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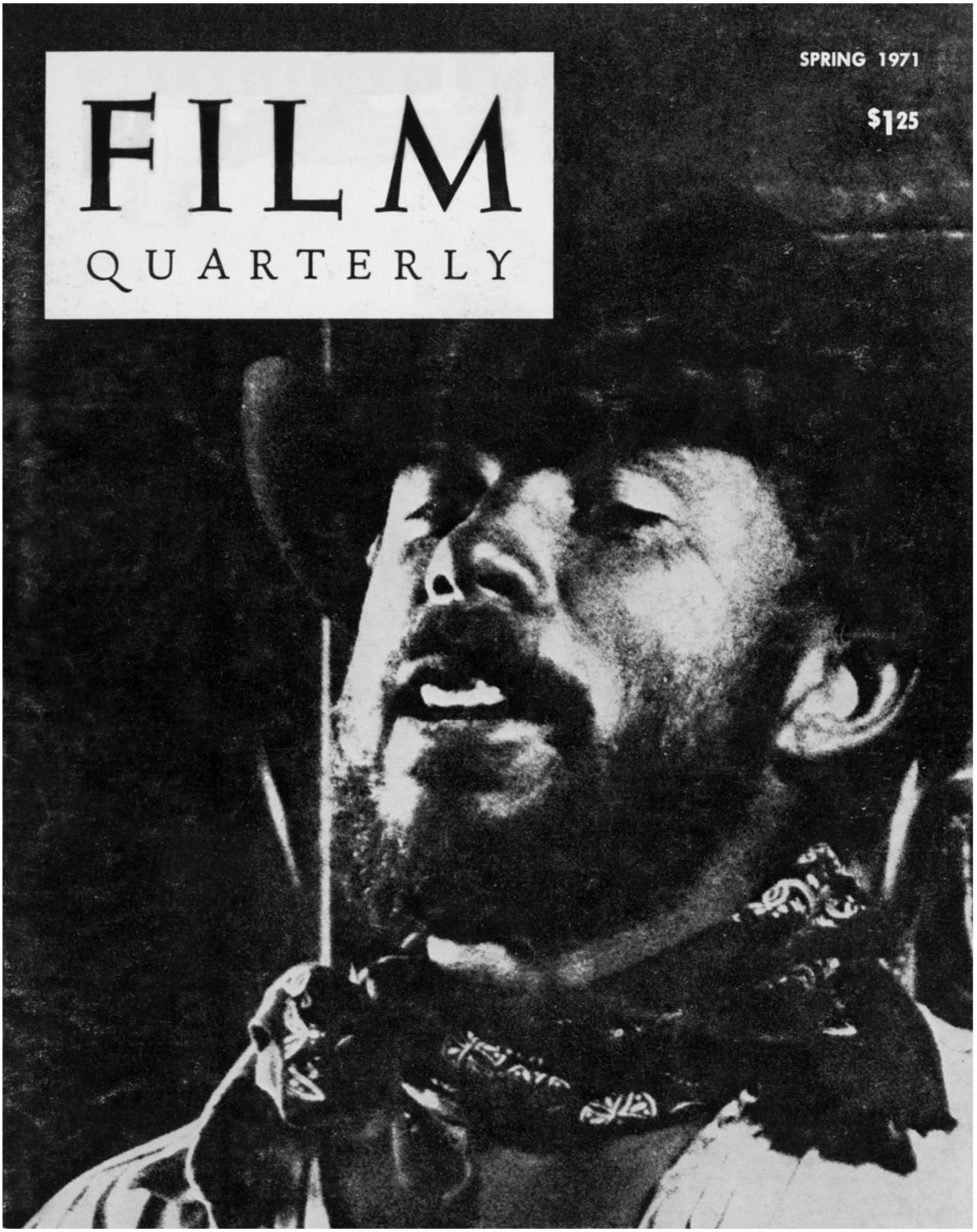

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VOL. XXIV, No. 3 Spring 1971

INTERVIEW

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SHORT NOTICES

COVER: Bruce Baillie in his own film, *Quick Billy*.

Editor's Notebook

PERIODICALS

On Film, Box 1044, Kansas City, Mo. 64111 ($10.00 for one year—6 issues) is an expensively printed, glossily designed magazine with all the frills you could ask (a recorded interview, printing on foil and transparent plastic, lots of four-color advertisements) but nothing to attach them to. I'm constitutionally disposed to welcome all new and reasonably serious film magazines, but what can you say about one whose bid in the auteur stockmarket goes to Otto Preminger, with its other main enthusiasms Blake Edwards and Leo McCarey? Robin Wood contributes a good brief piece on *Night of the Hunter,* and Mike Prokosch is decent on Godard; but the magazine as a whole shows what happens when you spend a lot of money trying to do something "new" without any real idea of what something new would be. Unfortunately, there is an old term for this kind of enterprise: vanity publishing.

GODARD'S VARIANTS

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[Cont'd on p. 32]

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or even hallucinatory cinema, in both the feature and underground or independent films, can we foresee anything of the questions that aesthetic theory must try to answer? Rudolf Arnheim, in his pioneer work four decades ago, dwelt on the nonrealistic elements of the film image—those aspects of it which abstracted from (or distracted from) its faithfulness to things photographed. Yet Arnheim was able to do this kind of analysis comfortably precisely because an abiding faith in reality still existed: film might abstract from reality, all right, but everybody knew it was still there, waiting to be kicked, like the tree Johnson used to refute Bishop Berkeley. With Youngblood and other media freaks, this basic certainty has been seriously eroded, though not perhaps as seriously as they like to imagine. But do we therefore face an era solely of what Henderson calls part-whole theories: theories of formal organization, in which what is represented or used as material for art is of little interest compared to the ways in which the artist manipulates it? I think not, basically because there is now a much greater sophistication among us about the relations between artistic styles and social phenomena. Purely formalist theories, thus, are likely to seem empty and decadent to most people who care about such things. Hard though it may be, we are going to have to develop theories which deal both with forms and with their relation to audiences and the societies to which the audiences belong.

Such theories cannot be developed in isolation from the rest of our cultural life, nor in isolation from our personal lives and personal relations with films and other film-goers; we have to try anew to make sense of the current movie-going experience (or the electronic forms that displace it) just as "going to the movies" made social and intellectual sense to Kael or Farber in their youth. No search for meaning or value in art can be conducted on the basis solely of pure sensitivity and intelligence, as Pechter imagines; any search for meaning is inevitably engaged in some kind of social debate or indeed (to use a hackneyed term that is still viable) struggle. A critic's intelligence cannot be "committed," in the sense that Kael has made pejorative, but it cannot help being *engaged* with some explicit sense of the potentialities of film art and of our culture generally. There is no need to conceive these potentialities dogmatically or narrowly; but critics must try to conceive of them in some way, and apply their conceptions aggressively to developments in film-making, if criticism is not to be simply entertaining opinion-mongering.

It would seem, then, that the particular task confronting our little film magazines at present is to seek out and develop critical writing with some theoretical ambitiousness and bite. Obviously no one can will ideas into being; they must come from our social experience, as Eisenstein's were stimulated by the Russian Revolution and Bazin's by the Liberation. But among the many new and good writers who are coming out of the great wave of interest in film, I hope that we editors can manage to find and encourage and publish those who are engaged in developing the genuinely new ideas we need.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK, cont'd.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

In hopes of improving the efficiency of its subscription office, the University of California Press will henceforth be requiring payment to accompany new subscription orders.

CONTRIBUTORS

RANDALL CONRAD divides his time between film-making and writing; he mostly lives in New York. BRIAN HENDERSON wrote on some theoretical implications of Godard's camerawork in our last issue. CHARLES HIGHAM is the author of *The Films of Orson Welles, The Celluloid Muse,* and other books. FORSTER HIRSCH lives in New York City. JAY LEYDA is now teaching film at Yale, after many years abroad. JOSEPH MCBRIDE and MICHAEL WILMINGTON live in Madison. HARRIET R. POLT runs a film series at Merritt College in Oakland. MICHAEL SHEDLIN lives in Venice, California, and formerly studied at Berkeley. MARVIN ZEMAN is a graduate student in mathematics at NYU.

MICHAEL SHEDLIN

Conrad Hall: An Interview

Conrad Hall photographed* The Wild Seed, Morituri, Harper, The Professionals, Divorce American Style, Cool Hand Luke, In Cold Blood, Hell in the Pacific, Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here, Butch Cassidy and The Sundance Kid, *and* The Happy Ending. *He received an Oscar for* Butch Cassidy *and is presently preparing to direct a feature.

Were you always interested in cinema?

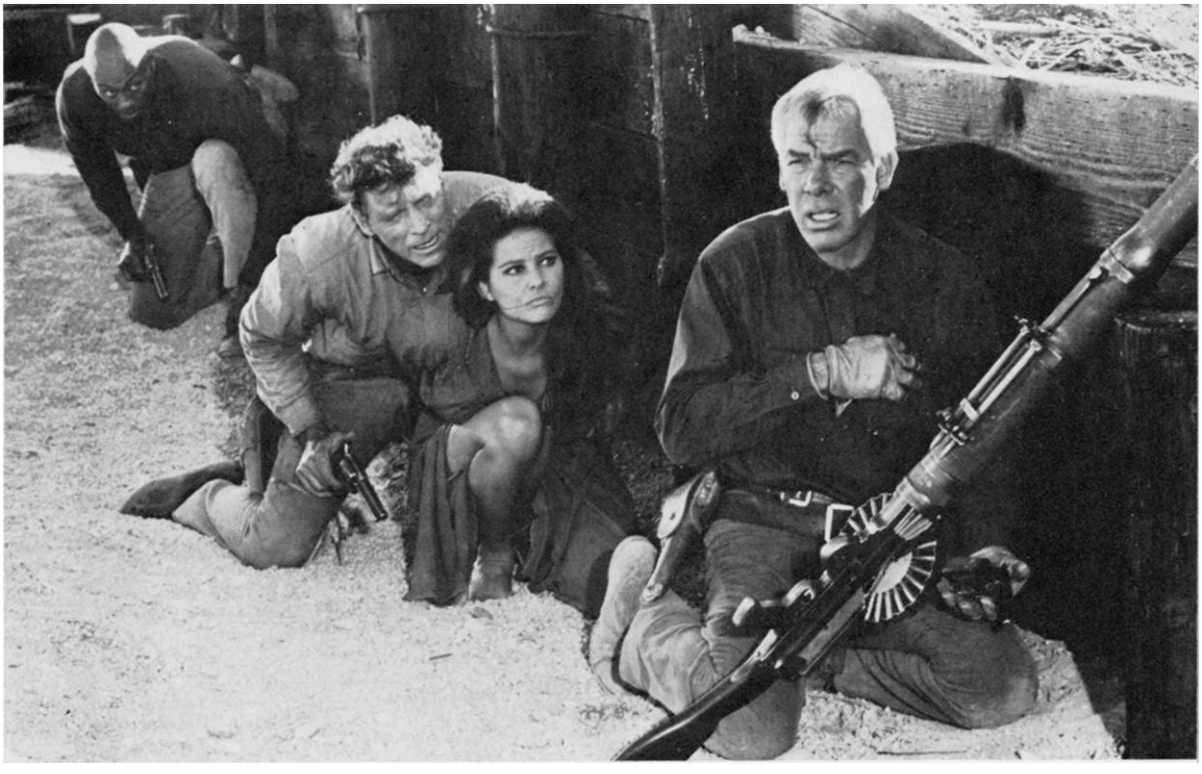
I was a major in journalism at USC. I'd had two years of college elsewhere. I didn't know exactly what I was interested in doing at all, but you have to have some sort of a major, so I just picked journalism, and I wasn't doing very well in it. I got a D in a course—Creative Writing. You either have to make it up in order to get credit for it, or you can change your major. So, I picked up the Liberal Arts and Sciences Manual, and thumbed through it—A, astronomy; B, biology; C, cinema—and I thought, "That sounds kind of interesting . . ." It interested me primarily because it was a new art form. I mean, it just started fifty years before I was in it. It was born then. And I thought it would be kind of interesting to get in on the ground level of an art that was forming.

How much luck did you have with jobs after you got out of film school?

Well, it was fairly easy at the time. It was just after the advent of television, and people didn't know what to put on it, and it consumed a vast amount—films weren't on it yet. We did jobs making documentaries, we got jobs making commercials, all kinds of things, like photographing filmed shows like Paul Coates. We were really just sort of film bums. I formed a company with two other USC graduates called Canyon Films, and we were for hire to do anything and everything—directing through to gripping and electrician; photography, editing, and so on. We worked on all kinds of films besides TV films—industrial films, educational films, nature films, and a lot of moonlighting work for Hollywood producers. At that time there were still B-pictures, which don't exist any more, and they invariably ran into financial difficulties before they were completed; and so, rather than continue on with a full union crew, they'd close up shop and go into the editing room; they'd cut, and they'd see that they needed a long shot of something, a point of view here, a run-by of a cab there, stuff like that. So they would contract with me – I couldn't get into the union – to photograph it for them.

How did you come to be a director of photography?

Well, I had a company, as I told you, and we couldn't get into the union. We got hassled by them. We decided to form our own union. About four or five of us got together and formed the Association of Film Craftsmen, which we affiliated with NABET. We came to affiliate with NABET because, even though we had a charter from the NLRB to operate as a a union, we were still being hassled by the IATSE (the established Hollywood union). When we worked in studios, they would come and threaten to boycott the producer and to crack heads and stuff like that. So we tried to figure out how they had the power, and we



THE PROFESSIONALS, *directed by Richard Brooks.*

decided that it was through control of the projection system—they had all the projectionists. They could threaten not to show a film, which would be a terrible loss for the producer involved. So we said, "How do films get shown on TV?" and we found that there were projectionists that showed films on TV, and that they belonged to a different union, called NABET. So we went to them and said, "Would you be interested in a live film segment of your union?" and they said, "Hell yes," and we said, "Terrific," and we amalgamated with them. So now we could say, "If you don't show our films in theaters, we won't show your films on TV." And we had power. This was a CIO union, and soon after that the AFL-CIO merged—which didn't help matters at all—but they could not then hassle us any longer.

Who was in on this?

It seems to me—Irvin Kershner, Jack Couffer, Marv Weinstein, myself, others. We just used to meet, and we decided to form a union, and did it. So, anyway, when we weren't working at a paid film job, which was quite often in those days actually, we used to sit around, my two partners and myself, and write stories and dream about making a feature-length motion picture. We found a story one day called "My Brother Down There" in the Martha Foley collection, 1954, and we bought it. We wrote a screenplay and we got it financed and we made a feature.

How much did it cost?

$150,000. At that time we all three did everything. However, when it came time to make the picture we decided we had to delineate our jobs. The three jobs that we wanted were photographer, director, and producer. So we wrote the jobs on three pieces of paper and juggled them around in a hat; Marv reached in and pulled out one, and Jack reached in and pulled out one, and I reached in and pulled out one, and mine said photographer, and that's how I became a cameraman rather than something else. Because it meant getting into

the IA union—and they still hassled you—in other words you couldn't show a NABET film in movie theaters. They would let you work but they wouldn't let you show one of your pictures. I subsequently left the NABET anyway. I got mad at somebody who was in charge of the hiring hall, which is where people call in and ask who is available. It was a girl who would make comments about people's abilities. Like so and so is good on exteriors, but is bad on interiors, etc. All they were supposed to do is say either he's available or he's not available. And I took great exception to this practice, and left the union. This was before we found the story. So, it came time to shoot this movie, and the IATSE came around and signed us up, then I told them I was going to photograph it, and they said, "Oh no you're not." And I pointed out to them that it says in the Taft-Hartley Act that the owner of a company is allowed to do any one thing in that company that he chooses besides being the owner and president. Well, they hassled me, and I had great difficulties with them. Herb Aller (of the IATSE), the executive board of the union, and I went over it again and again, and my lawyer told me that I was in the right, but that it would take a lot of money to fight it. Finally Aller proposed that I hire a cameraman and leave him in the bus and photograph it myself, as long as I paid the cameraman and gave him credit for it. He said that if I did that, I might be able to get into the union when we got back from our location. I was young at the time, and I said, "Oh what the hell, enough difficulties." So that's how I became a cameraman.

Where did you go from there? Have you worked in TV at all?

I went backwards from there to assisting, then operating—I loved operating and still do. Then Leslie Stevens made me director of photography on the "Stoney Burke" television series, and when that folded, "Outer Limits" for a year. I also did films for Leslie Stevens, one called *Incubus* in Esperanto, a little ten-day job. I understand they eventually made a nudie out of it. I don't know how they managed to do it. I guess they cut in a lot of extraneous nude stuff. (It didn't go over in Esperanto.) I talked to Francis Ford Coppola, and he said that he had seen the nude version of it. I had nothing to do with that.

What kind of a film was Incubus?

It's a black-magic type film. It's about black magic of some kind. It's an allegory. Feature length. And I didn't quite understand it.

How does one evaluate good comerawork in a film as distinct from the director's work?

Is the camera used effectively to tell the story?

Isn't that largely up to the director?

Well, that depends on the director. It's largely up to some directors, and it's largely up to some cameramen sometimes. It depends on how visually strong the director is. There are a lot of directors who have never seen the camera before. They say, "OK, there's the scene, how do you want to shoot it?" And you shoot it however you want to. There are other directors who say, "OK, put the camera right here and don't hassle me." I please the director, that's my job. My job is to help the director tell the story that *he* wants to tell.

Was it Brooks who chose the widescreen black and white format for In Cold Blood?

Yes, Panavision black and white. He chose it but I suggested it. It's always the director's choice. That was very strange actually. We wanted to shoot the picture in 1:85, but I said I wouldn't shoot it in 1:85 unless I could hard-matte it. That means to block out an area of the Academy aperture to make a film whose size ratio is 1 to 1:85 in the camera itself, so there is no information in the dark areas.

How is this different from regular shooting?

Well, there's an Academy aperture, which is the standard frame of 1 to 1:33. That's what basically your television set is, except that you've got curved corners. That is also what your old movies were. Then wide screen came out and they cut the top and the bottom off and blew it up bigger. I want to compose for one frame proportion, I don't want to compose for one and then have them show another. Particularly, I want to be able to put lights in

that area—I want to put lamps as close to the top of the frame without them being seen as I can. Or the sound man might want to bring in his microphone as deep as he can rather than keep it way out there just to protect some frame that you'd use only for TV. So I insisted on shooting with a hard matte, and Richard did too. And the studio was unwilling to do this, so in order to get the picture shown the way we shot it, we chose a frame they couldn't dinker with.

So you're not against wide screen on principle?

The frame proportion keeps changing. Now they have vertical frames and multi-image. You can do anything you want to, if that's the best way to tell the story. The frame doesn't bother me at all being that wide. I don't give a shit what the shape is. I like the 1:33 now even. I think it's terrific. If the story is good nobody thinks about the frame.

How do you think distribution and exhibition patterns could be changed to encourage creative film-making?

I'll tell you what's going to happen very shortly. The theater owner is going to be down the tubes, I'm afraid. I don't think there's going to be any theaters, except in some new way that they'll think of to protect what they do which is to show movies in a movie house. Because very shortly there is going to be a machine out where you go down to the store and buy a movie like you buy a record. You take a cartridge and stick it into your TV set. And it's going to shake up the whole goddamn world. First of all, somebody will get a screen that's huge, and put it on the wall. They could do it now, but Westinghouse and GE and RCA want to sell the TV sets they're already tooled up to make, and they won't manufacture it. I think theater-going is finished. I'm a very good friend of one director who has a projection room, and he sees all the movies that are made. I don't know where he gets them from, probably the various studios. And everybody who has a projection room passes them around, they call it the Bel-Air circuit. It's so much more fun to go over to a friend's and sit down and watch a movie and have a cup of coffee and sit with your feet up and discuss it. It's a much better way of watching movies than going into a theater that smells, and where the bathroom is a long ways away, and is probably dirty, and the sound is not the way you want it. At home, you have the controls right there. I think that theaters are out, as soon as this new equipment comes in. Then you'll have a collection of movies, and you'll exchange with someone else who has a collection of movies. Let me see *2001* tonight, and I'll show you *Birth of a Nation*. . . .

And rental outlets. . . .

I think it's going to change completely from the way we know it now. Soon, too. Very quickly. By the way, the only reason underground films aren't distributed more is because nobody thinks they can make money off it. However, if someone would set up a central distributor for cartridges of those kinds of films, everybody would be better off.

And hopefully they'll be putting those kinds of film on UHF channels, films that couldn't ever get a theatrical release. Do you think that videotape, particularly videotape with more lines than it has now in this country, will take over from celluloid?

I think so, when the size of the picture gets bigger. When I can buy something at the store that will throw up on the wall a picture 8x10 feet.

Do you think they'll eventually be shooting in tape and that film will become obsolete?

I haven't been keeping up with that. I don't know. A lot happens in a year. I don't even know if I can photograph any more—I haven't done it for over a year. But it doesn't make any difference what form it takes, the artistry is all that's important anyway. The technique is all easy to learn. I could teach anyone to be a cameraman in a week. See, what happened was that we were a craft that had to have a tremendously high degree of professionalism because such large amounts of money were spent on the projects we worked on, and we had to always be right. Otherwise, everybody else's efforts would be worthless. We had to

be better than we needed to be. We had to go out and learn all of that stuff, and really be good, so when somebody said, "What's it going to look like?" we could tell him. He doesn't want to take some guy with great artistry and a slight grasp of the field and say, "OK, shoot this picture," and the guy says, "Oh God, I forgot the filter." When you make underground films, it doesn't make any difference, because it's just a group of people getting together, plus the fact that if you leave the filter out, you show it anyway. And then people think that's artistry, and it has *become* artistry: because everything else was so slick, people found that there was beauty in the imperfect. There *is* beauty in the imperfect. In fact, I hate anything that's beautiful any more, photographically speaking. Photographically, I can't even stand a blue sky anymore, to me it's disgusting, it's like a postcard. It's something that revolts my stomach. When I see a clear, bright, blue sky on the screen, I want to throw up, something happens inside me. I have to destroy it somehow or other. I have to make it pale blue by overexposing it, or . . .

You overexposed Butch Cassidy. . . .

Yeah, but more so in *Tell Them Willie Boy is Here.* That was really overexposed. In *Butch,* I didn't go that far out, there was no need to. In the future, I might even go out further. Much further.

One of the things that struck people about Cool Hand Luke *was its sumptuous photography.*

That was before.

Is this a crisis of sorts for you then?

Yeah. That's why I love Los Angeles. Everything is fogged in, smogged in, and the skies are white. It's beautiful visually, gorgeous. I hate color anyway, I can't stand color.

Just what is the process of overexposing these films? Do you leave it pretty much the same throughout all of the scenes?

You could almost leave it at one stop. I experimented with all different things, but I didn't need to; I could leave it at one stop for front light, and one stop for back light, and shoot the whole film at two different stops, and let the laboratory figure out what to do with it. The labs can do a lot, they can do anything. And I'd rather they work than me. It's all right to destroy the color and then let them try to put it back in, because they can't get it back in. They're all the time trying to saturate color and make it brighter, prettier. And I'm trying to make it softer and less bright.

In Luke, *do you think that the prettiness detracted from the prison atmosphere?*

I personally feel that the film would have been more realistic, more dramatic, in black and white.

Do you prefer black and white generally?

I prefer black and white for telling a story, yes. Although color is right for me sometimes. When it can be dealt with properly. Color has a tendency to be very unreal, to detract from the story. Whereas with black and white, there's no way to detract, once you accept it, which is right at the beginning.

Is it harder to shoot in color or black and white?

They talk about separation and all that, but I do the same thing for color as I do for black and white, virtually.

Did you use special filters on Cool Hand Luke?

I use fog filters on practically everything, because that helps to destroy the sharpness of the image. Which I don't like anyway. It's all too sharp now. Lens manufacturers—their term for excellence is sharpness, and I find that a lot of the photographs I've seen from the early days were beautiful, the lenses weren't as sharp then. I like that. I don't like sharpness. With black and white, there's no variation from what your eye tells you nature is. When you see the ocean, and you see another ocean, you know what the color of the ocean is, because you've seen the ocean. If all of a sudden somebody puts a polaroid filter on it, then you say, "Well Christ Almighty, that's unreal, that's a guy with polaroid glasses on." Because that's not the way the ocean looks. If grass happens to be blue-green because of some fuckup in the lab, or fading of the print, it bothers you, be-

cause you know that grass is not blue-green. You might not have a chance to think about it, but emotionally, there are little notes being taken and sent back. . . .

Do you think Hell in the Pacific *would have been better in black and white?*

It would have been as good, probably better.

Where was that shot?

Palau. In the Western Carolines, 600 miles east of the Philippines.

Any process shots?

No process shots.

How long did it take to shoot?

14 weeks.

Are you pleased with that film visually?

No. It was too good-looking. I wish I'd destroyed it more. I made it too rich-looking. I should have destroyed it more. I experimented with overexposure on *Hell,* but I didn't use it then. As a cameraman, I enhance my knowledge of my craft by experimenting with the producer's money, without hurting him. We have what's called a slate, to identify the scene. All my slates are experiments. I'll overexpose a slate, and I'll make a little note of it, so that when I see it, I'll know whether or not I got the effect I was trying for. So I used it on *Willie Boy.* I knew that I wanted to make the film look funkier. I made experiments to determine how far I could go without having a shambles on my hands.

Disregarding content, and considering style, do you prefer a Ford, or say, a Welles, who uses the camera more subjectively?

I like it all. It's all there to use. You just have to use it right. It's just a language. Panning shots, zooms, dollies, static shots, it's all there. You use it to tell the story best.

What do you think of using two cameras? Polanski says it's absurd.

Terrific. Terrific. Causes a lot of complications, though. It might bother a lot of people. It would bother me. I've never directed, so I don't know, but I'd want to *really* set up both cameras. I'd want to see through both cameras, in a sense.

Apparently Richard Lester stands around with a camera himself sometimes, and shoots when he thinks something especially good is happening.

Oh, I believe in that. I think the director should have a camera whenever he wants one. I like to operate my own stuff. I like operating. It's a very creative job. Something emotional happens to me when I'm looking through a camera, and when I see the story unfolding through the camera, and I'm helping to tell it by the moves I make.

I didn't think that the IA let people operate their own stuff.

I do it anyway. That whole thing has got to be broken down. With the advent of the reflex camera, a whole new style of shooting developed, which Ford and those cats never even had to contend with. They told you what they wanted, and then some guy had to approximate it by looking through a viewfinder. Which was never what you were actually getting, only approximately what you were getting. But as soon as the reflex camera came in, you got exactly what you saw. A whole new style of film-making developed. The cameraman could now be more involved in immediate choices. And the zoom lens, too. You could open up a bit; maybe you haven't got a moving shot, and the actors miss their marks, why do you have to cut it? If I were on the camera, I could just accept it, and if they got wider, just pull back a bit with the zoom lens. After all, the director wants a two-shot, he doesn't want two people out of the frame. If I'm hired to photograph, I want to operate, I want it to be mine.

What's the most elaborate set-up you've ever worked with?

I'd say working on a freighter in *Morituri.* A whole freighter. I lit a shot, a day-for-night shot, and I had every piece of equipment that was aboard lit. Two generators going. It was a terrific helicopter shot, Nelson Tyler operated it. It starts on a submarine surfacing, and then comes up around the submarine, and you see people pouring out of the conning tower, and blinkers going, and you see the freighter in the distance, all lit up. Then you leave the sub and you go to the freighter, to a close-up of

the captain on the deck, saying, "Reverse engines!" A waist shot; still from the copter. Then you follow somebody else down to the main deck, and he sends over the gangplank, then runs the full length of the freighter, and opens the hatch to the prop shaft to shout down to somebody working on a fuse device below; the helicopter comes up and around and reveals the submarine in the background with a boat coming towards the ship, blinking. The whole freighter in the foreground and the sub in the background. Really a problem lighting, because we had to get somebody by the light to keep it trained on the helicopter, so that it would pick up in the daytime. We had every light going—I had 10 K's standing on the deck. I'd tell people to aim them at the copter and keep them there, wherever it was. If the light is not aimed at the copter, you'll get no value from your light. It's underexposed so much that you don't see the light stands or anything, you just see the highlights.

What would you say to a young cameraman interested in getting into the industry?

I don't think it will be a problem any more, because the whole protective union system will disintegrate. . . . I hope it does. Everybody who wants to should be allowed to try. There should be a union, and everybody who wants to get into that union should be allowed to get in. What are we trying to prove by keeping people out? There's plenty of jobs for everybody. There aren't that many good people anyway.

Do you think film school is essential to someone who wants to be a cameraman?

No. But I think that it helps make you more of a complete film-maker. I feel I know how to do everything. I've directed commercials and industrials; I've never directed a feature, though. But I feel I can edit, I can produce, I can write, I can shoot. . . . When you're in a cinema department, you don't just learn how to handle a camera, you learn about the history of films, you learn about documentary, you take classes in film writing, in directing, all aspects of film-making. This at least allows you to know about the other person's job. I think the really good film-makers are people who can do all the jobs. I'll bet you Bergman can photograph anything, I bet he could edit anything, I bet he could act in it, you know he can write and direct it, he does everything. I don't believe in those guys that just know one thing and let somebody else figure out everything else. I don't believe in leaving it to the cameraman to shoot something. . . .

Have you felt any influence of young people in the industry?

No studio is without its young director now.

What about apart from studio directors?

I haven't been working except in the IATSE, so I don't know what's really happening throughout the industry. I know all of my crew I brought along as fast as possible. Most of them are pretty young guys. I know that people are pouring out of the universities, and many of them will make films, underground films, TV films, or something. I'm for getting started as soon as you want to. I think there's a cult of youngism that didn't exist before; when I came out of school there was no cult. The chances being offered to young people today are much greater than in my day. In my day, you had to be 65 years old to do the things that kids are doing immediately. There are a lot more kids since the war, and they're a lot more important.

What technical advances do you foresee in the next ten years in film photography?

I don't know anything about technical stuff at all. I hate technical stuff. I don't care or know anything about it. I can find out in ten seconds, all I have to do is go to a technical guy. If there's some new way of telling a story that somebody has come up with that I don't know about, then I go to them and ask them what it is. And they tell me. If I see something that Haskell Wexler has used that I think is a neat thing, I go to Haskell Wexler and ask him how he shot it, and he tells me, and I tell anybody else that asks me about my work. Somebody else will use it in a different way to tell a different story. It's a language, everybody should be free to use it. I'm for dissemination of all knowledge in the business. Artistry is

something else again. That is something you can't disseminate. All the technical stuff, though, you can learn faster than you can learn to become a mechanic. It's more complicated to learn to be an auto mechanic.

Isn't it the lighting that's most complicated?

Lighting? There's front light, back light, cross light, top light, bottom light, what else is there? Use it in any combination you want to.

Do you find any relationship between your dreams and your work? Do you dream in overexposed images?

No. None of my dreams are about my work. Some people dream about their work and get all sorts of ideas and plots, but I'm not like that.

Which films of the 1960's were visually striking to you?

The Seven Samurai. Woman in the Dunes. Lawrence of Arabia. The Battle of Algiers. . . .

How do you feel about the political sentiments in Battle of Algiers?

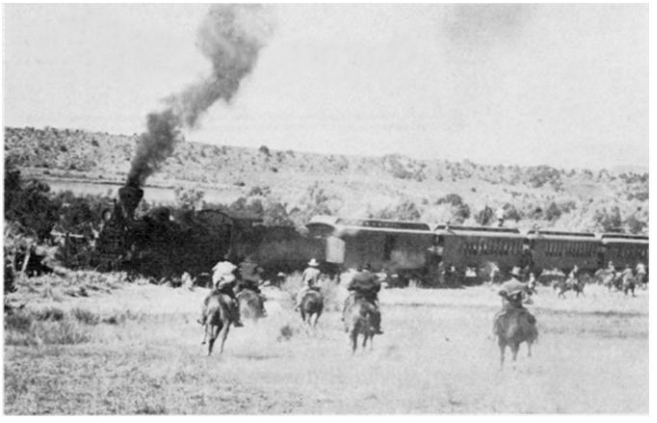
I don't see much to disagree with. It's about a group of people who wanted to be independent from a mother nation.

There's surely a lot of talk about revolution. Do you think that there is a serious revolutionary consciousness growing here? By serious, I mean people who are willing to go out into the streets and fight.

I think so. I didn't think so a year and a half ago, but I think so now.

What about location work? Do you prefer to work on location? Do you think that one necessarily gets more realism on location?

Yes, more realism definitely. It's not impossible to get good realism on a set, but things are made too easy for you. You have an abundance of light, you have places for lights to be put already. Set work will ultimately have an unreal look, because you'll have light coming from somewhere where it's impossible for it to come from. When you're dealing with natural locations, you have windows, and very few places you can put lights. Usually the places you will put them are the places where light would come from anyway. I've always liked shooting away from the studios better than shooting on a sound stage; I hate the fact that there's a coffee machine right there and everybody goes and gets coffee, and there's telephones, and friends are visiting . . . it's more like a commissary than a place to work. And when you're working in a natural location it's usually so crowded that you can't tolerate visitors and extraneous people around. Natural locations often force the director to tell the story more simply, because he's somewhat limited in what he can do. He can't get tricky with camera moves and that kind of thing.



BUTCH CASSIDY AND THE SUNDANCE KID

In relation to what you said about distorting reality and destroying the prettified image, what are some of the other ways to do this besides fog filters and overexposure?

Underexposure. Using pola-screens, a filter that polarizes light; this causes the colors to be enriched—blue is bluer, etc. It eliminates aerial haze. If you use two of them together, you can polarize it so that you get a black sky—it's helpful for day-for-night photography.

How is day-for-night photography done?

Usually badly. But not necessarily by the man who's doing it, usually by the people who make the release print. They choose to show you too much. What you had looking pretty reasonable, they print up so that it looks like daylight. You lose the effect. A laboratory can ruin whatever you do. If you were in control of the final print, you could make the day-for-night look good. There are a number of ways to achieve this effect. You can use graduate

filters, pola-screens, underexposure, printing, it can be done in the optical printer. I've had many day shots used for night shots because the context of the story changed. They just make a dupe and take it to the optical printer. They underexpose it and bring a graduate filter into the sky area to darken the sky. Another way of getting day-for-night is to use Technicolor and desaturate, take some of the color out and superimpose a black and white image in order to achieve a monochromatic effect like night. There are a lot of methods of doing day-for-night in black and white photography that are entirely different. It's easier in black and white. You can do it with red filters (red makes blue go black). If you have a blue sky, which normally would register gray, you put a red filter on, and it holds back the blue and makes it go black. Then you underexpose the rest of of it. I don't recommend anyone shooting day-for-night if they can possibly avoid it. It's never any goddamn good. It would be if you could control the printing, but they want to print it up for the drive-ins, and it's gonna look like day, and everybody's gonna say, "What kind of a schmuck shot this day shot when they're talking about night?"

Along the lines of destroying the sharp image, would you extend that to camerawork that is not rock solid?

Yes, definitely. I've had several experiences where the director has gone into the outtakes to look for a scene that is more flawed technically in order to have it be less slick. I make a dolly track sometimes, and I put sand across it, and I put the camera on a soft-wheeled dolly, and race with somebody. And the camera's not tied down, it bounces and causes fantastic violence on the screen—really jarring—the image shoots out of the frame and back in and jumps up and down. It's stroboscopic in a sense. It's fucking up the scene somehow for the story's benefit. It creates an emotional reaction in the audience, to have the camera violent as well as the figures in the scene.

Do you like hand-held work?

I love it. It's exciting, you really get caught up in it. It's like swimming underwater great distances. Sometimes you end up holding your breath until you practically collapse to try and make it steadier. It's something that you really feel, the camera becomes an extension of your body. You dance with it.

[At this point, Conrad Hall's collaborator Katherine Ross entered the room.]

What kind of interaction goes on between a cameraman and an actor on a big industry film? How can the cameraman affect the actor?

K.R.: That's a hard question to answer because some cameramen are terrific, and you end up sort of working for them, not doing what they ask, but because their eye is the only real audience you have. And if you know that they're good, which is just by intuition, you'll do a scene, and the operator or the cameraman will come up and say, "There's something really terrific you did in there," and you'll know to trust him and do it because it was good . . . cinematically. And it doesn't matter if it wasn't a deeply felt move at that moment, because on film you don't have to feel everything all the time—what's important is what the lens picks up. You can get a great feeling from them if they really love photographing.

C.H.: I saw a film on Claude Lelouch shooting. It showed him rehearsing with the actors. His assistant cameraman was right there with an Eclair just watching while he rehearsed the actors. If there was something very exciting happening, maybe even out of context, that he knew would be very difficult to capture later, that guy had that camera in his hands in a second, and he was shooting it.

K.R.: Sometimes during rehearsals, maybe you're doing a very emotional scene, and something happens, and you really do it, you know, and the director says, "That's great! Do it just that way again," and suddenly you're very self-conscious. . . . It would be nice to have that kind of freedom—improvisational camera. . . .

C.H.: I want to help change the world, and I want to do it by telling stories that help to do that. And other people say, "I'd rather do

it by picking up a brick and throwing it through a window, or sitting down somewhere and attracting attention." I think that films haven't changed it, although they've influenced it somewhat, but not necessarily for the better. Because there hasn't been in it the responsibility that there should be. The artists are not in control yet. Those in charge are not a group of artists, they're a bunch of people making money. But now the artists are coming along, and maybe there's a chance. . . . I don't think we can change the world through films any more. I used to think we could change the world by showing the human condition. But picking up a brick and throwing it, or sitting down someplace in a road, does a much quicker job. I don't have any answers for anything, but I know that I'm not going to make any more pictures that I don't really care about. My motives in the past were different.

ERNEST CALLENBACH

Recent Film Writing: A Survey

"When I was little, I wanted to be a mathematician. I have always been fascinated by those who do pure research, by the great mathematicians who, by making an advance in one direction, unlock years of fruitful research possibilities for succeeding generations. This taste for research is quite personal and absolutely irrational."—Jean-Luc Godard to Jean Collet, Sept. 1963

It's a satisfaction to film people, in a general way, that so many film books are now being published. After the long lean years, it's comfortable to think that our faith in the art is at last being justified. For if anything signifies Seriousness, it is books. Yet a publisher and editor like myself must be constitutionally skeptical, in hopes of conserving both sanity and trees. The motives people have for wanting to publish are, to say the least, mixed—though we have only recently begun to receive in the film field any sizable number of manuscripts that are clearly sprung from the publish-or-perish fount, that source of so much academic intellectual corruption (not to mention the waste of paper). And especially in a field where the pace of publication has increased so fast, we need to stop and try to take stock of the purposes and worth of what has been done. There have been a tremendous number of film books published in the past year or so, although the output relative to that of the established fields like English or sociology is still modest. Once, we could have the easy feeling that we could read everything that came out. We now face a situation like that in older fields, where specialization is forced on us whether we like it or not: nobody has the time to read all the books that are appearing. I regret this, personally speaking, because it means a kind of fragmentation and dispersion of intellectual activity, but it seems to be inevitable whenever any subject is attacked by large numbers of people; in science, matters have gone so far that the dozen or so workers really concerned with a given problem communicate with each other by telephone, xerox, or at worst mimeograph, between Berkeley, Cambridge, Dubna, or wherever, and only see other scientists at occasional meetings; publication itself is a side product of the process—not unimportant, of course, but it merely memorializes what has

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happened, and adds to the problems of the abstracters and information-retrievers. (When Watson and Crick had cracked the DNA structure, they took pains to bring their report down to a crisp 600 words, and could hardly be accused of littering up the intellectual universe.)

Film is still, however, within the domain of the humanities for most writers who address themselves to it. An occasional sociologist ventures some notions, usually with a generality that film historians consider flimsy; an occasional psychologist uses film as a research recording tool. There are probably some curious scientific problems involved in film perception, but so far no psychologists have found them interesting. People writing about film have usually been interested in it either because it's an art that intrigues them (like most critics) or because it's a mass medium they hope can be turned to political advantage (a tradition going back to John Grierson, who was a political scientist and socialist agitator). We are now, however, coming to a point where both of these emphases seem limited and insufficient, and people seem to be getting ready to try integrating them, to deal with film as an art that is inherently political even in the most apolitical hands. I want to return to this crucial matter later, in discussing some recent critical books. However, to get a perspective in which the few critical works of importance can be discussed—and to try and do some kind of justice to the many books of recent vintage which we have not reviewed separately, though we will return to some in future issues—I'd like to present a brief survey of the recent film-book output (not at all exhaustive), trying to sort it out a bit and sketch some patterns, directions, and pitfalls.

ANTHOLOGIES

It was discovered about five years ago, when film study first began to catch on in colleges, that there wasn't much available in paperback that the students would read. Arnheim bored them, and they had never seen the German films he was talking about. Knight was too textbookish. But the kids *would* read articles; you could get them to at least thumb through Dan Talbot's pioneer collection. Since then, a procession of editors has combed through the journals and put practically every decent article ever written into some collection or other; but the process is continuing apace with collections of reviews, grouped around major films, apparently intended to be used as readings for classes who are viewing the films. Since the reviews tend to be disparate in their approaches and responses, this is evidently intended to promote discussion by proving that films are fun to argue about (not that students exactly need proof).

P. Adams Sitney has, in his *Film Culture* anthology, shown that a special-purpose collection may still have point and vitality. However, as intellectual activity, the compiling of an anthology is hardly the most demanding task you could undertake; at this point, it mostly seems to be thought a good way to get your name on a publication without doing any actual writing, except maybe an introduction. Like all text-use-oriented publishing, it tends toward low common denominators because that is where the real money is. I personally think that we've now got more anthologies than we can use, and that would-be collectors should hold off a couple of years to allow the real writers to produce some more good material. Even cannibals need to pause between courses.

Film Culture Reader. Edited and with an introduction by P. Adams Sitney. New York: Praeger, 1971. $12.50. Sitney contributes a thoughtful introduction, and also one of the main items of theoretical interest, his essay on "structural film." (Another is Dziga Vertov.)

The Movies as Medium. Edited, with an introduction by Lewis Jacobs. New York: Noonday, 1970. $3.65.

Film and the Liberal Arts. Edited by T. J. Ross. New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1970. Though depressingly textbookish, draws from an unusually broad group of sources.

A Casebook on Film. Ed. by Charles Thomas Samuels. New York: Van Nostrand, 1970. $3.25. A book of

readings, both general and grouped around The Graduate, Bonnie and Clyde, and Blow-Up.

Film as Film: Critical Responses to Film Art. Edited by Joy Gould Boyum and Adrienne Scott. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1971. $4.95. Groups reviews of films by various reviewers for classroom discussion use.

Renaissance of the Film. Edited by Julius Bellone. New York: Collier Books, 1970. $2.95. Anthology of criticism on major postwar films.

Celluloid and Symbols. Ed. by John C. Cooper and Carl Skrade. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970. $2.95. Essays on religious aspects of cinema.

INTERVIEW BOOKS

Directors have been the chief prey of interviewers, but also industry old-timers, stars, cameramen, and so on. Interviews can be entertaining, and they can be informative if you have a copious supply of grains of salt to take them with; they have, above all, the great virtue of getting the reader close to the firing-line at which films are actually produced. But too few of the people who undertake interviews bother to prepare themselves competently, so they're at the mercy of the interviewee: they haven't seen many of his films, they don't know the major turning points in his life, they don't know who his friends and enemies are, they aren't well acquainted with the world in which he has lived—they are, in short, gullible, and since they are also often lazy and don't check what the interviewee says against other sources, this gullibility passes on unchallenged into the printed interviews. Thus future readers come to accept as candid fact what is often deliberate or unconscious self-justification, rationalization, or even sometimes (on really important questions) just plain deceit. These problems afflict the official "oral history" tape-recording projects that have existed at UCLA and the American Film Institute as well as individual freelance interviewers; there just aren't that many well-equipped interviewers around. For every Charles Higham or Albert Johnson who has seen every film a man has made (and remembers them) there are many young and intrepid would-be "scholars" who are willing to interview men of whose work they are almost entirely ignorant. The problem is worth noticing not only as cautionary for book buyers but as a general intellectual problem: it is characteristic of American technological-know-how-gee-whiz-hardware-will-solve-it scholarship to think that merely tape-recording important people's words can suffice—when it is really only the beginning of a process of evaluation and analysis of a distinctly old-fashioned kind, involving the confrontation of facts (such as words but also records) by an active and informed human mind. The words are necessary, but far from sufficient. Moreover, the choice of whom to interview is as difficult as how to interview him. Presumably, a certain rapport is essential between subject and interviewer, as well as basic knowledge on the interviewer's part and some candor on the subject's. Presumably it is impossible to interview *everybody.* What it all comes down to, I think, is that good interviews always result from the initiative of an informed interviewer who is really interested in a man's work, personally and technically, who has taken the trouble to acquaint himself with it, and can show others why that work is worth thinking about. This means that if you are interviewing cameramen you need to understanding lighting and cameras and film stock; you have to *care* about them.

It seems to me that we are vastly overburdened with both useful and trivial interviews with directors; the only kind that might represent a major contribution at this point would be along the book-length interview lines of Tom Milne's marathon conversation with Losey, or Truffaut's with Hitchcock.

But we are drastically short of material on writers above all, and on producers to a lesser extent. Now that the great era of craftsmanship in Hollywood is over, such interviewing is bound to be archaeological; at its best it will have the compensating fervor of a Kevin Brownlow. But it may have practical import-

ance as well as the scholarly role of preserving the past if it can help carry over into the era of the smaller, more personal film some of the spirit of workmanship without which even disposable art cannot hold our attention.

In *Film Quarterly*, we have sometimes tried to develop a "case history" approach to interviewing, talking to various people who worked on a given film, hoping to capture something of the strangely collaborative nature of filmmaking and coming out, inevitably, with a *Rashomon*-like result. Given voluble collaborators and enough time for proper checking, this could also be a fruitful way to do an interview book. And it is interesting to interview filmmakers who work in a common school, as Alan Rosenthal does in his forthcoming *Documentary in Action*.

The Film Director as Superstar. By Joseph Gelmis. New York: Doubleday, 1970. $6.95. Unusually acute and articulate interviewing, but the individual interviews are often disappointingly short, perhaps from a desire to cover too many people. Includes 16 directors who have come from outside the industry, from McBride to Bertolucci to Nichols.

Directors at Work: Interviews with American Film-Makers. Edited by Bernard R. Kantor, Irwin R. Blacker, and Anne Kramer. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1971. $10.00. Chatty conversations, sometimes illuminating (Stanley Kramer is one of Jerry Lewis's favorite filmmakers; it was films by Eisenstein and Dovzhenko that brought Kazan into theater). Included are Brooks, Cukor, Jewison, Kazan, Kramer, Lester, Lewis, Silverstein, Wise, and Wyler. The interviewers ask nice sociable questions, and sometimes hit pay dirt, but pass up many opportunities (they let Wise discuss the cutting of **Ambersons** with utter vagueness).

Hollywood Cameramen. By Charles Higham. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970. $5.95. "There is still room for veterans; and this book is a testimony to their individual skills." The light these old men throw on their directors is not so flattering as their treatment of stars; Daniels is especially intriguing on Stroheim, and Garmes on Sternberg ("He left the lighting to me at all times"). Higham has modestly but perhaps unwisely edited out his questions, since he has the knowledge needed to ask good ones.

The Real Tinsel. By Bernard Rosenberg and Harry Silverstein. New York: Macmillan, 1970. $9.95. Mostly interviews with old Hollywood hands.

HOW-TO-DO-IT BOOKS

The original master at this kind of thing, Raymond Spottiswoode, died recently in a car crash (somebody might compile a grim obituary list of film people done in by the automobile). There's now a proliferation of books aimed at college students, high school students, even elementary school students, but none of these so far has the firm, intellectually elegant grasp of technical material that makes Spottiswoode's *Encyclopedia of Film and Television Techniques* the last word. If you really want to know what you're doing (whether or not you like to think you're "a professional") you need to have the *Encyclopedia* handy.

Photographic Theory for the Motion Picture Cameraman and **Practical Motion Picture Photography.** Compiled and edited by Russell Campbell. New York: Barnes, 1970. $2.95 per volume. First volumes in a new series of texts coming out of the London Film School. Carefully prepared technical information, incorporating quotes from experienced cameramen.

Filming Works Like This. By Jeanne and Robert Bendick. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971. $4.95. A technical primer for secondary school use.

Professional 16/35mm Cameraman's Handbook. By Verne and Sylvia Carlson. New York: Hastings, 1970. $15.00.

How to Make Animated Movies. By Anthony Kinsey. New York: Studio, 1970. $6.95. A concise history and guide to simple, inexpensive animation techniques.

The Work of the Film Director. By A. J. Reynertson. New York: Hastings House, 1970. $13.50. A useful though not exciting survey of directional tasks in a feature film.

SCRIPTS

Ever since the notion began to get around that it was interesting to see how films were put together, the transitory and fugitive status

of film prints has posed an almost insurmountable problem. The primary way to study film is of course to study film prints; everything else, however intriguing, is of accessory interest, like a poet's notes or a novelist's first draft. If 8mm copies of films had been available from the beginning in libraries throughout the land, only in rare cases of "philological" interest would anyone have thought to publish a script. And someday, if cartridge-sales ever replace the reel-rental distribution system, we may achieve a situation which by-passes scripts.

At present, however, and rather startlingly, script publication has become very big business, rather like sound-track records: some 250,000 copies of *Easy Rider* have been sold. Such illustrated books are presumably used by young readers much as the records are—to "recreate" the film after they've seen it, rather than for study purposes. But anybody who wants to do close analysis of films can learn a lot from the many script books now coming out, both on currently popular American hits and on classics and European films. Few of the script books are done with the meticulous attention to final-film detail of the Grove Press books that were edited by Robert Hughes—most of them are slightly revised versions of the original script, which suffers various alterations in production. Such versions are always useful, but readers must beware of thinking they represent the author's "purest" intention, from which the film in its released form can only be a falling-off. Sometimes, of course, commercial pressures are behind changes (good or bad); but film-makers also constantly get new ideas, encounter structural or length problems they hadn't anticipated, or simply find that an idea that looks fine on paper doesn't work on the screen. The best light on such matters is thrown by the French series, *L'Avant-Scène du Cinéma,* which prints original versions but indicates later deletions and also additions; we would do well to follow the French example here.

The scripts coming out seem to me impressive in variety. After a beginning with Antonioni and Bergman some years ago, publishers have discovered that far more rarified items than *Tom Jones* can be safely if modestly marketed; and thus we have not only fashionable current directors but also René Clair, Cocteau, Rossellini. Most of these scripts we owe to the enterprise of continental and British editors who have gotten them out of the production companies. It has always been more difficult to obtain publishing rights to American films, since our agents and lawyers seem to be hungrier than their European counterparts, but it can be done—even for *Citizen Kane,* whose script will shortly appear along with Pauline Kael's long essay "Raising Kane" in a volume to be called *The Citizen Kane Book.* Since writers were—and remain—so important in Hollywood, it is especially unfortunate to have had little of their work published, except in the mid-forties in the *Best Screenplays of 19–* volumes. The auteur "theory," apparently, has so hypnotically focused attention on directors that nobody has thought of editing a series of American scripts —a deficiency I am told will be remedied soon.

Salesman. Script drawn from the film, with introduction by Harold Clurman, production notes by Howard Junker, and filmography of the Maysles brothers. New York: Signet, 1969. $.75.

Saint Joan: A Screenplay by Bernard Shaw. Ed. by Bernard F. Dukore. Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1970. $2.45.

Alice's Restaurant. The original screenplay by Venable Herndon and Arthur Penn. New York: Doubeday, 1970. $1.95. With forewords by Herndon and Penn.

Beauty and the Beast. By Jean Cocteau. Bilingual script edited by Robert M. Hammond. New York: NYU Press, 1970. $14.95. A careful scholarly reconstitution of the script; should be useful in French classes dealing with films.

Carl Theodor Dreyer: Four Screenplays. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1970. $12.00. Passion of Joan of Arc, Vampyr, Day of Wrath, Ordet. Translated by Oliver Stallybrass. Introduction by Ole Storm.

Little Fauss and Big Halsy. By Charles Eastman. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1970. $2.25. The original screenplay, with illustrations.

David Holzman's Diary. By L. M. Kit Carson from a film by Jim McBride. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1970. $4.95.

Duet for Cannibals. Susan Sontag. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux. $2.25.

René Clair: Four Screenplays (Le Silence est d'or, La Beaute du diable, Les Belles-de-Nuit, and Les Grandes manoeuvres). New York: Grossman, 1970. $4.95. With forewords and commentaries by Clair: witty, perceptive, glacially elegant.

Federico Fellini: Three Screenplays (I Vitelloni, Il Bidone, The Temptations of Dr. Antonio). New York: Grossman, 1970. $3.50.

Visconti: Three Screenplays (White Nights, Rocco and His Brothers, The Job—episode from Boccaccio '70), and second volume **Two Screenplays** (La Terra Trema, Senso). New York: Grossman, 1970. $3.50 and $2.50 respectively.

DIRECTOR STUDIES

It is not clear who first took seriously the idea that you could write a whole book about a film-maker, just as you could about a novelist or painter. As early as 1940 Iris Barry of the Museum of Modern Art published a 40-page essay on Griffith—edging beyond article length, but not yet venturing a full-scale book. In 1942 Robert Feild's *The Art of Walt Disney* appeared—but it focused more on Disney's technology and organization than on his art. Like so much in postwar film criticism, the idea of director monographs as we know them may have taken practical form through André Bazin, who was an active agitator for film as well as critic—though I don't believe his name is mentioned in the account that publisher Pierre L'Herminier gives of his starting the Seghers series in Paris. It is clear, at any rate, that the Editions Universitaires and Seghers series established a tradition of short, commissioned, illustrated books including both a critical essay and a filmography, sometimes plus selected documents—quotes from reviews, interview excerpts, and the like. Both the advantages and the defects of the French system have been carried over into their English-language equivalents. As an expression of the systematic and categoric habits of the French, the Paris series admirably tried to cover both the old masters (L'Herminier began with Méliès) and the new: Antonioni, Resnais, Hitchcock. Some of the studies were substantial works of analysis, like the Hitchcock study by Eric Rohmer and Claude Chabrol, and others in the Editions Universitaires series. The Seghers series tended to have shorter texts—sometimes, indeed, virtually no longer than a major article—which varied greatly in quality.

The danger in a commissioned series, as opposed to the publication of occasional works, is that the pressure to keep the series going and publishing regularly tends to lower the quality of the output. This happens for two reasons: the editors, having gone through the available best possibilities in both authors and subjects, begin to have to commission works that are less promising; and the commissioning system itself tends to result in authors turning in lower-quality manuscripts than they are likely to do if the writing is undertaken primarily on their own initiative.

A strong editor who is in a position to exert detailed control over the work, like Ian Cameron in at least the early part of his Movie Paperback series, can counteract these tendencies to some extent. Interestingly enough, British publishers have thus far had the series field to themselves; Cameron, Peter Cowie at Tantivy Press (Zwemmer-Barnes), and James Price, who has managed the series edited by the British Film Institute staff, have had no American series competition so far, though at least one plan for an American series is now afoot. Whether this signifies superior British publishing energy or superior American caution, we may take it, I think, that few really excellent director studies are going to appear no matter what publishers do. The writing of a full-scale book on a film-maker, like its

counterpart in other arts, requires the devotion of several years of effort by a skilled critic even in relatively favorable practical circumstances (such as easy access to a major archive). Director studies are not very economically attractive to established critics, compared to the writing of occasional or regular articles and reviews, for which magazines now offer good pay. Nonetheless, critical studies of major directors are touchstones in film criticism and arguably the most important kind of critical work there is. It is to be hoped, therefore, that young scholars—who have the advantages over their elders of more leisure and presumably fewer settled prejudices—will begin to write director monographs that aspire to the standards of perception, intelligence, command of original and secondary material, and general cultural awareness that we expect in other intellectual endeavors. Whether because of its technological side or other factors, film as an academic discipline has always tended toward separatism and ghettoization. Writing just for film nuts is as debilitating as writing just for Dryden specialists. We need more books which, like Donald Richie on Kurosawa, Robin Wood on Bergman, or Charles Higham on Welles, attempt to give a detailed and reasoned assessment of a director's work in the context of what used to be called "his life and times." As far as I can tell, there is no question that if such manuscripts are written, publishers will publish them; at the University of California Press, at any rate, we regard such works as of the highest priority.

With director studies as such we should perhaps list certain books *by* directors, though these are rare and, in the case of Hollywood people, usually ghost-written and publicity-prone. Eisenstein's *Notes of a Film Director* is a major and perhaps humanizing addition to his writings. But too few film-makers take the time to write seriously of their own work as René Clair or Jean Cocteau did, or as Joseph von Sternberg did; despite a certain amount of guile or bile, such considered statements have a value that goes far beyond any number of interviews, especially when the interviews are conducted in the penumbra of a publicity campaign for a man's latest film. It is good news that both Welles and Renoir are reported at work on autobiographies. But how much can be lost when, as was apparently the case with the Chaplin book, a publisher accepts a ghost-written manuscript!

Jean-Luc Godard: An Investigation into His Films and Philosophy. By Jean Collet. (New York: Crown, 1970. $2.95) Seghers volume.

The Lubitsch Touch: By Herman G. Weinberg. New York: Dutton, 1968. $2.45. Modelled on the Seghers books, containing a rather charmingly enthusiastic bio-critical essay, excerpts from the script of Ninotchka, interviews, quotes from critics, annotated filmography, and bibliography.

Sergei Eisenstein. By Leon Moussinac. New York: Crown, 1970. $2.95. A rather scrappy book, translated from the Seghers series.

Griffith and the Rise of Hollywood. By Paul O'Dell. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1971. $2.95.

D. W. Griffith: The Years at Biograph. By Robert M. Henderson. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1970. $7.50. A carefully researched account, chiefly of historical rather than critical interest.

Film Essays and a Lecture. By Sergei Eisenstein. Edited by Jay Leyda. New York: Praeger, 1970. $2.95. Some short polemical essays (one of which, calling for better film criticism in 1945, got Eisenstein banned from the pages of Iskusstvo Kino) and some longer pieces. With Leyda's complete bibliography of all Eisenstein's writings, translated and untranslated.

Notes of a Film Director. By Sergei Eisenstein. New York: Dover, 1971. $1.95. A paperback of the 1958 volume.

Movie Paperbacks: Lindsay Anderson, by Elizabeth Sussex, $1.95. **Samuel Fuller,** by Phil Hardy, $2.50. **The Films of Robert Bresson,** by Ayfre, Barr, Bazin, Durgnat, Hardy, Millar, and Murray, $2.50. **Arthur Penn,** by Robin Wood, $2.50. **Claude Chabrol,** by Robin Wood and Michael Walker, $2.50. **Roberto Rossellini,** by Jose Luis Guarnier, $2.50.

International Film Guide Series: The Cinema of Francois Truffaut, by Graham Petrie, $2.50. **The Cinema of Roman Polanski,** by Ivan Butler, $2.95.

British Film Institute Series: Pasolini on Pasolini: Interviews with Oswald Stack. Horizons West: Studies in Authorship in the Western, by Jim Kitses. **Rouben Mamoulian,** by Tom Milne. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970. $5.95 cloth, $2.95 paper, per volume.

HISTORY

If the writing of director studies is difficult, the writing of history is murderous. Indeed, if we understand by "history" the kind of book that Terry Ramsaye or Lewis Jacobs wrote, no one in America has since ventured to try it, though we have had a few good books covering limited periods. As far as I know, the only book of recent years that could be considered a major historical achievement is Lotte Eisner's *Haunted Screen* (University of California Press, 1969. $10.95), her study of the German expressionist period. Pauline Kael's forthcoming study of *Kane* shows, I think, how history of the American film *ought* to be written: it is careful research done by an informed and skeptical mind, equipped with sharp critical vision and a view of American life and art sufficiently flexible and sophisticated to cope with the ironies and complexities that abound in an expensive and industrial art like film. (One persistent defect of British criticism of American films is the authors' sketchy acquaintance with American life—a defect no doubt equally apparent when Americans write about British or European films.) We must hope that the *New Yorker's* example in running the *Kane* study will be followed by other magazines, who can finance the necessary research effort to a degree that few if any book publishers can. But here again, we must look to young scholars, who are preparing dissertations or earning their bread by teaching, and thus have the time and energy available for the effort of experiencing and synthesizing and placing in perspective which the writing of history requires. Our archival resources at the Library of Congress, plus the George Eastman House and the Museum of Modern Art, now make it possible to work on historical problems of the American film without going to Paris. Whether in film departments, history departments, or even art departments, we should soon begin to see work which justifies the effort and money that has been put into preservation programs in recent years.

Early American Cinema. By Anthony Slide. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1970. $2.45. Carefully researched brief account of the major movie-making companies to about 1915; with a good description of many Griffith films still too little known.

The Citizen Kane Book, now in press, will contain Pauline Kael's essay from the New Yorker, "Raising Kane," plus the script. Boston: Atlantic, Little-Brown, 1971.

The Making and Unmaking of "Que Viva Mexico." Edited by Harry M. Geduld and Ronald Gottesman. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970. $15.00. Assembles all the available documents on this unfortunate episode; neither Eisenstein nor Upton Sinclair partisans can take any particular comfort from the materials.

French Film. By Roy Armes. New York: Dutton, 1970. $2.25. Thumbnail sketches of forty directors, from Lumière to Lelouch.

Mary Pickford, Comedienne. By Kemp R. Niver. Los Angeles: Historical Films, Box 46505, L.A. 90046. $7.50. Biograph catalogue descriptions and frame enlargements from early Pickford films.

REFERENCE BOOKS

Film as an industry has had its yearbooks and annuals for a long time, of mixed usefulness. Recently special-purpose compilations have begun appearing, but unless something happens to the American Film Institute index project before its work gets published, we will shortly have a reliable guide to the credits and synopses of virtually all films ever produced in this country. The reprinting of the *New York*

Times reviews gives an additional library resource. Annuals and journals such as *Filmfacts* will continue to have some current use, but the AFI volumes should put an end to those tiresome compilations of illustrated credits which clutter the remainder shelves; the pack-rat instinct to compile information for information's sake can now be diverted toward something else. Record-keeping is useful, but it will now be clear that the problem is really to make sense of the record: to write works of history.

"Screen" Series: Germany, by Felix Bucher. **Eastern Europe,** by Nina Hibbin. **Sweden 1,** by Peter Cowie. **Sweden 2** (a thematic critical study), by Peter Cowie. New York: Barnes, 1970. $2.95 per volume. Illustrated alphetical guides to film-makers and actors.

John Willis' 1970 Screen World Annual. New York: Crown, 1970. $8.95. Stills and credits for 1969 releases in US.

The American Musical, by Tom Vallance, and **The Gangster Film,** by John Baxter. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1971. $3.50 each. Reference indexes.

Films in America, 1929-1969. By Martin Quigley, Jr., and Richard Gertner. New York: Golden Press, 1970. $12.95. A surpassingly dumb book, mixing about 400 box-office triumphs with serious work, aiming to please every reader a little but actually suiting nobody. The plot precis text is excruciating. Pages 335-358 (covering 1968 and 1969) have been omitted from some copies by printer's error.

MISCELLANEOUS

Writers and publishers have tried various other handles by which to get a marketable hold on the medium. There has always been a steady flow of books about individual stars from commercial publishers – more or less gushy, more or less publicity-motivated, more or less phony and ghost-written. Occasionally a writer who actually knows movies will write about stars–as Richard Griffith did–but it's not a genre that needs encouragement. A related offshoot, illustrated books about eroticism in the movies, sprouted briefly in France and England, but seems unlikely to pop up here when you now can see actual filmed sex at the skin houses downtown. Special genres of cinema–animation or horror or westerns or whatnot–have given the opportunity for luxuriously illustrated books, but their texts have usually been their weakest link. Then there are the books which are not quite theory, not quite criticism, not quite how-to-do-it, tumbling amid the stools. And–regrettably rare–there are books which, like the paperback reissue of Wolfenstein and Leites, represent a genuinely interdisciplinary approach; but where are the books on film that ought to be written by lawyers, economists, sociologists, anthropologists?

The Movies. By Richard Griffith and Arthur Mayer (revised and updated edition). New York: Simon & Schuster, 1970. $19.95. Perhaps the best gift available for the general movie fan: an intelligent miscellaneous survey of film from the beginnings.

The Movie Stars. By Richard Griffith. New York: Doubleday, 1970. $25.00. A sometimes penetrating, sometimes arch or superficial book; very good printing of well-selected photos.

The Moving Image: A Guide to Cinematic Literacy. By Robert Gessner. New York: Dutton, 1971. $3.95. Raises some important questions about scriptwriting, but the answers are routine or worse.

The Language of Film. By Rod Whitaker. New York: Prentice-Hall, 1970. $4.95. Brief general introduction to film-making.

Movies: A Psychological Study. By Martha Wolfenstein and Nathan Leites. New York: Atheneum, 1970. $3.45. The perceptive 1950 study of the "good-bad girl" and other mythic phenomena; recommended for young critics now undertaking structuralist and "iconographic" work.

Stardom. By Alexander Walker. New York: Stein & Day, 1970. $10.00. From Gish and Valentine through McQueen and Poitier.

Art in Movement. By John Halas and Roger Manvell. New York: Hastings House, 1970. $17.50. A lavishly

illustrated but rather mundanely written survey of contemporary developments in the animated-film field, which has achieved an immense variety of styles in recent years.

Films on the Campus: Cinema Production in Colleges and Universities. By Thomas Fensch. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1970. $15.00. A report on the many film departments now active in American universities (even in West Virginia!) which only adds to one's doubts whether film can be taught.

CRITICISM

I come now to my chief concern, criticism and "theory." It seems to me that we now have critical resources that greatly surpass those of a decade ago; our general-audience magazines, in particular, are now immensely better served, and the critical books which have flowed from this journalistic work seem to me to constitute a remarkable outpouring of critical energy, knowledge, and intelligence. Many new and good critics continue to develop within the specialized film journals. As a congenital pessimist, I choke to say it, but we *have* never had it so good.

Nevertheless, speaking more as an editor than a critic, I would like to try here to make some sense of what has been happening in film criticism recently on the level of ideas. I do not propose another round of critical arm-wrestling, of which I am probably more tired than any reader could be. Nor do I have a defensive attitude about film criticism's contribution to our culture. It is reported that when an actor attacked John Simon, in a television debate, Simon tried to justify his role as a critic by lamely recounting how he had worked in dramatic productions and so on; even Pauline Kael, when attacked along the line of how can you know anything about it if you've never done it, once retreated to telling of her work with the San Francisco underground. Such arguments are farcical because they ignore the fact that criticism is an art in its own right. Writers who can get hundreds of thousands of intelligent persons to read their stuff are clearly practitioners with some kind of real skill; but it's not the same skill that film-makers have, much less actors. Like film-making, criticism is a kind of culture-secretion, and they share a few elementary prerequisites like taste and intelligence; but the working requirements of the two are utterly different. We might as well demand of an actor that he be able to write a readable, stimulating, informative critique as ask a critic to act (or direct, for that matter). The business of the film-maker is to make films; the business of the critic is to react to them—as sensitively and intelligently and wisely and interestingly as he can. I don't find a balance of presumption on either side. There is a plainly visible Darwinian selection process among critics, just as among actors; if you can act or write so that it impresses and interests people, and have reasonable luck, you'll be able to work and become known. It would be excellent if more critics tried their hand at scriptwriting or directing, and more directors tried their hand at writing criticism, but it isn't obligatory; they are working opposite sides of the same movie street, and should have the mutual regard of good gunfighters or good con men or good trial lawyers.

Our critics span a range of philosophical assumptions and tastes which is broad enough (though so far entirely bourgeois) to cope with almost all films produced in recent years, one way or another; you have always been able to find a critic who could deal with films in a way that seemed reasonable to you, whether your tastes ran to Hawks, Kramer, or Bergman.

In what way, then, can this body of critical work be considered deficient?

One way to begin is by noting that practically nobody writes *books* of film criticism. If this seems a strange statement after a year when more film books have probably been published than in all previous publishing history, consider that among the books that could be considered as serious, major criticism only a tiny handful were original, "real" books—Wood on Bergman and Higham on Welles,

above all. For the rest—Kael, Farber, Sarris, Pechter (and Youngblood to a lesser extent)—all was packaging together of previously written material. I indicated earlier one practical reason for this—you can make a living by writing for magazines, and you can't just by writing books. Robin Wood, I believe, mainly teaches to live; so does another excellent British writer, Raymond Durgnat. But in this country our film teachers don't seem to include talented critical writers, with the exception of Sarris, who has begun to teach at Columbia.

Now journalism is not necessarily a bad thing for writers. Bazin was, after all, a journalist, and a harried one at that. Some of Shaw's best writing was done under journalistic pressure. A weekly deadline can be an inspiration, and so can the fact that in weekly criticism you get no chance for second thoughts or leisurely revision. Nonetheless, writing in the review format has drastic limitations. You can imply theoretical matters, but in the general press you had better be sure they don't get too heavy. You can recur to themes broached in another piece, but you had better make every review essentially free-standing—you can't depend on the reader keeping a connected argument in mind from one to the next. You can mention old films, but you had better organize your reviews around current ones, and if you generate any historical perspectives, you had better keep them light. Moreover, the finer a writer you are, the harder it becomes to turn your reviews into genuine chapters of a book (even supposing editors encouraged you to try); for a review done by a skilled writer is a special-purpose item that cannot easily be put to other purposes. From a practical working standpoint, thus, reviews aren't really useful grist for an integrated book—they may, indeed, be outright obstacles.

An equally severe problem with working as a weekly critic is that it forces you to waste your time: especially with today's situation where foreign films are having a hard time entering the US market and domestic production is falling off, there simply isn't a film worth writing about every week. (Or indeed sometimes every month.) And this disability is simply memorialized in the ensuing books. In *Going Steady,* for instance, out of some 76 films Kael discusses about ten seem to matter to her as films. She has important and intriguing things to say about many of the unimportant films; but when the balance tips this far one feels it as a waste of talent—not only is criticism here an independent art, but a superior one; it's like devoting an orchid-grower's finesse to the production of snap beans. There is no question that the ordinary output of an art-industry like film deserves some attention, above all because the first works of promising talents generally fall into the less-than-triumphant category, and also because film criticism is inevitably cultural criticism and must convey to the reader some sense of the general cultural output surrounding works of unusual interest. But what we most relish in good criticism is the sense of a fine mind responding to a fine work: in fact, it is the excitement of this give-and-take process, which Kael is extraordinarily good at conveying, that makes criticism an art: who really reads critics to obtain ratings for movies? Sometimes, indeed, the critique that fascinates us most is busily setting forth an opinion on a film utterly different from our own. (Just as, in science, we may admire a co-worker's experimental technique but believe that his results must be interpreted differently.)

As a group, our American big-time critics are very good at responding to movies; in one way or another, they make you feel that it would be simply marvelous to hang around listening to them in person. (Complaints have even been heard about the cult of personality in film criticism, where the critic become the star just as the director has.) They are sensitive and witty people, often with a stunning gift of phrase. I think it not far off to say, however, that general ideas do not much interest them. Why this is, I do not pretend to know; perhaps there is something about the very act of writing criticism which means that one tends to so intently focus upon the work in

immediate question that sensitivity in that context triumphs over all more general kinds of mental activity. Theorizing, that particular speculative curiosity which motors science, takes after all a very special mental set. Its presumption may even be inherently at odds with art, which is by nature unsystematic, ad hoc, furtive, messy, vital. (Or so at least I would imagine Pauline Kael might argue.) The theorist must attempt to "rise above" individual cases, to arrive at large generalizations—a process which inevitably dissociates his sensibility from actual films, at least to some extent. It is significant that Bazin, the most theoretical critic of our times, also relied constantly on scientific allusions and metaphors in his work.

Theorizing can be a pleasure quite in itself, of course, just as playful activity. But as a kind of intellectual work it appeals to disappointingly few people. Besides, it's scary; as Kael remarks, "In the arts, one can never be altogether sure that the next artist who comes along won't disprove one's formulations." However, this is a risk any person who indulges in what we might very loosely call "scientific" thinking has to take. Indeed it is practically foregone that one will look a bit silly, for every generation of scientists reworks and refines previous thought—sometimes even throwing it out bodily. There is no reason to hope that criticism (even Bazin's!) can be exempt from this process; nor can concentrating on the refinement of taste exempt one—for tastes too change, indeed even more rapidly and irrationally.

Criticism *needs* ideas, however, and I would like to spell out some of the reasons, perhaps a bit painfully. Criticism cannot in fact rely upon "taste" alone; every good critic's way of thinking rests, if we bother to analyze it carefully, upon a pattern of assumptions, aesthetic and social; and it employs a constellation of terms appropriate to those assumptions. The act of "criticism," in essence, as opposed to the mere opinion-mongering of most of the daily press, is the application of such terms to the realities of a given film: describing it, analyzing it, evaluating it, and in the process also refining the terms and assumptions. Nobody would enjoy it much if the process were carried out in an obvious and mechanical way; on the other hand, there are benefits to be gained by carrying it out with more intellectual elegance and determination than are customary among our film critics. For the terminologies current today really don't seem to be suitable for coping with crucial current developments; they leave the sensitivity and intelligence of the critics stranded whenever a difficult new film appears—a *Persona, Weekend,* or *Rise to Power of Louis XIV.*

Assumptions and terms reasonably suitable for dealing with conventional narrative fictions have been around for a long time. Basically "realist" in tenor, these ideas have never applied very well to non-narrative and expressionist forms, especially experimental ones; the neglect of experimental film by critics has been due at least as much to practical embarrassment at this as to the inaccessibility or low quality of the films. They have also, as Brian Henderson suggests elsewhere in this issue, not been very useful for analyzing internal ("part-whole") relationships in works of art—precisely the kind of formal analysis we need to fall back on in a period like the present when relations to reality have become largely moot.

Realist assumptions tend to deal in terms of essences, but film has no single essence such as Bazin sought—it is a multiform medium, and all signs point to our entering a period of increasing fragmentation. We may never reach another consensus, such as underlay traditional Hollywood craftsmanship, as to what film is or ought to be. Assumptions may henceforth have to be couched in terms of polarities, or "ideal types." The notions that will seem natural to the future are almost literally invisible to us, because they will make assumptions we cannot entertain. It seems certain, however, that any new nomenclature must include terms for dealing with the relations between the art's materials and its forms, and the relations between the work and its viewer. Surrounding and to some extent subsidiary to such terms will be various others concerned with technique or

style: questions on the level our criticism now chiefly deals with. But where are the critics who are developing new terms? (I must reserve judgment about the "structuralist" school of analysis until it shows itself more clearly in English; so far, work under this banner has seemed either conventionally literary-thematic analysis or "iconography" on a stupefyingly naive level.)

The critic needs new ideas because otherwise it is impossible to articulate what the new film-maker feels and does; otherwise the most delicate critical faculties can register only zeroes. Most artists, of course, have ideas they are plenty willing to express, and indeed often talk in a strongly programmatic style. (The Flaherty Seminars were an attempt to institutionalize this phenomenon.) It's seldom, however, that artists have an interest in or grasp of large trends in their art, and the root act of artistic creation is in any event not ideational. A rare film-maker, like Eisenstein, happens to be good at theorizing about his own kind of work; Godard, in his elliptical and maddening way, seems to be the only one around at present. But aside from such rare exceptions, we will get our ideas about what is going on from critics, or we will not get them at all. It would be a good thing if our critics could, over the next couple of years, come up with some new and coherent ones.

Every critic worth reading has some heresy to propound, and William Pechter's in *Twenty-four Times a Second* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971. $8.95) is that of revelation: he believes that the truth is ready to hand, if only somebody will come forward to seize it, like Lancelot picking up the magic sword. Thus he tends to be a little scornful of other views, brashly over-confident that he is of the Elect. In fact, when he is good he is very good, but sometimes he is not. His explication of *Breathless* is acute, energetic—his abilities outstretched to cope with a challenging work. His defense of de Broca's *Five Day Lover*, and of de Broca's essentially noncomic talent, is the kind of clarification of style and genre we badly need and rarely get. But his attempted clearing of the air about *Marienbad* gets nowhere because he is unwilling to entertain the possibility that the film is as psychological as it is, and as un"moral"—he writes of its containing "scarcely a line of dialogue that one can imagine being spoken." Yet clearly, if the film makes any sense to anybody at all, this can't be true. And it seems in fact that most of us, though perhaps not Pechter, do indeed "imagine" dialogue like *Marienbad's* in plenty of our adolescent and not-so-adolescent fantasies. It's bad dialogue, perhaps; but that doesn't keep us from imagining it—quite the contrary, for it is a minor subspecies of pornography, whose necessary repetitiousness and obsessiveness it shares. The *Marienbad* case sets one limit for Pechter's method; to his relentless moral tests, the film yields no clear pink or blue reaction. It makes no *statement;* yet it exists, it *presents* something. But that something is not of the order which Pechter can analyze; he complains, thus, that "the deeper we probe into the characters' consciousness, the less we know and understand them." But what if the film is not "probing," or at least not probing "characters"—what if it is the complex embodiment of fantasy, something like visual dreaming? Pechter even ventures to speak confidently of "failure" when he surely must have considered that he could be misunderstanding the film's intention. At the end of his essay, conscious of the problem, he poses it in fancifully stark terms: whether art serves beauty or knowledge. He declares roundly that the end "must, of internal necessity, be that of knowledge"—but only after qualifying this to apply only "where the subject of art is the human being, at least, the human being as protagonist of an action." Thus finally he must beg the question—for whatever *Marienbad* is, it does does not seem to be that sort of art. It is, rather, some weird transitional variant between the film drama we are familiar with and some as-yet-undefined species toward which film is moving. As Kipling had it in his story, something that is neither a turtle nor a hedgehog may still come into existence and survive, and

somebody will come along to name it armadillo. But poor *Marienbad* has no category in Pechter's nomenclature.

Nor is Pechter, to my way of thinking, really any more reliable than most critics on more conventional fare. In dealing with *The Wild Bunch*, he neglects the important *machismo* side of Peckinpah's personality (the film in fact owes major debts to a Mexican novel). Pechter thinks Nicholson the only interesting thing in *Easy Rider*, whereas his actorish performance seemed to me the major tonal flaw in the film—entertaining, but as out of place as an interjected juggling performance might have been.

Pechter's essay against Eisenstein is a bold attempt at a major overhauling job, but it still seems to me rather perverse. This is not because of its judgmental side—I am not greatly agitated by the question of whether or not *Potemkin* is a Great Classic, though I think it is rather more humanly interesting in an allegorical way than Pechter does—but because his essay merely sets up an undergraduate dichotomy and plumps for one side of it: Bazin and Renoir over Eisenstein and montage. But in the art history that must some day be written about film, no film-maker is an island; and Eisenstein, whose thought is immensely more complicated and subtle than Pechter admits, will have to be evaluated not only in the circumstances of the deadly society he inhabited but also in the context of a larger world artistic tendency with counterparts in other arts. Pechter skirts edges of this large problem here and there—he quotes Eisenstein on Joyce, thinking to ridicule only Eisenstein—but doesn't try to do anything with it.

Of Bergman, Pechter has little good to say —and even less of the recent films, where morality has given way to psychology and what Bergman also thinks of as a kind of music. He is good on *Psycho*; though (as I did too at the time) he misapprehends the ironies of the phony psychological ending. He makes a valiant defense of *The Birds* on the grounds that it is about "Nature outraged, nature revenged" —a kind of premature ecology story, with Jobian overtones—which I find clever but hopeless, fundamentally a city person's misplaced fantasy ("nature's most beautiful and gentle creatures. . . ").

Was will der Mensch? one of my philosophy professors used to begin by asking. And in Pechter's case the dominant underlying concern seems to be with the question, "Is this film or film-maker truly great?" The question can be interesting, and attempted answers to it can be interesting; but as an organizing principle of analysis it seems to me somehow deficient—its role really ought to be that of a working hypothesis, as it was for Bazin, but not the *end* of enquiry. Assuming and believing that *Bicycle Thief* is great, or that *Diary of a Country Priest* is great, Bazin always goes on to propound ideas of another order: ideas having to do with how the films work upon us, what their aesthetic assumptions and strategies are, ideas in short having to do with style, in the largest sense. Pechter has some ideas about style, but they largely boil down to negative propositions. Eisenstein is a bad artist (and a bad man, as well as a bad writer) because he elevated art above truth, thus betraying both man and art. *Marienbad* is a bad film because it is not about character and plot in a manner that provides "meaning" or truth. Bergman is a bad director because his is an art of surfaces.

Well then, what *is* this truth? Don't stay for the answer, because there really isn't one. Each artist has his own truth: Buñuel's that "this is the worst of all possible worlds" (I'd like to verify the original on that some day—did he say "the worst" or "not the best"?); Welles's, Renoir's, Fellini's. It seems to be, in fact, essential to a great artist that his truth cannot be described. But it is the role of the critic to discern and announce its existence, and to excoriate all those false artists who don't tell the truth.

Whatever its virtues, this is a narrower conception of the critic's task than most critics accept. Consequently, Pechter heaps much scorn for their laxness upon film magazines, film books, other film critics, and "film enthusiasts," and thus generates unfulfillable expectations in the reader that his own book will some-

how be a quantum jump ahead of other film writing. Pechter is a most intelligent and sensitive critic; disconcertingly, what keeps him from the very front ranks is precisely a certain hubris, a prideful fastidiousness which can become suspect even though it never becomes crippling as it does in the work of John Simon. Pechter quotes Lionel Trilling, on Agee, as saying that "nothing can be more tiresome than protracted sensibility"; but his 300 pages of careful, judicious, humane prose end merely with a section called "Theory," leading to the conclusions that critical consideration of art must be whole, cannot concentrate on mere technique, and is inherently dependent upon reactions to "the aesthetic ramifications of art's meaning."

It is any critic's right to imply that his candlepower exceeds others' by a significant margin, or that the darkness is denser in film than in other parts. But it is more accurate, as well as more modest, when critics recognize that their work is part of an inherently confused welter by which tastes and ideas rub upon created works and little by little give off the light, such as it is, by which we and posterity understand them. Bazin, who seems to me the most important film thinker of our times, was too busy analyzing films, trying out his ideas on them, constantly testing and revising and rethinking, to be much concerned with the sort of ultimate, permanent critical purity Pechter envisages as the goal. I would be the last to deny that film criticism could use a lot more sensibility of the kind Pechter possesses; but in itself that is not enough. We also need new ideas; and the fundamental ideas lurking in *24 Times a Second,* as in virtually all other current film writing, are still Bazinian. It is as if Bazin had thoroughly ploughed the field of film aesthetics right up to the edge of the precipice. We can retrace his work, refine it, even eke out a corner here or there that he missed. But nobody has yet figured how to fly off into the space at the edge.

Ironically, the only critic around with a patent on a theory is Andrew Sarris, whose success as popularizer of the "*auteur* theory" was, as he genially points out in the introduction to *Confessions of a Cultist,* entirely inadvertent (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1970. $8.95). Worse still, this theory isn't a theory at all, but a practical critical policy: a good one within obvious limits, but of no analytical significance in itself whatsoever. When we look back over Sarris's columns of critical writing, as assembled in this volume, it's surely just as much a shambles as the film criticism he observed about him in 1955. He's a master of the light phrase ("Neorealism was never more than the Stalinallee of social realism") and he is charming about his extra-theoretical divagations—at least when you share them, as I do about Vitti. Sarris makes a halfhearted attempt to turn the auteur theory into "a theory of film history" in the introduction to *The American Cinema;* but a little later he remarks that it's "not so much a theory as an attitude." Actually, he doesn't have a real theoretical bone in his body; he is a systematizer, but that's quite a different matter, just as entomologists who revise the species classifications for bees are useful scholars, but not doing the same kind of work as researchers who try to figure out how bees fly. Sarris's early formulations of auteurism, as about *The Cardinal,* are significantly evasive: "Preminger's meaning" is said to be strongly expressed visually, but is nowhere described—as indeed, judging even by what else Sarris says of the film, it could hardly be by anybody. Admittedly, in this volume we get only a truncated Sarris. But a truncated pyramid is still visibly a pyramid. When one takes away Sarris's holy categories, however, there is nothing theoretical left; what is left is an urbane, witty writer with an elephantine memory and an accurate eye who often has sensible things to say about individual films and who can occasionally, as in his account of seeing *Madame X* on a transAtlantic jet, become quietly and movingly personal. The generalities he will sometimes venture are usually perverse: "The strength of underground cinema is basically documentary. The strength of classical cinema (including Bergman) is basically dramatic. The moderns—Godard, Resnais, Antoni-

oni, Fellini—are suspended between these two polarities." Moreover, by 1968 he could write in the *New York Times* a piece whose defense of auteurism is so mellow that it must seem mild to Pauline Kael (who can, of course, out-*auteur* anybody when she feels like it). At this point it seems clear that Sarris's contribution to American film thought has been massive in transmitting enthusiasms but minimal in analytical ideas.

Perhaps disappointingly, neither *Dwight Macdonald on Film* (New York: Berkeley Books, 1970. $1.50) nor Stanley Kauffmann's new collection *Figures of Light* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971. $7.95) offer any explicit, coherent view of the new relations developing between art and audience, though they are our two most socially concerned critics. Macdonald was famous for his own attempt at classification, his formula of masscult and midcult and *kitsch*. But as far as analytical ideas go, he cheerfully confesses that "being a congenital critic, I know what I like and why. But I can't explain the *why* except in terms of the specific work under consideration, on which I'm copious enough. The general theory, the larger view, the gestalt—these have always eluded me." He then trots out a number of rules of critical thumb, but only to prove his honesty by showing how they don't work. It is only in a piece about comedy that he is less diffident, and works out some general principles (he calls them "rules"); but these could apply to novels or plays just as well as to films. His long and careful commentaries on Soviet film, written in the thirties and forties, are to my mind excellent cultural criticism of a kind we also could use, but they don't contain anything original about film style.

Kauffmann, though he is concerned with the new audiences and the delicate balances between commercial hype and genuine novelty in "youth" films, isn't willing to venture any general ideas about what is going on, either; at the end of his new book he takes refuge in the vague notion that "standards in art and life are becoming more and more congruent." In a day when survival is a catchword, it may be true that criticism should select and appraise "the works that are most valuable—most necessary—to the individual's *existence*." But how do we know which works those are? To determine this, we need ideas about the society we must survive in, the role of art in it, how we "use" art, and what makes art "useful."

The virtues of Manny Farber (*Negative Space*. New York: Praeger, 1970. $7.95) have usually been taken to be those of the wise tough guy who looked at movies for their secret pleasures—those precious moments in the action flicks when a clever actor and a "subversive" director got together either to spoof the material or give it an instant of electric life. He liked plain, grubby stories, and he was allergic to pretensions at all levels, including those of auteurists; he could write of Hawks's *Only Angels Have Wings* as a "corny semi-catastrophe" and conclude that "No artist is less suited to a discussion of profound themes."

But there's more to Farber than that. Farber hates what has been happening to movies since about 1950, but that doesn't really matter, he could just as well have loved it—except that adoration has a tendency to blur vision. What counts is that he notices what has been happening, and indeed has been more willing than any other critic to try and elaborate on it in fairly general terms. If he might be called an aesthetic reactionary, at least he's a conscious and articulate one. Like Bazin, of whom one perhaps hears faint indirect echoes in Farber from time to time, he believes in realism. The excitement of action films comes from the fact that they confront us with the gutty, tough, cynical inhabitants of the American lower depths caught on the fly in miscellaneous unhallowed adventures, racing through stories of greed and desperation under the guidance of skilled and modest craftsmen. Appreciation of such films is a kind of shock-of-recognition operation—the film whirls you through its itinerary and here and there you notice things that matter, because they are *real*. Farber would never presume to hope for what Bazin saw in neorealism—whole, finished works of dense and

convincing realism—but he would have wanted it if he thought it could happen here.

Yet Farber never confronts the philosophical or aesthetic or indeed practical problems such a position presents. He is not some kind of Christian like Bazin, so he has no doctrine of immanence or anything like it. Though he is aware that film involves much pretense, he is unwilling to consider that "realism" is itself a set of conventions; his defense of the old style is ultimately an impossibly simplistic "imitation" theory. Thus he can argue: "What is unique in *The Wild Bunch* is its fanatic dedication to the way children, soldiers, Mexicans looked in the small border towns during the closing years of the frontier"—as if he (or we) had to have been there to enjoy or appraise the movie. He never confronts the phenomena of camp, whereby a bit of acting which strikes him as utterly real can seem totally phony to somebody else—especially somebody coming along a couple of decades after. (It has been found that fashions in clothes can't be revived until 30 years have passed; does a similar cycle length perhaps prevail for film acting?)

But, from the standpoint of his devotion to the old Hollywood style, Farber sees pretty clearly what has been happening: how the former "objective" style, the anonymous, geographically reliable world of the Hollywood writer, cameraman, and editor, has given way to far more dubious forms dominated by directors, in which some vague directorial viewpoint or personality or style is supposed to be the center of interest, rather than the plot.

Nor is Farber's perceptiveness only a recent development. As far back as 1952 he was complaining about *A Streetcar Named Desire* that "The drama is played completely in the foreground. There is nothing new about shallow perspectives, figures gazing into mirrors with the camera smack up against the surface, or low intimate views that expand facial features and pry into skin-pores, weaves of cloth, and sweaty undershirts. But there is something new in having the whole movie thrown at you in shallow dimension. Under this arrangement, with the actor and spectator practically nose to nose, any extreme movement in space would lead to utter visual chaos, so the characters, camera, and story are kept at a standstill, with the action affecting only minor details, e.g., Stanley's backscratching or his wife's lusty projection with eye and lips . . . the fact is these films actually fail to exploit the resources of the medium in any real sense." He exaggerates, of course; moreover, a few years later Kazan was to be the first director actually to *use* the vast expanses of CinemaScope with any visual activity—in *East of Eden,* a film Farber did not comment on. And we must admit that Farber's analysis is often careless and suspect. Thus he remarks that Toland's camera in *Kane* "loved crane-shots and floor-shots, but contracted the three-dimensional aspect by making distant figures as clear to the spectator as those in the foreground." Would space have been expanded if they were fuzzy? On the contrary, keeping the backgrounds blurry (and the lead players in stronger light than anybody else) was a basic device of standard Hollywood craftsmanship to *avoid* perception of fuller spatial relations, resulting in compositions where the figures stood out but not really against anything—only as differentiated from a background blur, usually of constructed, shallow sets.

Nonetheless, Farber's basic descriptive contention cannot, I think, be escaped: "The entire physical structure of movies has been slowed down and simplified and brought closer to the front plane of the screen so that eccentric effects can be deeply felt." (81) "Movies suddenly [in the early 60's] changed from fast-flowing linear films, photographed stories, and, surprisingly, became slower face-to-face constructions in which the spectator becomes a protagonist in the drama." (190)

Since the Hollywood film is dead, and Farber knows we can never go back to that aesthetic home again, what is left? In a melancholic survey of the 1968 New York Festival, he plumps for Bresson's *Mouchette*—because of the girl's toughness, the down-and-out life surroundings taken straight; his terms of praise are that the film is "unrelievedly raw, homely,

and depressed," and here for some reason he does not mention Bresson's camera style, or note how odd it is that Bresson's excruciatingly refined and stripped-down handling should be the last refuge of the streamlined naturalism he loved in the action flicks. There's not much left in the cinema to love, for Farber. Some of Warhol's odd characters appeal to him; he approves of Michael Snow's "singular stoicism"; he likes *Ma Nuit Chez Maud* because of Trintignant's performance and the richness of its provincial detailing, and *Faces* grabs him because of Lynn Carlin. But no more do we enjoy "the comforting sense of a continuous interweave of action in deep space." We're caught up instead in conversations about movies—"a depressing, chewed-over sound, and . . . a heavy segment of any day is consumed by an obsessive, nervous talking about film."

For readers who only know Farber by his famous piece on "underground" (action) pictures, this new volume will establish that he is indeed one of our first-rank critics, with a very personal vision, an often irritating yet suggestive style, and faster ideational reaction-time than anybody around. But the acuteness of his vision is like looking down the wrong end of a telescope; everything looks very sharp, but small and going away.

In the one corner, thus, we have Farber, stoutly bemoaning the destruction of the movies—the replacement of the plotted and acted picture by exudations of the director's twisted psyche. In the other, we have Gene Youngblood, bemoaning the phoniness and redundancy of the plotted and acted picture and announcing the cinematic millenium because film-makers are at last portraying "their own minds."

I think Youngblood's *Expanded Cinema* (New York: Dutton, 1970. $4.95) is an important book, so I want to get out of the way some minor criticisms of it. Youngblood writes in that blathering style common among media freaks—half Bucky Fuller mooning and half McLuhan "probes"—with a peculiarly alarming Teutonic tendency toward agglomeration. "The dynamic interaction of formal proportions in kinaesthetic cinema evokes cognition in the articulate conscious, which I call kinetic empathy." (Who won World War II, anyway?) He can be staggeringly naive or unperceptive. ("A romantic heterosexual relationship of warm authenticity develops between Viva and Louis Waldron in the notorious *Blue Movie*.") He is prone to wild exaggeration and imprecise logic, but he is also the only film writer on video technology to display mastery of the subject. He is very unhistorical, which may merely be fashionable disdain of the past, but is more probably a youthful lack of familiarity with both the conventional and experimental cinema of the past—however lamentably unexpanded they may have been. Nonetheless, its drawbacks do not prevent the book from being a forceful and clear exposition of a theoretical position, like it or lump it.

Youngblood's view can be sketched thus: all previous cinema has been deficient because it has been falsely and tautologically "about" external things, to the neglect of the proper subject of cinema, namely the mind of the film-maker. In the synaesthetic cinema or expanded cinema, however, this dominance of the external is thrown off; all things become subjects of film perception and expression, nothing is taboo, "unfilmic," or impossible to deal with, and people use film as freely or wildly as poets use words. It turns out that the really distinguishing mark of synaesthetic cinema is superimposition, which guarantees that you are not seeing *via* a "transparent" medium, but *via* one which somebody has created—the function of superimposition is perhaps similar to that of the frame or canvas surface in illusionist painting. Sound is dissociated from image—for, as Bazin remarked, the coming of synch sound extinguished "the heresy of expressionism," and Youngblood is reviving it.

All this has some smell of novelty; does it perhaps have the substance as well? What is the philosophical and ideological basis of such a doctrine?

One way of getting at this question is to look back at earlier major shifts in film "theory."

We can now see that Bazin crystallized, in his defense of deep-focus and neorealism, the essence of the cinema of Christian Democracy—postwar European liberalism. (As Bazin himself pointed out, it is no argument against this that Italian script teams, for political insurance, customarily included one Communist, one Christian Democrat, one rightist, and one socialist.) Similarly, we can see in Eisenstein the essence of Bolshevik cinema—*montage* was "democratic centralism" in the hands of the film director, while deep-focus and widescreen allowed democratic participation in the image-reading process by the liberal middle-class spectator.

If we can see a similar over-simplified paradigm in Youngblood, it would probably be that of a coming technological slave culture, in which the masses of people are allowed to play with certain fascinating visual toys within a tightly controlled corporate society. At a discussion during the opening festivities of the University's Pacific Film Archive in Berkeley, Youngblood spoke of people playing with visual equivalents of Moog synthesizers—processing bits of film into their own personal video trips, presumably rather as our ancestors used to gather round the piano and sing "Daisy, Daisy." What really catches his imagination is man-machine symbiosis: computers retrieving and storing and diagramming in a playful partnership with people—a sort of benign Big Brother fantasy in both the sibling and sociological senses.

There are two main problems with this kind of notion. One is aesthetic, and was put into blinding focus at the Berkeley symposium when somebody asked John Whitney how long it took him to make *Matrix*, no doubt expecting an answer like six hours. But it took three months of shooting (fully assisted by sophisticated computer hardware) and three more months of editing, filtering, and printing. Now *Matrix* is not a frightfully complex production project in its own area, and it is a highly precise, mathematical kind of work which probably entails less than the usual stresses and indecisions of artistic creation. In short, we are *not* about to enter some kind of aesthetic paradise in which every man can become his own electronic-wizard artist. Indeed the lesson of Youngblood's own tastes is that the best of the "synaesthetic" artists he discusses (Belson, Brakhage, Hindle) don't even use electronic technology, only rather ingenious but conventional home-made rigs, in which the impact of the human hand, brain, and eye can be directly and intimately achieved. I don't wish to assert that there is a simple inverse relation between technological involvement and artfulness – if there were, modelling clay would be our greatest art form. But artfulness does not spring from technology, it *uses* technology. When you ask machines to create something, as in the computer-generated films Youngblood describes, it comes out dreadfully flat and dull. Even the most sophisticated machines so far built have no sense of play.

What they do have is a high price tag, and this connects with the second problem, which is a social one. Modern technology is extraordinarily expensive, and it is owned, in a patent and often in a literal sense, by giant corporations which lease it out. Youngblood talks like some kind of radical, and writes for the underground *LA Free Press,* but he seems surprisingly comfortable with big business, and sometimes seems to think it philanthropically inclined to coddle our perceptions. Yet we must notice that the only way artists have gotten at complex video technology is through the ETV stations in SF and Boston and by the "artist in residence" situation at Bell Telephone and a few other corporations. It is not only chroma-key video equipment which is tightly controlled, either; the coming wave of EVR and other cassette distribution systems is similarly tightly held, with patents flying like shrapnel. The sole aspect of video technology which is freely available to artists and users the world over—largely thanks to Japanese initiative, it seems—is half-inch video tape, a cheap, convenient but shabbily low-definition medium. Anybody using the other systems will not be his own master; he may not be as bad off as artists at the mercy of old-fashioned

producers or distributors, but he will be in jeopardy whenever he becomes unorthodox.

Youngblood writes of the new technology creating a technoanarchy in which all men's creativity is freed. This kind of optimism is not just constitutional, of course, but springs from a particular philosophical position—one which, in my opinion, fits neatly into the program of the technofascism which is what is *really* developing in our society. Youngblood's position is a confused and oversimplified one. "We've been taught by modern science that the so-called objective world is a relationship between the observer and the observed, so that ultimately we are able to know nothing but that relationship." (127) A few pages later he breezily remarks, "There's no semantic problem in a photographic image. We can now see through each other's eyes . . ." (130) To compound these basic confusions, he also contends that the "media," by which he and other McLuhanites tend to mean not whole, real-people social institutions but only their technical manifestations, are becoming and will be our only reality: our very minds will be merely extensions of the worldwide media net.

This kind of view has been put so often lately that it is necessary to say why it is not reasonable, or perhaps even sane. First of all, we are creatures with a very detailed biological constitution that has powerful mental components; moreover, the psychological development of a human being takes place on a level of experience quite different from that of the media. Without necessarily being Freudian about it, our minds are much more extensions of our experiences in babyhood and childhood than they are of anything that happens to us later. We must expect the replacement of a good deal of normal parental interaction by interaction with television sets to have significant effects on our children and on their own later child-rearing practices as adults—effects in the direction of depersonalization, passivity, and so on. Even so, the residues and constancies of our biological condition and earliest life persist; they account for the myths that concerned Jung, and in a different sense Bazin. They are, indeed, most of what enables us to continue as viable mammals, rather than appendages of machines.

Second, the development of society, of which the media are only one part, is a material process. "Information" freaks like to argue that objects don't matter any more—only information is important, and since information is immaterial, we have transcended materialism. This seems to me a gross and pathetic delusion. In fact, the more highly technological our society becomes, the more dependent it is on physical objects, and the more numerous, tightly controlled, and demanding of natural resources those objects become; in short, the more sheer power is at stake, and the more the power relationships of the society come to bear. Since power in our society is chiefly ownership power, we can't possibly understand the media and what they are doing to us without understanding who owns them and what their purposes are. In the real world media do not "expand" of their own accord.

Like most idealist positions, Youngblood's is founded on physics metaphors rather than biology ones: despite the seeming modernity of much computer talk, it is still basically nineteenth-century thinking—childishly and enthusiastically fascinated with the machine, eager to assimilate human actions to parallels with machines.

I would like to note two puzzles which arise from the films Youngblood discusses, but which do not seem to worry him. We can see two general trends or types of film in Youngblood's examples—the classic, mathematical, abstract work of the Whitneys, people who work with computer simulation, etc., and another trend in which the imagery is drawn from the real world, though perhaps much transformed—Belson, Baillie, Hindle, Brakhage, Bartlett and DeWitt, etc. The films of the former group are often intriguing, beautiful, or startling; but it is only films in the later group which are moving. Why is this?

My own guess is that it has to do with the way our perceptual processes work. We do not really perceive abstractions; if Gestalt-oriented

psychologists such as Rudolf Arnheim are to be believed, abstractions are indeed inherent parts of the methodology of the perceiving process itself. "Pure" shapes such as those of the Whitney films thus pose a kind of short-circuit situation; in this they are perhaps akin to certain antique mosaics or some op art. They cannot be sufficiently mixed and muddled to be stimulating to our entire perceptual resources, like part of the real world; it is too obvious that they are simply what they are, whereas our evolution has equipped us precisely to cope with those appealing or disturbing things whose nature may not be obvious. Youngblood is scornful of the repetitions and tautologies of the fiction drama film; but repetitions are pretty clearly the stuff of our mental processes, and I would hazard indeed that it is in certain obscure repetitions (perhaps of earlier experiences we happen to share with the film-maker) that we would find the source of what touches us—even in quite abstract films like *Re-Entry*.

The other puzzle concerns the visual characteristics of images that have been passed through a video system—like those of *OffOn*, *Moon* 69, *The Leap*, and so on. It seems to me that their characteristic visual style is significant in some way, but I don't know of what. Of course they have scanning lines: a constant visible interference with clear vision. Their colors are photoluminescent, rather than the dye colors of ordinary photography; with such colors it is impossible to achieve quite what we think of as "natural" tones, as of skin, leaves, earth, or water. Moreover, that crucial superimposition is an immensely easier and more flexible technique in video than in conventional film work, and some kinds of color keying and dropping-out can be done in video that can not be done in film at all, or only through the most tedious kind of hand work. All these qualities of the video image certainly make for a "dramatic" image, that is, an image whose own nature is a strong focus of attention, just as they go against a "realistic" image, that is, an image that seems to be transparent in the way Bazin loved.

It may be that imagery of this sort is properly namable as *hallucinatory*: vision in which the heuristic or biological function of sight is subsumed to an introspective, purely "visionary" function: one in which we no longer see in order to learn or to act, but in order to enjoy seeing *itself*. (We might, clearly, argue certain parallels between this kind of imagery and modern painting.) Youngblood is curiously reticent about the relation between drugs and "expanded cinema," but it is commonplace among heads that certain films are "trippy" while others are not. Films, indeed, offer the opportunity for a kind of tripping that painting, for instance, cannot offer, no matter how "visionary" the painter tries to be. (Most hip painting, ironically, turns out merely fanciful in a grotesque way, without any of the magical perceptual stimulation of the film trips.)

If we are entering an era of hallucinatory film in some such sense, this may also explain away one difficulty about video transformation work. With a network control room at your disposal you can do what Youngblood visualized as happening at a visual synthesizer: you can transform images according to dozens of technical commands, superimposing, echoing, changing their color, contrast, orientation in space, and so on. Putting into the machine only a few minutes of color film original, you could come out with hours of wildly varied and superimposed material, like a huge symphony based on the theme "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." But if the conventional narrative film is formalized and redundant, what would we say of such an operation?

No: the artist must still deal with his images; no machine can do it for him. And art is long and madness-making. In the end, Youngblood's heresy is the familiar American one, that technology can save us, that by building a better object we can redeem our souls. In his Los Angeles terminology, this approach leads to "the new man." So it may, alas. But it won't lead to good films.

If, as both Farber and Youngblood imply, we are indeed entering an era of unrealistic

or even hallucinatory cinema, in both the feature and underground or independent films, can we foresee anything of the questions that aesthetic theory must try to answer? Rudolf Arnheim, in his pioneer work four decades ago, dwelt on the nonrealistic elements of the film image—those aspects of it which abstracted from (or distracted from) its faithfulness to things photographed. Yet Arnheim was able to do this kind of analysis comfortably precisely because an abiding faith in reality still existed: film might abstract from reality, all right, but everybody knew it was still there, waiting to be kicked, like the tree Johnson used to refute Bishop Berkeley. With Youngblood and other media freaks, this basic certainty has been seriously eroded, though not perhaps as seriously as they like to imagine. But do we therefore face an era solely of what Henderson calls part-whole theories: theories of formal organization, in which what is represented or used as material for art is of little interest compared to the ways in which the artist manipulates it? I think not, basically because there is now a much greater sophistication among us about the relations between artistic styles and social phenomena. Purely formalist theories, thus, are likely to seem empty and decadent to most people who care about such things. Hard though it may be, we are going to have to develop theories which deal both with forms and with their relation to audiences and the societies to which the audiences belong.

Such theories cannot be developed in isolation from the rest of our cultural life, nor in isolation from our personal lives and personal relations with films and other film-goers; we have to try anew to make sense of the current movie-going experience (or the electronic forms that displace it) just as "going to the movies" made social and intellectual sense to Kael or Farber in their youth. No search for meaning or value in art can be conducted on the basis solely of pure sensitivity and intelligence, as Pechter imagines; any search for meaning is inevitably engaged in some kind of social debate or indeed (to use a hackneyed term that is still viable) struggle. A critic's intelligence cannot be "committed," in the sense that Kael has made pejorative, but it cannot help being *engaged* with some explicit sense of the potentialities of film art and of our culture generally. There is no need to conceive these potentialities dogmatically or narrowly; but critics must try to conceive of them in some way, and apply their conceptions aggressively to developments in film-making, if criticism is not to be simply entertaining opinion-mongering.

It would seem, then, that the particular task confronting our little film magazines at present is to seek out and develop critical writing with some theoretical ambitiousness and bite. Obviously no one can will ideas into being; they must come from our social experience, as Eisenstein's were stimulated by the Russian Revolution and Bazin's by the Liberation. But among the many new and good writers who are coming out of the great wave of interest in film, I hope that we editors can manage to find and encourage and publish those who are engaged in developing the genuinely new ideas we need.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK, cont'd.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

In hopes of improving the efficiency of its subscription office, the University of California Press will henceforth be requiring payment to accompany new subscription orders.

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Two Types of Film Theory

Philosophers often find it useful to classify theories bearing upon a problem according to some typological scheme. In *Five Types of Ethical Theory,* C. D. Broad treats Spinoza, Butler, Hume, Kant, and Sidgwick not only as moral theorists but also as examples of basic approaches to the subject. In a final chapter Broad includes these and other theories, actual and possible, in a comprehensive classificatory scheme. Similarly Ogden, Richards, and Wood, in *The Foundations of Aesthetics,* advance a schematic outline of the principal approaches to aesthetics. Why such schemes are helpful is not hard to see. For one thing, they bring order to the otherwise unmanageable number of theories in fields such as ethics and aesthetics. In order to be useful, however, classification must also be accurate, and this means that a good typology of theories embodies a good deal of analysis. Before one says that two or more theories are fundamentally—not just apparently—similar or different in this or that respect, one must have penetrated to the base of the theory, to its generative premises and assumptions. One must also know intimately how the theory gets from these to its conclusions and applications, so as not to be misled by the latter. This analytical work, as well as the classification scheme which is its completion, are helpful, finally, in the criticism and evaluation of the theories themselves, thus preparing the way for new theoretical work.

A classification of film theories stands on different ground than those in more developed fields. Whereas typological schemes in ethics and aesthetics grow out of an abundance of theories, a classification of film theories faces a paucity of positions and the fact that most of the possible approaches to the subject have *not* been explored. Moreover, whereas classifications of philosophic theories usually concern not fragments of theories or attempted theories, but only fully complete approaches to the problem, it is possible that there *has not yet been* a comprehensive or complete film theory.

The underdevelopment of film theory, however, may itself be a reason for close analytical work, including a classification scheme of the principal approaches already taken. It is also incontestable that new theoretical work is needed: the development of cinema since the late fifties is far beyond the explanatory capacities of the classical film theories. Either new developments are seen in old terms or—more often—the attempt at theoretical understanding is not made.

The careful review of older theories is part of the spadework necessary for the formulation of new theories. Just as film art is stimulated by ploughing back the work of the past, so film theory may be stimulated by ploughing back the thought of the past. The limitations and weaknesses of older theories reveal paths to be avoided just as their achievements reveal, cumulatively, the problems and doctrines that a new theory must take into account.

The principal film theories that have been developed are of two types: part-whole theories and theories of relation to the real.* Examples

*These theory-types are neither new nor unique to cinema. Part-whole theories and theories of relation to the real (sometimes called imitation theories) have had a long life in the history of aesthetic thought generally. Through the eighteenth century these were the principal, most widely held approaches. See Monroe C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics from Classical Greece to the Present*

of the first are those of Eisenstein and Pudovkin, which concern the relations between cinematic parts and wholes; examples of the second are those of Bazin and Kracauer, which concern the relation of cinema to reality. Our examination of these two theory-types will limit itself to Eisenstein and Bazin. Theirs have been the most influential film theories, arguably they are also the best, and—in essential terms—they are probably the most complete. Theirs are also the theories closest to actual films and based on fullest knowledge of cinema history. Closeness to subject does not guarantee a good theory; in the cases of Eisenstein and Bazin, however, it insured that the theoretical concerns of each were nearly always those of cinema itself.

The focus of this article is less the truth or falsity of the theories discussed than the theories themselves. It examines not the relation of theories to cinema but their operation *as theories*. Thus behind our typology of theories lie larger questions: What is a film theory? What are its necessary features? What does it seek to explain?

The real is the starting point for both Eisenstein and Bazin. One of the principal differences between them is that Eisenstein goes beyond the real, and cinema's relation to it, and that Bazin does not. It is obviously of primary importance to determine precisely what each meant by the real: since this term is the theoretical foundation for each, it determines in some degree everything that comes after it. In fact, however, neither theorist defines the real nor develops any doctrine of the real whatever. To some extent in each the resulting theory is built upon a foundation that is itself an unknown. Concerning cinema's relation to the real, both Eisenstein and Bazin are far clearer.

For Eisenstein, as for Pudovkin and Malraux, pieces of unedited film are no more than mechanical reproductions of reality; as such they cannot in themselves be art. Only when these pieces are arranged in montage patterns does film become art. Eisenstein states this doctrine repeatedly, perhaps most succinctly in the following formulations;

> "*Primo:* photo-fragments of nature are recorded; *secundo:* these fragments are combined in various ways. Thus the shot (or frame), and thus, montage.

> "Photography is a system of reproduction to fix real events and elements of actuality. These reproductions, or photo-reflections, may be combined in various ways."
> (*Film Form*, page 3)

> "The shot, considered as material for the purpose of composition, is more resistant than granite. This resistance is specific to it. The shot's tendency toward complete factual immutability is rooted in its nature. This resistance has largely determined the richness and variety of montage forms and styles—for montage becomes the mightiest means for a really important creative remolding of nature." (*Film Form*, page 5)

Elsewhere Eisenstein speaks of "combining these fragments of reality . . . into montage conceptions" (*Film Form*, page 5). Defining cinematic art in this way requires one to reject uncut pieces of film, what we would call long takes, as non-art; and this Eisenstein does. He refers to:

> ". . . (T)hat 'prehistoric' period in films (although there are plenty of instances in the present [1929], as well), when entire scenes would be photographed in a single,

(New York, 1966) and *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism* (New York, 1958). It suggests the backwardness of film theory that they are still the principal approaches in its field. Neither in aesthetics generally nor in film theory are part-whole theories and theories of relation to the real necessarily or always inconsistent. One task of analysis—perhaps the chief task—is to determine where competing theories are inconsistent, where they do not conflict, and where they are positively complementary.

> uncut shot. This, however, is outside the strict jurisdiction of the film-form."
>
> (*Film Form*, pages 38-9)

> "In 1924-25 I was mulling over the idea of a filmic portrait of *actual* man. At that time, there prevailed a tendency to show actual man in films only in *long* uncut dramatic scenes. It was believed that cutting (montage) would destroy the idea of actual man. Abram Room established something of a record in this respect when he used in *The Death Ship* uncut dramatic shots as long as 40 meters or 135 feet. I considered (and still do) such a concept to be utterly unfilmic. [135 ft. = approx. 2½ min. at silent speed.]
>
> (*Film Form*, p. 59)

Whereas Eisenstein only mentions the real then hurries to other matters, Bazin discusses at length cinema's relation to it. Like Eisenstein, however, Bazin neither advances a theory of the real nor defines it. Even his theory of cinema's relation to the real is put not explicitly but through a series of metaphors, each with a slightly different theory. Seeing the theory in operation, in "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema," gives a surer sense of it than Bazin's metaphoric definitions. Applying his theory to cinema history, Bazin contrasts "directors who believed in the image" with "those who believed in reality." Image directors "added to" the object depicted by editing techniques and/or plastic distortion (lighting, sets, etc.). A "reality" director, such as Murnau, "strived to bring out the deeper structure of reality" and "adds nothing to reality, does not deform it." This style exhibits, in Bazin's revealing phrase, "self-effacement before reality." In defending composition-in-depth, Bazin says: "The spectator's relation with the image is nearer to that which he has with reality." Elsewhere Bazin speaks of the "supplementary reality" of sound and, more generally, of cinema's "vocation for realism."

In "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," the being in question is not that of nature or reality but that of the image itself. Bazin is inquiring into the nature of the image and finds that the image shares in or partakes of the real. The precise nature of this partaking Bazin essays in several formulations:

> "(T)he molding of death masks . . . likewise involves a certain automatic process. One might consider photography in this sense as a molding, the taking of an impression, by the manipulation of light." (p. 12)

> "[The photographic image resembles] a kind of decal or transfer." (p. 14)

> "Let us merely note in passing that the Holy Shroud of Turin combines the features alike of relic and photograph." (p. 14)

> "The photograph as such and the object in itself share a common being, after the fashion of a fingerprint." (p. 15)

"The photograph as such and the object in itself share a common being"—Bazin never makes it clear what he means by this, though he gives the concept several formulations:

> "The photographic image is the object itself, the object freed from the conditions of time and space that govern it. No matter how fuzzy, distorted, or discolored, no matter how lacking in documentary value the image may be, it shares, by virtue of the very process of its becoming, the being of the model of which it is the reproduction; it *is* the model." (p. 14)

> "In spite of any objections our critical spirit may offer, we are forced to accept as real the existence of the object reproduced, actually *re*-presented, set before us, that is to say, in time and space. Photography enjoys a certain advantage in virtue of this transference of reality from the thing to its reproduction." (pp. 13-14)

> "Photography affects us like a phenomenon in nature, like a flower or a snowflake

> whose vegetable or earthly origins are an inseparable part of their beauty." (p. 13)

[Bazin hedges his doctrine here by casting the discussion in terms of the *psychology* of photography, how we react to it rather than (strictly) the nature of its image; but Bazin does not stay within these bounds—the essay's title is finally controlling.] Though he seems to do so at times, Bazin never does identify object and image. Where Eisenstein seems to merge them (the film piece *is itself* "a fragment of reality") Bazin keeps them distinct, though he makes the image dependent upon and inferior to the real—not only at its birth but throughout its existence. For Eisenstein, on the other hand, the film-piece's connection or identity with reality is de-feasible: that bond is severed or dissolved when the piece is combined with others in montage sequences.

For Eisenstein, the only way that pieces of film can overcome their "unfilmic" status as mere "fragments of reality" is by combination into montage patterns. Through this nexus alone, filmed reality becomes art. Thus much of Eisenstein's theoretical writing is devoted to the various kinds and methods of montage association. He devotes considerably less attention to the kinds of artistic units—greater than the shot, less than the whole film—which these montage associations form or constitute. What sort of unit is the montage combination? The word that Eisenstein usually uses for this intermediate formal entity is the sequence, but he never develops a doctrine of the sequence nor discusses the sequence as such and indeed seems not to acknowledge it as a category of his film theory. It enters through the back door, as it were, for want of a better term/concept; though Eisenstein sometimes uses it as a term of accepted meaning and common usage. It appears thus in an early essay, "The Filmic Fourth Dimension," in which it is italicized as though a technical term and then, without definition, slipped into the discourse and used again and again (in this essay and others). The sequence, that is, the montage sequence, is in fact a central category in Eisenstein's aesthetics, though an unacknowledged and unanalyzed one. At times Eisenstein discusses methods of montage and other association categories without reference to the sequence, as though entire films were built out of them directly. Of course this is not true, as viewing an Eisenstein film makes clear: each of his films proceeds by way of narrative blocks or segments, each of which is composed of one or more montage sequences. Indeed, when Eisenstein discusses his own films he frequently falls into this usage also, referring to the "fog sequence" of *Potemkin*, the sequence of the gods in *October*, etc. Sometimes he uses alternative phrases, "a fully realized montage composition," "a film fragment," as synonyms for "sequence," but the structural concept and its indeterminacy remain the same.

Eisenstein's short essay "Organic Unity and Pathos in the Composition of *Potemkin*" creates additional puzzles regarding the sequence and the intermediate formal units between shot and whole film generally. Eisenstein proffers an elaborate analysis of *Potemkin* as a tragedy in five acts, including such classical machinery as a caesura, golden section construction, etc. Eisenstein's breakdown of the acts makes clear that they are composed of several sub-events or sequences. It would seem, therefore, that shots—in various montage patterns—make up sequences, and sequences in turn make up larger parts or areas or acts and these in combination make up the entire film; but to these intermediate formal entities Eisenstein devotes almost no analytical attention at all.

It is of the greatest importance that Bazin's critique of montage is in fact a critique of the montage sequence; and that the alternative to montage which he advances is consequently another kind of sequence. Bazin speaks of montage film-makers as dissolving "the event" and of substituting for it another, synthetic reality or event. "Kuleshov, Eisenstein, and Gance do not show the event through their editing; they allude to it. . . . The substance of the narrative, whatever the realism of the individual shots, arises essentially from these (editing) relationships; that is to say there is an abstract

result whose origins are not to be found in any of the concrete elements." (p. 27) In speaking of Flaherty, Bazin says:

> "The camera cannot see everything at once, but at least it tries not to miss anything of what it has chosen to see. For Flaherty, the important thing to show when Nanook hunts the seal is the relationship between the man and the animal and the true proportions of Nanook's lying in wait. Editing could have suggested the passage of time; Flaherty is content to *show* the waiting, and the duration of the hunt becomes the very substance and object of the image. In the film this episode consists of a single shot. Can anyone deny that it is in this way much more moving than 'editing by attraction' would have been." (p. 29)

In regard to Welles, too, Bazin defends the substitution of the sequence shot for the montage sequence.

> "Anyone who can use his eyes must realize that Welles' sequence shots in *The Magnificent Ambersons* are by no means the passive 'recording' of an action photographed within a single frame, but that on the contrary this reluctance to break up an event or analyze its dramatic reverberations within time is a positive technique which produces better results than a classical breakdown of shots could ever have done." (p. 39)

In these passages Bazin idealizes the sequence shot but he does not insist on it. The sequence shot is the perfection of the long-take style or tendency, but there are other possibilities. For instance, Bazin defends Wyler's use of a repeated inset shot within a long take (in *Best Years of Our Lives)* as a kind of dramatic "underlining." (I disagree: fundamental values of the long take are lost or diminished by such interruptions/insets.) A more common variant on sequence shot Bazin does not discuss–the use of two or more long takes to make up a sequence. How the shots are used, particularly how they are linked, present interesting theoretical problems. Such considerations belong to a comprehensive aesthetics of the sequence and of the whole film–something neither Eisenstein nor Bazin provides. That is, such problems take us beyond the present, into the realm of a new film theory.

The sequence is as far as either theorist gets in his discussion of cinematic form. The film theory of each is in fact a theory *of the sequence,* though neither Eisenstein nor Bazin nor both of them together contain or achieve a complete aesthetic even of the sequence. The problem of the formal organization of whole films, that is, of complete works of film art, is not taken up by either. This is the most serious limitation of both theories. Both Eisenstein and Bazin contain fleeting references to whole films, and Eisenstein a short essay, but–what is crucial–both discuss the problem of wholes in literary not cinematic terms. Thus *Potemkin* as a tragedy. Bazin, more incidentally, speaks of the cinematic genres of the Western, the gangster film, horror film, etc.: it is these which govern the whole film and hence determine the nature of the sequence which in turn calls for a certain choice of treatment. It is at this point that Bazin's film theory enters. Bazin has definite ideas concerning how the sequence, so determined or given, might best be treated or realized. These film genres, as well as the older genre of tragedy, of course have literary origins. Consider the importance of this: after the most technical and detailed discussions of shot and sequence–*in purely cinematic terms*–both theorists veer off into literary models for answers to the ultimate (and arguably most important) question for film theory: the formal organization of the whole film itself, of the film *as film.* In fact the answers Eisenstein and Bazin give avoid this question rather than answer it. Their solutions in terms of (pre-cinematic) literary models are a failure to take up the problem at all.

The above raises the difficult problem of narrative and film form's relation to it. Put crudely, it is possible to analyze cinema in either per-

spective, formal or narrative. That is, one can consider each category—shot, sequence, whole film—in terms of narrative (sometimes present) or cinematic form (always present) or both. Eisenstein and Bazin discuss shot and sequence primarily as cinematic form, not narrative. Why narrative should then emerge as the central or sole category of analysis at the level of the whole film—when it has not been an important category at lower levels—is not clear. In fact Eisenstein and Bazin subtly shift ground at this level; they turn to another problem as though it were the continuation of their initial one. They consider shot and sequence in terms of cinematic form and then the whole film in terms of literary models and do so as though treating a single problem from start to finish. They write as though formal parts added up to or constituted a narrative whole. Indeed, this seems not far from the traditional view: cinematic form in shot and sequence serve or realize story or content.

We have been concerned primarily with exposition of the theories under examination; it is now time for analysis of them. Our focus here is the way the theories are put together, how they operate as theories, what their internal dynamics are. Our inquiry will concern, among others, these questions: What is the cause of the failure of Eisenstein and Bazin to consider the formal organization of entire films? Is it internally determined by the premises of each theory? How does each define cinema as an art? What are the relations in each theory between the two essential terms of cinema (as art) and the real? How does the real affect or condition film as art and how does film as art relate to the real?

Both theories start with the real; from this common point the two diverge sharply. The choice or move that each theory makes just beyond this point is crucial for its entire development. As noted, Eisenstein breaks with the real in order for film to become art. It is montage, the arrangement of film-pieces, which transforms them from "fragments of reality" into art. There is a logical or ontological problem or gap here: the real on the one hand and the finished film-work on the other, with only a nexus of arrangement between. To bridge this gap Eisenstein emphasizes again and again that montage is (or involves) a qualitative alteration of the film-piece itself. "The result is qualitatively distinguishable from each component element viewed separately," "the whole is something else than the sum of its parts" (*The Film Sense*, p. 8). To get the same material from non-art to art, montage had to be given magical, almost alchemical powers. Eisenstein undoubtedly indulges in mystification here. The problem could be avoided if Eisenstein would admit that unedited film pieces were already art in some sense, if lesser art, or that they might be in some circumstances. But this is what Eisenstein cannot allow. If the uncut shot could be art then montage would not be necessary for art—the long take and long-take styles could be art also. Eisenstein must make montage the sole nexus to film art—that is the strategy of his theory. Put another way, Eisenstein is not content to accept montage as his aesthetic preference and to advance reasons for its superiority; instead he must ground his preference for montage in an ontology, in the nature of things, to insure its exclusivity as film art. This leads Eisenstein to certain other distortions also. To emphasize montage he must de-emphasize the shot and its categories of artistry; composition, lighting, actor placement, etc. Eisenstein can hardly deny the importance of these so he tries to assimilate them to his theory of montage in various ways. Thus the shot is a montage cell; that is, the smaller unit is explained in terms of the larger. At other times Eisenstein emphasizes the unstructured reality of the shot, calling it "more resistant than granite" and referring to its "complete factual immutability." Thus Eisenstein plays down also the careful planning and preparation of shots before shooting and the careful formation and composition of individual shots (evident in his own films).

On the positive side, Eisenstein realized rightly that (having begun with the real in the first place) he had to break connection with the

real if cinema was to become an art. For relation to the real, Eisenstein substitutes montage. Montage is a part-whole theory: it concerns the relations of cinematic part and part and part and whole. Thus for relation to the real, that is, relation to something else, Eisenstein substitutes relation to self, relations within self, which is the first condition for art. To speak of part-whole relations is to speak about art. Thus Eisenstein's is a genuine aesthetic theory and a genuine film theory because it concerns the conditions and requirements in which film is art. This is indeed the focus of all Eisenstein's theoretical writings—he is continually drawing parallels and differences between cinema and the other arts, theater, painting, fiction, etc. Thus Eisenstein's is a two-stage film theory, proceeding from the relations of cinema to the real to the relations of cinema with cinema (part and whole). The theory's chief defect is that it defines this nexus, from first to second stage, from reality to art, too narrowly, limiting it to the doctrine of montage.

There remains the question why Eisenstein did not get beyond the sequence. In principle—concerned as he was with part-whole and with cinema as art—he *should* have. And he certainly recognizes the need in his piece on *Potemkin* as tragedy. [What he does not say there is what the tragic apparatus he describes has to do with film, or with the subject of this film. Nor does he convince that this is what unifies the film let alone accounts for its effects.] The answer to the question is perhaps to be found in Eisenstein's intense concern with the *emotional effects* of cinema, specifically of course with the effects of montage; and in his devotion to this factor in his own films. This—the various effects of montage organizations on viewer—seems at times the central category of Eisenstein's aesthetic. As filmmaker and theoretician, Eisenstein was concerned, indeed obsessed, with the closest possible control of the viewer's emotions. His analysis and attention here are literally on a shot-by-shot basis. Now it is obvious that one cannot talk about effects of this precision in regard to whole films. One cannot speak of a single emotion in *Potemkin,* nor of a single emotional process. They are too many and too complex, even in regard to any of the film's main parts. The precision and control Eisenstein speaks of occur on the local level. To Eisenstein cinematic form means precise ordering of the viewer's emotions and this cannot be conceived or spoken of except for relatively short stretches. Eisenstein is weak on formal wholes because of his commitment to the part-complex (the sequence) as aesthetic center and theoretical focus and because of his concern with absolute emotional control at the local level.

Bazin's is a one-stage film theory. Bazin begins with the real but, unlike Eisenstein, does not go beyond it; he never breaks with the real in the name of art. This severely limits Bazin's theory of film, in a very different way than Eisenstein's starting point limits him; but has implications hardly less odd than those which Eisenstein's position has. For in Bazin, film art is complete, is fully achieved in the shot itself. If the shot stands in proper relation to the real, then it is already art. Indeed, there are for Bazin no higher or more inclusive units or categories of film form and film art. The shot depends on no larger unit nor on combination with other shots for its status as art. Bazin does not get beyond the shot (which may also be a sequence): for his theory it is the beginning and the end of film art. Bazin's theory is a theory of shots and what shots ought to be.

Bazin has no theory of part-whole relation, though one could be extrapolated from his discussions of the shot and sequence. We must recall first that simple linkage is the only connection between shots that Bazin approves—he frowns on expressive editing techniques, that is, on explicit shot relation. If the individual shot exhibits fidelity to the real, then it follows that a series of such shots, merely linked, must be faithful to the real also. Bazin is not concerned with this resultant sum and *its* relation to the real at all. His position seems to be: Be true to the real in each shot and the whole will take care of itself (the whole being the

mere sum of parts). Or perhaps: True parts linked together add up willy-nilly to a true whole. Bazin has no sense (and certainly no doctrine) of the overall formal organization of films. Indeed, one suspects that in Bazin it is the real which is organic, not art—except that art, in this respect as well as others, may reflect the real in its derivative sense, thus have a reflected organic unity. That is, film art has no overall form of its own, but that of the real itself. Bazin has a theory of the real, he may not have an aesthetic.

There is a sense in which Bazin's theory impinges on previous conceptions and practices of part-whole relation, though it does not have a doctrine of part-whole itself. Bazin critiques the montage sequence and substitutes for it the sequence shot. The long take replaces the montage sequence—a part replaces a whole (or complex) of parts. Viewed differently, the long take is itself a whole (at the sequence level) as well as a part (at the overall film level). This part-whole relation Bazin does not consider—the relation or ordering of long takes within the film. In neither Bazin nor Eisenstein is there any carry-over from sequence to sequence or any inter-sequence relation. Also like Eisenstein, Bazin has no theory of whole films. Bazin said how Flaherty should and did shoot the sealhunt sequence in *Nanook*, but he could not say how Flaherty or anyone else did or should shoot and construct whole films.

It is easy to see how Bazin's theoretical substitution of the long take for the montage sequence could have led to a new awareness of the formal organization of whole works and to new theoretical formulations thereof. With far *fewer* and more conspicuous parts in the overall work, their relation to each other and to the whole becomes at once a simpler matter to conceive and a more difficult one to ignore. Within the hundreds of montage pieces, Eisenstein could shift ground, suggesting now that the entire film is single, continuous montage, now that it is organized carefully into five separate and distinct acts, now that montage pieces go to make up sequences within whole films and within "acts"; but a relatively small number of long takes call attention to themselves and raise the problem of their mutual relation.

To proceed from the sequence to the whole, however simple a step, was inadmissible for Bazin because the work seen as formal whole rises up against the real, or stands over against it, as a separate and complete totality. To recognize the formal organization of the whole work is to recognize the autonomy of art, its nature as a whole with complex inner relations, The autonomy of the work, its status as a rival totality to the real, was to Bazin literally unthinkable. Hence he downgrades any kind of form except that subservient to the form of the real. Bazin's emphasis on the part, the sequence, serves to keep cinema in a kind of infancy or adolescence, always dependent upon the real, that is, on another order than itself. The real was the only totality Bazin could recognize. His "self-effacement before reality" placed serious limitations on the complexity and ambition of cinematic form.

Our analysis has revealed internal weaknesses in the classical film theories and therefore implicitly criticizes them. This is not, however, a criticism of the theories in relation to their own periods nor even "in themselves"; such operations would be irrelevant to present needs and also unhistorical. Our purpose has been instead a critical review of the theories for their usefulness for the present, conducted from the standpoint of the present, with the goal of helping prepare for new theoretical work.

Overall film organization has been stressed because, in the present, Godard has revealed the possibility (and the achievement) of new kinds of formal cinematic wholes, as well as new kinds of organization at the local level. Thus *One Plus One* is not a tragedy or a Western, it *is* a montage, that is, a purely cinematic being, organized in purely cinematic ways. (Obviously certain of Godard's other late films present more conmplicated cases—*Wind From the East is* a Western, as well as a sound-and-visual formal whole.) In these films (as no

doubt others do in other films) Godard raises cinema to a more complex, more total organization, and arguably to a higher stage in its evolutionary development. The classical film theories, for the reasons given above, cannot account for and cannot be stretched or amended to account for (or include) these works. Comparison with the classical theories is nevertheless useful—partly because they are the only models we presently have, partly because such comparison reveals the shortcomings of the older theories and possibly the outlines of a new theory. (We noted that Eisenstein slighted overall formal organization because of his interest in close emotional control of viewer response at the local level. Godard's freedom to create new kinds of formal wholes derives partly from his foregoing such control at the local level and perhaps any certain or preplanned emotional effects whatever. Certainly the postulation of a critical rather than passive audience requires this. Thus Godard's later films are increasingly cerebral, that is, intellectual rather than emotional organizations.)

We began with the need for new theoretical work. Does our analysis of the classical film theories yield any indication of the directions such work should take? Answering such a question goes beyond strict analysis of the theories themselves, that is, how they operate as theories, necessarily bringing in other assumptions, orientations, etc. If our analysis has been accurate, it should be accessible to various aesthetic positions, not just to one. What follows then, our conclusions concerning the classical theories, is separted from what has gone before by the line which divides analysis from preliminary advocacy or synthesis. It seems to me that consideration of reality and relation to reality in Eisenstein and Bazin, and in the senses which they mean, have been a source of serious confusion and even of retardation to theoretical understanding of cinema. It seems to me also that the next period of theoretical effort should concentrate on formulation of better, more complex models and theories of part-whole relations, including sound organizations as well as all visual styles; and only after this is done, or taken as starting point, proceed to relations with "reality," but not in the Bazinian or Eisensteinian sense of an antecedent reality out of which cinema develops. Finally, the focus of inquiry should be shifted from reality-image interaction to image-viewer interaction, as is being done in other critical disciplines, notably in the psychoanalytic approach to art.

To proceed we must return to our typology of film theories, which may be taken to a further level of generality and abstraction. Behind part-whole theory and relation to the real lie relation-to-self and relation-to-other, the two most fundamental categories in which anything may be considered. Thus part-whole relations include all possible relations of cinema with itself, and relation to the real or other includes all relations of cinema with that outside itself. [Thus our two theory-types are less fortuitously chosen than first appears or—more correctly—since they are the principal theories that have been developed, their appearance and opposition in the history of film thought are more fundamental than first appears.] We no sooner say this than we realize that there can be no choice between them, that these are the two fundamental categories or aspects of the subject, neither of which can be ignored or suppressed. Rather the question is one of the mode of their interrelation, the answer to which will be different at different times and places. In more usual critical terms, this question concerns the relation between intensive criticism and extensive criticism.

In regard to film criticism and film theory (which is, after all, a philosophy *of* criticism or meta-criticism) at the present, it seems to me that extensive criticism of cinema has been far more developed than intensive criticism. What this imbalance involves is not merely a "catching up." Since the two categories are correlative, that is, dialectically interrelated, it implies that extensive criticism, where unbalanced in this way, has been falsely based. For what *can* relation-to-other mean when relation-to-self, or part-whole relation, has not been

established? We are talking about those critics who hold up a work and read off its social (or moral) meaning at sight, without bothering to reconstruct its formal relations. The place to begin is always with the work itself. Only when the work is comprehended in its complex relations with itself, can relations with anything other be made. If one attempts extensive relations without plumbing the work itself, he is very likely to get the second relation wrong (for works of art, like systems of courts, often reverse themselves at higher levels or organization). At the least one has no basis to suppose himself right. Much more importantly, and fundamentally, he misses *how* it is that a work of art can mean—or stand in any relation to something outside itself—and that is only as a totality, that is, as a complex complete in its own terms. Only a totality can sustain relations with a totality. There are two terms to any extensive relation, the work and its other. Concentrating on this relation itself, extensive critics often ignore or slight the first term. Thoroughgoing part-whole analysis insures that this does not happen.

Eisenstein and Bazin present a special case—one that has not existed in the other arts (and their criticisms) for a long time. They seek to relate cinema to an *antecedent* reality, that is, the reality out of which it develops in becoming art. As we have seen, Eisenstein defines this nexus very narrowly and Bazin never allows cinema to break with the real at all. It is difficult for me to find any value in this approach whatever: such theories would keep cinema in a state of infancy, dependent upon an order anterior to itself, one to which it can stand in no meaningful relation because of this dependence. We no longer relate a painting by Picasso to the objects he used as models nor even a painting by Constable to its original landscape. Why is the art of cinema different? The answer in terms of "mechanical reproduction" assumes an answer rather than argues one. Similarly from an ideological point of view, only when we begin with the work (rather than with the real as Eisenstein and Bazin do) and establish it fully in its internal relations, that is, as a totality, can we then turn it toward (or upon) the socio-historical totality and oppose the two. (Or rather allow the work itself to oppose.) It is clear that nothing less than a totality can oppose or criticize a totality. It is also clear that something still dependent on reality, indeed still attached to it, can in no sense criticize or oppose it. Only when the work of art is *complete* in its own terms does it break this dependence and take on the capacity for opposition; hence understanding the conditions and kinds of artistic completeness and organization becomes primary for criticism.

Reviews

THE WILD CHILD

(L'Enfant Sauvage) Directed by François Truffaut. Scenario and dialogue by Truffaut and Jean Gruault, based on the book by Itard. Photography: Nestor Almendros.

The Wild Child is based on the memoirs of Jean-Marc-Gaspard Itard, a young doctor who took into his charge the child of the title, an 11- or 12-year-old boy captured in a forest in central France in 1799. Itard, disagreeing with colleagues who believed the child to be mentally defective, obtained funds from the government for a housekeeper to take care of the boy, while he himself saw to his training and education. His efforts of five years are recounted in two memoirs, one written in 1801

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THE WILD CHILD: *One price of civilization.*

and the other in 1806, the latter as a report to the Minister of the Interior.*

While Truffaut departs from the original in some details, the large outline and feeling of the film follow those of the book. The child, naked and filthy, is captured in the woods; after several futile efforts to escape, he is ordered brought to Paris and placed in a school for deaf-mutes, as he is unable to talk and appears unable to hear most sounds. Both his arrival and his stay in the school bring him to the attention of fashionable Parisians, who flock to see him as one would an unusual zoo animal. There follow many tests and observations of the boy; and although his responses are strange (his only sounds are moans and grunts, his eyes wander and he is unable or unwilling to focus his attention on anything except his food), he is found to be normal physically. It is at this point that Itard, played by Truffaut himself in his acting debut, begs to have the boy released to him in order to save him from the cruelty of other children, as well as from the futility of his profiting from the school's instruction. The rest of the film chronicles Itard's efforts to train the boy, eventually named Victor (and played by Jean-Pierre Cargol, a beautiful child and an extraordinary actor). A voice-over narrator (in English, though the rest of the film is in French with subtitles) reads sections from the memoirs, detailing the progress—and regress—of the child's training, and the doctor's thoughts about it.

The education concerns itself with three essential phases: the awakening of Victor's senses; the development of language and, through it, of abstract reasoning; and the development of emotional and moral notions—affection for his caretakers and a sense of justice. Without attempting overtly to instill

*The memoirs, under the title *The Wild Boy of Aveyron,* are available in an English translation by George and Muriel Humphrey in the Century Psychology Series, Appleton-Century-Crofts, paperbound.

these qualities in Victor, Itard observes the boy's growing fondness for him and for the housekeeper, Mme. Guérin (Françoise Seigner). A sense of justice is harder to observe, and to test for it, Itard reluctantly undertakes the task of subjecting Victor to unjust punishment. At Victor's rebellion against the punishment, Itard rejoices to see that ". . . the feeling of justice and injustice, that eternal basis of the social order, was no longer foreign to the heart of my pupil. In giving him this feeling, or rather in provoking its development," he concludes, "I had succeeded in raising primitive man to the full stature of moral man by means of the most pronounced of his characteristics and the most noble of his attributes."

The film, then, deals with the "civilizing" of a child. That this is not always an uphill struggle, nor even necessarily a desirable goal, Itard is sufficiently aware. On one occasion of failure, he exclaims, "Oh! how ready I was on this occasion, as on many others, to give up my self-imposed task and regard as wasted the time that I had already given to it! How many times did I regret ever having known this child, and freely condemn the sterile and inhuman curiosity of the men who first tore him from his innocent and happy life!" More than just aware of Victor's inability to learn true speech, Itard recognizes how his adoption into "civilized" life has deprived him of his freedom: Victor never loses his love and yearning for the outdoors, and Itard watches with pity as Victor stands by the window staring out, or sneaks out at night into a rainstorm, to sit on the grass swaying back and forth and making his little joyous sounds. Yet "civilization" of course deprives him of the ability to fend for himself out of doors, and his return from his final attempt at escape is prompted not, it seems, by affection for his caretakers, but by his newly developed needs and accompanying physical inadequacies.

Yet Itard's occasional regrets are overshadowed by his optimism and faith. "You are a young man of great expectations," he says to Victor on the latter's return. But does Victor's condition justify such optimism? And does Truffaut, as director, share it? I think not; Truffaut's final attitude is one of ambivalence. In life, Victor never did learn to speak more than a few words (though he was able to read and write, in a limited way). His arrival in "civilization" was soon followed by a series of colds and other illnesses, and he died at the age of 40. Itard himself, though he gained considerable fame through his experiment, to the extent of being invited by the Emperor of Russia to come and settle in St. Petersburg (he refused), ultimately had doubts about his original assessment of Victor's intelligence and aptitude. Though little of this is alluded to in the film, the very pathos of Victor's condition, and the depiction of his suffering under the constant, frequently monotonous training he is subjected to, give evidence of Truffaut's ambivalence over the sense of it all. Though Itard and Mme. Guérin are certainly a far cry from the foppish sensation-seekers of Paris, Itard may be accused of using the boy to satisfy his own curiosity—for which Mme. Guérin occasionally rebukes him. Itard's last words to Victor as he ascends the stairs with Mme. Guérin after his final escape are, "Tomorrow we shall resume our lessons." The look that Victor gives him is at best ambiguous, and belies the doctor's enthusiasm. On this look the film closes.

It's important to note that *The Wild Child* is dedicated to Jean-Pierre Léaud, star of Truffaut's first feature, *The 400 Blows*. Like *The Wild Child, The 400 Blows* is the story—partly autobiographical – of the "education" of a "wild" child. The Antoine of the earlier film, like Victor, is a freedom-loving child, trapped by adult society and forced to conform to its rules. Like Victor, Antoine's story (in *The 400 Blows* only, not in the later films Truffaut has made about the character) closes ambiguously —his flight from reform school dead-ends at the sea, and in a by-now famous freeze shot, Antoine numbly faces the camera. What is the meaning of his freedom? Is it freedom—or another sort of trap?

All this is not to say, however, that Victor's story is the same as Antoine's. Where the adult

world treats Antoine at best with indifference, at worst with cruelty, and his "education" is not much more than a process of regimentation, Victor's mentor and caretaker—Itard and Mme. Guérin—treat him with kindness, love, and (with the exception noted above) justice. Nor is Victor's native state made to seem particularly attractive. Though essentially healthy, Victor's body is covered with scars; his sensibilities are barely developed; and his greatest joys are along the line of rocking back and forth in a rainstorm. It has been a life of hardships, with few pleasures as compensation. Perhaps its glamor for us lies only in its distance from us—a distance which Truffaut emphasizes with his slow zooms out, ending in long shots which leave Victor, the wild child, small and alone. The remainder of the film, significantly, is done mostly in close-ups or medium shots—Victor is no longer alone, no longer separated from the rest of us by that distance. Whether, of course, that life "with us" offers sufficient satisfactions to make up for its own particular rigors, Truffaut leaves in some question.

But why, one could ask, has Trauffaut turned to material from the early nineteenth century? Is he being reactionary, or just quaint? I think neither. If films must be judged by the dubious standard of "relevancy," then *The Wild Child* is unquestionably relevant. We are seeing today a resurgence of Romanticism more widespread, perhaps, than any since the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This neo-Romanticism takes many forms: from the return to long hair, long skirts, buckskin clothing, and bare feet of hip youth, and their perhaps less faddish espousal of organic foods, ecology, and the like, to the renewal of interest in astrology, witchcraft, and other occult practices, to political anarchism and the general disillusionment with and disavowal of all forms of tradition and authority. Children, more and more, are left to "do their own thing," to determine their own lives and to choose what, how, and if to learn (as in schools like Summerhill). The "wild" child, the "noble savage" in other words, is today's ideal, as was Victor to the people who thronged to see him, expecting a pure specimen of the Rousseauian noble savage. What they found was a dirty, greedy, and seemingly simple-minded creature, less "human" than a pet dog.

Is Truffaut, then, advocating a return to the ideals of conventional "civilized" life? Of order and discipline, kindness, cleanliness and the middle-class virtues of the Itard household? Not unequivocally. Despite his claim that he ". . . simply wanted to make a film in praise of communication between people . . . in praise of the unspoken language . . . an answer to all those films about noncommunication that keep filling our cinemas," *The Wild Child* is *not* a paean to communication (how limited Victor's communication is, after all!) and to civilization. It is rather a lyric—tentative, uncertain, and yet haunting as the recorder sonata in the film's background. Yet however tentative and ambiguous, it is a rejection of the noble savage myth, an affirmation of faith in what civilization can do for man, what man himself, with the help of other men and women, is capable of.

—HARRIETT R. POLT

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

Director: Billy Wilder. Script: Wilder and I. A. L. Diamond, based on Arthur Conan Doyle's characters. Photography: Christopher Challis. Mirisch Productions.

Holmes: Detection is, or ought to be, an exact science and should be treated in the same cold and unemotional manner. You have attempted to tinge it with romanticism, which produces much the same effect as if you worked a love-story or an elopement into the fifth proposition of Euclid.

Watson: But the romance was there. I could not tamper with the facts.

Holmes: Some facts should be suppressed.

—THE SIGN OF THE FOUR

A few years ago, the arrival of a Billy Wilder film about Victorian England might have created a sensation. But now *My Secret Life* is out in paperback, index and all, and Wilder has become one of the last upholders of the

world treats Antoine at best with indifference, at worst with cruelty, and his "education" is not much more than a process of regimentation, Victor's mentor and caretaker—Itard and Mme. Guérin—treat him with kindness, love, and (with the exception noted above) justice. Nor is Victor's native state made to seem particularly attractive. Though essentially healthy, Victor's body is covered with scars; his sensibilities are barely developed; and his greatest joys are along the line of rocking back and forth in a rainstorm. It has been a life of hardships, with few pleasures as compensation. Perhaps its glamor for us lies only in its distance from us—a distance which Truffaut emphasizes with his slow zooms out, ending in long shots which leave Victor, the wild child, small and alone. The remainder of the film, significantly, is done mostly in close-ups or medium shots—Victor is no longer alone, no longer separated from the rest of us by that distance. Whether, of course, that life "with us" offers sufficient satisfactions to make up for its own particular rigors, Truffaut leaves in some question.

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A few years ago, the arrival of a Billy Wilder film about Victorian England might have created a sensation. But now *My Secret Life* is out in paperback, index and all, and Wilder has become one of the last upholders of the

classical decencies of the well-told movie. It was only seven years ago (remember?) that the Legion of Decency condemned *Kiss Me, Stupid* in terms usually reserved for the Whore of Babylon; now it has slipped quietly into re-release with a GP rating. But Wilder is still harnessed with his old press agent's image of the bull let loose in the china shop of American Puritanism—and now, with the fragments of the china scattered all over the shop, the reviewers are ready to consign the old bull to the pasture. Not surprisingly, even the sympathetic reviewers tended to shrug off *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* as a trifle or a minor diversion.

Holmes appeals to Wilder for his human failings more than for his legendary qualities as a detective—*The Private Life* depicts a crushing humiliation which Dr. Watson has suppressed from public knowledge—but Wilder's tone is unusually subdued, even elegiac, perhaps because the film is set in a simpler, more gentlemanly era far from the barbarism of James Bond and Pussy Galore. The hermetic, rococo elegance of Holmes's Baker Street apartment is, moreover, a kind of refuge from the tawdriness of society. Yet, inevitably, the refuge itself becomes constricting. In the film's first scene, Holmes is at the apogee of his fame (a new copy of *Strand* magazine chronicling his latest exploits has just arrived in the mail), yet he is restless and bored, a man whose best years, it seems, are behind him. Chafing under his image, he strips off the deerstalker cap and hound's-tooth cloak, chastising Watson for hopelessly "over-romanticizing" him and forcing him to wear the "highly improbable" costume the public has come to demand of him.

Sherlock Holmes is another example of Wilder's penchant for digging beneath the surface of famous personalities and professions to expose the painful contradictions between the image and the actuality. Holmes's reaction to boredom (at the beginning of the film) and to death (at the end) is identical: he takes a cocaine fix. This, of course, is not Wilder's invention—Holmes also shoots up at the beginning and end of *The Sign of Four,* and he uses morphine as well as cocaine in other stories—but it threw the ineffable *Films in Review* into a fit: "Some of (the film's) sequences have no purpose other than to suggest Holmes was a sex pervert and his use of narcotics a legitimate relief from boredom. The deliberate utilization of a fictional character of world-wide popularity to promote or condone those two vices is reprehensible." Wilder and his co-scenarist I. A. L. Diamond take a more serious attitude toward Holmes's weaknesses than his creator does, making him a more vulnerable and human figure. He operates beyond the law, like most of Wilder's central characters, but the fact that he is also a servant of the law makes his fallibility more poignant. Holmes's attraction to crime is not, as in the stories, the fascination exerted by imperfection on a superhuman "deductive machine," but, characteristically for Wilder, a man's dalliance with his own self-destructive impulses.

The classical detective story, the "whodunnit," is a highly moralistic genre which insists upon a totally rational moral system and an ambiguous approach to character. Anyone may be guilty (except, of course, the detective), and the most innocent-appearing is the most suspect of all. The detective, like the reader, is an outsider probing the intrigues of humanity with the fervent detachment of a lepidopterist; the story transpires as a series of games between the detective and his disguised adversary, ending in the unravelling and punishment of evil. The ideal detective is usually beyond passion: a behavioral scientist like Holmes, a spinster like Miss Marple, an old man like Poirot, a suave social butterfly like Queen, or even a cleric like Father Brown. Such professional moralists as statesmen and ecclesiastics have often been fond of detective stories, since they reduce life to a complicated but explicable chess-game. To Wilder, a moralist *malgre lui,* the detective story's fascination with hidden vice implicates even the detective himself. His films almost invariably revolve around a con-game, as seen from the viewpoint of the swindler; but there, as in his adap-

tation of Agatha Christie's *Witness for the Prosecution,* the central character is a man of the law who is swindled into joining forces with a criminal. His Holmes is a jaded romantic, a reformed *roué* who exposes himself to criminals in order to exorcise the possibility of further corruption. There is something faintly vampirish in the chalky white skin and rouged cheeks of Robert Stephens as Holmes (his brother Mycroft is played by Christopher Lee, the Hammer Films Dracula and a former screen Sherlock himself): the moralist cannot quite conceal the vague hints of degeneracy. Holmes's misogyny is revealed to be the mask of a thwarted passion: he tells Watson that he was once in love with a murderess and justifies his contention that women are "unreliable" by explaining that his fiancee died of influenza on the eve of their wedding.

In making Holmes more human, Wilder and Diamond have, curiously, neglected to adequately dramatize his legendary deductive genius. This would at first seem a serious weakness (akin to *Sunset Boulevard's* failure to portray the silent film star as anything more than a colorful eccentric), but for Stephens's performance, which is so coolly adroit and filled with nuance that the actor almost succeeds in filling in the blanks. Reading the script, we might think that Holmes is merely a pathetic *schlemiel*—he is hoodwinked by a lady spy into betraying the most delicate secrets of the British government to the Germans —but Wilder's direction of his actor keeps us alert to the delicate vacillations of passion which are leading Holme's intellect off its course. The delving into Holmes's sexuality is a marked deviation from Doyle (even from *A Scandal in Bohemia,* whose Irene Adler is the closest correspondent to Genevieve Page's Frau von Hoffmannstahl), and it is this missing aspect of Doyle's Holmes, above all, which contributes to the unnaturally inhuman character of the detective.

In the film's gayest episode, a sort of whimsical reprise of *Sunset Boulevard,* Wilder plays with the audience's speculations about Holmes' sex life by having an aging Russian ballerina (Tamara Toumanova) offer him a Stradivarius to father her a child. She and her Diaghilev-

Genevieve Page, Colin Blakely, Robert Stephens in THE PRIVATE LIFE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

like impresario (Clive Revill)—who is reduced, like Stroheim in *Sunset Boulevard,* to acting as her pimp—have already tried and failed with Tolstoy ("Too old"), with Tschaikovsky ("Women are not his glass of tea"), and even Nietzsche ("Too German"). Holmes slithers out of the situation by telling them that he and Watson suffer from a "cruel caprice of mother nature," and the stunned impresario whispers the secret to the ballerinas who have been dancing backstage with the inebriated Watson. Two by two, the line of girls is transformed into a line of effeminate boys, and Watson flies home to rail at Holmes like a peevish adolescent. Colin Blakely's Watson is constantly on the verge of hysteria—alternately, hysterical admiration and hysterical jealousy. The sexual tensions in his character have more to do with Jack Lemmon's characterizations in earlier Wilder films than with Doyle's sedate, dignified Watson, who acquired a wife early in the series.

"What indeed *was* his attitude toward women?" the narrator, Watson, wonders early in the film. It is, in many ways, a child's world which Wilder creates for his two bachelors to inhabit. When asked why he was making a film about Holmes, Wilder replied, "He's always fascinated me. Holmes. And his relation to Watson. Ever since I was a boy." The director's 221-B Baker Street is like the Rover Boys' clubhouse, filled with curios and marvelously silly gadgets (such as Holmes's cigarette-smoking machine), and presided over by a motherly Mrs. Hudson who scolds them for letting a woman stay the night. Wilder's credit appears over a hand shaking a glass ball containing an image of Queen Victoria, covering her with the snows of innocence, like Welles's Rosebud. The queen herself (the elfin Mollie Maureen) later makes an appearance—largely, one feels, so she can drop her famous line, "We are not amused." Though Wilder mocks her political naiveté, he portrays the queen in a doting, affectionate light, as a man might portray his grandmother.

The idealization of innocence which has always gone hand-in-hand with Wilder's skepticism has often led him to be as misogynistic as Doyle's Holmes, but here—immersed in the subtly fantastic, Franju-like atmosphere evoked by Christopher Challis's photography, Alexander Trauner's settings, and Miklos Rosza's score—he treats the woman who deceives Holmes as a tragic dupe like Holmes himself. At first she is nothing more to Holmes than the traditional lady in distress. We become aware of her deception of Holmes long before he does, and our attention is turned quickly from the ostensible spy plot to an exploration of the desperation and fragility which seem to lie beneath her disguise. And it is Holmes's gradual intuition of her desperation which, perversely, begins to attract him to her. She seems at first to fit into the Wilder gallery of scheming whores, with Holmes cast as the customary Wilder dupe—Genevieve Page was probably brought to Wilder's attention in her role as the madame of Buñuel's *Belle de Jour.* But it is the *amateur* whore (Barbara Stanwyck in *Double Indemnity,* Jan Sterling in *Ace in the Hole,* Judi West in *The Fortune Cookie*) who reaps Wilder's scorn. He respects professionals because they do not attempt to conceal their corruption; and we respect Frau von Hoffmannstahl even though she is deceiving Holmes, because she is not deceiving us. It is surely no accident, too, that she is a *German* spy, the tool of forces which Wilder has always confronted with thinly concealed outrage. There is an astonishingly callous touch toward the end of the film when Holmes and Mycroft destroy her fellow spies without the merest flicker of compunction. When Holmes learns of her death, at the very end, we finally realize the depth of his commitment to her: the man who cannot face the death of his desires retires once more to privacy and takes refuge in cocaine. Wilder has rarely equalled the intensity of this moment.

—JOSEPH MCBRIDE AND MICHAEL WILMINGTON

VIDAS SECAS

(Barren Lives) Written and directed by Nelson Pereira dos Santos, from the novel by Graciano Ramos. 110 min. McGraw-Hill-Pathé-Contemporary.

Vidas Secas was already six years old when it had its first New York showing last year. Its simplicity and realism made it seem even older. Not because its story is "timeless"—the exploitation and humiliation of a peasant family from Brazil's Northeast is a contemporary and decidedly political subject—but because it seems at first to belong, by its restrained style, to an earlier period of cinema like neorealism, rather than to the "new cinema" that arose in Brazil concurrently with the "new wave" in France.

In the Northeast, Brazil's most exploited region, a migrating peasant family settles as squatters in a cattle ranch. The owner arrives to open the ranch; the family can stay if the man will work as a herdsman. In town on a holiday, the man is cheated in a crap game and loses the family's small savings. When he accuses the other man of cheating, he is jailed overnight for "assaulting" a soldier and then beaten in his cell by the police. His wife and son, coming from church in their new clothes, have to spend the night in town without knowing what has happened to him. Later in the season, the owner closes the ranch again: the man loses his job and is cheated of the compensation he was promised. Without lodging, the family has no choice but to migrate over the dry, hostile plain till they reach the city. The film ends here, leaving the family as poor and broken as before, continuing a cycle of wandering.

These and the other scenes (little, cruel episodes: in one, the family must kill and eat their parrot, from hunger; in another, their dog is ill and must be killed in spite of the child's attachment to it) are filmed with a directness that is disarming. If *Vidas Secas* is a strong film, it is because of this linear, cumulative progress. In every scene, the humiliation of the family persists, till it finally becomes perpetual, a damnation. The scenes in the *sertão,* with no relief from the sun's dizzying heat, create a physical sensation of this hell: endless walking, dry ground with crooked, scrubby plants, thirst. Ending where it does, the film brings no conclusion to a cycle of misery.

The apparent simplicity of dos Santos's direction is the product of discipline. I would even say it constitutes a deliberate effort to regain the narrative simplicity of an earlier cinema, and the lucidity associated with neorealism. This can be explained by at least two things: externally, the source of the screenplay; within the film, the consciousness of the protagonists.

I am told that *Vidas Secas* not only "captures the mood" of the novel it is based on—i.e., that the novel too creates an atmosphere of barrenness, of the droughts that cause families to migrate from the *sertão,* of the misery of the peasants—but also sticks to the novel pretty closely, reproducing scenes like the killing of the parrot. I would guess from this that dos Santos's realism represents a sustained effort to come to grips with a subject outside the "natural" province of a bourgeois intellectual—the life of the peasants of the *sertão*—using the mediation of Graciano Ramos's novel.

(Of course, using the novel could not have been dos Santos's only means of breaking the barrier between himself and the people of the *sertão.* Between 1957 and 1963, dos Santos had directed no films, but did some journalism and made "obscure anonymous documentaries on the Northeast," in the words of *Cahiers du Cinéma. Vidas Secas* was his third feature.)

When one looks more closely at the narrative style of *Vidas Secas,* it is not simply objective after all. Dos Santos uses one device in particular which I think is key, namely the "subjective" shot, always "covered" by the perfectly familiar, "natural" cut from the subject to the object seen. The object is a landscape, or part of a landscape like the ranchhouse seen from a distance, or the sun in the trees. The person who is looking is always one of the family. These cuts occur unobtrusively, distributed as parts of the visual narrative. Even the dog, when it is dying near the end of the film, is the subject of such a sequence.

VIDAS SECAS

In one instance, as the family is crossing the plain the boy begins to faint. Cut to a shot of the sun in the trees, which begins to spin around. Cut back to the boy, who stumbles. The cut, inserting the sun and surroundings as they are suddenly felt by the boy, performs a narrative function. In fact it is rather a crude use of the "subjective" shot—for a film made in the peak years of "new cinema" and influenced by neo-realism. To me it is proof that the naiveté of dos Santos's style is deliberate, sometimes even forced. The "subjective" cuts in particular, all the more moving because they seem so natural, serve to link concretely the consciousness of each member of the family to this dry plain that makes them suffer, the *sertão* with its trees and huts. Another reason they seem so charged with expression is that the peasants never speak their feelings beyond what is necessary, even to each other; and what they do is dictated by no "plot," beyond the ceaseless migration and destitution of their lives.

In fact it is a principle of this film's realism that we see virtually everything through the protagonist's eyes. In the *sertão,* the man's path path is crossed by a file of three or four mounted soldiers. One guesses that they are mercenaries, perhaps bandits; but dos Santos includes no extraneous material to identify them. All we see of them is what the peasant experiences as they go past.

I began by saying that dos Santos chose a "political subject." Actually what determines the exact ideological slant of the film is its particular form of realism. The film is a series of situations composed from—and bound by—the viewpoint of a family of peasants as they live the fate of their class. We are made to see, and judge, everything in the story through the eyes of the oppressed. The only glimpses of "Brazilian society" we get are hostile figures along the family's path: ranchowner, soldiers, local police: so many agents of oppression. Dos Santos creates the lived sensation of perpetual harshness, abuse, hunger. It is the viewer who takes the indicated step and "reads" such a picture politically.

I have not seen dos Santos's films before or after *Vidas Secas* (his most recent is *The Alienist),* but I gather that the problem of realism has challenged him from the beginning. According to one history of the "new cinema," dos Santos is "considered the forefather of the *cinema novo*"; his first feature was "very much influenced by Zavattinian neorealism"; and in his second, he "hesitates between two realisms, socialist and critical, trying for a cinematic style but not finding it, groping, admittedly in crisis." (*Cahiers du Cinéma,* March 1966.) The same article notes that *Vidas Secas* by its form is very different from the other products of the *cinema novo* in this period—the films of Rocha, Guerra, de Andrade and others, which have been called chaotic, aggressive, intellectual, obscure, etc. Yet *Vidas Secas* is the product of that highly *conscious* movement as much as the other films. It is the fusion of dos Santos's search for a certain form of realism and his knowledge of Brazil's Northeast, that unmistakable evidence of the ravages of imperialism.

—RANDALL CONRAD

THE LITTLE THEATRE OF JEAN RENOIR

Directed and written by Jean Renoir. Photography: Georges Leclerc. Music by Jean Weiner and Joseph Kosma.

On July 29, 1970, a film series called "Cinémathèque at the Metropolitan Museum"—the first film exhibition of the City Center Cinematheque (an extension of the Cinémathèque Francaise)—commenced with two films by two masters, Buñuel's *L'Age d'Or* and *The Little Theater of Jean Renoir.* Renoir was introduced by Henri Langlois who gave some background to the creation of the film. After *The Elusive Corporal* (1962) Renoir naturally looked forward to future film projects, but none came his way. As the years went by, Renoir in fact undertook a second career, as a writer—resulting in his extraordinary biographical study, *Renoir My Father,* and in the novel *Les Cahiers du Capitaine Georges.* At one point he submitted plans for a film to be called *C'est la Révolution* to the Centre National du Cinemá, which gives out money to deserving film-makers. The Centre rejected the project, calling it obscene and idiotic. Renoir then submitted the project to French television which, surprisingly, accepted it. (European television seems to differ from American television in accepting obscene as well as idiotic projects.) The result was the trio of films which comprises *The Little Theatre of Jean Renoir.* The three films are joined together by Renoir himself who introduces each sketch. In addition, between the second and third episodes there is a song by Jeanne Moreau.

The first episode, "Le Dernier Reveillon" ("The Last Christmas Eve"), is dedicated to the memory of Hans Christian Andersen whose story this sketch is based on. ("I think that one should choose one's masters from among the very greatest.") The story is also the basis of *La Petite Marchande d'Allumettes* (1928), one of Renoir's first films. A beggar (Nino Formicola) is bribed on Christmas eve by a group of revelers to watch them eat in a restaurant so that they may enjoy the food better. But the forlorn eyes of the beggar, mirroring his hunger, are just too much, and the group turns away from the food in disgust. The restaurant management quickly deduces that the beggar is the cause and offers him the food if he would just leave without depressing any more customers. The beggar takes the food to his old flame (Milly), who helps him to reminisce about "the good old days" when food such as this was common to them. Finally, they fall asleep, and two more *clochards* pass by, find them dead in each other's arms, and inherit the dinner.

The second episode is called "La Cireuse Electrique" ("The Electric Waxer"). ("This one is an opera. Well, at least there are songs, choruses commenting on the action, etc.") It deals with the obsession of Emilie (Marguerite Cassan) for waxing her gleaming floors—and the reactions of her two husbands. When her first husband (Pierre Olaf) announces his promotion, it means only one thing to her: an electric waxer. At first he refuses but he finally relents and a salesman comes in to demonstrate the machine. The demonstration is a success, but the husband dies, falling on his head on the highly polished floors. An old childhood sweetheart (Jacques Dynam) consoles the widow successfully enough to become her second husband—and victim: he hates the noise of the waxer as much as the first husband expected to. (In fact, husband number one, represented by a photograph which becomes animated when necessary, keeps making appropriate faces at husband number two; the exchanges between the two are hilarious.) When Emilie ignores his insistence that she stop using the infernal machine, out the window it goes, and Emilie, unable to live without her true love, joins it.

After this episode comes Jeanne Moreau's song *la belle epoque.* She wears a beautiful, flamboyantly colored dress right out of a portrait by Auguste Renoir. ("I asked Jeanne Moreau to be our guide on this excursion into the past to which with infinite grace she agreed to lend her beauty and her talent.")

The third episode is called "Le Roi d'Yvetot." ("The title comes from a popular nineteenth-century song that the characters of the anecdote like to hum.") Duvallier (Fernand Sardou) has it made. He is a retired landowner,

has a young and pretty wife (Françoise Arnoul) and, last but not least, is a local champion at bowls. He is so good at the game that his competitors decide that he must be a cuckold: as the old saying goes, lucky at cards, unlucky in love. Sure enough, a local veterinarian cuckolds him. Duvallier finds out about his deception, but decides to do nothing; indeed, he even refuses to allow the lover to leave the household: "And abandon me, to whom you've been so useful? And abandon my wife, too? You egotist!"

The Little Theatre of Jean Renoir is an old man's film: Renoir is using the film to express his view of life from the vantage point of seventy-six years, which differs sharply from that of the thirties, his days of youth. In *"Le Roi d'Yvetot"* Duvallier insists upon the veterinarian, his wife's lover, staying in his household. This is quite different from what Renoir's characters did previously in similar situations. One can't possibly imagine Toni acting in this way; he would have killed the man. Indeed, he threatens to kill his foreman, Albert, if he goes near "his" girl, Josepha. In *La Bête Humaine* Roubaud kills Grandmorin on the Paris-Le Havre express for seeming to be too ardent towards his wife. In *La Règle du Jeu* the aviator, Jurieux, is killed by the caretaker, Schumacher, who mistakes Jurieux for Octave, whom the caretaker suspects of fooling around with his wife. (The situation is as awkward as this sentence.) Clearly one of the rules of the game, in the early Renoir, prescribes the fatal ending of an illicit romance upon its discovery by the slighted person. But when Duvallier informs his wife's lover that he plans to do nothing, the lover asks: "Then what of convention?" "Blast convention," Duvallier replies, "life is supportable only through little revolutions in eating habits, in the bedroom, in the public square, all storms in teacups . . ."

In his early years, Renoir, at most, pointed out the problems of society; in this film he gives a solution. But Renoir does point out that this solution is usually arrived at only with the experience of age. Renoir manifests this by contrasting Duvallier's behavior with that of his young maid. She is a very lively girl, running here and there throughout the film. Although one knows that ultimately she will settle down to marry the butcher's helper, or his counterpart, until that moment arrives, she will feel free to dream of the life of Camille or Messalina (or Nana).

Of course, not all of the aged accept fate in the way that Duvallier does, and Renoir recognizes this. In "La Dernier Reveillon" the two old *clochards* reminisce about the nonexistent "good old days," brought on by the thought of the Christmas dinner which the man had received. While Duvallier accepts what life has to offer and looks forward to the future, the two tramps escape to the imaginary past. And in case we assume that only the old delude themselves about the past, Renoir presents Jeanne Moreau's song about *la belle epoque*—the Parisian equivalent of the Gay Nineties. As Renoir says in the introduction to the song: "But I don't delude myself that it was all that gay. It had its injustices, its cruelties. But I like that period because it furnished us with touching elements which enabled us so often to put on a show."

It is interesting to compare Renoir's use of the Anderson story in "La Dernier Reveillon" to what he did with it in its predecessor, *La Petite Marchande d'Allumettes.* That film was made in 1928 when Renoir was young, and it has a young man's theme. Now, in his old age, Renoir is concerned with old age, and the theme is changed accordingly. First, the young match girl is replaced by the two aging tramps. Second, and most important, Renoir changes the girl's dream. In *La Petite Marchande* the little match girl wanders through the snow, attacked by the cold. She goes to sleep on a curbstone and is transported in her dreams to the land of toys where she falls in love with an handsome wooden officer who carriers her off on his horse. An envoy of death chases them and kills the officer in a saber duel. At the end, we find the girl dead on the curbstone. While the girl dreams of a future with her wooden officer, the two tramps can only reminisce about the past. One could

say that it is only natural for the young to dream of the future and the old to dream of the past. But, while Renoir sees nothing wrong with the young dreaming of the future, grasping for the stars—and he acknowledges this by presenting to us Duvallier's maid—he argues, in "Le Roi d'Yvetot," against the "natural" inclinations of the old to escape to the past. C'est la révolution.

Renoir seems to have attained the state of what the Japanese call *mono no aware*. According to Donald Richie this is "an elegiac emotion which occurs when we realize that the beauties and pleasures of our life will pass and fade and when we agree that, since this is the way it must be, it is therefore fitting that they do." Renoir is similar in this regard to Yasujiro Ozu whose earlier characters tended to be bitter about, and, at times, fight the decrees of fate (*I Was Born, But . . . , Ukigusa Monogatari,* etc.), but who later in his life (*Tokyo Story, An Autumn Afternoon,* etc.) had his characters accept fate. The later films of both Ozu and Kenji Mizoguchi (especially *Life of Oharu*) stress this concept of *mono no aware*. Renoir transmits this serenity partly through the simple settings and his unobtrusive camera. Whatever camera movement there is, is quite unnoticeable, and there are no camera tricks at all. Renoir has joined Ozu in stating (in an interview in *Sight and Sound*) that he now feels that tricks with the camera are "essentially uninteresting."

In the third episode Duvallier has learnt that in order to enjoy life to the fullest, one must tolerate others. Tolerance in love is also the theme of the second episode. Although "it deals with the struggle between human beings and the machine" (Renoir in the introduction) it is no more "about" machines than *Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe* is "about" artificial insemination. Both of Emilie's husbands cannot tolerate her electric waxer because they have fallen out of love with her. Renoir presents this point subtly. Throughout the episode a tremendous amount of noise is caused by work on a nearby building. And Renoir's chorus contributes its share. While all this racket is going on, a pair of lovers walk about, totally oblivious of anything but each other. In fact, they keep tripping on the curbs as they wander about. Renoir implies that when a couple is in love, noise is no problem; it becomes a problem only after love is gone. This use of sound is reminiscent of *La Bête Humaine*. Sévérine tries to get Lantier to kill her husband, Roubaud. In one of her attempts she leaves a dance hall with Lantier, and they go to her room. Throughout the scene, one can hear the music emanating from the dance hall. But as the two get emotionally involved, the music stops on the sound track. Only after Lantier kills *her* with the thrust of a knife do we again hear the music.

This is also an old man's film in the sense that Renoir's oeuvre is so rich that he can "borrow" from and refer to his past films in a very natural and subtle way. A charming example occurs in "La Dernier Reveillon" after the bum is presented with the box which contains the dinner. He tips the girl the bill with which he was originally paid to watch the eating. The tramp proves with this gesture that he is a direct descendant (or at least a relation) of Boudu, who tipped a "gentleman" with money he had begged.

Although the film will be released theatrically in the U.S., the episodes were originally made for television, and this is quite evident. The first two episodes are limited in terms of sets (they seem more suited for the stage than for the screen), with the first episode, especially, reminiscent of Red Skelton's "Freddie the Freeloader" skits. Only the third episode is "open," taking place mostly outdoors. In fact, the only film I've seen, originally made for television, which rivals the episode in this respect is Rossellini's *The Apostles*. Partly because of this "openness," the third episode is the most successful of the three. It also has the best acting, Sardou and Dominique Labourier giving splendid performances. The third episode also projects the serenity of *mono no aware* most successfully, the first episode being perhaps a bit too sentimental (although the sentimentality is used ironically) and the

second episode a bit too cute. But, all in all, the film is charming (not in a cloying way) and enjoyable. If it is not one of Renoir's best films, it is very close, despite the limitations of the episode form.

We had to wait eight years for this film. Renoir had hoped to follow it with a film to be called *Julienne et son amour,* starring Jeanne Moreau, but that project seems dead now. He has, however, been writing his autobiography, which should be a work of great literary merit as well as fascinating to the film world. Penelope Gilliatt wrote that not providing Renoir with film stock and actors is comparable to denying Mozart sheets on which to write music. The last years of Dreyer and Renoir have been a humiliation for all who care about film. But I suppose we should be grateful that at least this film has finally been made.

—MARVIN ZEMAN

WOODSTOCK

A film by Michael Wadleigh. Warner Brothers.

Technically, Michael Wadleigh's film record of the Woodstock Festival is an impressive achievement. The use of the split screen, of continually varying screen size, and the stunning, complex editing, sets up a visual rhythm which nicely enhances the music. Wadleigh uses appropriate visual styles to complement the musical personalities of the performers: thus Joan Baez's pure, simple version of "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" is filmed in an uncluttered, austere style, while the more raucous and intricate music of groups like The Who and Ten Years After is presented in a baroque, psychedelic style. The film is carefully paced, not only in the sequential arrangement of the music, but also i nthe arrangement of the cinéma-vérité footage of the daily life of the Festival. Remarkable, too, is the sharp, wonderfully alive and immediate sound recording.

But the film is not merely the record of an entertaining concert. As the film makes clear, the people at Woodstock—the producers, the performers, the audience—were conscious of participating in an event of potentially world-wide significance, "three days of music and love" which set itself in opposition to whatever is unhealthy in American society. Woodstock, the Festival, was the celebration rites of the new society with its new communal state; what makes the film especially interesting, however, is the underlying impression that it does not share the same spirit as the Festival. The film seems to me to occupy somewhat of a middle distance between approval and criticism. The joy and energy of the Woodstock experience is conveyed mostly through the music; the people who are interviewed, and who attempt to articulate the meaning of the Festival, come off less favorably. Though the film itself has been heralded as a paean to the youth movement, its tone is really much more ambivalent, more detached and objective, than most critics have acknowledged.

The film is really constructed in such a way that it can seem to be whatever you want it to be—it just depends on your point of view. I first saw *Woodstock* in a packed, aisle-filled house of mostly under-20 sympathizers, many of whom, judging by their conversation, had actually been at the Festival. There was tremendous rapport between audience and film: wild applause after favorite songs, hoots for middle-aged people who, when interviewed, expressed their disapproval of the cause. But even in this audience, there were occasional instances of laughter *at* (not *with*) their brothers being interviewed up there on the screen. As an objective recording instrument, the camera had created a distance between audience and film; at times, what the kids on screen were saying, replete with their jargon of "dig it," "groovy," and "man," seemed somehow exaggerated, as if the film-makers were trying to satirize the Festival participants.

The second time I saw the film was at a matinee after the initial craze for seeing it had passed. There were a surprising number of middle-aged people, some of whom tisked disapprovingly from time to time, but most of

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The second time I saw the film was at a matinee after the initial craze for seeing it had passed. There were a surprising number of middle-aged people, some of whom tisked disapprovingly from time to time, but most of

whom sat in absolute quiet; the theater remained, as far as laughter or reaction was concerned, as silent as a tomb. The same images, then, yielded such radically different responses—even the under-20s in that second audience sat through the film unresponsively—that I began to view *Woodstock* as a kind of Rorschach blot, in which the material presented is highly suggestive, not at all fixed in a final, unambiguous formulation, and therefore capable of inducing a wide range of interpretation. According to one point of view, the kids may be heroes, their life style the expression of rebellion against mindless, inhumane authority; according to another point of view, the kids may seem vague, immature followers of a parallel, equally conformity-ridden culture. The film, I think, offers plentiful support for *either* interpretation, as well as for many intermediate responses between these poles.

For the most part, when people are interviewed during the film, we don't see the interviewer. The subject is up there by himself, he's entirely on his own, and the people either look rather tentative or scared or else rather foolishly overconfident. In either case, that unseen, neutral camera offers no assistance to them—and the result is the curiously detached tone. Though it is true that the events have been edited in such a way as to overlook the freak-outs and the extreme organizational mix-ups which we read about, the material certainly doesn't have the rabble-rousing, semi-hysterical drum-beating tone which the Warners press agents used in their advertising campaign.

One of the first indications that the film maintains its distance from the self-congratulatory air of the Festival itself is the interview, early on, with one of the Festival's co-producers. He is needlessly hostile to the fatuous, but well-meaning interviewer; and he is altogether inarticulate. When he is asked to explain the appeal of the music to the kids, he says, rather helplessly, that "music is about what's happening now." When he abruptly excuses himself, the interviewer says, patronizingly, "groovy." The detachment of the camera is such that both hip producer and square interviewer are satirized; we are not encouraged to sympathize with either.

Toward the end of the film, a talkative girl with a headband, who has misplaced her sister, and who calls everyone "cats," and who relates her encounter with a guy tripping on acid, evoked considerable laughter from the audience—not the laughter of recognition, but the laughter of derision. This girl somehow seemed like a parody of themselves, and they weren't willing to go along with her.

Earlier, there is a fairly lengthy interview with two kids; they talk on a wide range of topics, and thus serve as spokesmen for many of the Festival participants. Surely, if Wadleigh and his associates were making a propaganda film in support of the Festival, they would have chosen different representatives. What the girl says about such matters as free love and parental authority is both smug and cliché-ridden, and the boy, who is brighter, is openly critical of Woodstock: he says that Woodstock means sex, that the music is only a pretext and doesn't offer an answer to the confusion which he and his fellows feel. To complement his assertion, the other side of the screen shows, in fast motion, thousands of kids rushing about aimlessly. Later, a girl who exemplifies this confusion says that she can't stand being there any more, there are too many people, and she breaks down in tears.

When they speak, the rock musicians aren't immune from the underlying criticism either. Some of them are exceedingly patronizing: Richie Havens tells the audience that all the songs "are about you and how groovy you are"; John Sebastian, oozing unctuousness and condescension, tells the crowd how he loves them all and how groovy the whole thing is, and then, ironically, proceeds to perform a song about the young generation betraying its ideals and being replaced by a new young generation.

The producers' sincerity is undercut as well. One of them says that he has undergone a spiritual change in the last three days because he has seen people communicating, and "that rare-

ly happens." On the other side of the screen is an unclothed couple making love in the grass—not really the kind of spiritual communication the producer was referring to. The producers decide to make it a free concert—*after* the kids break down the fence and they are left with no choice. Throughout the film, they repeat, with a self-congratulatory air which begins to arouse suspicion, that the Festival is a financial disaster.

In addition to those directly involved in the Festival, the film includes a broad sampling of reactions of the townspeople. In these segments, more than anywhere else, the film conforms to expectations: the people who are sympathetic to the kids are likable and human, the people in opposition are unreasonable and imprudent. Here, as practically nowhere else, the filmmaker's point of view, and our reactions, are unambiguous.

The Festival, as the film demonstrates, was a symbolic political statement—the establishment of a socialistic state by a counter-culture. "We've been feeding each other, man, we must be in Heaven," shouts an enthusiastic Festival organizer. Farmer Max, the amiable owner of the land on which the Festival was held, tells the kids that they have proven something to the world. But the images don't always support the self-congratulatory words: mud, confusion, trash, general disorder is apparent; the Festival, after all, was declared a disaster area (some of the participants mention this with unaccountable pride). At the end, the camera follows the clean-up squads over the general destruction of the environment, the litter and debris in marked contrast to the green, untouched fields shown at the beginning.

Much of the music supports the ideological premise of the Festival: the two opening songs (not performed, but used as background) express the desire to leave the polluted cities for the purity and simplicity of life in the country and testify to the fact that the revolution has been "a long time coming." The music in general speaks to the ideals of political and spiritual freedom: Joan Baez's workers' song, Country Joe's ironic antiwar song. The film concludes, appropriately, with Jimi Hendrix's bizarre version of "The Star-Spangled Banner"—the dark, brooding, gutsy, unorthodox, apocalyptic rendition capsulizes the challenge to traditional Americana which the counter-culture of Woodstock has embodied.

The social and political revolution which Woodstock symbolizes is, however, short-changed by the lack of articulate spokesmen: The music cannot bear the full burden of the political significance. The rhetoric of self-praise is vague—"groovy," after all, is an imprecise word—and to rely exclusively on hip jargon as a description of the experience is finally unsatisfactory. Though we are able to infer the cultural implications of the event, there is no coherent statement in the film to help us out. As an example of the purpose and energy and sincerity of the youth movement, the student action against the expansion of the war into Cambodia was more meaningful than Woodstock. As chronicled by the film, the Woodstock experience—not the music, but the stumbling, barely coherent, jargon-ridden speeches surrounding the music—seems disappointingly mindless and unexamined. —FOSTER HIRSCH

Short Notices

The Great White Hope. Audiences have been flocking to Martin Ritt's extravagant film because of the fuss that has been made over the performance of James Earl Jones as Jack Jefferson, a black heavyweight champion who is patterned after the skilled, arrogant early-century boxer, Jack Johnson. Bigots are eager for a Caucasian champion because Jefferson is an independent, inflammatory black man who has a white mistress. A parade of "white hopes" challenge him, but he clobbers them as fast as the frustrated promoters can find them. This film version of the stage hit has a number of flaws, but the most nagging and least forgivable is that the white heroine is miscast. There must have been something distinctive about a white girl who could

ly happens." On the other side of the screen is an unclothed couple making love in the grass—not really the kind of spiritual communication the producer was referring to. The producers decide to make it a free concert—*after* the kids break down the fence and they are left with no choice. Throughout the film, they repeat, with a self-congratulatory air which begins to arouse suspicion, that the Festival is a financial disaster.

In addition to those directly involved in the Festival, the film includes a broad sampling of reactions of the townspeople. In these segments, more than anywhere else, the film conforms to expectations: the people who are sympathetic to the kids are likable and human, the people in opposition are unreasonable and imprudent. Here, as practically nowhere else, the filmmaker's point of view, and our reactions, are unambiguous.

The Festival, as the film demonstrates, was a symbolic political statement—the establishment of a socialistic state by a counter-culture. "We've been feeding each other, man, we must be in Heaven," shouts an enthusiastic Festival organizer. Farmer Max, the amiable owner of the land on which the Festival was held, tells the kids that they have proven something to the world. But the images don't always support the self-congratulatory words: mud, confusion, trash, general disorder is apparent; the Festival, after all, was declared a disaster area (some of the participants mention this with unaccountable pride). At the end, the camera follows the clean-up squads over the general destruction of the environment, the litter and debris in marked contrast to the green, untouched fields shown at the beginning.

Much of the music supports the ideological premise of the Festival: the two opening songs (not performed, but used as background) express the desire to leave the polluted cities for the purity and simplicity of life in the country and testify to the fact that the revolution has been "a long time coming." The music in general speaks to the ideals of political and spiritual freedom: Joan Baez's workers' song, Country Joe's ironic antiwar song. The film concludes, appropriately, with Jimi Hendrix's bizarre version of "The Star-Spangled Banner"—the dark, brooding, gutsy, unorthodox, apocalyptic rendition capsulizes the challenge to traditional Americana which the counter-culture of Woodstock has embodied.

The social and political revolution which Woodstock symbolizes is, however, short-changed by the lack of articulate spokesmen: The music cannot bear the full burden of the political significance. The rhetoric of self-praise is vague—"groovy," after all, is an imprecise word—and to rely exclusively on hip jargon as a description of the experience is finally unsatisfactory. Though we are able to infer the cultural implications of the event, there is no coherent statement in the film to help us out. As an example of the purpose and energy and sincerity of the youth movement, the student action against the expansion of the war into Cambodia was more meaningful than Woodstock. As chronicled by the film, the Woodstock experience—not the music, but the stumbling, barely coherent, jargon-ridden speeches surrounding the music—seems disappointingly mindless and unexamined. —FOSTER HIRSCH

Short Notices

The Great White Hope. Audiences have been flocking to Martin Ritt's extravagant film because of the fuss that has been made over the performance of James Earl Jones as Jack Jefferson, a black heavyweight champion who is patterned after the skilled, arrogant early-century boxer, Jack Johnson. Bigots are eager for a Caucasian champion because Jefferson is an independent, inflammatory black man who has a white mistress. A parade of "white hopes" challenge him, but he clobbers them as fast as the frustrated promoters can find them. This film version of the stage hit has a number of flaws, but the most nagging and least forgivable is that the white heroine is miscast. There must have been something distinctive about a white girl who could

snare this carousing champion and not wilt under the steady racist abuse. However, as portrayed by scrawny, pallid Jane Alexander (she played the role on stage) this woman is so unspectacular that a street sweeper would shun her. This is not a condemnation of unattractive actresses; it's just that plausibility suffers when one of them is assigned to a role that calls for a strong, glamorous woman. (Could you become enthralled by a serious drama in which Paul Newman surrenders fame and fortune because he is hopelessly hooked on Phyllis Diller?) Blacks, women in particular, are sensitive to the casting flub in *White Hope.* Hoots and catcalls ring out in the theater when Jefferson scorns a fiery, curvaceous black woman for this wallflowerish white girl. It is a decision that is difficult to swallow. In her opening scenes, Miss Alexander performs like a camera-shy amateur. Through her performance there are only flickers of warmth and sensitivity. Her big scene occurs in a barn just outside the US, when they are penniless and forbidden to enter the country. Jefferson is in training for his tainted battle with a formidable "white hope" (based on the famous Jack Johnson-Jess Willard fight); she enters looking like a scrubwoman; they fall into an unconvincing yelling match (as a hysterical woman she is comical) and he verbally slices her up and then boots her out; she tosses herself into a well and friends retrieve her corpse and place it before him; his anguish is expressed in a polished soliloquy that is fifth-rate Shakespeare and altogether unlike what one would expect from an unschooled pugilist. Jones is too eloquent and refined to be believable as a ruffian. His is a loud, unmodulated, devouring performance. There is no peace from him even in quiet scenes. At times, one wishes that the director had switched him to "Off." Though the burden of the film is on him, he over-responds. In this choppy, incomplete, disastrously edited production, Ritt attempts to use Jones's noisy energy to conceal the holes. Chunks of the fighter's career are ignored. The period between his mistress's suicide and the pitifully staged climactic fight is omitted. His years of degradation abroad and his descent into poverty are haplessly chronicled. Howard Sackler, who converted his play into a screenplay, failed to purge it of staginess. It looks like a flock of shrill stage vignettes that are carelessly strung together. There is too much shouting, too many climaxes, and not enough camera movement. A typical scene is Jones's tantrum in a nearly deserted railway station; it is a flagrant stage transplant. He staggers toward the screen as if he were facing a theater audience and does the tormented-hero bit. It is a cheap irrelevant bit of melodrama that, on the stage, must have allowed Jones to awe the audience with his ability to project to the back rows.

—Dennis Hunt

I Never Sang for My Father. While retrospectives are devoted to the work of *auteur* Douglas Sirk (director of *Magnificent Obsession* and *Imitation of Life),* in the same year that Don Siegel's *Two Mules for Sister Sara* and Blake Edward's *Darling Lili* are acclaimed as major works of art, it is not surprising that an honest, moving film like *I Never Sang for My Father* should be mocked by many "sophisticated" critics as a soap opera. For when the trivial and the tawdry are extolled, isn't it natural to expect the devaluation of what is genuine and significant? *I Never Sang for My Father* is cinematically undistinguished, with some embarrassing heavy touches in Gilbert Cates' direction, and its subject—the tortured quality of the father-son relationship, the struggle to come to terms with old age and death— could be called "old-fashioned"; what brings it to life is the urgency of Robert Anderson's writing. The film comes from a moderately successful play, but Anderson first conceived it as a screenplay and here returns it to the medium for which it was originally intended. The material is actually much better-suited to the screen than to the stage, because the drama that grows naturally from the situations is tentative, open-ended, explorative, rather than artificially heightened and compressed. The heart of the film may still be in the family squabbles in the Garrison home, but these are quietly naturalistic, unfinished, rarely built toward a neat dramatic climax as stage dialogues would be. In addition, the scenes outside the home —Gene and his father at the Rotary Club, or choosing a coffin for Gene's mother, a semi-documentary sequence exposing our society's neglect of the aged —have none of the self-consciousness that we feel when a one-set play is arbitrarily "opened up" for the screen. These scenes help to reveal character, illuminate themes, and actually intensify the pathos of the material; the structure is loose enough to allow a richer, more detailed texture than the usual filmed play can contain. Anderson's dialogue is too often overly precise and explicit, but the relationships are never stripped of their complexity. The anguish of Gene's dilemma is eloquently conveyed— his bitter memories of his father's disparagement of him since childhood contending with the sense of

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revelation, he attends a station-sponsored rally, murder on his mind. The film's melodramatics are compressed into its closing minutes. After shooting the wrong man, he is stomped to death by the crowd. From the podium Rheinhardt fails to dampen the hysteria inside while outside a race riot ensues. A dazed Geraldine is arrested for possession of marijuana she had let the hippies put in her purse. Once in her cell she strangles herself. When Rheinhardt is informed of her death he at last is able to be moved, or at least behaves as if he can be. For a supposedly political picture, the references in *WUSA* are veiled, as sexual ones were in an earlier age of film. The views of the radio station barely are mentioned, let alone explored. They are never integrated into the plot. Reinhardt is shown reading its station breaks not its editorials. Rainey does not discover the machinations behind his investigation but is told of them, and the knowledge unbalances him. *WUSA* believes in what it is doing, but its politics of feeling is no more targeted than it was when Frank Capra was advocating it.

—Robert G. Michels

Book Notes

In future issues we plan to give further coverage to some of the books listed in the survey on page 11; writers are urged to contact us about books they would like to review. We cover below several titles not dealt with in the survey.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART BOOKS

FILM NOTES, edited by Eileen Bowser. LOST FILMS, by Garey Carey.

In the rising flood of film books during the past year (publishers now appear to accept any film subject as a sure sale) it is too easy to neglect the useful publications that do not appear conspicuously on bookshop shelves. From its start the Film Department of the Museum of Modern Art quietly issued printed supplements to their film programs, no matter where they were shown; it was Iris Barry who felt that the memory of a film experience needed the reinforcement of print. Her monograph on D. W. Griffith (which Eileen Bowser has recently reissued in a fuller and more accurate version) and Alistair Cooke's ahead-of-its-time analysis of the ingredients that make a star—his example, Fairbanks—were more important than their modest format would indicate. Miss Barry also thought that film students needed an international film history and she chose the only one then available to translate and to edit (I've often wondered if either Bardèche or Brasillach took the trouble to look for their corrected errors), and she insured the publication of at least Vol. I of *The Film Index*, the most carefully prepared of all American film reference works; the Federal Writers' Project was dissolved before Vol. II could be transferred from cards to type (the cards are still waiting, by the way).

It is two recent Museum publications that I want to draw more attention to, here. In 1969 Eileen Bowser completed her labors of bringing together all the notes on American films then available from the Museum. Between 1935 and 1969 more than 200 American titles were in distribution, from *Chinese Laundry* of 1894 to *The Gunfighter* of 1950. These notes have various authors—Iris Barry, Gary Carey, Alistair Cooke, Richard Griffith, and Arthur Knight—but Mrs. Bowser has taken on the chief editing burden as well as writing notes for those films that had not previously had this attention. Before you decide that you don't need such a seemingly piecemeal book (and don't be put off by the spiral binding, either!), I particularly recommend that you read Richard Griffith's notes on *The Last of the Line*, on *Queen Kelly*, and on *Morocco;* Mrs. Bowser's beautifully researched notes on *Blind Husbands, Miss Lulu Bett, Foolish Wives, The Marriage Circle, Sunrise, Million Dollar Legs, Our Daily Bread, The President Vanishes, The Grapes of Wrath, The Set-Up*, and a Griffith-Bowser note on *She Done Him Wrong*. I have not read such serious and scrupulous comments or less dogmatic judgments on these films in any other book.

Gary Carey's Museum book is of a quite

revelation, he attends a station-sponsored rally, murder on his mind. The film's melodramatics are compressed into its closing minutes. After shooting the wrong man, he is stomped to death by the crowd. From the podium Rheinhardt fails to dampen the hysteria inside while outside a race riot ensues. A dazed Geraldine is arrested for possession of marijuana she had let the hippies put in her purse. Once in her cell she strangles herself. When Rheinhardt is informed of her death he at last is able to be moved, or at least behaves as if he can be. For a supposedly political picture, the references in *WUSA* are veiled, as sexual ones were in an earlier age of film. The views of the radio station barely are mentioned, let alone explored. They are never integrated into the plot. Reinhardt is shown reading its station breaks not its editorials. Rainey does not discover the machinations behind his investigation but is told of them, and the knowledge unbalances him. *WUSA* believes in what it is doing, but its politics of feeling is no more targeted than it was when Frank Capra was advocating it.

—Robert G. Michels

Book Notes

In future issues we plan to give further coverage to some of the books listed in the survey on page 11; writers are urged to contact us about books they would like to review. We cover below several titles not dealt with in the survey.

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different character, but also extremely useful. He is careful to mention that by the time you see the book, the word "lost" can no longer be applied to some of the films. Our mourning is often (happily) premature—largely due to attention that the book commands of private collectors and foreign archives. Even as this Liebestod was in preparation, Mr. Carey was happy to eliminate *The Devil's Circus* as no longer "lost." (What a lovely moment it must have been when the Prague archive identified one film in their huge collection as Karl Brown's *Stark Love,* a film that was considered hopelessly lost, perhaps a myth!) And lately we've had the search forces of the American Film Institute (with William K. Everson opening ancient and forgotten vaults to find treasures that understandably had not been regarded as treasures by the watchmen). *Lost Films* is luxuriously produced and this, too, helps the endless search. The large quantity of splendid stills will often, I am sure, send a reader (or looker) to check his store again. I am especially happy to inform Mr. Carey that I have *seen* two of the lost—*Mockery* and *Polly of the Follies,* one in this country, the other abroad. And so one of the most pleasant of games goes on.

I sincerely trust that Mr. Carey will carry on his good work, revising this first book, by joyously removing some titles and stills, and adding (with special attention to the years before those covered by him here) more—more—more, to keep our unsung archaeologists busy.

—Jay Leyda

SAINT CINEMA

Selected Writings 1929-1970 by Herman G. Weinberg. New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1970. $8.95.

Herman G. Weinberg's title is very revealing. For him, the cinema is indeed a saint, and all his criticisms are beatitudes, his accounts of the figures he admires not so much critical assessments as hagiographies. No wonder then that he is swamped with letters from directors and stars, none of whom are saints, and most of whom are *monstres sacrés,* egomaniacally addicted to their own interests at the expense of everyone else, attracted to the cinema because it seems to offer opportunities for unbridled extravagance, self-assertion and the personal exercise of power. Who would want to be a novelist or a painter, struggling in solitude, when he can be—to quote the title of a recent book—The Film Director As Superstar?

With most adherents to the *auteur* theory, from Rohmer/Chabrol to such feather-brained contemporary addicts as Bogdanovich, Gerald Pratley, and Rex Reed, a director can do no wrong: thus, these non-critics serve more satisfactorily than any press agent, and are a press agent's dream. Most books on directors cannot admit to failures, to a director's lapses, since to do so would seem to rule out any reason for writing the book at all. Film criticism continues to lag abysmally behind literary or music criticism, comparing instead with the worst criticism of painting: a series of feverish beatitudinous assertions, flawed—like the cinema itself—with compromise. Ambition—the need to become a director or to be socially acceptable to directors—can flaw a critic fatally, and residence in or frequent visits to Hollywood can or should result in lethal crises of conscience.

Weinberg is the oldest critic-fan in the business, and if only because he has pursued his enthusiasms with less venality than any other, because he has been situated in New York and lived in humble circumstances in pursuit of his dreams, we can only feel affection for him. His book may be a collection of beatitudes, but it also contains a cornucopia of *trouvailles,* those odd, largely useless and always hynotically fascinating snippets of movie lore that can "make" any bedtime volume. Even though he to my mind grossly overrates (like almost everyone else) Von Stroheim's ludicrously vulgar brand of heightened period realism, and even though he is misled into thinking Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* a great fresco, quoting Stendahl in his expression of rapturous approval, and even though I disagree with him almost everywhere else, I find him at all times likable, warm, genuinely affectionate. He is

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not a wicked opportunist using film criticism contemptuously as a stepping stone to "better things." He is like a dear, nice old woolly dog, nuzzling at the feet of the masters.

The cinema, in the English-speaking world at least, is the most deeply compromised and corrupted of all art forms, capable only under special circumstances of yielding more than 60 percent of an artist's vision—and today, in the period of so called "independence" an artist has to be a salesman, a packager of goods, a busker, and a bastard. Weinberg sees it all differently, in a haze of self-deceived dream, that somehow seems less embarrassingly naive than touchingly nice as he ranges from Feyder to Von Sternberg his brilliant detestable idol. And in his biography of Ernst Lubitsch Weinberg seems to me at his attractive best. Weinberg's Lubitsch book is, in fact, so wholehearted a labor of love that one is prepared to overlook the fact it has nothing to do with criticism. Lubitsch's faults—his inability to move the cinema from the confines of the stage, his rather awkward matching of European and American techniques, his largely uninteresting lighting and camera setups, and his heavy reliance after talkies on stage dramatists —are not really touched on. Instead, Weinberg writes accurately and affectionately of all Lubitsch's fine qualities—his brilliant timing, his direction of actors (particularly notable in *Trouble in Paradise*), his shrewdness in observing details of human action and reaction and his frequent "rightness" in making a "choice" of—and for—an actor. The book contains a vivid and startling account of Lubitsch's death and funeral supplied by the writer-director Walter Reisch, and other intriguing personal reminiscences. It is compact, carryable, well-illustrated and easily read at a sitting. We need superfans like Weinberg—provided that, as here, they are well-informed, not corrupt, and capable of channeling the flow of gush.

—CHARLES HIGHAM

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