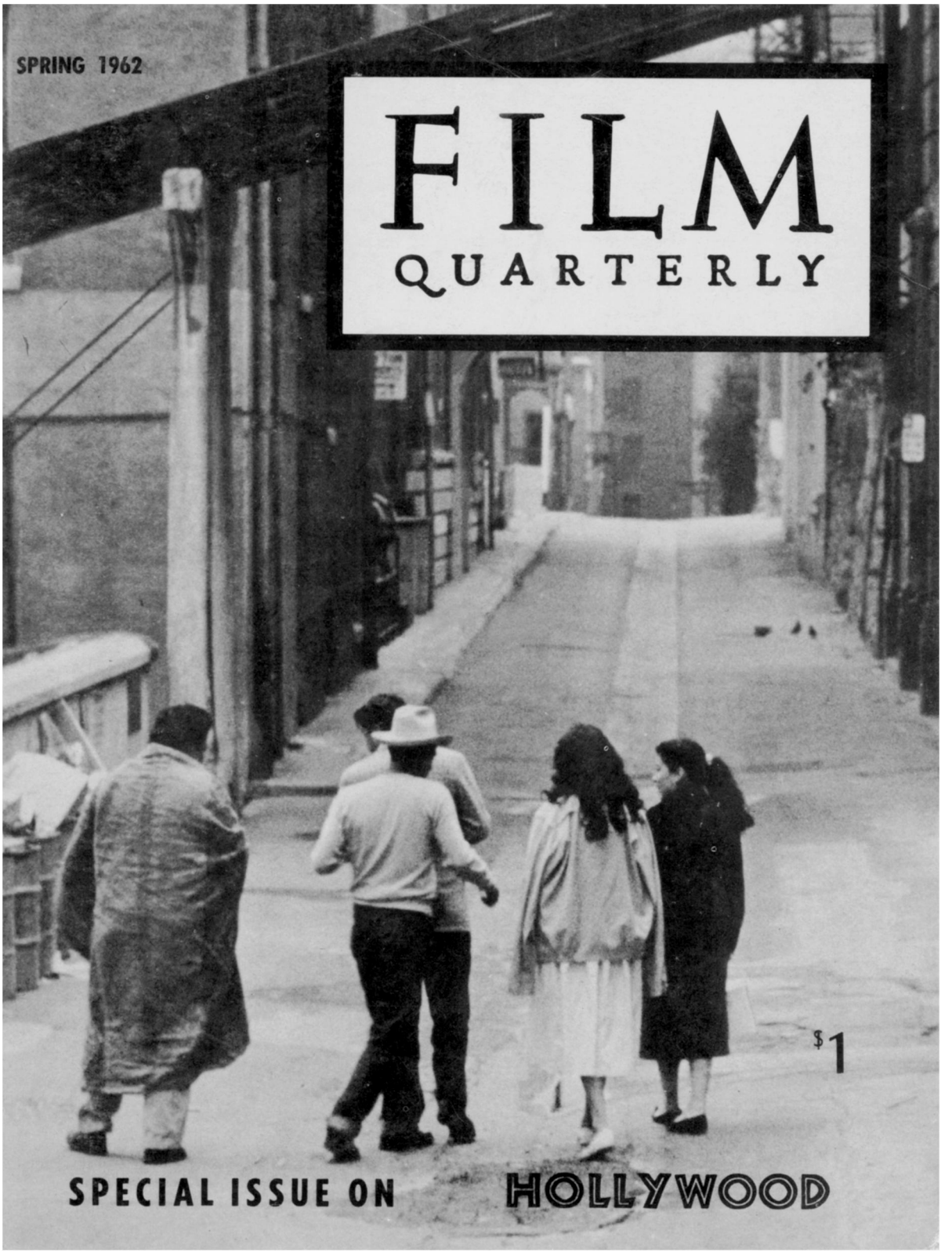
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REVIEWS

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Editor's Notebook

"Turn on! Turn on!"

"I beg you to remember the proper name of that troubling tree in Eden: it is 'the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.' What is meant by the masculine sensibility is the ability to eat the fruit of that tree, and live. What is meant by the 'human condition' is that, indeed, one has no choice: eat, or die."—James Baldwin, NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, *January 14, 1962.*

Be warned, gentle reader, that what follows is as much confession as manifesto: any thing said for the first time betrays that it has not been said before. The ensuing pages are a kind of attempted drawing-together of three years of thinking of the fate and prospects of film in our world and in our country. It is a strange opening for an issue attempting to deal with Hollywood today, perhaps; but it seems to me a necessary one.

Film Quarterly began publication in the Fall of 1958; its editor started it from scratch in more senses than one, having been out of touch with the film world for several years previously; and at that time the situation in the cinema was a fairly bleak one. The Italians had run through the impetus of neorealism; the Japanese, after the earlier high points of *Rashomon, Ugetsu, Gate of Hell*, seemed to live in an impenetrable thicket of samurai-pictures; the British cinema did not exist; the Poles were making some interesting films and there were stirrings in France and Spain, but the films were not imported. Hollywood, after the hopes raised by *Marty* and the advent of several talented TV-trained directors, had sunk back into ever-costlier commercialism. Only the isolated genius of Ingmar Bergman and Robert Bresson —both somehow outside the main cultural stream—gave comfort.

Such was the general situation. The journal's policy in reaction to it was one of printing a wide variety of the most intelligent criticism that could be found, without attempting to make writers hew to any line. The editor and the editorial board believed that such a policy would allow new theoretical perspectives and views to emerge as they appeared, if they appeared; and it was in addition appropriate to a journal published by a scholarly press. The "tone" of *Film Quarterly* has hence been that of an arena-type journal, rather than a faction-type journal. This has disappointed some readers who find polemical journalism more exciting, and it has confused other readers who do not like to have to produce their own order out of diversity. But it has, as a look back through the three volumes of *FQ* will show, produced a substantial body of critical writing whose intelligence is on a par with that of most literary journals.

The Critical Shift

The nature of the criticism that English-speaking critics have been writing, in our pages and elsewhere during these past three years, has begun to change recently; and we appear to be on the verge of very substantial change. In 1958, in our pages as in *Sight & Sound*, the predominant serious note was one of social evaluation, and films were judged basically on social grounds. When writers looked forward to better films, they conceived them as bolder in their exposure of social evils, more forthright in turning the conscience of documentary upon the feature, more acute in showing us what could be done to make our world more habitable. It was an optimistic tradition, rooted in the postwar enthusiasm for social reform; it was oriented to progress and good works, of which films were expected to be instances. The films that matched such a critical view were well-made films with plots that could be said to illustrate something; they had beginnings in which the situation was spelled out, and middles in which it was developed, and endings in which it was resolved; they had topics or subjects—one made a film "on" somebody or something.

We are now having to realize that a good film is usually not a good work, and that a film which *is* a good work in any obvious sense (say that of *On the Beach*) is probably never a good film. We are, in other words, coming to face the problems of art.

Moreover, what has come to gall about the practice of critical "commitment," is that in the end it is on the side of society—not the present existing society but a somewhat revised hypothetical version thereof; its "humanism" is conditional. If men are potentially thus-and-so, we can love them. But for a variety of reasons such a view is receding from our artistic and political perspective. We begin to see that a far more extreme personalness, almost anarchism, is the only basis upon which we can seriously deal with serious screen art: *no matter how* men may be, we love them. (It is curious in this connection that Truffaut remarked in an interview that he would have trouble avoiding concentration on Hitler's "human" side, if he were making a film about him.) Both in conflict and nonconflict, we begin to understand that we must place the individual's needs, emotions, higher than we place society's commandments; society gets along all right without us, as it always has. We now begin to see that this is indeed the opening of an era of "direct action"—the key event of our political life is the sit-in, which poses the individual's solitary determination, his own personal moral force, against the force of the state.

And such realizations lie beneath our hopes for a new cinema—"expressive" cinema, "personal" cinema, call it what we will. We sense that we must demand of film-makers that they wager their artistic destinies much more personally than is customary; that they expose their hearts, not just their technical skill or intelligence.

Such realizations are our particular reaction to the epoch of the organization and the organization man, which brings in its train organization films, poetry, music, and organization life. The opposition between nature (so to speak: the individual conditioned by some kind of social surroundings) and society (so to speak: the sum and pattern of individual actions) is an opposition we can never escape so long as we remain either sane or civilized; it is close to the root of the human condition, and indeed it is what dramatic art is usually about. But at any given historical point, with its given stresses, we feel that the balance must be pushed one way or another. We see more and more harshly which way *we* must push, in this time of cost-accounting, rationality, the minimal obvious risk. These trends are universal, evidently—they apply in Moscow as in New York, in Peking as in Cairo or Buenos Aires; they are the hallmarks of modern industrialized man, who acts and wishes to act as if he were a lovely machine. They are the marks of the beast: totalitarianism, government from above, the negation of love.

It falls to us, then, in our capacities as critics or film-makers, to remember and say that man is not a machine, and not always lovely, but that that is not in question in art; he is what he is. He hates and kills and lusts and loves, he cares and does not care; he is capable of all things, even in ignorance and despair. Luis Buñuel puts it, "This is not the best of all possible worlds." Nor should we expect it to be. It is "merely" our world: funny, lethal, beautiful, horrible. Because it is ours, it should be in our films, instead of the monstrous fabrication that is there now.

It is necessary to insist that this program is not a result of *realpolitik* calculations—that if we had films that were more "realistic" it would do us some kind of good: activate us, agitate us, lead us to some poll. The object of art is to excite us, to make us live more intensely in any area it touches (which might of course include explicit politics); to make us *see*, for it is our own separate responsibility to *do*. Any other kind of art is an insult, and deserves the quick oblivion it receives.

The French Line

Film criticism in the past decade has presented a very different picture in France from that in

England and the United States. The world of French criticism is complex and filled with traps for an Anglo-Saxon reader; a world of *logique* in the bad sense—of what we would call rhetoric, wilful paradox, metaphysics, hot air. But it is a tradition with two cardinal virtues: first, since not all of what is said is "serious," there is room for critical play, and from play much may be discovered; second, since it is a world of hotheaded partisanship, unnoticed films and directors are sometimes rescued from undeserved neglect. The French film world is one of higher risks than ours; it takes more chances, and hence includes more asses and imaginary idols than ours; but it also has more air, more holes through which genuine madmen may spring to public view. It is worth recalling again and again, as one reads through *Cahiers du Cinéma,* turning pale at some imbecile (a standard, almost endearing term of abuse in France) raving about the virtues of *Party Girl* or *Crimson Kimono,* that the same men who have on occasion written such things have gone on to make *400 Blows, Breathless, The Cousins.* One would not expect it; but it happened.

Now the best American critics tend to write like *Sight & Sound* writers: they are cool, balanced, sensitive, responsible, safe; some even have the remarkable stylistic fluency and grace of the English higher journalism. When the attempt was made bodily to import *Cahiers*-type criticism to the United States, in the pages of the *New York Film Bulletin,* the interviews and articles reprinted from *Cahiers* did not strike fire, and the original articles tended to be jejune, without the intricacy and ingenuity of *Cahiers* and with an unpleasant tendency to substitute bad-mouthing for polemic. (The American film scene could use about ten times as much polemic as it has, but calling names will not produce it.) One new writer of real talent appeared through the pages of *NYFB,* James Stoller; and one known writer, Andrew Sarris, has recently contributed two good pieces; but the paper did not succeed in developing an anti-*S&S* and anti-*FQ* body of criticism even to the extent this was done by the *Oxford Opinion* group in England. The *NYFB* now appears to be a posture without content.

A few other American writers have occasionally tried to inject continental trends of thought into what they see as the provincial backwater of American criticism. But on the whole critics of the French persuasion have not appeared among us. This is especially ironic because, by a charming inverse ethnocentrism (or snobbery) the French postwar film-nuts happen to love American pictures: the cheap gangster melodramas of the 'thirties; the Bogarts; the Minnellis; the Howard Hawks action pix; they adore Hitchcock, whose psychological metaphysics are gravely examined in extremely elaborate terms; lately they enjoy Robert Aldrich and Sam Fuller.

Now this is really very interesting. For it does often happen that, through the curious ways of cultural lags and disparities, cultural artifacts get attention from other cultures than their own, in which they would have intellectually and perhaps commercially perished. And the cultural strangeness of America to the French (despite their touching affectations of hipness) may both enable them to see things we do not see and to avoid seeing things we cannot help seeing. The fact that they do not tune in the vulgarities of Fuller may leave them freer than we to appreciate his art, such as it is. They are not blinded by knowledge of the society about which his films seem to be made.

The above is what one might call the safe case for the general principle. The trouble is, however, that to us a reasonable general case does not really finish the matter; we must still deal with the individual pictures.

Now the individual pictures come down to things like *Party Girl.* In Andrew Sarris's "The Director's Game," in *Film Culture* #22-23, an intelligent and useful article, Sarris goes so far as to say: "By any conventional standard, *Party Girl* cannot be taken seriously. The acting, the script, the subject are beneath contempt. No discernible liberal cause is advanced by this film, and no important sector of Ameri-

can life is illuminated even by indirection. Here is the acid test of La Politique des Auteurs. If it can be shown that Nicholas Ray has expressed a personal attitude in this admittedly mediocre framework, and that Ray is a major artist, then it is no more perverse for a film critic to be fascinated by *Party Girl* than it is for a literary critic to be more interested in the love letters of Shaw than in the plays of Pinero."

It would be hard to quarrel with this. But it is impossible *not* to quarrel with what follows. For Sarris argues only that (1) there is in *Party Girl* a "moral relationship," "the psychological and moral inferiority one Ray character feels to another" which is evidently a unique virtue of some sort; and (2) "Ray's flair for cinematic movement lingers in the mind long after the trivial plot details and the atrocious acting have been forgotten. Far from being a collection of 'x' images, *Party Girl* is a flow of 'x^3' movements, and nothing is more vitally cubistic or visually dynamic than Cyd Charisse going into her dance. It is possible to dismiss the film as the limited triumph of form over content, but in Ray's wild exaggerations of decor and action, there arises an anarchic spirit which infects the entertainment and preserves the interior continuity of the director's work. . . . To reject Ray's cinema of formal excellence and interior moral relationships within a generally fake external frame is to abandon American cinema to its noble intentions and its vulgar compromises, to the glib liberalism of Stanley Kramer and the pedestrian documentation of Fred Zinnemann . . ."

Now I yield to no man in my love of cinematic movement, whether linear or exponential, much less Cyd Charisse going into her dance; these things *are* joys, but to note them is not equivalent to showing they constitute formal excellence. Sarris's other main contentions seem to me too thin to bear scrutiny: practically every film of whatever excellence or tawdriness contains moral relationships of one kind or another; there are interesting and consistent moral relationships in *Blue Hawaii*. I do not understand those who would "dismiss" the film as a limited triumph of form over content: how simple the artist's task would be if such a triumph were possible! And to talk of anarchic spirit and interior continuity is merely to make a heartening gesture toward Ray: "We know you are a good man, go, go!" It reminds me of a time when I was rooting for a basketball team that had superb ball-handling and amazing play-making ingenuity and tact, but could not make baskets. Half a game is *not* better than none.

Now it is a disservice to a director to pay too much attention to his bad films; and it is perhaps ungenerous to take up so seriously Mr. Sarris's sacrifice play of *Party Girl*. But in this Aristotelian world there is really no total critical test and one part of it, one film, may still be looked at in solitary; indeed perhaps especially in film is this necessary, for each film is such a complicated gamble against such formidable odds. To the declaration (Truffaut's?) that there are no good films or bad, only good directors or bad, one can only quote any recent discussion with a director, good or bad. One *can* say that good directors make both good and bad films whereas bad directors make only bad ones; this is truer but not so dramatic or strategically useful. (And—a matter I will return to later—many critical statements are strategically meant, in the long and diffuse battles that determine the course of our cultural life: an aspiring young director who wants attention *must* implicitly lay claim to being a good director, since his first film is all too likely to be bad.) At any rate *Cahierisme* does not stand or fall with *Party Girl*, nor indeed with Nicholas Ray; but what do we see in a close look at *Party Girl*?

We see, I submit, a glorious anthology of clichés, prepared in the ordinary Hollywood manner. We see Charisse in a curious dress, we see Charisse lit like a flower in the middle of the screen; we see parties; room-mate's suicide in bathtub; we see court scenes with lots of people; we see rows of people strung out across the Cinemascope screen. We see Char-

isse sitting at her dressing table backstage. We see her dance on a big empty stage; the camera trucks in and trucks back, it pans to follow her, it cranes up to look down; the other dancers come and go. Later, we see Hollywood screen poesy, like: she and Taylor go out to a Chicago river bridge where he wrecked his hip as a boy—hence his limp. (This is a deep purplish scene, an "exaggeration of decor" especially funny to an old Chicagoan like myself.) He takes her back to apartment; we observe him at window while she is in background in apartment. (Look, deep-focus photography!) We see a kiss and a *jeu de glace* with mirror behind them.

There is a meeting of the mob presided over by Lee J. Cobb; El trains run across the shot outside. A dissident mobster is beaten with a miniature pool cue, and here the film suddenly comes to life; one remembers the earlier blood in the bathtub; and later one realizes that it is only these scenes which have really gotten any attention from Ray, and hence can get any from us. Taylor goes to Stockholm for a year to have his hip rebuilt. When Charisse fetches him, they drive off through some amateurish back-projection, wind blowing in hair. They return to States, and Taylor falls again under influence of mob; Cobb prowls around a throne-like chair and threatens him with busting hip again and acid in Charisse's face; he comes around. (This is where the moral superiority gets thick.) More court scenes. Cobb has rival gang rubbed out in wild bursts of gunfire through windows; from behind curtains, etc. Taylor-in-jail scenes; New Year party scene—special effects of balloons; Charisse does leopard-skin dance; bongo drums; same lazy camerawork as before; red light. Scene in dressing room; she hits gangster with brush. Goes to DA, says she will work on Taylor to talk, get free. Taylor makes deal with DA for her to get away to California; Taylor sent out to meet fate with mob. Goes to familiar bars. Feet walk into frame; gunsels. Taken to Ricco; more L-noises. The bottle of acid is brought out (they've caught her on train). Taylor appeals to Ricco's innate decency; he was once King of the Kids in his neighborhood, and wouldn't be a nasty man now. Cops have surrounded building; shots, confusion, lights out; Ricco falls backward and acid tips onto own face, followed by fall over balcony to ground below; more shooting. Taylor and Charisse walk along unscathed.

It is difficult to give any precise description of the appearance of the film, of its *mise-en-scène*, because it is so banal. Film like any art is an art of effective surprise; and except through the quick manipulation of violence, Ray never surprises us. It is a lazy film, one is forced to conclude; a hack job, though not a particularly cheap one. The acting and story are as Sarris evaluates them, or worse; but the photography and editing are no better. There are a few spots in the picture, aside from the scenes of violence, when it comes fitfully to life: Cobb at his throne-chair, the camera after him as he moves; a shot of gangsters and their girls at a table watching Charisse. But these are small jewels, and even the worst film always has one or two good shots; and they are surrounded by pure unalloyed tin.

The trouble is, of course, that *mise-en-scène* cannot be separated from what is being *mis en scène*. A director's art is not a trick of some kind, which can make an egg disappear, and a marble or a coin just as well. It is not possible to make anything out of Cyd Charisse's dances because, in spite of her obvious charms, she is not a good dancer. It is not possible to make a truly gripping scene with the lines involved here, and with Taylor and Cobb, because the lines are false, the situations empty of human meaning, and the actors superficial; there is nothing for Ray to come to grips *with*. (The result might possibly have been elegant emptiness rather than clumsy emptiness; it does not matter.)

Such ingredients are not *bound* to result in the defeat that *Party Girl* is; but they set the director's challenge very high, and they demand a fearful force from the script. The script of *Party Girl* is weak, if indeed it can be called

a script rather than a string of signals that might have come from an IBM-machine. The direction of the actors is also weak. The shaping of the scenes is mechanical and tired and routine, for Ray has no *attitude* toward them—I mean in the film, since I presume he despises them in his mind. Hence the film has no visual, almost physical, point of view—that remarkable quality we demand in a really good director or film; its few flashes of life come from a kind of admiration of simple forcefulness: gunfire, mostly. (One remembers the massacre in *Some Like It Hot;* Ray's is funny too.) Ray, who is a most intelligent man, could not think of an interesting way to show Charisse dancing without making it into another film; nor could he show the inane conversations which fill the film in any except a mundane way without making it into another film—a bitter and savage film, one would hazard, with real blood in it; nor could he do anything with the two party scenes except make sure that people keep moving about (it is a mark of defeat when one substitutes movement for motion—as, for instance, Marcel Camus did in *Black Orpheus*).

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Where does this leave us, if we cannot turn to *Party Girl* for comfort? Of course it is intellectually fashionable from time to time to enjoy bad movies and not just for laughs, but for a chilly sense of immersing oneself in the destructive element. Lacking this taste, the American highbrows who wander into a Howard Hawks movie find its silliness (which Pauline Kael with unprecedented kindness calls his "peculiarly American hard-boiled sentimentality") intolerable; the only exceptions with real enthusiasm seem to be a small group which finds camp more exciting than film.

But one may still conclude that even from a bad film much can be learned. Such an attitude is of course more natural to a critic who is an aspiring film-maker than to one who is not. Critics who conceive of themselves as writers above all, or as teachers, find it hard to take such a position; they lack the instinctive feeling that "There but for the grace of God go I" which tempers the judgment and fuels the enthusiasm of an incipient film-maker.

We need more critics who have this latter kind of attitude—not an indulgent attitude, but a *participant* one. For in the basic dilemma of the moment critics and film-makers share equally. The terms of it are something like this: committed criticism is clearly not enough; *Cahiers*-type criticism is clearly not enough; neither American film-making nor American criticism are enough. The search for new directions, in making films and in thinking about them, has got to be bolder.

New Production Patterns

The scrutiny of Hollywood undertaken in preparing this special issue of *Film Quarterly* has left me personally convinced that it is fruitless to expect anything different from Hollywood; we will get more of what we get now. At its best—*Psycho* or *High Noon*—this is powerful and ingenious and cuts close to the bone though it is not in the same league with Antonioni or Kurosawa or Satyajit Ray. At its worst—*Breakfast at Tiffany's*—it is abominable and sickening.

Our perspective on American film-making must of necessity be a personal one. And it is a different one from that of a Hitchcock or a Rossen or a Nicholas Ray, who have found their niches—or beds of nails—within the industry. To us it is the constriction of film-making opportunities for new directors which seems the paramount consideration: not in the sense of young men wanting to leap into their elders' chairs, for those chairs seem in any case more

like coffins, but wanting somehow or other to make films of some personal importance.

It is imperative that we realize how slender are our known artistic resources among young film-makers, and how shallow their experience, if we are to find means of improving the situation. The facts of the "apprenticeship" system by which young Americans can become film-makers are roughly these. There is evidently no known means by which one can enter several of the film-making crafts in theatrical films: photography and cutting. UCLA, USC, Northwestern, Iowa State, and a number of other universities offer good all-around instruction in film-making, but the graduates of these courses mostly make sponsored films or go into television. The only film-maker in recent years to break into Hollywood by making several independent films (initially on family money—a method which was also crucial to the beginnings of the French "New Wave") was Stanley Kubrick. Many others have tried; there may be as many as fifty unreleased features in Los Angeles, unknown and unheralded and mostly bad. (There are of course said to be even more in Paris.) It is not often enough realized how much training and experience are needed before one can, as von Sternberg put it recently, learn to "disdain the machinery" and concentrate on the creation. And it is not often enough realized how rare real cinematic talent is.

There is, moreover, another circumstance that strongly inhibits the development of new American film-makers: the lack of an established short-film industry. After being carried along for some years by the major studios as a service to exhibitors without much profit in them, the shorts have now, with the shift to independent production, virtually vanished from the regular commercial scene; and with the double-feature pattern they are not missed. Hence the production of shorts has become a precarious gamble. It is no longer possible for a young man to make shorts for a year or so, and then B-pictures for a couple of more years. Young men thus tend to try to make short films for industrial firms or for governmental agencies, and spend far more time promoting than making films. Very rarely the sponsorship arrangement permits the making of a good film, but normally the creative situation is more debilitating than was the old Hollywood apprenticeship, for all its cynicism: the purposes of the sponsor are normally so narrowly didactic or commercial that no personal vision can enter. Governments in France, Italy, Denmark, and even Britain sustain short-film-making; and such a system seems the only hope here. Perhaps it can be presented as a standard save-our-businessmen boondoggle.

But at present the possible personal strategies open to an aspiring American film-maker are something like this:

A. Work in television for a while and meanwhile seek to find money and talent for a film.
B. Work in sponsored films for a while, and ditto.
C. Make very-low-cost personal projects on a "professional amateur" level, while surviving by any means available.

Let us look at these various routes more closely.

The first was followed by a group of promising TV directors including the two Manns, Frankenheimer, Lumet, Ritt, and others; Frankenheimer's fate is still in doubt, but the others have now fallen completely into the Hollywood rut, and considering their initial advantages, this bodes ill for Route A.

The second is being followed by a large number of men, from which occasional names emerge: Irving Kershner, George Stoney, Kent Mackenzie, Dan Drasin, John Korty. We do not yet know whether any of these besides Kershner will find a foothold in the feature-film world.

The third route has been followed by Shirley Clarke, Morris Engel, John Cassavetes, Jonas Mekas, Robert Frank, and others. Though Cassavetes began as a Hollywood TV actor, and has since returned to the clammy embrace of the industry, this approach has been largely

identified with the "New York School." But it is necessary to distinguish two types of work that have been done in New York. The pure, or Mekas-variety, approach is to film entirely outside conventional financing, union rules, and so on; and to this approach I will return below. The approach taken by Shirley Clarke and Morris Engel is much more orthodox, being essentially a variant means of securing finance —from a lot of small investors rather than several large ones (distributor, studio, or bank) who normally demand script approval and other controls. At its optimum this approach should lead to films of the approximate boldness and novelty of the Broadway stage; this means, at the very best, Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams, and would be a slight improvement but nothing startling: *The Connection*, with all its sensational value because of the narcotics content, was a proven "property" and a sound business proposition. We need to find ways to make films that are *not* sound business propositions—because they are new and personal.

Cassavetes' *Shadows* was made on an ever-renewed shoestring, and so was Mekas' *Guns of the Trees*, and the care of such shoestrings may be our most crucial problem. We can hardly expect to find conventional financial sources with the flexibility, tolerance, and philanthropic tendencies that would be necessary to finance such films as these on a sound businesslike basis; the thing cannot be done. These films are going to have to be *scrounged* together.

(Let me digress to say, in answer to those who claim that the publicity of the New York School has hopelessly outclassed its film-making, and will shortly produce the inevitable backlash, that one *Shadows* against one *Guns* is not a bad record, even if it is said in cynical circles that a few *Shadows* cannot make an *Eclisse*.)

And this is why there is much to be said for the concept of the professional amateur. Under this term I group all film-makers who do not try to deal with conventional sources of finance: most of the short-film-makers in their early years, who pick up the money from their own pockets and the pockets of friends and relatives; who live by square jobs of one kind or another, often in jobs not connected with film. This category includes men whose films have gained attention, like Cassavetes and Mekas and Mackenzie; and it includes many more whose films have not.

If the term has a derogatory ring, it should not. Most creative artists in the United States do not live by their creative work, after all, and it is unlikely that film artists should have a special dispensation. Creative artists teach; they pump gas; they sponge on friends. Sometimes, after a lifetime of such existence, they grow relatively rich—like Henry Miller or Kenneth Rexroth. But the earlier state is normal for our culture; it may even in a sense be necessary, since an artist cannot easily have the freedom of mind he needs if he is heavily involved with the conventional rewards and pressures of society.

Yet we are ill-prepared to admit that something similar may be the natural state of the film artist, and we are surprised to hear of the long periods of unemployment among foreign film-makers. When the idea does arise, it irresistibly brings with it the Gestalt of the "experimental" film: sloppy, pretentious, self-conscious, dull—a subcultural artifact harder to bear than the forthright vulgarities of the mass audience. We would prefer to imagine film creators as rather in the early John Huston line —dashing, imaginative, able to bulldoze the front-office men and somehow pull the living rabbit from the industrial hat. We fear that in our heavily faddish and snob-ridden metropolitan centers, films made avowedly outside commercial channels would tend toward the effete cult film. "Well, it will go over at Cinema 16," is one of the nastiest condemnations a critic may nowadays deliver—and of course an unfair one, for Cinema 16 audiences do not dislike good amateur films. Nor do the substantial and rapidly growing nontheatrical audiences throughout the United States.

And the image of nonindustrial, nonsponsored independent films made in recent years is not in fact anything like that of the dread "experimental" image. We need to know much more about the small films produced here and there in the country; there is a pressing need for some kind of quick, mimeographed news bulletin that would keep new film-makers in touch with each other. But we do know a few people and a few recent films: Kent Mackenzie's *Exiles*, George Bluestone's *Bartleby*, Dan Drasin's *Sunday*, and there is a host of men making short films of a more or less documentary tone. Some of them still have technical matters to master; some have mastered them on the scale of their choice and are confronting the real problems of screen art. From them, in the next several years, should come many films of the greatest interest.

To the Box Office

Now what conceivable destiny will these films have? Much depends on luck and commercial climate and the willingness of distributors to take risks. But perhaps a few considerations that are slightly novel may be advanced.

One is that new film-makers must develop a revolutionary attitude toward the box office. It is customary for a faint sneer to come to one's lips at the term. This is a fatal error. For if an aspiring film-maker is a man of talent, his best ally, and in the long run his only dependable ally, is his audience. *The basic strategic problem is how to get to an audience as quickly and simply and directly as possible.*

It is also customary to try to think of financiers, distributors, exhibitors, code officials, and front-office men as part of the machinery that "helps" to make films. Actually their function is just as much to prevent films from getting made: those films which do not qualify as "product." Yet a film's destiny ought ideally to be decided just by the film-maker and his audience. If it were possible for young film-makers to stand or fall upon the reaction of the audiences of the film societies, universities, museums, and genuine art theaters of the country, most of them would be glad to take their chances. But such chances cannot be taken at present without the intervention of the above-mentioned figures, who function as if *they* were the audience. Their reactions, however, are not the reactions of an audience which likes or dislikes, is moved or bored, stimulated or deadened, by a film; their reactions are complex calculations involving nepotism, salesmanship, luck, the condition of a company's other resources, and the instinct for "showmanship" which is alleged to reside in the bowels of the bankers who finance theatrical films these days.

The problem before us is whether there is any realistic way to short-circuit this situation, so that new film-makers might confront their fate at *some* box office as directly as possible. The acuteness of this problem is especially great in America, where the regular industry is both more massive and more rigid than in, say, France or Italy. In France, it was reasonable to expect that, once the ice was broken, a large number of relatively high-risk independent productions could be financed; these were on budgets of well under $100,000. But in ordinary American industrial terms, such a budget is now practically unheard of. The Hollywood cinema has priced itself out of the world of film art. No bank in its senses would give two million dollars to somebody like Antonioni or Buñuel; it's too dangerous.

This situation is at the root of attempts to organize an American Film Institute [as described in Colin Young's proposal, *FQ*, Summer, 1961] and to build booking circuits for off-beat films. The existing distribution machinery cannot yet return sufficient money to support independent film-making on its own, and foreign returns, perhaps ironically, cannot be counted on for such films as Hollywood can (and nowadays must) count on them. But the time is not far off. Three basic tasks must be accomplished: (1) The distribution set-up must be extended and improved. (2) Sources of capital must be enlarged and educated in the process by which, as Paul Goodman put it for theater, the new film can "find out and invent

what must be unpopular and yet will soon be immensely popular." [*Dissent*, Autumn, 1959.] And (3) the craft unions must be negotiated with to achieve flexible contractual patterns that will enable very-low-budget films to be made on a union basis yet without jeopardizing union rights on superproductions. (It is extremely encouraging that, in the New York area, new practices which amount to a special kind of wage deferral have recently been regularized by standard contracts for low-budget productions of special personal interest to crew members; it is important that this promising development be followed up in other places.)

The Technology

It is also possible that technological developments will foster the growth of professional amateur production. The availability of light, flexible, yet professional-quality 16mm cameras, and very portable sound-recording equipment, has seemed of importance primarily for off-the-cuff shooting of the sort done by Leacock et al. in *On the Pole* and *Primary* [see *FQ*, Spring, 1961]. But this is only one kind of application; such equipment may also be used for films with invented, controlled, scripted action—and not only films which capitalize on the absence of ordinary polish, like *Shadows*, but films which possess the polish of, say, a studio film of 1940. If George Stoney makes the feature he is thinking of, he will probably do it on 16mm; a number of theatrical-type films have been shot on 16mm in recent years, such as a version of Kafka's *Metamorphosis* done at the University of Michigan, and George Bluestone's *Bartleby*. Such films have had their faults, but the faults did not spring from the 16mm gauge, which in the hands of experienced technicians like those at the National Film Board is capable of technical polish virtually indistinguishable from 35mm. And the equipment requisite to professional polish in 16mm production exists in virtually every city in the land. What is needed is talent and experience and vision, and the curious and rare ability to raise money—an art in itself.

Another technological development that will soon be of great importance is electronic motion pictures. Television images as we usually experience them are unpleasantly coarse-grained; the 525-line standard cannot attain the definition even of 8mm photography (which, incidentally, is currently enjoying some technological breakthroughs of its own, in the form of magnetic sound-striping and synchronous-sound-recording equipment). But a number of factors will change this situation considerably.

One is the development of stagger systems, which cause the scanning beam that produces the TV image to wobble vertically as it moves across the face of the picture tube; this destroys most of the visible "line" quality in the image. There are also German plastic screen-covering devices that suppress the lines; and the picture-producing dot can also be given an elliptical shape that minimizes the dark lines between the bright lines written by the moving spot.

Second, higher-standard systems may be employed. In Britain 864-line systems already exist, permitting much better definition; as the mechanics and electronics of such systems are perfected, it will be possible to produce TV images of definition and tone subtlety equal to all but the best 35mm photography. (Although kinescoping has now become something of a lost art in American commercial practice due to the spread of video-tape recorders, it is already possible to make kinescopes from ordinary American-standard TV images which cannot be distinguished from straight 16mm photography.)

Now the significance of such developments is enormous. As Albert Abramson wrote in *Electronic Motion Pictures* (University of California Press, 1955, $5.00) and as he recently repeated in a letter, electronic picture-making possesses many spectacular inherent advantages over photography, once satisfactory definition can be achieved. Some of these advantages are economic: the video tape which corresponds to

the film negative costs about $70 per half-hour. Others are artistic: (1) The electronic camera can see in dim light. This much reduces lighting problems and does away with the most cumbersome aspects of film shooting practices; and it enables the camera to operate in places where the film camera's battery of lights would derange the subject matter beyond usefulness. (2) The electronic camera can be extremely small and light. The standard studio TV camera is about as big as a standard studio film camera; but TV cameras exist that are 8 inches long, 4 inches high, and 2 inches thick. This confers upon them an unprecedented flexibility, portability, and inconspicuousness (the electrical impulses they produce may be transmitted to a recorder at a distance either by wire or wireless means). (3) Since the TV images may now be recorded upon magnetic tape and instantly replayed, shooting with an electronic camera enables the director to see his "rushes" immediately. This would provide a tight and sure control at the moment of shooting, instead of hours or days later, when the circumstances of shooting may be impossible to recapture.

These advantages are not absolutes, of course, and they strike a film-maker oriented toward nontheatrical work as more exciting than they do one whose experience is primarily in studio work. They have not yet been adopted in Hollywood (though, with the increasingly close financial bonds between film and television corporations, they surely will be in due time) because of the still satisfactorily efficient routines of film shooting, contractual agreements with unions, and so on. And there are still difficulties in the editing of video tape: TV sound-recording is synchronous and goes on the same tape as the video signals, which makes it hard to extricate and mix; and the physical devices for tape editing have not yet reached the great perfection of film editing machinery.

Moreover, the initial investment in an electronic camera and video-tape-recorder is substantial (about $50,000, but falling), and inexpensive rental schemes have not yet been developed; their advent will be a sensationally important step, and should be encouraged by all who see the need for the huge new low-cost training ground for film-makers that would result.

Electronic shooting, resulting in kinescoped prints able to be projected in any 16mm projector, would give us what we above all need: a system whereby young film-makers might take their chances with their audiences without the intervention of massive capital and the massive business machinery that goes with it. It would not make things easy for them: the raising of $10,000 for a high-risk project is not as hard as raising $100,000 for a high-risk project; yet with personal film projects being especially hard for backers to evaluate, it would still be murderously difficult. But it would make it possible for film-makers to undertake projects of an ambitiousness which, under present alternatives, they would have to wait years to attempt, if they ever could.

It is ironic that in a very rich country one should have to propose so small-scale a solution. Yet this is perhaps really quite appropriate. More than French or Italian or British film-makers, Americans face the consequences of massive organization life. In film-making, this confronts us with the industrial pattern of Hollywood. The richness of Hollywood is its damning fault; and serious film-makers must face the challenges of holy poverty.

Personal Films and Personal Criticism

There is always talk of trying to start a publicity campaign for an "American New Wave," since this would for a time enable low-cost films of modest virtue to make enough money to survive. The film public craves cultural novelty, no doubt, as much as any segment of the American population—it too looks for new looks, new sounds, new ways; and with a certain amount of talent and a certain amount of gall one may create the impression of a new "school" of film-makers. Such a development may be desirable or necessary; and if it is, the film-makers must, as Truffaut did, find in them-

selves a talent for publicity.

The critics will be faced, as always, by individual film-makers and individual films. And we need many more new critics who will deal with the art seriously and with love.

How are critics "formed"? Some come up through film societies, where they learn the background of the art. Some are movie bugs from early youth. Some find the cinema after interests in other arts—drama, painting, poetry—have begun to seem narrow. Some are interested in the cinema as a symptom of practically everything happening in our society—these come to it from politics, sociology, psychology.

The new critics we need may come from any of these routes. What is important is that they should regard the film as an exposure of the soul—the film-maker's soul *and* the viewer's soul—not distant phenomena of "story," "subject," "properties," "media." To such critics film is a ritual by which we confront our own destinies and the destinies of our world. We need critics, in other words, for whom the cinema is like bread or wine or women: who crave it, who are passionate lovers and haters, who know that the art demands all their intelligence and all their care, and that even that will never be enough; critics who are devoted enough to know that the profound can lurk in the trivial, and vice versa; who are willing to give themselves to ugliness or despair as well as beauty or joy; who are willing to immerse themselves in a film as desperately and totally as if it were their own life—and then come back and write of it for us, who may (if we are open and free) understand what the experience has been, and what it signifies.

This is personal criticism, and we need it in exactly the same manner we need personal films. Indeed the two are inseparable: for if men are to make films with their own passions they demand audiences who will watch and listen with their own passions; it is a game of love, not a commercial gambit. And if men are to watch and listen with passion, they demand film-makers who can do more than titillate and calculate. We need men on both sides who are willing to go as far out as they are capable of. This is to play for real; all else is merely talk; and talk is cheap.

Among film-makers we do not need more clever adaptors of commercial properties. We do not need more craftsmen skilled at "licking" away the nastiness or difficulty of scripts. We need writers willing to sit down and do the pitiless, self-killing and self-saving work of writing from the heart without being commissioned to do so. (There would be, if our cinema were truly alive, a great pool of unproduced original scripts written by men who know that it is the creator's responsibility to create, and not to wait for somebody to assure him it will be profitable.) We need directors who know a good script from a commercial one, and are willing to risk their own destinies with those of their writers. We need film-makers, in short, who are brave enough and mad enough to take this medium seriously. We have had enough of the organization-man's film-making. We have had enough of films as industrial products. We want films that speak from us and to us.

And among critics we need an equal boldness. Long ago I wrote, in a predecessor to this journal, "An Exhortation to the Trade." This seems to be an exhortation to critics: that we should let go, be much more personal, expose more of our own prejudices and feelings and wishes, go out on more limbs, throw out more wild ideas for mutual checking, let our loves and furies about the cinema have fuller rein. If the loves and furies can be intelligently written up, we will print them; if they cannot, we will always read them with sympathy and interest.

The cinema is a machine. But let us not be deceived: a typewriter is also a machine. At issue is always the quality of feeling and thought and knowledge that goes into the machine and somehow comes through to us. In dealing with these, we cannot be "too" personal. Even the best critics are seldom personal enough; and it is not enough, of course, to be merely crotchety. But in the work of our best writers (Lambert, Kael, Croce, Warshow,

Kauffmann, Macdonald) we see something of what is needed. From them, and from the rest of us, we must ask more and more and more.

It was in the autumn of 1956 that Lindsay Anderson asked of British film-makers and critics, in his famous article in *Sight & Sound*, that they "Stand Up! Stand Up!" Almost six years later, we can see that that was a relatively easy prescription. A new, riskier, harder, more personal and more demanding necessity is now upon us. Our imperative must be: "Turn on! Turn on!"

About Our Contributors

JOSEPH L. ANDERSON, who is now with the Audio-Visual Bureau of Ohio State University, is co-author of *The Japanese Film;* he lived in Japan for some years, and has watched Kurosawa at work.

HERBERT FEINSTEIN's interviews with film people are broadcast on the BBC Third Programme and Home Service, and on KPFA, KPFK, and WBAI; his articles have appeared in the Harvard Law School *Bulletin*, Columbia University *Forum*, *For Film*, and this journal.

BENJAMIN T. JACKSON has written reviews for this journal, and works in a Hollywood animation studio.

PAULINE KAEL wrote the celebrated article, "Commitment and the Strait-Jacket" in a recent issue; her work appears in *Sight & Sound* and other journals.

ARTHUR KNIGHT has written about films for the *Saturday Review* for many years; he now lives in Los Angeles, where he teaches at USC; he was recently appointed Curator at the new Hollywood Museum.

WILLIAM PECHTER has written about films in the *Kenyon Review*, and also writes fiction.

New Film Societies

Persons wanting to start film showings often write to *Film Quarterly* for advice. Since the journal operates on a very small budget and has no secretarial staff to deal with such inquiries, we print below a brief outline of the first steps needed. We also recommend the attractive volume, *Film Society Primer*, published by the American Federation of Film Societies, Box 2607, Grand Central Station, New York 17, N.Y.

Film societies are the main means by which Americans may learn the history of the art, which is not taught, as it should be, in every college in the land. And in many towns film societies are also the only means of seeing new contemporary work, or out-of-the-ordinary films of any kind. Moreover, helping to run a society is one of those fascinating enterprises that form a subterranean cultural life in America; and the dogfights over program selection, the technological battle to provide high-quality projection, the need to make ends meet and yet show what one wants, and the problems of providing program notes and publicity that give old films a chance to be seen for their art and not their "quaintness," comprise the training ground over which have passed many of the film-makers and most of the serious critics of the world. Some societies, of course, fall prey to dissension or snobbism; but the fact remains that without the societies, and the distributors who provide them with films, we should all be ignorant of much that is necessary to know if we are to have any kind of perspective on current work. The starting of a film society in Keokuk, then, ought by no means to be an occasion for derision. We wish there were dozens.

The steps for organizers to take:

(1) Obtain rental catalogues from all film distributors advertising in *Film Quarterly*.

(2) Write to the American Federation of Film Societies, Box 2607, Grand Central Station, New York 17, N.Y., or Box 19652, Los Angeles 19, California, for information sheet. Subscription to the AFFS journal, *For Film*, is $1.00 per year; sample copy free on request (limited offer).

(3) Invite not more than ten of the most enthusiastic prospective members to a planning

session and (a) quickly plan a tentative twice-monthly series of 5 to 10 film programs; (b) assess your work potential—will your enthusiasts commit themselves to the many tasks necessary to run the series? (c) if so, book the films; (d) if not, book one film as bait for an organizational meeting to which your entire community is invited (and make certain that a few work horses are there); (e) organize the group and get going.

(4) For specific assistance or advice, write AFFS (addresses above).

Prizes

Two festivals are being organized to help bring "professional amateur" films out into the open. One, under the auspices of Contemporary Cinema, 3765 Wright Place, Palo Alto, California, wants 16mm films completed between January, 1959, and April, 1962. Showings will be at Foothill College, May 18-20, 1962. Prizes: $300, $200, $100. The other, organized by the Documentary Film Group, University of Chicago, Chicago 37, Illinois, wants 16mm prints up to 45 minutes long; deadline for applications is March 30, 1962; the festival will run from April 15 to April 28. Prizes: $100, $50, $25. Applicants bear postage but no application fees. A similar festival, to which European productions have also been invited, has just been held in Vancouver, and will be repeated next year.

Periodicals

Film, published by the British Federation of Film Societies, 35 Priory Road, Sheffield 7, England, costs 5s. per year. About a quarter of each issue is devoted to film-society organizational matters and news, but the rest contains articles, interviews, and reviews which are often of high quality, and features such as "Opinion" in which views of various critics are sharply contrasted.

For Film is published approximately four times a year by the American Federation of Film Societies, Box 2607, Grand Central Station, New York 17, N.Y. ($1.00 per year, 25¢ per issue.) The current issue (Vol. 6, Nos. 3-4) marks a new level for the publication, which now contains such items as Pauline Kael's withering examination of the San Francisco Film Festival, and reviews of *The Connection, Last Year at Marienbad, Throne of Blood,* and *Ballad of a Soldier.* There is also a report by AFFS President Gideon Bachmann, and a news section. A useful feature is a guide to sources of new and interesting shorts—those neglected but promising children of the film world, which should be continued and expanded.

A DISCUSSION:

Personal Creation in Hollywood: Can It Be Done?

In an attempt to illuminate the creative situation confronted by the serious film-maker in Hollywood, "Film Quarterly" assembled a group whose members represent a variety of situations in the industry and approaches to the industry. **Fred Zinnemann** ***is an established director with a record of many fine films behind him.*** **John Houseman** ***has produced some of the most unusual films to come out of Hollywood.*** **Irvin Kershner,** ***director of "The Hoodlum Priest," is a new director attempting to make films with personal force by working inside the industry or filming abroad. As we go to press, he has announced formation of a producing company.*** **Terry Sanders,** ***who with his brother Denis made "Time Out of War" while studying at UCLA, "Crime and Punishment USA" as an independent venture, and "War Hunt" for United Artists, is seeking ways of making films that matter to him outside Hollywood.*** **Kent Mackenzie** ***made his feature-length documentary, "The Exiles," entirely outside commercial channels and is now hoping to find distribution for it.*** **Gavin Lambert,** ***who came to Hollywood after a brilliant job of editing "Sight & Sound," has written screenplays for "Sons and Lovers" and "The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone" and will soon begin directing a film of his own. To give a critical perspective, we also invited Pauline Kael, who has been writing articles and reviews for this journal, "Sight & Sound," and other publications, and who operated for several years the remarkably successful art house, the Berkeley Cinema Guild. Colin Young, Los Angeles Editor of "Film Quarterly," organized the discussion and prepared the transcript, which is somewhat abridged. The session opened on the general question of why film-makers should choose to work in Hollywood.***

HOUSEMAN: Well, why I'm making pictures here rather than anywhere else is answered in a sense by a look at what I'm doing. I've just made *All Fall Down* which is a smallish picture by Hollywood standards—based on a novel by James Lee O'Herlihy, screen play by William Inge. Frankenheimer was the director and we shot about seven-eighths of it here and about one-eighth of it in Key West. Spent a week in Key West on location. In that sense it was purely a Hollywood picture with a brief location period. Irwin Shaw's *Two Weeks in Another Town* was a much larger picture, a Cinemascope color picture, and that was made about 40 per cent in Rome, simply because the locale was Rome and there was no possible way of shooting it anywhere else. And then the interiors and things we could shoot here were

shot here. The next project is a novel which is really a sort of international Anglo-American novel which we shall probably shoot out of London. There are some New York scenes and some London scenes and the majority of the picture is in Greece. That's *The Cool of the Day.* After that I expect to do another picture here but again with some location work—called *The Alligators,* based on Molly Kazan's one-act play, or rather it's an elaboration and expansion of an idea she had in that play and will be essentially a Hollywood picture although we would shoot 30 or 40 per cent of it in New York and again in Florida. It happens to be laid in Miami and nothing looks quite like Miami except Miami. These are in every sense of the word Hollywood pictures except they aren't all shot in Hollywood.

YOUNG: Are they all MGM studio productions or are they independent?

HOUSEMAN: Nowadays, as you know, we all have independent companies, and we all own quite a high percentage of the net of our pictures. But that's a fiction in a sense—rare is the combination of pictures that ever makes any money under studio conditions. I know I'd be extremely surprised if any two, and they're yoked in twos, if any two make money for me. Really in every sense of the word, except the form of the company, this is really very little different from the old studio operation, except that the studio is no longer in a position to supply you with the casts or the contract people they used to. At Metro, they still have on the whole, extremely good technical facilities—the designers, the cameramen, all those are quite good and though you choose your own it's really a company operation and not an independent venture—that's a fiction. . . .

KAEL: Do you have more freedom operating in this way?

HOUSEMAN: No, not really. But then, generally speaking, nor do independents. My experience has been that you can function sometimes more freely in a fairly loose large organization, than if you have to account directly to the bankers and the releasing organization. I really don't think there is any black and white of freedom or bondage.

KAEL: Are these pictures you wanted to do?

HOUSEMAN: Oh yes, every one of them.

KAEL: And the casts and writers and so on.

HOUSEMAN: Yes, entirely. But that was also true eight years ago. The only difference which makes it a little more difficult is that a studio like Metro had a stable of actors, some of whom were desirable and some were not; you did not have to take the ones you did not regard as desirable, but you had a kind of insurance against the oppression of MCA and some of the other large agencies. Whereas today studios have almost nobody under contract, so you have no security, you have no advantages in that respect, in working for a major studio. They can deliver no one to you. You must go out and shop just as if you are making an independent picture.

A NOTE ON THE NEXT ISSUE

Even though this *Film Quarterly* contains 72 pages instead of the 64 which our budget normally allows, we have had to postpone many articles and reviews about recent Hollywood films of interest.

We hope to include these next time, in an issue that will also deal at length with films made in New York.

KAEL: Do you have difficulty getting the people you want?

HOUSEMAN: You don't have difficulty, you just have to pay unbelievable prices if the studio decides they need a big name to carry a picture. But that's just as true of the bankers who finance independent pictures, or United Artists, or anybody else. There's simply no difference. In fact I'm not sure that a major studio with multiple product is not able to take a little bit more chance than an independent, which requires the insurance of big-time names

to get financing from a bank. I don't think there is anything to choose between them.

YOUNG: Terry, would you like to say what you've been doing recently?

SANDERS: Well, in September I completed final scenes on *War Hunt* which I produced and my brother Denis directed, with United Artists release and financing. And this picture will get its first test engagements in March and after that go into general release. *War Hunt* was made as one of a group of pictures which supposedly were to be categorized as idea pictures, by United Artists. This meant that stars or budget were not to be the consideration but theoretically if the idea was good, they would go ahead and make it. Naturally the budgets had to be lowish, in the $250,000 range. Well, a few pictures were produced and apparently the system was not working out. It may have been because Max Youngstein left or the company's philosophy changed and over-all things got much more difficult this year than they were a year or a year and a half ago. However, if this picture does happen to do well commercially, that will open many doors. If it doesn't, it will be a question of starting again, putting things together from scratch, so I can't say yet what I'll be doing next. But, to the question of making pictures in Hollywood and why I'm here, I do live here, I did go to school here, I studied pictures here, I drew heavily on Hollywood, learning and observing, but I do not feel particularly based in Hollywood. *War Hunt* had a Korean locale, during the Korean war, and I certainly would have preferred to go to Korea. And then I am a producer who is very involved in the processes of film-making as a photographer, and I like to handle the film. I like to edit, but I find it extremely difficult in Hollywood to touch the film and get credit for it, and not have to do it by sneaking around corners, which I do not like to do. Hollywood has an atmosphere to work in that is not my favorite atmosphere, and I am looking for other places to make films, not only for the shooting, but also a base of operation, where a film can be edited and all that. I also feel that Hollywood with its tremendous talent resources, with its tremendous equipment and technicians —I feel that in the past ten years perhaps the overall quality of that has gone downhill, somewhat due to television. I think the film laboratories are geared for television and not for specific features, special handling that we ordinarily would have demanded on a feature. I again feel that I can work with another base of operations.

YOUNG: Do you think that the United Artists methods of financing and releasing films give you any guarantee that a film will be sold to the audience that you had in mind when you make the picture? Are you at all trepidacious about how they will handle the advertising and releasing of *War Hunt*, for example?

SANDERS: Well, of course, *War Hunt* was only my second feature; I do not have a long record of films behind me, and yet this certainly has been the best experience so far. I respect the people at UA much more than the executives I have met in other studios, but so far as guarantees about how the film is handled, on the second or third or fourth film you do not have any guarantees of anything, you cannot make any demands. You're damn grateful that you got to make the picture. *War Hunt* started out to be a very special film, with a very special point of view about war, and it is. Probably today UA would like to have a more conventional war film and therefore they may try to sell it as a more conventional war film, hoping that maybe it is, but of course the film hasn't changed.

We know that in March it will open in San Diego and in Detroit and in single engagements of this sort. From the reactions on these engagements UA will learn whether the campaign was correct so that then they can open it all over the country. A general release means that they have stopped worrying about it, they have set a campaign and have sent the film out.

KAEL: Will they give your picture any prerelease publicity?

SANDERS: Well, I was a bit worried about it, I must admit. Technically and actually I am

supposed to be consulted in these matters. There is no question of that. I assure you that there will be some sort of prerelease publicity given to it. There will be screenings for national press in the east, there will undoubtedly be screenings out here.

KAEL: I think it's more important that *you* be assured. I've just seen so many small pictures go down the drain, and simply disappear, and you just don't get a chance to see them.

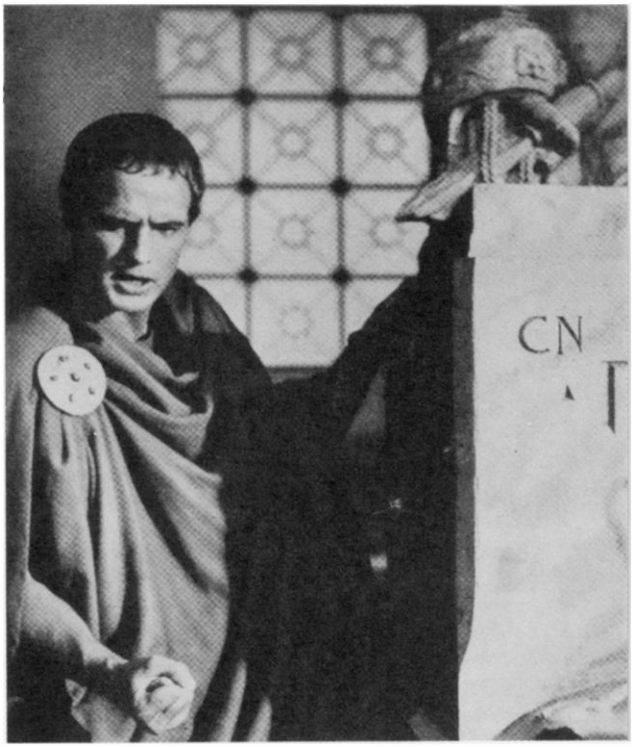
SANDERS: Yes, Stanley Colbert's film never saw the light of day. It was a picture called *The Explosive Generation,* which had as its theme passive resistance on the part of American students. The plot is that a teacher gets fired for giving sex instruction in school, and the students through a campaign of silence get the teacher reinstated.

LAMBERT: Was that picture thrown away, actually? I haven't seen it, but I do remember seeing the title advertised quite a lot here, and it was a steady second feature in the drive-ins.

SANDERS: Yes, but by "thrown away" I mean that if you have set out to make a picture with a certain theme, then you may as well advertise it, or no one will know. If you advertise it as a juvenile delinquency picture. . . .

HOUSEMAN: No one has any control over that—you can make twenty pictures and still have no control. Freddie—I think that probably you have more say than the rest of us; I'd be curious to know for instance how much you really determined the selling of your Australian picture *The Sundowners.*

ZINNEMANN: It varies with studios, and sometimes even with the film. It has to do with what the money people expect of the picture—if it is potentially a big money picture they give you more latitude, but if they don't expect too much they tend to freeze you up. Or listen to you and not do it. At Warner Brothers for instance, I made two pictures. With *The Nun's Story,* they were enormously coöperative, and listened to me—not that I have particularly brilliant ideas for the exploitation, but I did a lot of travelling around and so forth. But on *The Sundowners* they were rather disinterested, not too inclined to do very much, and in a sense I felt that it went down the drain for that reason, commercially. United Artists I find is a different arrangement, because the producers pay for the publicity and United Artists lets them go as far as they want provided they spend their own money. I have found that major studios tend to disregard us—producers and directors. They listen benevolently, and then they do whatever they please.



Marlon Brando in John Houseman's production of JULIUS CAESAR.

HOUSEMAN: Occasionally they get confused by a picture and they do turn to you. I know that on *Julius Caesar,* they were so perplexed that they actually allowed me to do a great deal, not in the way of spending money, although some was spent—in the way that audiences, educational groups and so on were approached. The same was true on *Lust for Life.* They were both pictures they were very scared of, and they wanted any kind of help they could get—not that they were willing to

spend too much money on them. However, on *Lust for Life* we did agree to do certain things that would attract "cultural" elements among the public. But then at the same time they started a huge advertising campaign which showed Van Gogh about to rape a nude model. This almost wrecked the good they had done with the other campaign.

ZINNEMANN: They always fall back on that, whenever they get frightened. With *The Sundowners* they had all sorts of "sex in the tent" advertising. You can't help it. It's very sad that many key people in distribution are still 30 years behind us. I would say that most of them have no creative ideas as to the selling of pictures, particularly of unusual pictures. They always fall back on the cliché. I think they alienate an enormous part of the audience. But I would like to comment briefly on what Terry said, because I find it very interesting and very discouraging that what he referred to as "idea films" are not properly presented to the public. To my mind it has something to do with what you termed "general release." They are pictures which are probably special in many ways—they have a special problem and should perhaps be shown to a special audience, and to my mind it would be much wiser to show pictures like that in art theaters and to present them after a very long and loving advertising campaign and let them run a long time to get their public, rather than to throw them out into the huge cold palaces where they disappear after a week. I have seen so many of them go that way. It seems a terrible shame. I have recently seen two pictures made by very young people, one of which is fair and the other I found very exciting. It is a picture made by Tim Whelan, Jr., and Wesley Ruggles, Jr.—both sons of well-known directors. They had a hundred thousand dollars. They went to Hong Kong and made a film, with two Chinese children, showing how these kids come to Hong Kong from the mainland to look for an uncle and do not find him, and slowly get ground under foot. It is a tragic and very beautiful picture, called *Out of the Tiger's Mouth*. They made it with a Filipino cameraman, using concealed cameras to a large extent —portable Arriflex cameras. Tim Whelan apparently speaks some Chinese and was able to direct in Chinese part of the way, and the picture is very remarkable. But I am convinced that if a film like that is shown in general release, it will disappear in three days. Fortunately this one will be shown in art theaters. And it would seem to me that the best method for young picture-makers is to try for the art theaters if at all possible. I think they would get much more response because a big distributing organization is not geared to deal with new ideas and new approaches.

KAEL: Have young American film-makers ever attempted to approach a foreign-film distributor who does know how to handle a special film? Do they make more by throwing a film in as the lower half of a double bill for a week throughout the country than they would by this other method?

HOUSEMAN: Major companies are making deals now with the art-house people. They have screenings in New York to which they invite the art-house operators, who now comprise quite a substantial circuit, so they can come and make their bids. But art-house operators are not entirely pure either. [Laughter]

KAEL: I was thinking of the distribution companies, who have become very shrewd about promoting certain special films—I mean Astor and some of these companies who have done extraordinary advertising campaigns—but I am puzzled because I am not sure whether a film makes more money that way or not. I think that the most incredible statistic I saw for last year was that the Fritz Lang picture which played in drive-ins and neighborhood houses—the thing based on *The Tiger of Eshnapur*—had grossed more than any other German film. It did not play in art houses, and it was a terrible piece of *kitsch*, and I understand that it also grossed more than *The Devil's General* which had had a great success in art houses. So I am not sure about the relative economic advantages.

SANDERS: Just think of 8,000 play dates as opposed to 100.

ZINNEMANN: You mean, Terry, that if you had the choice of sending a picture out through United Artists or through the art houses, everything else being equal you would prefer a general United Artists release?

SANDERS: Absolutely, because I want to get my money back. But actually one does not exclude the other—the art house only means to me a kind of special handling—

KAEL: It should mean reaching a different audience—an audience that responds in completely different terms.

SANDERS: Well, eventually something like this will be developed.

KERSHNER: I wonder if we are really talking about the problem. Certainly, anything we do we wish to be exhibited well, publicized well, and certainly get our just rewards, but the problem, I think, is: "Is it possible to make films, idea films or call them what you want, is it possible to make films that would be suitable for art-house release, which means that they would have to be comparable to some of the fine foreign pictures and would be, let's say, good enough (in quotes) to go into general release?" Not *can* this be done, but can this be done with the kind of material that we feel is right for this, when we have to get money in the $200,000 class and make them in competition with Hollywood films which cost $1,200,000 or more. How do you make a film which is entertaining, which has ideas, which is let's say adult, which doesn't depend on violence for its shock, doesn't depend on sex for its excitement—how do you create this type of drama for $200,000 when there's no time to play, to waste, to take a chance, to do all the things that an artist has to do to make a film. I think that this is the real problem.

YOUNG: Well, part of the reason that this is a problem is that the person making a film for $200,000 has to work with substantially the same union contract as the person making a $4,000,000 picture. This means that although he may wish to spend a certain amount of time shooting his film he is bound by contractual agreements to divide his money into a certain number of days according to the unions' specifications. The unions do not recognize, it seems, a sliding scale in original budget, and this means that the film-maker is predisposed to choose films which are easy to shoot in a short amount of time, and this does not allow for the kind of exploration you are talking about.

ZINNEMANN: The unions give you no relief of any sort? [Noes] Do you try to work without them?

KERSHNER: Well, of course, with a certain kind of film you have to—you shoot, you edit yourself, you act as your own art director. You certainly learn to do this in documentary, and for years I did this in documentary, and I have tried to do it in other films. But it is still not the answer because at some point you need assistance, at some time you need a fine performer, at some point you want someone's talent, in a craft, to help you, to complement you and this is where you are stopped. Out of the country it is easier. I have found what you can almost call altruism among many union people in Italy. Some people said "Come back and shoot a film here. We will put together a crew of from 12 to 14 people. Don't worry about the money—we'll set up a kitchen, we'll eat, we'll find a place to live," because I mentioned a certain community I wanted to work in, which would be very inexpensive, "just make sure you give us at least six to eight months to do the film." [Laughter]

ZINNEMANN: Yes, well, it happens.

KERSHNER: I had an art director on my last film there [a pilot for television] and he was telling about working on *Il Brigante*, the film by Castellani; he said that for one year he struggled with this thing, he acted as make-up man, he was the art director, he did some lighting, he did some of the costuming, he actually built a tremendous ramp, with which it was possible to do beautiful crane shots that went on forever—you know one of those things that makes a film-maker just feel good . . . the

aesthetic of movement. He said that he worked for a year on the film, and when they had finished they had built part of a village and a village square in southern Italy, they all got together and added the fourth walls to the different buildings, and they are now being lived in, and this was part of the pleasure—they all were sick, they all worked so hard.

I asked them how the film worked out? He said, "Oh, it made a great deal of money." "Ahhh," I said "Did you get a piece of it?" and he said no. "Didn't you expect it?" I asked. And again—"Oh no, we worked, we got paid, we got what we wanted, but we had a marvellous experience—it was the most exciting period of my life." Now here's a man who loves film and this was shared by the others. I think it's wonderful.

ZINNEMANN: Yes, it's marvellous.

KERSHNER: I may be an idealist [protests], but I think that we have to get back to the fundamentals—how do we make a superior film; if we have to do it for a budget, how do we make it for the budget. I think we have to compete with the finest material coming in from the rest of the world, and beautiful things are being made throughout the world. The problem is how do we as American film-makers interpret the American scene and not be forced to run away and to see things in other countries with the inane, almost childish, superficial attitude of a person who knows about 200 words of the language—where you cannot even interpret a gesture properly. How do we stay here and interpret the feelings and the smells of a place which is a part of us—this is the problem.

HOUSEMAN: Well, I think current rules and restrictions *do* make it extremely difficult. But I think there *are* ways of outwitting your employers—half of my career has been spent putting things over on employers, all the way from the government to the third floor of MGM, but it is unfortunate that such a thing is necessary. Of course occasionally a miracle happens, and a creative man is able to go off into a corner and come up with something, but it is increasingly difficult.

KAEL: Have any of the unions who are always so angry about runaway production, ever been asked to one of these round-table discussions?

YOUNG: Well, they have an official position and a friendly position. The friendly position would, I think, admit many of the things which we have been saying; the official position, however, says that they cannot do anything about it so long as any of their members are unemployed. And we know that in some cases this, at present, runs to as much as 20 per cent of the available members. Usually I have found that the officials of the locals are extremely reasonable (although people recently have had not much luck with the camera local in Hollywood) but some of the older members are understandably very worried about their own positions, and what emerges, as an official position is an impression of the unions as being completely unaware of changes in the film business all over the world, even in Hollywood. They act as if they have no idea at all that there might be other ways to produce films than those customarily used by the studios here, and they seem oppressively aware, still, of conditions in the earlier years.

HOUSEMAN: But you are dealing there with the situation which the theater has been suffering under for thirty or forty years, which is that there is one across-the-board scale for given types of work. Of course it has been absolutely insane for the theater to be asked to carry scales of wages which are valid for movies—and movies are not able to absorb costs that are legitimate for TV—with its multiple showings, replay systems, and astronomical audiences. But I do not think that the unions as they are presently constituted are in any position to break this up or to adjust their scales to the various conditions prevailing in the different branches of the entertainment business. It would be extremely hard for them to do so, with the best will in the world. It has always been said in the theater that if you could go to the unions and were able to guar-

antee permanence or near-permanence of employment—for example that we could take a crew and guarantee to pay them for eight months in the year—that the union would then give you a concession. But I don't think they would, because once they had made the concession, fly-by-night commercial producers would immediately move in and cite this as an example and demand the same treatment without the guarantees.

YOUNG: I would have thought that that was just a question of arithmetic—that in other words if other parts of the production were known to be costing a large amount of money (the story and the stars, and so on, prices which are admittedly negotiable, but which have at any one time a certain fairly well-known scale) the unions would be perfectly entitled to think that they should be employed at the same scale. If, however, they are offered evidence, that another kind of cast is being put together, and that another kind of budget is being considered, would it not then be possible for them, just as a matter of arithmetic, to claim that they would not be allowing a precedent that could be used against them by more expensive productions?

SANDERS: What about the stage unions? Don't they grant certain concessions?

HOUSEMAN: No—except that in a town like this, where there is so little theater, and the stage unions are so anxious to promote and aid the growth of theater, they give you enormous concessions as compared to New York.

SANDERS: Well, that is probably what Colin was alluding to—that type of coöperation.

YOUNG: The off-Broadway play is not required to maintain an entire complement of union staff—

HOUSEMAN: They pay a Broadway union scale, but they are allowed to employ fewer men. But as these productions become more commercial, the unions screw up their demands.

YOUNG: But that is a matter of arithmetic. As they become more commercial, the unions change their standards.

KERSHNER: I don't think we are dealing with the problem again, which is how to make good pictures, and how to make them inexpensively. And we are talking about pictures for which we will never get a great deal of money—although I don't believe it when I say it. I have read many scripts and many people have brought ideas to me, for so-called idea pictures, so-called superior pictures, art pictures; most of them stink. I mean they are really bad. They are pretentious, they call them poetic often, but they are literary-poetic, not cinematic-poetic. The problem is, right from the beginning: what material are you going to work with and how are you going to develop material that can make possible fine films, true films, contemporary films, films of value, how are you going to do it when the temptations everywhere in the culture are such that they practically prevent you from looking over your right shoulder?

ZINNEMANN: I'd like to try to give you a partial answer to this question. It probably doesn't answer it except in a very small segment, but I can tell you what happened to me personally, because I went through that, it now seems like 400 years ago, but nevertheless it happened. I came here in 1929 from Europe and I learned my trade by being assistant to some wonderful directors, and doing various other things. The time came when I wanted to direct, and it was obviously quite impossible. Granted the circumstances were quite different then. You could only direct through a major studio. By luck I was asked to direct a documentary picture in Mexico [*The Wave*] and I spent a year down there making it, and when I came back, without a job to go to, I couldn't get a job as an assistant because I had been away too long, and people naturally wouldn't give me a job as a director; but eventually a couple of reels of the Mexican film arrived and I showed them to Jack Chertok, head of the shorts department at MGM, and on the strength of these two reels he gave me a chance to direct shorts. Perhaps the best method for a young man to attempt recognition as a director is to

Fred Zinnemann's
MEMBER OF THE WEDDING.

make a picture abroad where these problems don't exist, and come back and present it. Then I think once his identity is established, suddenly things open up for him.

KAEL: Aren't you trying to develop an accident into a general policy?

ZINNEMANN: I don't think so—if I may continue for a minute . . . I am referring again to Tim Whelan and Wesley Ruggles, Jr., who went to Hong Kong and made their picture there—their first crack out of the box. Granted it was done outside of the country, but they brought to it an American point of view, and I think that this picture will definitely put them on the map. I think that they will have much less trouble the next time around. And it is up to them then whether they want to become commercial directors and start capitalizing on their talent immediately as many have done, or whether they will continue making their own kind of pictures. I am trying to say that if abroad you find a situation where you can create a picture which will bring you into focus as a director—this may be an opening wedge. And as I say I offer this in all humility. I think it is one solution which may offer a chance in something which otherwise looks like a rat race.

KAEL: Well, but what kind of industry is this then? I mean you can make a great movie abroad and it can win fifteen prizes, but does anybody know about it?

LAMBERT: Now they do. Things have changed considerably.

KAEL: Well then—Kent's film [*The Exiles*] has been getting all sorts of festival awards—he can't get a distributor for it yet in this country.

MACKENZIE: Well, of course we are still making some changes.

LAMBERT: Have you tried to get one in Europe—for the usual pattern for films that win awards at the various festivals is that first of all they do well in Europe and then they are bought for America—it is very much a kind of waiting game in the whole art-house field. They don't usually book films and exploit them in a big way until they have not only won an award at a festival but they have also drawn audiences in some foreign country.

MACKENZIE: It was well received at the festivals, but we continually received reports that everyone was asking who made it, where was it from, where could they see it again, and this and that—and we just had no way of handling it. We were all young men working here as technicians, and we had no money to hire a representative, an agent. It went to Venice, Mannheim, Edinburgh, London and San Francisco.

YOUNG: Your film wasn't made with a budget—it wasn't made with money in hand.

MACKENZIE: I think actually that ours is a very unusual case, and we haven't until this point faced any of the things you've been talking about. We just started out. We were concerned with what Irving spoke about earlier—how could you make statements about American culture, with meaning. We didn't know anyone of our age, whom we were in contact with at least, who was doing anything like this. We didn't know anything about audience, the unions, distributors, or any of that—we just said let's make the film. We had no money, but the money turned up, and then the film was finished. [Chorus: "Marvelous!"]

KAEL: But isn't it an extraordinary assumption that if you are struggling to make it here and you make a film in Europe, that *then* there

is a place for you in the industry? Does the industry just wish to make more big spectacles—what room are they going to have for young men anyway?

ZINNEMANN: Well, I think the industry always looks for people who have some sort of distinctive talent—they are hungry for them.

HOUSEMANN: They may not let them *do* the things they hire them for.

LAMBERT: But actually Hollywood has turned down very few people.

KAEL: That's puzzling—you wouldn't think so from the movies you see.

LAMBERT: It is not a question of closed doors—it is that they ask people to work on terms that they don't like, which is a very different thing.

ZINNEMANN: John Cassavetes is another example—fairly recently.

KAEL: Yes, but he's an example in the great tradition of being swallowed up very fast, isn't he—like Kubrick and so many others. The distance between *The Killing* and *Spartacus* is enormous. It means that you've made it, but it also means that you're through.

LAMBERT [and others]: No, I don't think so at all. I don't think you should judge anyone on one film.

KAEL: Yes, that's perhaps unfair—but think of him doing something unusual or interesting now—it's at best a fifty-fifty chance. Once you've dealt in that big a budget and hit it that fast that hard, then you've really made it. Can you go back?

VOICES: Yes, you can go back . . .

KERSHNER: I'd like to answer this from personal experience, which sometimes clarifies. I remember walking on to a set at MGM to do a television pilot. It was the first show that I was to do in TV. My experience up to that point had been in documentary. I had made films in Turkey, Greece, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Trans-Jordan and you can imagine the conditions—I'm mentioning these places just so you can imagine the amount of sand I had to get out of the film plane. And then suddenly I walked on to the set at MGM and I was terribly frightened. There were two tremendous trucks standing there—the largest trucks I have ever seen, with men swarming around, and I sort of didn't know who to ask what, and I still had the feeling that I'd love to take a hand camera, and I'd love to sit on the dolly and I'd like them to pull me as fast as they could while this car came barreling down a eucalyptus grove and then came to a dead halt, but not a *dead* halt like a dolly does, but with all the jerking of a quick stop, and throwing myself on the ground, doing a couple of gyrations, just for this shot. I couldn't figure out how to do it—for here was this beautiful piece of equipment—I had a boom, we had trucks, and generators—we had lights all over the place—it was frightening. But the fear quickly passed, I must say—it was a delight. Coffee was served right on the hour, the sandwiches were first class, the assistance was wonderful, everyone was pleasant as the American technician tends to be, helpful, respectful. But I had a terrible feeling at the end of the first day's shooting that I hadn't got what I wanted, and this gnawed at me on the second day; but when I ended the picture I thought: "You know, I have been doing things incorrectly, the cheap way, the small way. This is the way to do it. You must have a boom. Everyone knows that you must have a 40-foot boom, so that you can just move down and move in—" And I hated the film. I didn't like what I did—I realized that I didn't shoot it the way I saw it. Because I had learned to see in a particular way. I had learned in documentary to cope with four-wall sets, and to light within four walls, and to *utilize* four walls, to stage within four walls—to fight the resistances—and resistance is always a part of art. Resistance means that you are reacting, that you are playing with, that you are seeing, that you are feeling, that you are pushing yourself against a force which is the force that's always present in any art, to prevent you from expressing something. Today I discover that I am split down the middle. I would like the boom, but I realize that you must have the other. I realize that there are

times in a film when you have to pick up your camera, and tell everybody to go home, and to go away into a corner with just your cameraman and maybe two people and you can shoot whole sections of the film. Or you yourself pick up the camera . . . because of a certain movement you want to get, you feel it and dream it, you see it in your mind and you can't explain it. You should be able to do it, and you *can* do it when you leave Hollywood. The American technician is not unfair, because you can choose your people—you can choose them and they do respect you when you try to do something. They are not stupid. They do react to a script which tries to say something, but in Hollywood I think there's a self-consciousness—the studios are still here, you can see the smoke stacks off in the distance, and so you must leave the area.

But in the end I think the problem comes back to material. The films can be made, if you have the material, and I think that where the idea film-maker gets his material is most relevant.

SANDERS: What do you mean by material?

KERSHNER: By material I mean you can't go out and buy a novel, you can't buy a play that's been proven successful. I think that you have to develop original material, and this is essential, and this is what I think we have to talk about. How do you get original material—how do you get talented people to have faith in you, and you have faith in them and yet work out an arrangement, paying them, and spend as much time as is necessary to work on original material for film.

LAMBERT: If writers are going to be tempted to work speculatively with a director on a project they really want to do, it is very difficult to work in that way unless you really feel that there is some chance of something coming of it. There is nothing psychologically worse than to feel it will be an absolute miracle if anything ever happens. This is one reason why comparatively few talented writers will work that way. The second factor is that unlike many of the film industries in Europe there's no tradition here of a lot of good writers feeling that they are welcome in the movies. For example in Italy someone like Moravia can work in the movies and feel relatively satisfied with what he does there, in France someone like Marguerite Duras, whom I don't happen to like, is nevertheless kind of invited into the films. Now this doesn't happen here. Of course talent is indeed invited, but what happens when the invitation is accepted is something else. For example Faulkner was here, but worked on nothing, and Nathaniel West worked in films but on B-pictures.

HOUSEMAN: I think that the single most serious problem that Hollywood has faced in the last few years, in the last 15 years, is the search for original film material, and I don't mean by this that it all has to be invented from zero. But inducing a studio to do something that is not already a success in another medium is the greatest single obstacle one has to overcome. And that becomes a vicious circle because then it is not only brand names and successful packages that you're dealing with—the whole style of working in the movie industry becomes conditioned by working on successful material. I know of a good writer who came to this town cracking with the desire to create movies and now ten years later he earns $150,000 a picture and it would not occur to him to work on material which was not a smash hit in another medium.

SANDERS: His agent is putting him up to it.

HOUSEMAN: This friend of mine doesn't need an agent to tell him.

LAMBERT: I don't think it's a question of agents. Whether a man is an established Hollywood movie writer or an outsider the obstacles to getting a studio to accept let alone encourage original work are enormous. You can get a writer whose credits are approved of, or you can have another kind of writer, but it doesn't make any difference.

HOUSEMAN: But no one wants it, Gavin—the directors don't want it, the backers don't want it.

KERSHNER: But this is where I feel we can say there is hope: I think the directors *do* want

it. I have talked to directors who do want it.

HOUSEMAN: But the majority of directors do not want it.

KERSHNER: I think that the ideal thing is to work with a writer. Let the writer work with a director, not the producer, in the conventional sense of producer as someone who sets a deal and doesn't work creatively. This is what they do in Italy, and in France.

HOUSEMAN: I'll tell you where else it was done. It was done right here for about seven years in television—because television couldn't afford to buy the big successful packages, and had to create original material. The result was that a whole crop of very talented writers and very good young directors all grew up in a tremendous state of excitement, creating almost weekly, under terrible conditions of hurry, and so the work was not always perfect, but there was enormous energy and vitality. Now all these have become fat cats and are all now back in the same pattern, wanting to do only the big pictures. All this has happened in ten years.

KAEL: Wasn't *Splendor in the Grass* an original?

HOUSEMAN: Yes, it was.

KAEL: Let's pass over that.

HOUSEMAN: There's no inherent virtue in the fact that something is an original.

KAEL: No that's just the point I was making —it's the approach to the medium. I do think that Hollywood is sometimes getting the wrong writers—there's probably an enormous number of talented kids, all over the country who simply feel there's no chance to get into movies, so that you are getting tired television hacks, and they are writing the dialogue for great expensive productions.

SANDERS: I don't entirely agree. I think that writing is the one channel for getting into Hollywood. It is the one area that is comparatively open to anyone who can pick up a pencil and paper.

YOUNG: Irvin, some time ago we talked about a picture you wanted to make and you said that you had got some money together from your earnings in television and you had invested this in a writer to maintain him on some kind of salary to give you a script. Is this what it takes? Is it an economic problem of finding some way *yourself* to get the money together so that it's simply your own personal risk? Or has it not also something to do with the general culture—the attitude towards picture-making in this country, which requires the employer-employee relationship? Going back to what Gavin said, there appears to be this perfectly reasonable unwillingness to spend a great deal of time speculatively developing a script.

LAMBERT: What I meant was not an unwillingness on the part of writers to speculate, but an unwillingness to speculate in movies. A writer willing to speculate would rather go away and write a novel, which he knows he can do his own way, and has a reasonable chance of getting published, than to speculate on writing a movie which may never see the light of day, and for which he may never get any money.

KAEL: I know a number of very good writers who were bumming around Hollywood—you know, Graves and Spender and Shorer. Really first-rate writers who get tired of driving cabs, working as bartenders. A young American breaking into the movie industry as a writer has an extraordinarily difficult time.

YOUNG: Well, I wonder if we could approach this from the other end? We could assume that if there were the right kind of material, there would be a desire among some film-makers, even if perhaps not among most, to use such material. Can we talk about the audience's desire to have that kind of material?

HOUSEMAN: Before you get to that there is an extremely characteristic thing, it seems to me, something that has happened, that we all know: think how very few American films, even among the good ones, have a signature. This has something to do with the organization of the studios and the releasing companies. But also, as you were about to say, it has a lot to do with the audience. There is a very strong resistance to individual statements in American pictures

while on the other hand among the worst European picture-makers—they are not all good, God knows, but there is nearly always some kind of personal statement, and this seems very hard to inject into American pictures. I don't know why.

YOUNG: I asked the question about audiences because I think there is considerable evidence that American audiences would like to see that kind of personal statement in American films, and there is not very much evidence that they don't want it. They would much prefer American film-makers' statements in American films than foreign film-makers' statements about foreign subjects.

LAMBERT: When you talk about audiences in this sense, what sort of audiences do you mean?

YOUNG: I mean art-house audiences, more or less, but organized in such a way that they would provide a big enough public for a modestly budgeted film.

LAMBERT: I see, because I would have thought that there was some evidence that this audience did not like the films of Orson Welles, for example.

YOUNG: But that was some time ago.

KAEL: I think that a lot of us who have been in theater management for a number of years find that it is the fault of the distribution rather than of the audience. I, for example, ran *Touch of Evil* six times and packed the house every night of each run. This was by working out my own publicity, and I did the same with *Night of the Hunter*—and all sorts of films that had been completely thrown out into the blue. This was also true of *Member of the Wedding*. I'm sure if *The Hoodlum Priest* were played in repertory art houses now it would do well, because after all people did not get a chance to see it properly.

YOUNG: I agree. There is evidence of this kind now, whereas there was not ten years ago. There are a few exhibitors now who take the pains—and whenever they take the pains there is this response, no matter what part of the country they're working in. They have to create, first of all, an audience and then create a trust in that audience for their taste so that each new film in that theater does not have to be sold all over again from scratch.

LAMBERT: There I think you are getting to the main thing, which is the creation of an audience. The trouble is that most of the time we are dealing with a machinery that is very lazy and resents having to create an audience and just throws most films out in the same way and at what it conceives to be the same kind of audience.

KAEL: I was struck by the symposium published recently by the *Saturday Review*, in which it was said that the public's interest in the foreign film is largely snobbish. This is being blind. People are interested in these films because they are fresh and new and different and they object to the same old stale American movies. Of course it is snobbish on certain occasions, but there is a genuine interest.

ZINNEMANN: Miss Kael, I was there at that symposium and only two people in the group thought that foreign-film interest was snobbish. Three out of the six felt that foreign films on the whole were very, very good, and said so. I think it's only fair to defend my colleagues; Stanley Kramer, for example, said very strongly how he had responded to European films and Frankenheimer said much the same.

YOUNG: Well, it would seem to me that the experiences of the people around this table indicate that there are certain limitations on their work which have nothing whatsoever to do with audiences' tastes; that the studios' methods of buying material has probably had very little to do with current taste and that the distributors' methods of selling films has nothing to do with tastes. Firstly, is this the case, and secondly, if it is, is it at all possible that film-makers in concert might have some effect on these limitations?

KERSHNER: I think on the whole we are dealing with an audience which has been conditioned to receive certain kinds of material. It is a circle, and the only way to break out of the circle, I think, is through the art house that builds its own audience. Gradually the effect of this will be felt. I talked, for example, to an

art-house owner in St. Louis, a woman, who happened to love films very much. She also packs them in; she takes the trouble to write little brochures, which she mails out on very cheap pulpy paper—she writes why a particular film is significant and does it quite charmingly and naïvely, but she packed them in. I think it has to start on this grass-roots level.

KAEL: I think, in fact, almost every theater in the United States is potentially an art house these days. A tremendous number of small-town theaters are prepared to run foreign films whenever they think there's an audience for them, even occasionally the drive-ins.

LAMBERT: But will they publicize their works in the right way? We should not forget that audiences in Europe are just as preconditioned as audiences here when it comes down to a question of publicity. Many of the films which make millions in the U.S. also make millions abroad. In fact, I think, the biggest money-makers in Italy, for example, are the spectacles. Steve Reeves films, for example, which we see dubbed into English.

HOUSEMAN: This was true until recently but now *La Dolce Vita* is the biggest money grosser in Italy. There was a time when Rossellini's films were dying like dogs and *Quo Vadis*, for example, was making lots of money.

LAMBERT: I meant, simply, that some of the big American spectacle films like *Ben-Hur* which do extremely well in this country have similiar successes abroad.

HOUSEMAN: I think Gavin has just put his finger on an extremely important and fairly sinister thing. A great many of the inhibitions on American pictures are erroneous perhaps but nevertheless are rooted in a conviction on the part of the big American companies that the foreigners like simple-minded action pictures and that they do not like realistic pictures of American life.

LAMBERT: It's awfully sad, because if instead of saying, look we can make a $15,000,000 picture, because we'll get at least half of it back in Europe and elsewhere, if only they could say, we will make a $300,000 or $500,000 film because we can get half of that money back there too. If they would say this it would help a great deal.

YOUNG: Surely the evidence is there that they *can* say that. Is it not the case that the cheaper, more thoughtful, well-done films, have done quite well in Europe?

LAMBERT: They have done quite well, but of course if you are dealing in purely financial terms, it is far more interesting to spend, say $5,000,000 on a picture and get back, say, $20-000,000 if you are a financier, than to put out a low-budget picture, and get back a relatively small amount.

YOUNG: Then again, an exhibitor will prefer a film which will make more money for him. Most exhibitors think that the film has to do all the work; that the names of the cast, or director in the case of a foreign film, will themselves be the attraction, rather than anything he says or does about it. All he has to do is the very minimum of getting that name to the public through the press as an advertisement and he thinks that is all he can do. The thing that undoubtedly is open for change is this assumption he makes, that there is really nothing he can do about a film which will be as important as the names which are associated with it. Because in those cases where an exhibitor has made a personal effort the rewards have been substantial. There are of course a lot of art-house exhibitors who prefer not to see the film they are showing, so they won't be held accountable for it.

HOUSEMAN: That brings up the question that the majority of foreign pictures that we admire and that have done well in this country have been pictures which contain material which an American company, including an American releasing company, would simply not permit you to exhibit. I have just had a week with the Legion of Decency, and let's not underestimate for a moment the terrifyingly stultifying effects of these organized and successful attempts to inhibit any kind of honest statement about American life. They are there to see that you don't make it. Whereas foreign films have a refreshing freedom of comment on social, eth-

ical, and personal relations in the modern world.

LAMBERT: How much do the exceptions prove?

HOUSEMAN: Preminger's exceptions for example *[Moon Is Blue, Man With The Golden Arm]* have not proved a thing.

LAMBERT: Don't they prove something if they make money? For after all one of the major arguments against taking a film out without a code seal is that you cut yourself off from a large part of the audience, and this would come off your returns.

KERSHNER: I wasn't aware of any of this until I actually ran up against it. They will ask you to submit a script before you shoot and they will recommend changes or in certain cases as I discovered they will recommend that you not do the picture, because they won't pass it. I made a little film called *Stakeout On Dope Street*, if you will pardon the title (I wasn't responsible for it)—we took the script to the code office and after reading it they said: Absolutely not! You can not make this picture! We will never pass it—we will condemn it. And I said, But, but, but . . . there is nothing wrong in it. It is very simple—it just mentions a few things which have not been mentioned before, or have not been shown before, and it will be done with such good taste—I was already precensoring, you see, "Good taste"—horrible word. But they said: Don't make it. That's what we recommend. We will never pass this. So I marched out and made it, which of course you have to do—but always precensoring, always saying things like "I hope we can slip by." But I'm not going to give in to them; we made it, brought it up to them, they looked at it and they squirmed, and they said "Well, you did it with good taste." And I knew at that moment that I had failed. [Laughter] But it is so easy to be intimidated, and of course the worst intimidation is the intimidation inside—when you say: "Well, I might get away with it, but why take a chance?" Or you begin to do it and then you say: "Well, I won't go this far, I will not look in this little crevice of life."

LAMBERT: You start being your own censor.

KERSCHNER: That's the worst, that's when you're finished as an artist—but who says we are artists anyway.

YOUNG: We are degenerating into the tacit position that no one at this table is doing what he wants to do.

KAEL: Is that a false assumption?

KERSHNER: Absolutely.

YOUNG: Knowing the people at the table, I consider that this is undoubtedly a false assumption. Fred—you've not yet had an opportunity to say what you are doing at present.

ZINNEMANN: Actually I have been far more interested in what the others were saying, because I thought it was really much more important.

I think that John put it very well, and I concur with what he said. I am making my pictures as I want to make them, to the best of my ability, hoping that the audience will like them, and fortunately for me, in some cases they do. In that sense I don't have the problems that some of you people have. It was simple for me, in the sense that perhaps by luck or by accident I was stubborn enough to fight the front office, and I was tricky enough to be able to get away with it, and with a blind, naïve, stupid persistence insisting on what I wanted to do. And there were times when I was extremely unpopular, and fortunately was stupid enough not even to realize it.

KAEL: Is this not just a little disingenuous? I happen to think that you [Zinnemann] are the greatest director in Hollywood, but I have very little interest in seeing your next picture.

ZINNEMANN: I am not being disingenuous. I am telling you exactly how I feel.

KAEL: But how about the rest of us—do we all feel the same way? [Pause]

LAMBERT: No, I don't feel exactly like that . . . I would qualify that. From my point of view it is not a question of my not doing what I want to do—I think one usually starts out doing what one wants to do, but one does not always end up achieving it, partly because of things which one simply fails to do oneself and partly through external pressures, accidents and

so on. I would not say personally that the problem on the whole is not being able to do, just like that, what one wants to do; it is not being able to do what one wants to do in the way one wants to do it, which is a different thing. You see it is *not* that there is nothing around—there is a great deal around. There are many things which often look very interesting, both from the point of view of the material and the people involved. But in films, not only are so many personalities involved, all the psychological factors are so complex, but also you never quite know when the curtain from New York is going to come down—or wherever that curtain may happen to be pulled from. You can go into things that really look marvellous, from the start. The subject is good, the people around you are good, and then suddenly pressures declare themselves. You have to gauge the odds as well as the material.

YOUNG: Fred—I would be interested in knowing how you decide which film you will do next—what sort of decision is this?

ZINNEMANN: Well, it's probably just the same as happens with John. I read some material, a story, a play or whatever, or I see something happen, and it moves me, and I think it would make a good movie, and I want to make it. If it does not excite me I would not want to make it. If it does move me, I try to transmit my feelings to the audience. If I am indignant I try to transmit indignation. If it makes me feel compassionate, I try to communicate that feeling, and it is really this transmission of my emotions to my audience which interests me. And therefore I would never consider a project, no matter how successful it is, or how much money it has made, if it doesn't move me. Because then I would not know how to move an audience.

YOUNG: Do you find that given that starting point, which seems to be ideal, do you find that beyond that you are able to make the films in the way you wish to?

ZINNEMANN: I do at the moment, simply because I was fortunate enough to make a few pictures which made money. But I swear to you that if I make two pictures in a row which are flops, the temperature will drop to zero, and I will not be able to make films in that way. It is a purely temporary arrangement. It is a function of the economic success of my

Irvin Kershner's HOODLUM PRIEST.

pictures. If they think you are a good risk they will give you more latitude. If they think on the other hand that you have slipped, they will give you less latitude. It is that simple.

YOUNG: This latitude is given by those who finance your films, is that right?

ZINNEMANN: Yes, because they have a record of the money pictures have made. If they feel that even although certain ideas of yours appear to be "far out," you have in the past made money with your pictures, and they let you go with the picture.

YOUNG: Where would this pressure show itself?—If for example you made two flops.

ZINNEMANN: It would show itself all the way through. It would become difficult to get a job, and if I got a job I would find suddenly that many actors were wary of working with me. I would find that I would no longer get the sets I wanted, I would get a shorter schedule, a much smaller budget, and so on. I am not being cynical—this is how things are, and I have no quarrel with it. From a certain point of view it probably makes sense.

YOUNG: Well, what part of your judgment about the selection of a subject, which you will film, is an estimate of how the finished film will be taken by an audience?

ZINNEMANN: Perhaps you won't believe me, but I try not to think of that; I can only say that various things that I have tackled have looked very hopeless to people up front, and they needed considerable persuasion. If you will forgive me for talking about myself, in the case of *The Nun's Story,* for instance, we had great difficulty. We went to Paramount with it, and one of the people there said: Who wants to see a documentary about how to be a nun?

YOUNG: I think we might understand this more if we knew of some projects which you had not been able to make, because of this sort of battle with the studios. Do you have any examples of that sort in the last few years?

ZINNEMANN: I can't think of any offhand, but I did lose a couple on the way. I did actually have terribly tough going with a Graham Greene novel, which I thought was very interesting—the last one he did *[Burned-Out Case],* which I thought was a wonderful book, and I was very very interested in doing that. But I met tremendous resistance to doing it. And I finally had to give up.

KAEL: Well, that helps—because what I would like to question is that a man of your taste and ability, having absolute freedom, would be what you have been doing, and that's where I think that perhaps some of these internal pressures we have been speaking of come into play, the internal censorship. It would be marvellous to be in your position, in this industry, and not have any fears.

ZINNEMANN: But actually you know, I am happy to say that there are quite a number of people who are in that position—for instance John is in that position.

KAEL: Are you?

HOUSEMAN: Yes and no. No one is entirely in that position.

ZINNEMANN: . . . you know Billy Wilder, William Wyler . . . any number are in that position. . . . Stevens.

HOUSEMAN: But I think Wilder, for example, so long as he continues to make comedies *[Some Like It Hot, The Apartment, One Two Three]* has the freedom, but Wilder might easily come up next week with something quite different, and I think they would be very nervous. For example when he made *Lost Weekend* at Paramount he was condemned . . . exiled, thrown out.

LAMBERT: And particularly when he made *Ace in the Hole,* which was in a way one of his most personal films; that scared everyone.

HOUSEMAN: One of the major differences between ourselves and foreign picture-makers, which we have not mentioned, is that in the history of the arts, you very rarely find a completely favorable creative climate in a period of recession. And unfortunately the American movie industry is not expanding, is not dynamic, but is in a constant condition of retreat and shrinkage. This does not make for a very congenial climate in which to make pictures. In Italy, due to a number of political and economical and cultural reasons, from a very small industry movie-making has burgeoned into a

massive success, from an economic point of view, and within that expanding economy it is comparatively easy to make the kind of pictures you want to make.

LAMBERT: This is absolutely true. As Fred was saying in his own case, he had made a couple of pictures which made money and after that he was given latitude, and could do what he wanted . . . this is a kind of microcosm of the larger thing. When an industry as a whole is doing well, everyone feels confident and more in the mood to give opportunity.

HOUSEMAN: Yes—and expanding. The industry is doing, in a sense, perfectly well, but for the wrong reasons. Also—I don't think this is true of you, but I think it is true of a lot of us—I am not sure that we have the nerve, or the integrity, or the willingness to go through what some of these people have gone through. For example, I have a friend who worked with Fellini on *La Dolce Vita* and the fact is that Fellini didn't eat very well for about two and a half years when he was peddling the idea for the film from one crooked financier to another. He finally found one, and as you perhaps know he has hardly made a nickel on this—the biggest money-maker in the history of Italian films, and he made no more than his original salary. But the point is that he was willing for two and a half years to earn nothing while he stayed at home fretting until this picture came through. There are very few of us whose standard of living would permit us to go through this kind of devotion.

LAMBERT: And then of course you think of someone like Buñuel, who has been sitting it out in various ways for about thirty years. There was a time when he couldn't do a movie at all, he was doing jobs like supervising Spanish versions at MGM.

YOUNG: What effect can a film-maker have on a film if he doesn't leave it—a director or producer? When he sees it through the answer print, what happens when he doesn't let the distributor take over?

ZINNEMANN: Of course you *can* get the contractual right of two previews, and if you get this you are over the hill because it means you have two successive previews, in which the picture is cut exactly the way you want it, and after two previews you are usually close to home.

HOUSEMAN: You have to fight to put it into your contract. They will resist like mad. . . .

ZINNEMANN: It is a question of how badly they want you.

LAMBERT: I didn't know that—I thought directors were limited to the right of first cut. [General babble, the sense of which is that the right of first cut has become more or less meaningless, since in certain cases the film was projected only for the director and his editor, and was then put back into dailies for the producer.]

YOUNG: Kent has made a film *The Exiles* which was not at all made by the permission of anyone, except himself. It is not clear to me what happens to such a film when it is finished.

MACKENZIE: Well, it isn't clear to me right now either. We expect to try to get a New York theater opening, to have some distribution for it in Europe. Of course it is never going to make very much money, although there is a possibility of a television sale in this country, since it is more of a documentary than a theatrical picture.

LAMBERT: How long is it?

MACKENZIE: 77 minutes at present, but it will probably be around 72 when we're finished. But I have felt throughout this whole discussion that I must associate with a different circle than most of you. I am not of Hollywood, although I work in it, and aside from the fact that I owe a lot of money to people in Hollywood, I really don't identify myself with the industry as such, and my feeling about this film is that I can't be concerned about the distributors and the unions and all these things. But I just don't know enough young film-makers who have enough desire to want to do anything—I think we are creating fears, I think we are building these things in our own mind. I may be naïve about this because of course it has taken a terrible toll of me emotionally to

spend four years completing this one film, but I would do it again. I have certainly no desire to worry about any of these other problems. This may be naïve but understand that I only have made one film, and I don't know what's going to come of it yet, but I think it's this inner censorship which bothers me more than anything. I find myself doing it. And I think that the problems I have in distribution today are problems, weaknesses which I put in the film myself. It is an unfinished thing, it is something that a bunch of young guys started four years ago, and as far as I am concerned it is something that is four years old. But I can't allow myself to fear all these things. There are enough young technicians in town right now who don't belong to unions, who don't want to belong to unions, who have worked on low-budget features and all kinds of things—they can do anything technically you might want them to do. They can make any kind of shot you want, other than something which is going to take a great deal of money.

HOUSEMAN: What are you working on now? Because this does become a problem of continuity.

MACKENZIE: Oh, yes, it does. But, in my own case, while trying to put the money together for another film, I work as an editor and at other things, just to survive. But the danger here of course, is what happens to you inwardly, if you can't resist what is going on all the time. I don't know anyone in my circle who wants to make a statement—they all want to get into a position, they all want to be directors, they all want to have Cadillacs or security or something like that.

LAMBERT: But I think your attitude is the opposite of naïve, it's very shrewd, and absolutely real. I don't think anyone is being truthful who works in the system if they say they have no inner censorship whatsoever. I think we all have it, and the only problem is how far we recognize it, and how far we fight it. You know it cannot but be there, and you cannot go on breathing a kind of panic air and not realize you get a draught down your throat from time to time.

HOUSEMAN: It is partially panic, but it is also greed, because the opportunities are there. As I said, there is a terrible tendency to become nostalgic and yearn for the happy years of the Depression but certainly the terrible struggle within all young, or not so young, creative people, is against the fact that it is now extremely easy to go, even at an early age, into five-figure earnings, and what is your "creative" alternative? This is a problem which we simply did not have when we were beginning. The difference then between being very successful and not so successful was so small that it was a great deal easier to have "integrity" in the thirties than it is today.

[After this point the discussion moved on to a variety of problems concerning university film studies, apprenticeship schemes, and methods of encouraging or subsidizing short-film production in the manner of the British Experimental Film Fund, with moneys derived from the entertainment tax. It is hoped that concrete proposals along these lines can be worked out with industry and union officials in such a manner as to have some political viability, probably in connection with the establishment of an American Film Institute.]

ARTHUR KNIGHT

Curator's Choice

The Curator of Film and Tape at the Hollywood Motion Picture and Television Museum outlines his program for his new institution, which will be of immense significance to serious students of film as well as a useful public-relations enterprise for the industry.

Ever since my first visit to Hollywood, back in 1939, it seems that I have been hearing about a movie museum. I admit, therefore, to a certain skepticism when I learned that still another was being proposed a year or so ago. The American motion picture industry has traditionally been oriented toward its future, not its past. Tomorrow's picture was the one everybody talked about; yesterday's was simply an entry in the studio's profit-and-loss statement. Not only that, but plans for such a museum invariably made it sound like a cross between Madame Tussaud's and the Smithsonian Institute—wax effigies in the costumes of Marion Davies and Rudolph Valentino, Doug Fairbanks' swords hanging on the wall, Mary Pickford's curls under glass. Of the films themselves, there was little talk. Either they were too unimportant, or the public was expected to concentrate exclusively on the latest releases.

Several things have changed this in recent years. The Museum of Modern Art, with laudable persistence, has in its past quarter-century successfully spread the notion that the motion picture is indeed one of the most significant of the modern arts. Through its program of daily showings in New York and its distribution of classic films to museums, schools, and libraries throughout the country, it has gradually exploded the myth of movies as a simple, and simple-minded, entertainment. No less significant has been the impact of television, with its insatiable appetite for old films. The once-worthless old negatives, to which the studios grudgingly allocated shelf-space in their vaults, have suddenly acquired a commercial value. They live again. And as blear-eyed devotees of the late, late show will agree, many of them should never have been permitted to languish in the first place.

Sol Lesser and Eric Johnston with the Model of the Hollywood Museum.

Whatever the reason, the films—and, by extension, the tapes and kinescopes of TV shows—are central to the thinking that is going into the new Hollywood Motion Picture and Television Museum. (More recently, radio and recordings have been added to its scope—and, presumably, in the near future will also be added to its already unwieldy title.) Significantly, the only staff curator at this point is the Curator of Film and Tape. Also significant is the fact that, apart from the intricate negotiations required to set up three separate corporate organizations to build and operate the Museum, the major legal effort to date has been in the area of drawing the contracts and obtaining the clearances necessary to the acquisition of films and tapes. Happily, despite the inevitable complications, these are beginning to come through in gratifying numbers.

One such is a contract for twenty-five Buster Keaton shorts and features—the largest concentration of Keaton's work to be found anywhere. No less gratifying is the contract, recently completed, permitting us access to the vast holdings of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library. Part of the gratification arises from the fact that it is in the nature of a mutual assistance pact. With the coöperation of Sidney Solow and Consolidated Film Industries, the Hollywood Museum has undertaken to provide the Film Library with long-lasting acetates of its imperilled nitrate prints and negatives in exchange for the right to make copies for our own collection. A similar contract is even now being negotiated with Killiam-Sterling Productions, which holds a significant group of Biograph and Griffith pictures. RKO-Radio Pictures is the first major studio to agree to turn over to us prints of films made or controlled by that organization (including, of course, *Citizen Kane*). Other notable collections include Mary Pickford's and the late Cecil B. DeMille's, and numerous other individuals have either donated prints outright or given us permission to make copies.

Unfortunately, generosity is not enough. Every passing day forces the recognition that this Hollywood Museum is at least twenty years late. Pictures presented to us in good faith have crumbled to powder once the can was opened. In other cans, the film had been reduced to a sticky, runny mass, impossible to save (and actually highly dangerous to handle). One particularly heart-breaking case involved the rollicking Sennett comedy, *Mickey*, perhaps the best feature that Mabel Normand ever did. Four reels had come from the Museum of Modern Art. From another source, we obtained the entire film, but in an advanced stage of decomposition. It was our hope to cannibalize from the two prints to create a new dupe negative, and provide each party (and the Hollywood Museum) with new copies. As little as a year ago, this would have still been possible. As it is, unless from some unsuspected source still another print of *Mickey* turns up, all that remains of the film is the first four reels. But at least these have been transferred to acetate.

Still other films have come to us too warped and buckled either for printing or projection. These are turned over to Kemp Niver, the Museum's technical wizard. For almost fifteen years, Mr. Niver has been at work photographing onto celluloid the paper prints deposited by pioneer movie firms—Edison, Biograph, Vitagraph—in the Library of Congress for copyright purposes. The films that he has produced by his original and painstaking process have a steadiness and clarity that exceeds most prints obtained from dupe negatives of pictures of that period—and form one nucleus of the Hollywood Museum's film collection. But Mr. Niver has also invented a process of interleaving old pictures with strips of paper, a process that virtually arrests deterioration. All shrunken, buckled, or deteriorated films that come into the Museum for which there is any hope of future resurrection are promptly interleaved. In the meantime, he is at work on a special optical printer that will make possible the rephotographing of these films onto fresh acetate, from which projectable prints can be drawn.

The analogy may not be quite exact, but it seems to me very much as if painting, after some two thousand years, had suddenly been recognized as an art form. Some Rembrandts and Rubens turn up in mint condition, and promptly go on the walls. Others must be laboriously worked over, restored, sections repainted or even eliminated before they can be exhibited. And there are some which, through years of neglect, are so shredded and torn that the first impulse is to throw them away. But *ars longa est;* and there is always the possibility that some process, as yet undiscovered, can bring back a measure of their original beauty. That, I feel, must be the work of a museum, rather than of any individual collector. And I appeal to those collectors who may happen upon this article to permit the Hollywood Museum to copy onto acetate your precious pictures before it is too late. In exchange, we can provide you with a new print. But the critical time for nitrate stock is already upon us; and unless these transfers are made quickly, there may be nothing left of these pictures for the future.

Perhaps this is the best place to state Museum policy (or more accurately, in lieu of any other directive, *my* policy as Curator) in the acquisition of materials. Frankly, I see no point in attempting to duplicate the splendid, international collections of the Museum of Modern Art and George Eastman House in this country, or organizations like the British Film Institute and the Cinémathèque Française abroad. Ours is, specifically, a *Hollywood* museum—which to me means that we are interested primarily in the American film in all its ramifications. It means not only Griffith, Sennett, Ince, and Chaplin, but Paramount, MGM, and Universal-International; films for the Air Corps and films by Maya Deren; industrials and educationals. It means that we hope to go in depth into areas where other institutions have limited themselves to representative samplings. I hasten to add, however, that this does *not* mean that there will be no foreign films in the Museum's collection. American pictures have repeatedly been influenced by work abroad—by the early Film d'Art, by the Ufa films of the 'twenties, by postwar Italian neorealism, to name but a few. And many of our greatest stars and directors—Garbo, Dietrich, Lubitsch, Wilder—began their careers in Europe. These sources, these influences, these origins we also propose to trace in the Hollywood Museum's collection. They are part of the story of the American film.

Unlike the Museum of Modern Art, however, the Hollywod Museum does not propose to circulate its films. Indeed, all contracts are drawn specifically limiting use of the films to on-premises, educational showings. This will pertain, of course, to the daily screenings to be held in the Museum's 500-seat auditorium, where films will be programmed to supplement exhibits on display in the galleries. But it also means that the Hollywood Museum will provide research facilities for *bona fide* students and writers in which films from the collection can be privately reëxamined. Plans for the building, as prepared by William L. Pereira, concentrate these facilities in an eight-story tower, which will also house the library, the stills department, and the Museum's administrative offices. No less than five small projection rooms are contemplated for this purpose.

Still to be explored is the possibility of organizing special classes with the various guilds and unions of Hollywood, or extension courses to be offered in coöperation with the many colleges and universities in the Los Angeles area—courses to examine both the history and the techniques of the American film. Because the Museum will include two fully equipped sound stages, one for motion picture production, the other for TV, it is even possible that production workshop classes might be given. Since this might affect USC and UCLA, however, both of which currently give film workshop courses, and since the unions' attitude toward such classes must also be considered, the whole question has been turned over to a committee for further investigation. In

the meantime, the Museum's Education Consultant, T. Fred Kuper, has been meeting with representatives of the Los Angeles County schools to find out how the Hollywood Museum could best serve the needs of the elementary and high schools here. With the Museum still on the drawing board, there is complete flexibility in terms of space and facilities, and every effort is being made at this point to anticipate future needs.

Another aspect of the Museum's activity that looms large in all of our thinking might be called community service—although the community we have in mind is the entire United States. Central to this plan is an IBM "memory" machine which would record not only the films, books, stills, and memorabilia actually in the collection, but which would also stockpile information about films and collections around the world. This is a project particularly dear to Sol Lesser, the Museum's *éminence grise*. Obviously, the Museum could not begin to collect all the films ever made on medical subjects, on art, or on religion; nor would we want to. But we have already begun an international collection of catalogues on these subjects, with descriptions, technical data, and sources. All of this will be transferred to the IBM cards to provide an instantaneous reference source that will, we trust, prove the most accurate and complete in the world. Simply by writing to the Museum, a doctor, for example, can learn what films exist in any specialized field of medicine, and where they can be found —and at what cost. Not coincidentally, Colin Young's American Film Institute plan has been discussed in relation to the Museum; and at the very least, its research function—the locating and cataloguing of films of artistic and cultural merit—could readily be integrated into this phase of the Museum's work.

I realize that so far I have discussed only the *hintertreppe* aspects of the Museum, the thinking of the boys in the back room, as it were. But since, at this point, the building itself is a good two years away, while the projects and activities described above are already fairly well in hand, it seems simply a matter of first things first. Nevertheless, acquisitions are progressing steadily, with some thirty-two volunteer committees actively engaged in seeing to it that the Museum does not open its doors on bare walls. To date, perhaps the most significant single acquisition has been the Mogen Skot-Hansen collection of prescreen history, including books, slides, and animation devices dating back to the early seventeenth century. The gift of Los Angeles banker Bart Lytton, it is source material of the highest importance. To this will be added Mr. Lesser's own collection of early cameras and projectors, currently housed in the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences building. The Stills Committee, under the energetic chairmanship of George Gray, has already assembled upwards of 100,000 rare photos from private sources; while most of the major studios have granted access to their still libraries for additional material. I might add that, instead of going into dead storage, these will be on constant display, some of them blown up for wall shows, more of them screened in the galleries through closed-circuit TV.

Because the Museum hopes to—and for economic reasons, must—attract millions of tourists each year, the gallery displays inevitably will have their Disneyland aspects. *Ben-Hur's* chariot, already in the collection, will be conveniently parked so that visitors can have themselves photographed at the reins to show the folks back home. A submarine conning tower, the gift of 20th Century-Fox, will rise from a tank, while model airplanes simulate an attack against a rear-projected background. An illuminated chart will illustrate graphically the intricacies of a TV network. Enlarged models will demonstrate the Maltese Cross action in projection machines, or describe the techniques of sound recording. The Music Committee, under Johnny Green, has promised to select appropriate recordings to accompany the show in each gallery. There will be a restaurant, its various rooms designed after the set-

tings of famous films. "Come with me to the Casbah," at the Hollywood Museum, may be merely an invitation to lunch. And, of course, there will be the two sound stages, where observers may watch from behind glass the shooting of actual films or the staging of a TV program, while guides describe the details of each operation.

But this is the superficial side of the Museum, the side turned toward the casual visitor. If he wishes, he can hit all the high-lights in less than an hour. On the other hand, the displays have been designed to incorporate what architect Pereira refers to as "living storage"—exhibits in depth placed behind the high-lights. Beyond the Maltese Cross enlargement, for example, will be ranks of early projectors, all in working condition, which can be examined freely by anyone of a mechanical bent. Beyond the samples of the costumer's art will lie an exhibit of the sketches and models from which the designer works. Continuously running daylight projectors in the galleries will supplement such presentations, here with a clip of film showing the costume in use, there with another clip showing the work rooms or the fittings. Fundamentally, the purpose of the Hollywood Museum is to enhance each visitor's appreciation of the intricate art and the basic craftsmanship of films, television, radio, and recordings. For some, we recognize, the high-lights alone will more than suffice. For the serious student, however, there is no such thing as too much. It is our hope and our intention to provide within the Hollywood Museum a source of satisfaction for both; and through that, the kind of aware, informed audience that has always inspired artists to give of their best.

ALBERT JOHNSON

Interviews With Hubert Cornfield and Paul Wendkos

Among the newer Hollywood directors, two who have attracted attention during the past months have been Hubert Cornfield and Paul Wendkos. The assignment of Cornfield to a major Stanley Kramer production, "Point Blank," indicated that this young director had finally won recognition for his unique low-budget feature "The Third Voice" (1960), a thriller in the early Welles tradition. At about the same time that Cornfield began preliminaries on his new assignment, Columbia Pictures released "Angel Baby," a modest programmer which received praise from film critics as a more persuasive treatment of fanatical evangelism than Brooks' "Elmer Gantry." Its director, Paul Wendkos, had already been noticed by British critics on the staff of "Motion" as one of America's most promising film-makers, but it was not until the critical notices of "Angel Baby" were published that American critics began to take a closer look at Wendkos' work. Both Cornfield and Wendkos have been saddled with hack scripts, and perhaps

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the latter has suffered more because his assignments have encompassed such trivialities as the "Gidget" films. However, when I talked with both of these directors, their comments indicated the ironic crosscurrents of their careers, and their different outlooks on a creative future in Hollywood.—A.J.

Hubert Cornfield

I was born in Istanbul, Turkey, and brought up in France, but after spending most of my early childhood there, I was brought to New York. I went to the University of Pennsylvania and the Philadelphia School of Art, because I became extremely interested in graphic arts. After I graduated from art school, I did advertising designs in Paris, working for the 20th Century-Fox offices there. One of my posters, for *All About Eve,* attracted the attention of Skouras and he gave me my chance to work in the art department offices in New York. I guess, in technique, I followed in the footsteps of Paul Rand, Saul Bass, and in the Paris office, I knew Chabrol and Godard; we all went to art school out of frustration and made film posters. The Fox publicity department in Paris is a hotbed of film talent. Well, in New York, I became even more frustrated and left. My poster for *All About Eve* was bought by the Museum of Modern Art, and this made me feel better, but I got a job writing publicity copy for 20th and occasionally I'd read original scripts. I'd read the stuff at lunch time and the films that were made out of some of the scripts I'd read were *always* inferior to the original scripts. My father had been a film distributor so I realized that there was a whole world of serious film-makers somewhere. I finally decided to make a film myself, just for the hell of it, and I bought a secondhand Bell & Howell and started shooting in Greenwich Village. I hit upon the idea of doing a film on the color "red," and I shot and cut it myself. I was terrifically excited about it and showed it to everybody, but it was during the time of the Hollywood investigations by the House Committee on UnAmerican Activities, and everyone seemed to think it unwise of me to try to push my "red" film at that particular moment, especially since I was just *beginning.* I was very upset about this little turn of history, I remember, and I wrote a long letter to Billy Wilder explaining my situation. He seemed to be the most daring director in Hollywood, someone with sense, and I decided to go along with whatever he told me. He told me not to get discouraged, just try another color.

Hubert Cornfield preparing Bobby Darin for a scene in POINT BLANK.

I joined the Actor's Studio as a director-observer for a few months, then came out to Hollywood as a reader for Allied Artists. Spyros Skouras, on a whim, had promised to let me work on a small production if I came out. "You know, you know more than you think you do," he told me. Actually, I was terrified by people. "Call your lights!" they'd cry. Call

my lights? I didn't even know what they were talking about on the set, and I thought a director was supposed to know how to call his lights, whatever that meant, so I memorized all of the light cues and instructions in the script and finally I became the most hated guy in the world because I knew *everything*, a sort of one-man technical crew. After seeing those first rushes of the film, I knew that I was doing what I wanted to, for the first time, from a graphic, cinematic, sculptural approach, I felt that I had a contribution to make. I haven't seen what I've wanted to do since *Citizen Kane*. Welles had a language, and I wanted to develop a film language of my own, too. First of all, I had to get a Directors Guild approval, so I went to the three directors I respected most, Wilder, Wyler, and Mankiewicz, and I thought, if I have *their* approval, then I'll be all right. I got Wilder's signature—I'd never met Wyler or Mankiewicz before, but they saw Wilder's signature and signed. Wyler and I had something in common, we both have deficient hearing in our right ears, so when he gave me advice I listened like a disciple. He said, "Concentrate on the really good scenes in a script; never mind about those sequences which just show people getting in or out of cars, opening doors and all that stuff." When I started working on my first picture, I discovered that there wasn't a good scene in the script, so I concentrated on getting out of cars, opening doors and got all sorts of excellent techniques into the film. None of my films ever took more than 16 days to make; the director can be victimized by twelve highly proficient technicians. The audience wants to believe, and all one has to do is to take advantage of that and startle them every minute.

So, in 1955, I did *Sudden Danger* for Allied Artists. I had a 7-day shooting schedule for the whole thing, but I had a dog in that picture so it took 9 days and the Mirisch Brothers, who produced it, didn't speak to me for two years. They called me an "arty director." I was the youngest director of films in the United States. Then, I worked on a television remake of *Five Fingers* in 1956, called *Operation Cicero*. In 1957, I did *Lure of the Swamp* for 20th. The producer doublecrossed me on this picture—he sabotaged the final print by cutting without telling me. *Blunder Road* (1957) also for 20th, was the film which brought me my present position with Kramer. He somehow managed to remember having seen it and liked it, and I'm terribly grateful for this opportunity. It's surprising, but nobody paid any attention to any of these films, not that they're great, but there are some great moments in them; of course, *The Third Voice* is the best in many ways, but Kramer hasn't seen it yet, but there are still a huge number of exciting techniques that I'd like to use in films.

I've only been connected with low-budget films until now and when I have my screenplay finished, I discuss the parts individually with each actor and I try to explain or change whatever makes the actor uncomfortable. For instance, in a scene with three actors, I'll have a meeting with them together as well as separately; now, the individual interviews have been given over to the meaning of lines, but when actors work together I want to *hear* the meaning come across through the actor's voice. Once the actors believe what they are saying, then I pick my set-ups from their natural movements; I want them to be natural, so that the camera is choreographed according to these initial, natural movements. Once I've got this general concept set, then we shoot. When there are close-ups or I believe that the camera should move, someone's point of view must be involved. The camera should not move unless this is motivated. In close-ups, I like to stay very close to the lens. The camera moves should be used as sparingly as music, you should be conscious of neither.

What sort of bad tips can I give to new filmmakers so that every film won't be exactly like mine? *Always soak your cameras in oil!* I want to see completely cinematic films. It is certainly possible to be totally creative here in Hollywood, to do gutsy things. I think location is the most exciting thing in the world, and I

Cornfield's THE THIRD VOICE.

prefer it to studio shooting. I don't think that a great idea makes a great film necessarily, what makes the great idea a work of art is *how* it is done or said. Even the most objectionable or controversial themes can be a work of art in film terms. Bosch's paintings are totally unrealistic depictions of abominable things or Goya's war sketches can be accepted as gory, but they are still artistic triumphs. Films have a capacity for driving things home so concretely—it's like a gun, depending on where you're pointing it. I believe that every picture should be judged by the maturity of tone with which it is presented. One knows right away that *The Mark* is a mature film. On the other hand, *The Immoral Mr. Teas* is like watching an Abner Dean fantasy. I love women, mind you, but *I* went to sleep; I was bored. Everybody's nude, so what?

The advantage of working with stars is the thorough professionalism that ensues. The person who is a little hungry works harder—it sounds like a theory, doesn't it? My personal feeling is that success or the loss of a goal to strive for kills creativity. People often reach a certain point—they want to be a star—so you're a star, then one never improves. One has to continually strive. I have strange theories about stars, and don't knock them, but an actor is always dependent until he becomes a star. It's a kind of humiliation which usually makes them better actors, so when they become stars they have to recapture their masculine egos, or the starlet blossoms into herself, a total woman. I think that screenwriters should direct their own pictures, the cinematic transitions for the camera should be thought out and placed into the screenplay. The tighter the screenplay, the more dangerous the deviations from it. It's so funny, when you have so many things you'd like to say. I'd like to do a film abroad . . . I've met Clouzot, who read *The Third Voice* and at one time he was considering having me write a film for him, but I got involved elsewhere. Perhaps my greatest lesson in film making came from a talk with René Clément and he told me that the camera was like a pen. Unless you had something to say, there was no need scribbling around with it. Here, directors don't associate very much at all with actors; here we have a world of imagery—everything is unrealistic, right down to the physical aspects. When you use a real sound, it's often less effective than an artificially created sound. I guess I can only cry out help for more talent in Hollywood so that standards can rise with renewed competition and more drive.

You're going to meet Paul Wendkos? That's very interesting because our careers have crossed recently concerning *Angel Baby,* which I haven't seen, nor have I met Wendkos. Anyway, the producer Frank Wood called me up and wanted me to direct *Angel Baby.* Denis Sanders was originally supposed to do it with George Hamilton as part of the deal and Sanders had withdrawn from the film. Woods also had a signed commitment to use Debra Paget in the lead. I didn't feel that she could do this terribly demanding part, and the film was on a 17-day shooting schedule. I told Woods that this was a radically short time for a film of this scope and I got 20 days. I also got nervous about Debra Paget, but at the last moment, the producer bought out her contract and I discussed the possibility of using an unknown

in the title role. He said it was okay, and I set about trying to find someone. I had two days to find someone in New York City, but all of the girls I auditioned had that theatrical quality, a cross between Julie Harris and Geraldine Page. Then I remembered that I knew Kazan very well, a terrible thing to forget, and I called him and told him I needed an "evangelist type." He was interviewing a girl called Ava Patrides at Actors Studio and sent her over. I didn't think she was the right type, but she made my problems hers and she suddenly came up with a girl. "She's a little tall," she said, "And she's in a play down in the Village called *The Balcony*. So we sped down there—I took one look at the girl—she read for us, moved us, and later even Woods was impressed, and that's how I found Salome Jens. She is, as you've seen, the figure that makes the picture. Then, I cast Mercedes McCambridge, Henry Jones and others, started going to evangelistic meetings and headquarters to get the feel of things. When we finally went down to Florida on location, we found it to be a rainy nightmare. After six days, every problem was circumstantial, and out of the blue, I was replaced. It's terrible to have this happen. I couldn't get a job—I couldn't even get arrested. They hired Paul Wendkos, and that's all I know about him. The picture was made in 35 days, so basically I didn't have to be replaced.

Then, I went to Europe because the atmosphere was so completely negative here. *The Third Voice* opened in Paris and stayed at the Normandie for three weeks, which was unusual, and when MCA took over a big French agency, they hired me to do a screenplay of Alfred Hayes' novel, *My Face for the World to See,* as a possible starring vehicle for Jeanne Moreau. I did the script, and came back to Hollywood, where Warner Brothers hired me to do the script called *The Switch,* a mixture of *The Maltese Falcon* and *The 39 Steps.* I was writing two scripts at the same time, one in Ben Frank's restaurant from 2 a.m. to 7 a.m. (I like to work in corner tables or booths at restaurants) and on *The Switch* in the afternoon. Both Raoul Levy and Moreau loved the Hayes script and just as I was waiting for things to happen, they *did,* but in the wrong ways. Levy attempted suicide in his Paris office, and I got a call saying everything had been called off indefinitely on the Hayes project. The next day, Warners shelved my script for *The Switch.*

Suddenly, I got a call from Kramer. He was about to start work on a film and he wanted me to direct it. It was a "secret project" at the time because of its controversial subject matter, the case history of an American fascist. When I came to Kramer, he said, "I want you to know it's going to be your picture not mine. You'll be casting it, cutting it, everything. I'm not coming on the set. I've found that it's to my advantage for a film to be one man's concept. I wasn't always this way, but I've changed and possibly, if I were still only producing, I might not have changed. Even on major points, if you feel strongly enough about it, I'll be the one to back down."

Now *that's* a terribly rare attitude in this industry and, for me, a very moving thing. I've never heard anything like that. Any subject can be made in an exciting, cinematic way. I believe that a film-maker's prime concern is to insure the excitement of the spectator every ticking second that goes by and that goes for every aspect of technique, but that technique can only be unified and held together by remaining faithful to the director's original intention. Film is still a very intricate, complex fusion of all these facets. What I feel that film itself has over other art forms is the direct emotional experience, where one is victimized by the coördinative, creative efforts of the talents involved—no other art form has that. If the film is good, *you're* in it, it involves you entirely, very much as music does. How long, the film-makers must ask themselves, how long can one stand the music of visuals in a particular shot?

Paul Wendkos

I'm from Philadelphia. I went to the University of Pennsylvania and was always enormously interested in films. During my first year in college I became involved in analyzing mass communication techniques and after graduation went to the School of Mass Communications at Columbia University for further studies in this field. At the same time, I attended classes in film history and aesthetics at the New School and was very much inspired by Lewis Jacobs, who formed most of my values of form and content in film-making. After this I worked on documentary films, mostly for the State Department, and three or four of these films were exhibited at Edinburgh. I soon tired of this, though. I felt that dramatic documentary films were too limiting; I needed fictional reality to say what or how, I wanted to experiment and stretch out my ideas. The excitement of creating imaginative stories on film took hold of me. I'd learned so much and I wanted to start using what I'd learned.

In 1956, I made an independent film, *The Burglar,* which Columbia bought. All of it was filmed in Philadelphia and Atlantic City; it had many cinematic, formalistic moments, particularly in the intercutting of a train's movements with a rape sequence, but what I was really trying to say about people victimized by society didn't quite come off. Possibly it was my fault, possibly not. It was my first film and a failure of inexperience and ambitious aspirations. There is, however, a dignity to making your own mistakes. You know the usual Hollywood story. To make something that you want to, that's the problem. I work out a scene very carefully and within that framework of reference, I rearrrange, mold it, there's nothing inflexible. It isn't pure improvisation in the *Shadows* sense of the word. Of course, Welles had the most profound impact on my style, and I've taken some of the fluid camera approach and theatrical flair and montage excitement found in his first two films. Kazan also, David Lean, the strong stylists who seem to stick to a sort of methodology of film that I like—Litvak's *Decision Before Dawn* also moved me.

My second film, *The Case Against Brooklyn,* was a gambling exposé story, a creation of mood with no core or character. I was preoccupied with mastering the Hollywood apparatus and being determined to overcome it. The final result was an enormously skilled thing, from a craftsman's point of view. The Hollywood machine, the technical brilliance, is like a gigantic orchestra that must be controlled. As for *Tarawa Beachhead,* a popular war story, it gave me more scope with its battle scenes; it taught me how to manipulate masses of people in an outdoor action picture with a fresh approach and a strong desire to make clichés fresh. I was always storing up ideas. These were my formative years of challenge and anxiety. At that time, there was an excitement in discovering new ways, new patterns of achieving surface effects. Then I did *Gidget,* a nice little family comedy, but, unlike the novel from which it was adapted, totally without depth. *Gidget* allowed me to

Paul Wendkos (right) directing Henry Jones and Joan Blondell in ANGEL BABY.

experiment further and master the cinematic form, but after this, I began to rebel, to want to amalgamate this form.

Face of a Fugitive was handed to me. Again, with a trite piece of material, I elicited somehow a strong interest in form, I think what the critics notice in it is a deepening of my control of the medium. Europeans are far more sensitive to style and form than Americans as far as films are concerned. The first and last sequences in *Face of a Fugitive* were quite exciting as pure experiments in cinema. I'm sure that its cinematic impact is what moves the spectators. I did *Battle of the Coral Sea,* another war picture, offering more experience and scope; the escape at the end was the best thing in it, really.

Angel Baby was done during the big strike and the studios were busy laying off their inactive contracts. One morning I got a mysterious phone call for help. I didn't particularly like the script, but I accepted. When I look back upon it, I think of the fantastic audacity of even accepting it. Whatever I achieved on *Angel Baby* was the result of having learned much from previous films. There was a tremendous amount of improvisation in the acting and shooting of the sequences, and a lot of fighting with the producers. The latter were out of money, they were totally unqualified to go on location with the film. Fortunately, I had a marvelous production assistant and assistant director, and finally, I had trouble editing the film the way I wanted to and never got a satisfactory budget on the production. Frankly, I think there is a much better picture in *Angel Baby* than we finally got. The writing gave an obliqueness to it, there are too many sermon scenes and vague characterizations, and the last miracle sequence, well, I desperately fought with the producers about this. Salome Jens' sudden ability to speak was explicable because of her trauma, and I decided to make the last sequence a symbolic scene—the inevitable triumph of innocence. Out of the rubble of everything that Angel Baby (Jens) stands for, the cataclysm and disaster of that incident, her innocence triumphs because of being able to heal that boy. The producer felt that the scene should imply that it really *was* a miracle. "I believe that!" he told me emphatically. "Those people can cure cancer!"

Anyway, I do believe that *Angel Baby* is flawed, despite its moments of real excitement, mostly those scenes in which Salome appears. She has an unerring instinct, all she needed was confidence and a climate to create in. I only had to be an audience for her. She was in the cast when I took over the film, and I had to adjust to the cast. I wanted the relationship between George Hamilton and Mercedes McCambridge to be opened up much more, it's one of the most intriguing parts of the script, but this was not pursued, so that what happened is that Jens' performance makes the film much bigger in scope than it perhaps was intended to be.

Salome Jens in Paul Wendkos' ANGEL BABY.

Then, I did *Gidget Goes Hawaiian*. I blew up in the middle of it and walked out, but when I got certain script changes made and a cast that was at least workable, I dressed the whole thing up into a slick work. It came off, we went to Hawaii to film it and it really was a fun picture to do. Now, I'm desperately unhappy, doing some television direction which only allows for flashiness. One can become a craftsman and lose his talent, which happens much too often in Hollywood.

I have offbeat tastes. One film I'd love to do is Jan De Hartog's *The Inspector* and also films on Styron's *Set This House on Fire* and *Lie Down in Darkness*. The latter could be a sort of an American *La Dolce Vita*. John Hersey's *The Child Buyer* also appeals to me cinematically as an allegorical satire—these I'd like to do, provocative films that say something about society. I'm looking for themes or properties that fulfill that theme and I've never had a chance to do these. I feel that I'm ready to make these kinds of films that I believe in. Whenever I think of how superb a stylist Lean became, I love films even more because I know how profound a medium it can be. Films like *Pather Panchali* have shown this. Why stay in Hollywood and fight them on their terms? I love films too deeply and passionately to deny myself the possibility of doing them with emotion. The only alliance between *Private Property* and *Hiroshima Mon Amour* was the cost. As for the "New Wave," it's not new, it only involves people who are emotionally committed to what they're doing. The problems the young guys face in this town are staggering, being harassed by the unions, you can never freely and artistically express yourself in this town. Not unless you have your own money like the men who did *The Savage Eye*, and look how stupidly that was received by the critics over here. Hollywood is the entertainment capital of the world, only once in a while can this entertainment aspire to art. *L'Avventura* is the kind of film I'd like to make—to say something profoundly and be proud of it. Why shouldn't this sort of film be done in Hollywood? When you've been sucking on the corporate tit, you get fat and dull—the studio can often take an exciting film and make it stupefyingly dull. Cassavetes is a rebel, I'm a little more bitter. I can't come to terms with Hollywood; I must leave. That's why I'm going to England where the opportunity seems to have come forth. Studios here have tired old men, squares, used-up—what common denominator does Cassavetes have with them? What common experience can they share? Nothing! I hope he succeeds—it'll break new ground for the new, upcoming film-makers. Any one who can function in this town can only come to terms with it. Kramer is the only man who has guts. Nobody in this town would have touched *Judgment at Nuremberg* and I'm proud of it. He's an impresario. It's not all just Hollywood's fault, there are other interior menaces that have grown into ogres over the years: the star system, police power, unions—frankly, I think even the Poles have more cinematic freedom than we do.

I'm sure a great deal of tension comes out of the enormous cost problems in making Hollywood films. We're just too over-organized, a monolithic corporate structure, crushing everyone.

I'm terrifically excited about going overseas. Even a *bad* English picture excites me. I don't mind doing a comedy if it has content, it's a nice change of pace. I don't know, just to maintain my sanity, I've been contented to be a virtuoso of the camera and hope that something I'm excited about turns out to be good. Here, I need an army behind me to create—even what happens to John [Cassavetes] is an abnormal thing for Hollywood. He has a real flair and has to stay away from commercial values. Just because *Too Late Blues* was made by a Hollywood studio will probably give it a hard way to go. Sometimes, I think that whatever moves and touches people is potentially commercial. Boredom is the thing to avoid. You know what I mean: those big, ponderous films you forget five minutes after leaving the theater.

WILLIAM PECHTER

Abraham Polonsky and *Force of Evil*

In 1949, a writer, whose experience, with the exception of two previous screenplays and two unmemorable novels, had been primarily in radio, made an adaptation of an unsuccessful, journalistic novel to the screen, and directed a film of it. The event would not seem to be a particularly auspicious one nor much of a novelty for Hollywood, where every other day finds one hack adapting the work of another hack. Nor would it have been much more promising to know that the film made use of several elements that were sufficiently familiar —the bad-good guy involved in the rackets who finally goes straight, the ingenue who tries to reform him, etc. Yet, apparently, to have known all this was not to know enough. How else to account for the fact that out of it all was created an original, moving, and even beautiful work, whose only tangency with clichés was at the point at which it transformed and transcended them? I think it is accounted for by that phenomenon which never ceases to be somehow both inexplicable and unpredictable: the presence of an artist.

But the event was, perhaps, not quite so unpredictable as I may, somewhat Hollywoodishly, have made it sound. The artist's name was Abraham Polonsky, and his film was *Force of Evil;* previously, he had written the original scenario for the film *Body and Soul. Body and Soul* did not lack acclaim; although independently produced, it won an Academy Award, and was financially successful. *Force of Evil* was without acclaim or appreciation; noticed only by the British film periodicals, it was allowed to die its quiet death, a gangster film with only muted violence, a love story without romantic apotheosis, a Hollywood film without the Happy Ending. Both *Sight and Sound* and *Sequence* had cited it as among the most original films of its year, and it still occasionally crops up in catalogues of neglected works. Lindsay Anderson, in his close analysis of the last sequence of *On the Waterfront* which appeared in *Sight and Sound* several years ago, invoked *Force of Evil* as foil to that film's operatic dishonesty. The habitual British reader may have caught the aptness of the comparison; for the American one, it must have been merely a little baffling.

In theme and meaning, *Body and Soul* and *Force of Evil* form an extraordinary unity. In each, the hero, played in both cases with a combination of tough cynicism and urban dreaminess by the late John Garfield at his most characteristic, allows himself to become involved with certain forces of corruption, only, finally, to revolt against them, and attempt to wrench himself free. In both films, the hero is not moved to this final breach without first having caused some irrevocable violence to those most close to him, and both films end not with some cheap and easy redemption, but deep in *Angst* and ambiguity. "What can you do? Kill me? Everybody dies," are the final words of *Body and Soul,* as the fighter says them to the gambler whose fight he has refused to throw. The effect is not entirely pessimistic; there is a certain heroic implication in the fighter's assertion of his moral triumph, inalterable even in death; still, the fact remains that a life is not this casually disposed of, and the audience demands some compensation for the lack of final Uplift. This it got, in *Body and Soul,* in the physical excitement of the prizefight scenes, photographed so dynamically by James Wong Howe on (!) roller skates, and in the reliable familiarity of the fundamental story line: ambitious slum boy battles way up to success. It is the kind of story that

allows the audience the illicit thrill of a vicarious participation in the somewhat unscrupulous rise of the hero without the guilt that belongs properly to him. So, despite the frequently rich and even lyrical language of the film, its often striking images of city life, and the sense of flexible and sensitive human relationships which managed to cluster about the success story's rigid central structure, despite, that is to say, the presence of artistry, it was officially recognized by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences as a work of art.

Force of Evil is not so immediately likeable a film; it is without such direct compensations for its underlying sadness. Unlike the fighter of *Body and Soul*, Joe Morse, the hero of *Force of Evil*, is not so simply and understandably the product of social determinations. We first see him as a successful lawyer; he is not fighting to escape poverty, but to annex greater wealth. Nor is he unaware of the nature of his involvement, or without moral understanding. One is never certain that the fighter of *Body and Soul* is wholly aware of his moral predicament; but Joe Morse acknowledges full responsibility, without even pleading the excuse of weakness. By his own admission, he is "strong enough to get a part of the corruption, but not strong enough to resist it." But this is not so much weakness as a perversion of strength, a defect not in quantity but in kind. The progress of *Force of Evil* is that of the painfully gradual burgeoning of a moral imagination—if you prefer, a conscience. It is not miraculously achieved by romantic love, but only attained after the death of Joe's older brother, whom he had tried both to advance and protect within the racket in which they become involved. It is the relationship of the two brothers which is the central love story of the film—the Freudian "family romance"—a love thwarted mutually by guilt, and ending in anguish. In terms of plot, the film ends utterly without stereotypic satisfactions: the older brother is killed; Joe is about to confess to the police, and inevitably to be punished; there is no final, solipsistic kiss. "I decided to help," are Joe's last words as the film concludes, after he has found his dead brother's battered body. It is a moment entirely free from the pieties which customarily attend such a regeneration, nor has it any of that sense of straining to engage some good, gray abstraction like "Society," which hangs so heavily over the last sequence of *On the Waterfront*. *Force of Evil* ends in moral awakening, but it reaches out not so much toward society as toward community, even communion; a sense of the oneness of human involvement without any diminution of that involvement's ineluctable guilt.

Were this all, one might have simply a film of the tenderness, sensitivity, and, I believe, somewhat vitiating softness of, say, *They Live By Night*. Even *Sight and Sound* tended to relegate *Force of Evil* to the status of a sympathetic but "minor" film; I think this is other than the case. The film was said to be overly literary, and there is no doubt that it is a work which relies heavily on its language; perhaps, we are still not entirely free of the tyrannical dogma that language is not properly an element of film. To observe that the language of *Force of Evil* is beautiful in itself may not be quite to the point. The impression of that language is of for the first time really hearing, on the screen, the sound of city speech, with its special repetitions and elisions, cadence and inflection, inarticulateness and crypto-poetry; much as Odets had brought it to the stage. As in Odets, the effect is naturalistic, and, as in Odets, it is achieved by an extreme degree of mannerism, artifice, and stylization. But the astonishing thing about *Force of Evil*, more obvious now, perhaps, in the light of such more overtly experimental works as *Hiroshima, Mon Amour*, is the way in which the image works with the word. Nothing is duplicated, or supererogatory. Even in so simple an instance as that of the heroine's face in close-up, as the first person narrative runs "Doris wanted me to make love to her," is the relationship of word to image complementary rather than

redundant. The soundtrack is the image slantwise; refracted through an individual consciousness, and, to that extent, interpreted. Throughout the film, Joe is constantly commenting upon the action, telling us not only what he and the others think, but even describing his own, overt actions as we see him engaging in them. It is this kind of awareness and volition which is alien to the conventional melodramatic hero; and it is interesting to note that it is a departure from the novel which is related in flatly omniscient third person. The effect of all this off-repetition, with its language overlapping image and language overlapping language is finally quite different from that of the very similar devices of *Hiroshima, Mon Amour*. In that film, the final effect is merely rhetorical and consciously Artistic; in *Force of Evil*, the language takes on the quality of incantation, and imparts an almost choric resonance to the Cain and Abel myth which lies at the film's center.

The more one sees *Force of Evil*, the closer one gets to the film's center, the more one becomes aware of that central myth, and the formal means by which it is exposed. The language becomes a kind of insistent music, and the images move congruently with an extraordinary purity and freedom. A brief conversation is composed from a remote angle above a gracefully curving stairway; the moment exists both in and independent of the plot; and, independently, it is startlingly beautiful. Such imagery proliferates throughout the film, from the simplest of conversational exchanges to the complexly moving vision of Joe running senselessly down a deserted Wall Street at night, knowing that never again will he be able to return to his "fine office up in the clouds." *Force of Evil* is, actually, a very impure film; it *is* literary and dramatic, but only insofar as the film *is* a literary and dramatic medium, and no further. Beneath and beyond that, there is the autonomous beauty of poetic diction; the aesthetic paradox that what is harrowing in life may be that and be also beautiful in art. And the final passage of the film, in which, in the pervasive grayness of the early morning, Joe discovers his brother's body at the base of an arching bridge, from the desolate rocks upon which it has been discarded, "like an old rag," is both immensely harrowing and starkly beautiful. It is a descent to "the bottom of the world," to a kind of hell; the symbolic death that must be suffered before regeneration. "Because, if a man can live so long, and have his whole life come out like rubbish, then something was horribly wrong . . . and I decided to help."

BODY AND SOUL

[The "interview" with Abraham Polonsky related below was conducted entirely through correspondence. I have taken the liberty of some slight rearrangement so that there might be a clear relation of answer to question, but the words remain unchanged. Therefore, while the exchanges may occasionally approximate the give and take of conversation, they may be accepted as having the value of written reflection, such as that may be.]

Would you begin by giving me some idea of your background before you began working in films? Somewhere I picked up the information that you originally wrote for radio, and, if my memory doesn't play tricks, I recall reading a radio script of yours in the old Quarterly of Film, Radio, and Television. *I also seem to remember hearing that you taught for awhile at the University of Southern California and even the City College of New York, although I am not sure of the chronology (i.e., before or after film-making), and virtually certain that I must have dreamed the latter. Would you also refer to your published fiction and film criticism?*

I led the usual restless street life: gang (East Side); schoolboy (P.S. 32, 57, De Witt Clinton); teacher (CCNY, A.B.); Law (Columbia); volunteer in politics (Democrat, Anarchist, Radical, Confused). I taught at City College from 1932 to the war; never taught at the University of Southern California. I am familiar with the learned professions (teaching and law), the vagrant ones (sea, farm, factory), and the eternal ones (marriage, fatherhood, art, science). The most extraordinary shock in my life was not the war which I survived, but the films which I did not. I always wrote, produced little motion in life and never stopped talking.

My first novel *(The Discoverers)* was accepted, announced, advertised by Modern Age Books and then withdrawn as unreadable. I retired to silence in art, action in politics, and gibberish in radio (Columbia Workshop, Orson Welles, Goldbergs, and I forget). Two potboilers (Simon and Schuster, Little, Brown). The war (O.S.S.). My blueberry pie was Paramount.

Excluding the movies for the moment, I managed a semiserious return to the novel with *The World Above,* and, after being blacklisted, *The Season of Fear.* These attempts were laced with some short stories, criticism, and genteel scholarly editing *(Hollywood Quarterly, Contemporary Reader).*

The guerrilla life I pretended to practise in the war I played with some amusement and frequent disgust in the jungle of TV as a blacklisted writer. Likewise in films. Those minor victories and major defeats admit no obituaries at the moment.

How did you begin your work in films?

By accident. I signed with Paramount before going overseas. However appalled as I was by the industry and its product, the medium overwhelmed me with a language I had been trying to speak all my life.

Since I am under the impression that it is not extensive, would you mention all of your screen credits, official and unofficial, if the latter case is such?

Credits. *Golden Earrings:* direction, Mitchel Leisen. Assigned to an incredible romantic melodramatic stew, I painstakingly studied gypsy life under the Nazis (they were incinerated) and very cleverly worked the whole thing around to something else. The film, starring Marlene Dietrich, appeared as an incredible romantic melodramatic stew. I never could sit through it. I know there isn't a single word or scene of mine in it, but I was instructed to rejoice in the credit which I shared with two old hands, Helen Deutsch and Frank Butler.

Body and Soul: original screenplay; direction, Robert Rossen.

Force of Evil: screenplay with Ira Wolfert from his novel, *Tucker's People;* my direction.

I Can Get It For You Wholesale: screenplay based on Weidman's own treatment which simply kept the title of the novel. A comedy of sorts, directed by Mike Gordon with Dan Dailey, Susan Hayward. It was a stopgap for me to return to Europe to write another book and set up *Mario and the Magician.* Before I left, Thomas Mann told me he felt his exile was beginning all over again since fascism was inevitable in America. The novel I completed years later. No one wanted to finance the film.

I returned to Hollywood and made a deal with Sol Siegel at Twentieth to write and direct a picture, but the blacklist intervened.

Was your scenario for Body and Soul *a wholly original work, or was it derived from*

some other source?

It's an original screenplay. A folk tale from the Empire City.

Was Rossen to direct the movie from the time of the script's inception, or did he only come to do it through the contingencies of film production?

Rossen was hired after the script was done.

Did your work on Body and Soul *end with the scenario?*

No.

Were you present on the set during shooting?

Continuously.

Of course, it is easy to look knowing in retrospect, but to judge from Rossen's other work, Body and Soul *would seem to have closer affinities with* Force of Evil *than with the other films of his, even in the elusive matter of visual style. Or am I just second guessing?*

There was a struggle during the shooting to prevent Rossen from rewriting the script and changing the ending. In fact he shot an alternate finish in which the fighter is killed and ends up with his head in a garbage can. I think a comparison of *Body and Soul* with *The Hustler* might indicate not only the uses Rossen made of the former but where his temperament and style inevitably lead him.

Are you satisfied with the realization of Body and Soul *as a film?*

I liked *Body and Soul.* It was a surprise to see something I had written become film. I have an animal faith that survives moral weakness and defeat. To urge this against Rossen's metaphysical identity with everyday cynicism and the journalism of sense and sex indicated the realities of film making. Our resources on the set were immense: Garfield, James Wong Howe, Robert Aldrich, Lyons and Parrish, Don Weiss, Pevney. A slew of directors emerged from the film. Rossen's talent is force applied everywhere without let-up. My only concern was to save it from parody, except where deliberately I had kidded *Golden Boy* and that dear old violin. However, I'm not so sure any more that the obvious isn't one of the strengths of film language. If so it violates a bias of my nature.

What attracted you about Tucker's People *as an original source?*

Experiment. Garfield and Roberts suggested that I direct. I had already been brooding over this notion. Being a novice didn't prevent me from sharing all the illusions and frustrations of more seasoned writers. I was under fire long before I knew I had volunteered.

I knew *Tucker's People.* It had an allegory, true then and even more bitterly apt today; a milieu and characters familiar as my own habits; a hint of the language of the unconscious I could use as dialogue. In realization, necessities of the medium evaporated the allegory leaving great uncharted reefs of symbolism to wreck the audience; the people emerged except where I agreed to wrong casting; and the language almost obeyed my intention to play an equal role with the actor and visual image and not run along as illustration, information, and mere verbal gesture (wisecracks, conventional middle class slang, elevated notions drawn from the armory of Longfellow and Hemingway).

In the course of adaptation, you altered the novel rather radically, excising some characters and events, combining and condensing others. What particular problems did you feel were fundamental to your decisions in making the adaptation? I don't mean so much with regard to Tucker's People *in particular as with the question of adapting to the screen in general.*

I no longer remember anything except the days Wolfert and I spent endlessly talking along the beaches. Under the windy sun we didn't reason so much as proclaim discoveries. In effect, we eliminated the discursive power of the book and substituted for it so to speak centers of suggestion. We reimagined the novel as if it were an aborigine again. Then it became obvious that some characters would play larger roles and others disappear. Adapting a book to film is fundamentally a moral crisis. Assuming the intention is serious, the book is not chosen to be translated for non-readers but because still embedded in the conception is a whole unrealized life whose language is a motion of images. Where a book is unfulfilled a frightful problem arises. The film, if successful, is a critique of

FORCE OF EVIL

the author's failures. I am a coward here and prefer my own stories.

Do you have any particular conception of the nature of the medium? One of the original reviewers of Force and Evil *(Robert Hatch in* The Nation, *as I recall) suspected the presence of blank verse, and was duly horrified; but even admirers of the film have characterized it as "literary." Does this have any meaning to you? Do you have any ideas about the relation of word to image in the film; yours, and, perhaps, the film in general?*

I've heard them talk in talking pictures. Might talkies be like the opera? The main thing is the music but O the joy when the singers act and the songs are poetry. Let's pretend, I assumed for *Tucker's People (Force of Evil)* that the three elements, visual image, actor, word, are equals. (After all, the human personality is the medium of total human expressiveness. After all, language has been a medium for an art or two.) I didn't project anything important, just an experiment in which each of my resources was freed of the dominance of the other two. I was too inexperienced to invent novel visual images or evoke great performances. And certainly there was nothing in my literary record to suggest a New Voice. All I tried to do was use the succession of visual images, the appearances of human personality in the actors, and the rhythm of words in unison or counterpoint. I varied the speed, intensity, congruence and conflict for design, emotion and goal, sometimes separating the three elements, sometimes using two or three together. As for the language, I merely freed it of the burden of literary psychology and the role of crutch to the visual image. Blank verse? No. But the babble of the unconscious, yes, as much as I could, granted the premise that I was committed to a representational film. It was a method I would have tried again and again until solved. After all, we had that big Hollywood machine which the success of *Body and Soul* had delivered into our hands and we didn't mind seeing what we could do with all that horsepower. But the blacklist took the machine away from us. While we had possession, like those bicycle fanatics at Kitty Hawk, we couldn't wait to waken in the morning, knowing that each day would surprise us. We had the right feelings. Only our plane never flew.

Would you say you have been influenced by any other film-makers?

Vigo.

Mention has been made in a way I think might be valid of Odets as a literary influence. What is your opinion of this?

We both derive from Jewish jokes and street quarrels. I live dangled between the formal and argot without solution. I've tried to avoid American Standard Movie dialogue which is a genuine Hollywood convention. But I can write it and have for a living.

What film-makers do you particularly admire?

I like going to the movies.

What Hollywood films have you thought commendable since the late 'forties?

I seem to remember liking some but I can't remember which.

Is there an identity of theme and meaning between Body and Soul *and* Force of Evil?

Yes, but in *Force of Evil* every character and situation is compromised by reality while *Body and Soul* is a folk tale.

Eric Bentley has made the point that in both Elia Kazan's On the Waterfront *and Arthur Miller's* A View from the Bridge *there is, scarcely beneath the surface, an apologetics for each of their respective positions on political informing, a certain acting out of private crises; informing being the crucial act in both works, good in the former and evil in the latter.* Force of Evil *ends with the hero about to confess to the police, and "help" them. I do not mean to suggest that the final act is ever simply this, but do you feel that there is any political parable underlying the conclusion to your film?*

Not a parable, a fact. The hero is about to confess to the police because that was the way we could get a seal. There was an allegory underlying the film. It got lost somewhere and had nothing to do with confession or avoidance. Bentley is certainly right in his estimate of those works although the distinction between good informing and bad escapes me. One informs not only to escape punishment and regain acceptance but to share once again in the authority of the state. It is a hard life outside the pale.

Do you believe or know that you were blacklisted?

I know it and I believe it.

How did you discover this?

I was told by the studio, my agent, the newspapers, Congress, and my landlord.

How is one blacklisted; I mean, what is the typical nature of the process?

One is named in a hearing by an informer, or one is summoned to the hearing in person. The consequences are the same.

Do you know of particular individuals who were behind the blacklist, or was its authority always kept anonymous?

The cold war was behind the blacklist and everyone participated from those on the political right through those who had no politics. It was like collaboration under the Nazis. And it was like the resistance. The spectrum took in everything human including the inhuman.

Did you ever appear before the House Un-American Activities Committee?

Yes.

Was there any opportunity for compromise in order to "clear" yourself?

Then and now and frequently in between.

John Cogley, in his Report on Blacklisting, *observes that there was virtually no political content in the films of the blacklisted, and when it did exist it was usually in the form of so generalized a commitment to democratic ideals and justifiable revolution as could be subscribed to by any member of the audience but the most avid Hitlerite. Do you agree? Would you ascribe this to lack of intent, or lack of accomplishment? Or lack of talent?*

Hollywood radicals were mainly moral humanists and their films when they reflected anything at all showed a concern for the suppressed elements in human life. Political programming of any sort, left, middle, right, couldn't ever appear because producers wanted to make money. When political programming did appear as in the so called anti-communist pictures they were made in deference to the climate and not from the usual expectation of profits. Cogley's argument that blacklisting radicals is silly because they're too stupid or talentless to use the film for direct Marxist propaganda is jejune. He is talking about journalism, not story telling.

Do you have any thoughts on the career of Edward Dmytryk, who went from the Hollywood Ten to "exoneration," and eventually was to film such a tribute to conformity as The Caine Mutiny?

He probably thought it was capitalist realism.

It has been suggested that John Garfield's political difficulties and debarment from Hollywood work was a considerable influence in accelerating his early death. Do you have any opinion on this?

Yes. He defended his streetboy's honor and they killed him for it.

In the publisher's blurb for The Season of Fear, *it was implied that you left film-making voluntarily in order "to go abroad and devote [yourself] to serious fiction." Aside from the thinly veiled, characteristic cultural snobbery, is there any truth in this?*

No.

Inasmuch as you have any such self-image, do you regard yourself primarily as a novelist or

film-maker? Or both?

Neither. If I were younger you might say I had promise.

Were you aware of the sympathetic reception accorded Force of Evil *in* Sight and Sound *and* Sequence?

Yes.

Was their appreciation of any personal importance to you?

Pure oxygen.

Was Body and Soul *a financial success?*

Very much so.

Was Force of Evil *commercially successful?*

No.

Do you have any criticisms of the latter film's distribution?

It got lost in the general dissolution of Enterprise studios. Had we stayed in business we could have rescued it and made some money.

How did you come to use Beatrice Pearson?

She was brought to my attention by Martin Jurow, now a considerable producer himself. He worked for our company at that time.

Where had you seen her previously?

Nowhere.

What became of her?

She was in a few films and disappeared. They didn't know how to use her.

In what work are you engaged at present?

Grub Street.

Have you had any opportunity to make films since Force of Evil?

No.

Have you imagined any new subjects you would have particularly liked to work into a film?

Indeed I have.

Do you see any possibility for your prospective return to work in the film?

No.

What are your plans for the future?

None.

The interviewing of an artist is chancy; the pitfalls are familiar. On one hand, there is the kind of gulling Lindsay Anderson suffered at the hands of John Ford in his well-known *Sequence* interview; on the other, those dreary chronologies of how The Studio mutilated this film, and how They butchered that. Both alternatives may be valuable in their way (and the Anderson piece, I believe, does reveal, even inadvertently, a good deal of Ford's nature as an artist), but I was interested in achieving neither. Existing somewhere in that uncharted area between the put-on and the death toll, I tend immodestly to think that my "encounter" with Abraham Polonsky was something of a success. In anticipating critical intelligence of the artist, one proceeds at one's own risk. In Polonsky, I found this sort of intelligence, and the ability to articulate it.

Not all of the questions were answered as thoroughly as they might have been, but I conceived my role not as inquisitor; I was not out to "get all the facts"; rather, to open up certain areas for discussion, to that extent which Polonsky was interested in going into them. Politically, for example, it may be observed that, although the specters of the blacklist and the House Un-American Activities Committee are pointedly raised, no question is put as to Polonsky's actual political affiliations. I don't think of this as an evasion. My own attitude toward the pursuit of this line of questioning (from an anti-Communist position, it may not be irrelevant to add) is simply: So what? The fact remains that Abraham Polonsky, having earned the right to work in Hollywood on the terms which Hollywood unfailingly understands, those of having proven the ability to show a profit, was denied the exercise of that less-than-glorious right. The fact is that, since 1949 a filmmaker whom I regard as one of the richest talents to have appeared in Hollywood in the past fifteen years (and, I believe, the richest literary talent to have appeared in the American film) has not been able to work in films. One need not respond emotionally to that fact. One need not respond emotionally to any fact.

JOSEPH L. ANDERSON

When the Twain Meet: Hollywood's Remake of *The Seven Samurai*

Fidelity to an original source is never in itself a criterion for judgment of a motion picture. What is important is the nature and purpose of any changes. In this instance many significant changes stem from traditional Hollywood ways of seeing things, and comparing *The Magnificent Seven* with Kurosawa's film reveals some of the fixed ideas that inhibit American filmmaking.

Both films build from the same basic plot. The peasants of an isolated village decide, in desperation, to resist the bandits who have periodically looted them. Because they have no arms or fighting skills, the Japanese villagers go to a crossroads town to hire masterless samurai; the Mexicans cross the Rio Grande to recruit idle American gunmen. Both peasant groups first find a man capable of leading their resistance. When he has enlisted six more of his kind, they move to the village to organize its defense. During this time the peasants and their retainers are uneasy with each other until the bandit attacks unite them in common effort. When the violence ends in victory, the peasants return to their everyday chores. The surviving professionals go off with their guns and swords again for hire. (One survivor of *The Magnificent Seven*, a young would-be gunman of peasant origin, joins his local girl-friend in the fields.)

Now what do the two films draw from this plot? Despite an avowed reliance on Western Union for message transmission, Hollywood usually squeezes a moralizing conclusion out of everything it touches. Reduced to its essence and ten words, the message is that the reward for goodness is success, and for evil, failure. This is a pleasant, familiar, and inane conclusion which audiences happily accept.

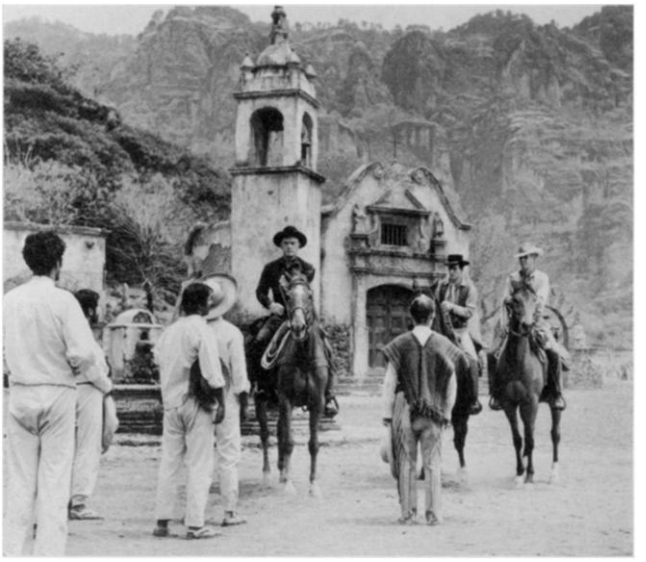
Because Hollywood films are seldom more than disguised morality plays and because the gunmen of *The Magnificent Seven* follow a calling that may be morally suspect, the script must establish their inherent goodness if any are to triumph at the end. There a number of ploys suitable for this task. William Roberts, the scenarist of *The Magnificent Seven*, chose the most current: social consciousness. Before the good peasants can sign him up, Chris, the gunman leader (Yul Brynner), must reveal his social conscience. In fact, his social conscience must be extra strong if the writer is to "lick" the difficult premise that Chris and six other Yankee gun-fighters will go out of their way to defend Mexicans. Hence, in the sequence which introduces Chris, he is revealed as a prototypal CORE-member who, uneasy over segregation of corpses in Boot Hill, uses his gun-slinging talents to stage a bury-in for a dead Indian. Although the lesser six of the story participate in the subsequent venture for other reasons—most of these are motives more individual and valid than their leader's—they grab for Chris' ideals when their own selfish reasons fail.

Kurosawa's warriors sign with the peasants to satisfy more immediate needs: they are hungry. The job provides room and board for several weeks. Kambei (Takashi Shimura), who becomes the samurai leader, does rescue a baby

from a kidnapper when we first see him. Although a baby in distress is a sentimental Kurosawa cliché, Kambei's act is not milked for meaning. It is largely gratuitous, an immediate response made without soul-searching. Perhaps it has "deeper" connotation; Kurosawa lets the audience decide. As elsewhere in his film, what is more important than the reason why a man acts is the fact that he does act.

But Hollywood scripture requires all characterization to be established without ambiguity. This definition of character is made primarily through each person's spelling out what he wants out of life or, more accurately, out of the period encompassed by the picture. This must be followed with a definite pay-off for each announced goal. Before the final fade-out we must be able to answer the question: did these people get what they wanted or didn't they?

This explicit, verbal definition of character requires expositional dialogue in the manner of the traditional theater. Through conversation or in disguised soliloquy, each character reveals himself or others. The people in *The Magnificent Seven* do this to excess. Black-gloved and troubled Lee (Robert Vaughn) is forever asking for release from a tormenting conscience. Cynical Harry (Brad Dexter) questions everyone about a hidden treasure which he believes is the real objective of the expedition. When even the lesser peasants come on about themselves at length, one wishes the damn Mexicans would learn to speak Spanish.



THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

But Sturges and Roberts are not content to leave their people as over-articulate individuals. Each character must also express a capsule philosophy which makes him less of an individual and more of a personification of a familiar point of view. For instance, Harry, the treasure-seeker, becomes the materialist objection to social conscience.

Because of a Hollywood inclination to set all conflict in direct personal terms, the bandit leader (Eli Wallach) in the American film confronts the villagers and gunmen in dialogue scenes which reveal his goals in obvious terms. He too must bear a philosophical burden in order to be set up as a personification of evil.

In *The Seven Samurai*, the bandit leader and his men are never seen close up, let alone heard. Kurosawa depersonalizes them: they become as uncommunicative and as incapable of compromise as a flood or typhoon. Almost equivalent to the destructive forces of nature, these Japanese bandits are not so much evil as amoral.

Following a preference for protagonists and antagonists who can ultimately be refined into their essential goodness and badness, the Hollywood plot again diverges from the Japanese after the first bandit attack. The seven gunmen are ambushed upon their return to the village after futile pursuit of the enemy. In the absence of their American cadre, the courage of the Mexicans faltered. They sold out. Better bled than dead. When their professional pride is offended by the bandits' offer to release them if they leave Mexico immediately, the gunmen decide to fight their way out. The peasants rejoin their allies in time to redeem their goodness through valor.

In the equivalent episode of Kurosawa's picture (it occurs before the first bandit attack), the samurai discover that the peasants have a hidden collection of armor. The only way they could have acquired this was by murdering wounded samurai after a near-by battle. Sometime in the past, the peasants have killed for the same reason as the bandits. With this discovery, neither of the opposing forces can now be mis-

taken for a representative of good or evil. The fighting can begin without implied moral advantage. The only thing the defenders have left is their humanity.

But even this is suspect, for one of Kurosawa's major themes could have been borrowed from Kierkegaard's "people talk about man as a social animal; at the bottom man is a beast of prey, and the evidence for this is not confined to the shape of his teeth." As in *Rashomon* and *The Throne of Blood*, Kurosawa expresses this theme through a kind of reverse anthropomorphism in which men take on the attributes of animals. The savagery of the fighting and Kurosawa's devotion to it make this immediately apparent.

Deëmphasis of dialogue is another way he achieves this animal accent. Occasionally he relies on speech to establish situations and to set up quick characterization but he takes every opportunity to accomplish these tasks through physical action or other visual description. Indeed, what little speech there is in *The Seven Samurai* often serves a nonverbal function—the emotional overtones of the words spoken are more important than their literal meaning. Dialogue becomes a sound effect.

This use of speech as a sound abstraction cannot be fully experienced by a foreign audience depending on subtitles which translate jabber into printed, clear English. This distorts Kurosawa's intention. It gives speech a literary purpose where none is intended. Subtitles may be unavoidable but they are as much a perversion of his work as a poor job of dubbing would be. The playing down of dialogue in *The Seven Samurai*, could be, in part, an attempt to turn a handicap into an advantage. In earlier films where dialogue was essential, Kurosawa failed to get intelligible speech. This was a result of the inferior sound equipment and technicians assigned to him, his lack of interest in or his failure to stress enunciation, and a stock company full of people like leading man Toshiro Mifune and character actor Takashi Shimura who stress emotional force in their acting more than clarity of speech.

Given the opportunity to go all the way in *The Seven Samurai*, the Kurosawa familiars let go without restraint. The extra-largeness of their performances is entirely appropriate because they must match the virtuosity of Kurosawa's *mise-en-scène* and his epic intent. Still, this blustering style is not as unrelated to the reality it is supposed to reflect as some foreign critics may think. Bushido demands bravado.

The performances of the American seven are as magnificent in their own way as the Japanese. James Coburn as a perfection-minded knife thrower, Charles Bronson as a fatherly Neanderthal, Steve McQueen as an easy going second-in-command, and Robert Vaughn as a gun-fighting neurotic all play in that cool impressionistic style so apparently effortless that it is often mistaken for naturalism. Yul Brynner and Horst Buchholz, with their touches of a thicker Central European romanticism, have done better in other films although they are not out of place here. The cast, more than anything else, places *The Magnificent Seven* above the average Western. They were more than a match for their director.

Sturges opens strongly but quickly loses his strength when he is forced into lengthy dialogue situations. Even when the bandits attack, he cannot revive his early verve despite a few isolated bits of cleverly staged gun play. However, at the beginning of the picture, as the bandits first move in to make their demands on the peasant village, and as Brynner and McQueen ride an armed hearse through town, shot after shot of a continually tracking camera gives a tenseness through movement which few Cinemascope films achieve.

In his dialogue scenes, Sturges avoids that hallmark of the talkative picture: cutting back and forth between over-the-shoulder reverse two-shots. Instead, as in his *Gunfight at the OK Corral*, he fills the Cinemascope width with people scattered across the frame in successive distances from the camera. This often requires the actors to play more to the front than to each other. When not brought off just right—and it happens in this film—the composition resembles

the work of a department-store decorator with a deep shop window. When it works, this distribution of people deep into the setting makes one conscious of men in their environment. Sturges' awareness of place is limited; his locations are only settings for interpersonal conflict. To Kurosawa, environment itself is part of the essential conflict. The turbulence of battle grows when rain falls in *The Seven Samurai.* The defenders battle the weather as much as they fight their attackers.

Like Sturges, Kurosawa uses wide-angle long-shots of accented depth and small human figures. While the American plays entire scenes in this kind of set-up, Kurosawa uses it only to establish the topography of a sequence. To catch important action, he shifts to extremely long-focal-length lenses that kill perspective as they push the characters flat against their surroundings. Man and place become one.

Although some of his now famous slow-motion scenes have been cut in the foreign version, the most effective slow motion of *The Seven Samurai* remains: the duel between a master swordsman and his challenger early in the picture. The slow motion forces an appreciation of the skill required for this kind of fighting and the grace which it accents makes this two-man duel an advance summing up of all the larger-scale choreographic fighting that will follow when the samurai face the bandits.

The Seven Samurai is everywhere an anthology of previous and subsequent Kurosawa experiments. His infinite number of stark angles, his slow-motion scenes of combat, his repetition of action, his compression and expansion of visual perspective, and his shock cutting provide a violent style equal to the violence of his subject.

If he parades his techniques in this film, he also puts himself on display. In Kambei, the samurai leader, Kurosawa by his own admission has created his most autobiographical character. Kambei's singleness of purpose, his control of every action, his attention to others' suggestions with final reliance on his own judgment, and his concern for his men, project an impression of Kurosawa at work.

Kurosawa dominates his production. He determined its pictorial quality to a greater degree than his camerman, Asakazu Nakai. He provided the original idea and was the major talent in the preparation of the script (he worked with his usual collaborators, Hideo Oguni and Shinobu Hashimoto), and he exercised total control over the editing. The essential difference between *The Magnificent Seven* and *The Seven Samurai* finally comes to this: Kurosawa is an *auteur.* His conception alone, his personality dominates the film while Sturges is only the most important talent on a work which has been shaped by many men, and compromised by many Hollywood conventions.

The only limitations on *The Seven Samurai* are those of the director's individual talent. Yet Kurosawa's self-acknowledged debt to the American Western, particularly John Ford's, helped to determine the shape of *The Seven Samurai.* This foreign influence has nourished him. Without the American cinema, there would be no Kurosawa.

Oddly, in Japan at the moment, there is a craze for fast-draw skills, side-arms collecting, and cowboy and gunman stories. As both a cause and an effect of this, dubbed versions of every major U.S. Western videofilm series now play on Japanese television while crowds fight to get into theaters running the latest Westerns from America. Unwilling to let such spoils go entirely to foreigners and television, theatrical film studios have countered with a new genre: the Japanese Western. These films transfer Western stories, characters, and paraphernalia unchanged to Japanese settings without regard for any reality ever experienced by a Japanese. A look at the impressive Japanese returns on Sturges' *The Magnificent Seven* was enough to excite one Tokyo studio into planning a remake of it as one of the new Japanese Westerns. Meanwhile, back in Hollywood, the cycle begins again: a minor United Artists producer has announced a Western based on Kurosawa's latest period piece, *Yojimbo.*

Film Reviews

THE EXILES

Written, directed and produced by Kent Mackenzie. Camera: Robert Kaufman, Eric Daarstad, John Morrill. Sound: Tom Conrad, Sam Farnsworth. Music: Tony Hilder, Eddie Sunrise. With Yvonne Williams, Homer Nish, Tommy Reynolds.

About eighty years ago the United States War Department was working at peak efficiency "pacifying" the American Indian by exterminating him. After years of blood-letting, certain people began to realize that a military solution to the problem was barbaric, and so a tiny movement was initiated to help the Red Man. It was typically too little and too late. In making the western plains "safe for white habitation," the American Indian had been systematically deprived of everything which might have helped him to become self-sufficient. Burdened with guilt a few generations later, the great white fathers granted citizenship to the Indian, in 1924. Ten years later they even repealed the laws which denied him his civil rights. He has been a "free member" of American society for only twenty-eight years. By comparison, the American Negro has been given an emancipation head start of eighty years.

The Exiles is a 77-minute film which concentrates on a small group of these Indians who are cut off from the main streams of life both by society and by their own choice—people caught in the vicious process of acculturation and trying to find an identity.

The film began five years ago when Mackenzie visited the San Carlos Indian Reservation to make a film report on reservation life. This turned out to be only the first step on a journey which ended up in the downtown bars near Third and Main streets in Los Angeles. On Main Street Mackenzie became friends with Tommy (Mexican Indian), Homer (Hualipi), Cliff (Choctaw), Yvonne (Apache), and a few other members of a small, isolated group of Indians living in the heart of the city. He gained their trust, and they agreed to reënact parts of their lives in front of the camera.

The actual production started July 4, 1958, with a budget of $539.00 (Mackenzie's total savings). Almost all equipment was loaned. Labor and service costs were largely deferred by friends in the film industry. Most of the raw stock was salvaged at one-quarter cost from a plane wreck. The rest of it was "short ends."

Shooting was done at night and on weekends. During this long process, characters who had at first carried important roles would vanish, some never to reappear. Other individuals began to assume more important roles. Many were jailed and had to be bailed out while the crew waited. It was a slow process, and the film took shape slowly. Money came in from friends and sympathetic acquaintances who wanted to see the project continue. No help came from the usual commercial backers who saw in *The Exiles* only a bad financial risk. Throughout the production Mackenzie was advised by various "professionals" to "beef-up the plot; give it a chase; have the girl raped; etc." Mackenzie was adamant and *The Exiles* was fortunately not tampered with.

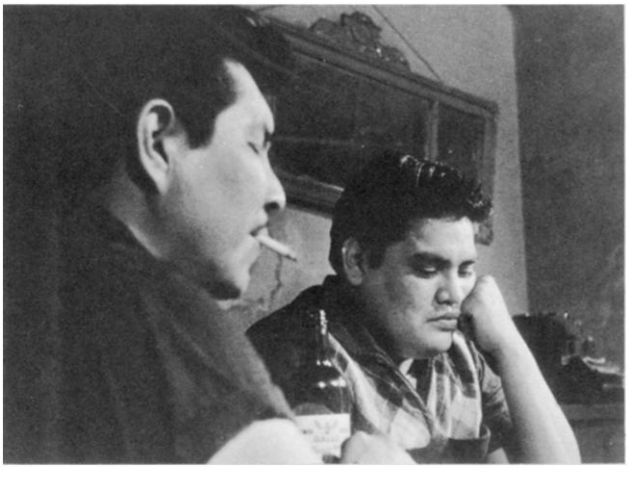
"The Exiles," says Mackenzie, "does not propose to reveal the total problem. There are many young Indians who, through their own efforts or the help of the Indian Bureau Relocation Office, have done quite well in the city. There are others who have done worse, getting involved with dope, prostitution, and crimes of violence. My picture does not touch on either of these extremes but focuses on just one segment of the Indian population which *does* exist and *is* a part of the total problem.

"No theatrical or documentary approach—in which a problem is stated and the decisions and actions of the characters proceed either to achieve or suggest a pat solution—seemed suitable for the film. The situation in which these people are involved could not be brought to a stage and reënacted. The thousands of details involved in their environment could never be

duplicated. So we decided to shoot the entire film on location, and subordinate direction, action, movement and lighting so that the surroundings, actions, and reactions of these people would, on film, honestly portray their situation and emotions. Instead of leading an audience through an orderly sequence of problem—decision—action and solution on the part of the characters, we sought to photograph the infinite details surrounding these people, to let them speak for themselves, and to have the fragments mount up. Then instead of supplying a resolution, we hoped that somewhere in the viewing, the picture would become, to the audience, a revelation of a condition about which they can either do something, or not—whichever their own reaction dictates, either soon or long after they have seen the film."

The film is a simple odyssey. Through the underworld of Los Angeles, a small band of Indians travel in search of pleasure. By the use of parallel editing we follow the adventures of several individuals as they have their "good time"; we drift with them through an evening of drinking, dancing, and fighting. The environment of the big city closes in around us; the streets, the bars, store windows, television sets, police, and bums become an overpowering presence. The good time becomes a journey into sadness and isolation ending on a deserted hilltop overlooking the lights of the city. Here the Indians dance tribal dances, sing tribal songs, drink more wine, and brawl until dawn. They wander back home. The bars open again. Juke boxes rattle out across the lonely streets announcing that the good times are starting to roll again. The episode ends and we are left with our own feelings.

THE EXILES, *by Kent Mackenzie*



This film is more than a grim "slice of life." It is an attempt, through film, to understand an aspect of social reality. I say "understand" because it is not a message picture which is constructed around an idea. It is an experiment; the film-makers hoped to discover something in the process of making the film. Conversely, the audience was expected to share in the uncovering process.

The Exiles grew from a rough outline that was prepared with the assistance of the Indians who suggested ideas. Within this simple framework of having a good time, the Indians improvised their own actions and dialogue. Of course Mackenzie was always there making suggestions and finding his way by intuition. Everything that appears in the final film has the sanction of the cast. These Indians live in a fringe world that is primitive, ritualistic, and often tinged with violence. They understandably refused to portray any aspect of their lives which might bring them into trouble with the authorities, and in fairness to them Mackenzie concentrated on the areas that the Indians themselves wanted to show. Allowing them this freedom of action and final control over the film greatly narrowed the range of activities that might have been shown and we are admittedly not given a totally "true" picture of their lives. For example, we do not know anything about how they earn their living or about their very special mores. But we must remember that *The Exiles* is not a "documentary" film in the ordinary sense. It is an original and personal film which defies classification. In cinematic form *The Exiles* is quite conservative. It follows most of the old rules: many static camera set-ups, carefully composed and traditionally lit photography; simple scenes working around master shots; lots of good, tight close-ups; realistically motivated music and effects

cutting. This approach seems to have been chosen so that full concentration could be given to the subjects.

There is an underlying feeling of honesty and integrity to this film. It holds a rigorous and compassionate view of the human condition. Often it cruelly reveals the weakness or folly of the Indians' existence. At other times we see the hidden strength of these people. Always, as it interprets and selects, it is sympathetic.

As you watch the Indians you are seeing what amounts to basic psychodrama. Most of the time they are either consciously or unconsciously trying to deceive the audience. They are quite concerned about the "image" they are presenting. Letting the Indians put this over adds another intriguing dimension to the film. Yvonne, for example, shows a discrepancy between what she is and what she thinks she should be. She wants to give her child a "better life . . . a better education than she received." This stands out as a platitude; something she feels she should say. She is very self-conscious about how she wants to appear. Tommy, the "Don Juan," probably appears no different off-screen. He always plays this role. The character of Homer emerges a bit differently. He appears to be struggling with some problem. He senses there is something wrong with the way his friends live. He broods. He contradicts himself. But he also reveals a strength which shows through the confusion. It is a strength which the film-maker saw and decided to reinforce in the film.

The difficulties in making a film like this are obvious. The film-maker begins to lose himself. His loss of detachment and the close involvement with his subjects makes it harder to see them. He begins to question himself. What is the real problem? Where are we going? Does this scene distort or add to the truth? The film begins to take its own head and "make itself" as the film-maker watches. In many respects *The Exiles* has the feeling of being an egoless film in the sense that "direction" *appears* to be missing. But it is there in a subtle, important way. Mackenzie's unmistakable sensibility is somehow guiding the film.

There has been a certain amount of comment on this film in the press and from the festivals. It is usually described as "black" or "unsympathetic." The Indians are referred to as "unpleasant," "distasteful," and with the exception of the Mannheim festival (where it took first prize) and the Venice festival (where it was well received among the majority of film people), the general audience reaction has been the same. The U. S. State department of course was highly disturbed by *The Exiles* and would have loved to suppress it (reminiscent of what happened with *On The Bowery*). I never found these Indians "distasteful" for a moment. In fact, quite the contrary: I liked them very much. They are good human beings—even with their duck-tail haircuts and black leather jackets. This does not mean that I am denying that *The Exiles* presents to us a dark and unhappy state of affairs. It certainly does. All I'm saying is that most people (film critics included) do not really see what is in front of their eyes. They have a preconceived image of what something should be like and turn off their minds to anything which does not conform to their emotional matrix.

The Exiles has roots in certain antitheatrical traditions which go back to Flaherty. But in contrast to Flaherty's work, *The Exiles* stays close to home. It deals with disparate and troubled human beings who live in modern industrial America. Flaherty's noble savages with their battles against the timeless forces of nature usually melted into nothing but beautiful silhouettes against a sky. While his "actors" were "recreating" a romantic vignette, the rest of the natives continued in their routine existence: dying of pellagra, being exploited by the white man and generally succumbing to other "timeless forces." In fact, most so-called "documentary" has been plagued with sentimentalism and escapism. The avoidance of social unpleasantry and dissonance has become an art in itself. The "city symphony" makers with their hyper-formalism have almost managed to re-

duce human beings into shifting patterns. (Even Grierson, after all his harping about Flaherty's social irresponsibility, ended up in another cul-de-sac of middleclass liberalism.)

The same confusions exist today. Take for example a courageous and well-intentioned film like *Come Back Africa*. This film is a reaction against all the empty, whitewashing, travelogue documentaries ever made. But Rogosin goes so far out of his way to emphasize his points that the film becomes tainted with exaggeration. It seems reminiscent of the Stalinist romantic radicalism of films like *Salt of the Earth*. As the film progresses, Rogosin's once believable characters flatten into paperdolls under his melodramatic wrench. No doubt he felt it was necessary to speak to some mass audience in a way they could understand. Nevertheless, in doing this, he destroys an otherwise compelling film. This is a familiar pattern: use baby talk to communicate to children and you usually end up sounding childish.

The Exiles leaves the most important things to the audience and in so doing it achieves its strength. It has none of the "sell" which often contaminates the "social documentary." There are no plugs. No narrator harping behind the subject's back. It is just there; an entity in itself. In many respects it is ambiguous and it becomes a sort of paradigm of reality. It can be seen and thought about in different ways.

Actually the fact that Mackenzie has chosen North American Indians as his subject is almost incidental. This fact is significant only because the Indians are the remains of a completely vanquished culture; rootless and isolated much more than the Negro or Jew in this country. And also that the Indian was the original American. He therefore becomes a special symbol of society's crime. Except for the single sequence on the reservation or the ceremonial dance on the hill you might forget that the characters are Indians. They could be almost any lost and isolated group. They are people trying to assimilate and at the same time to retain their native identity. They share with other social outsiders the language and manners of the hipster, the criminal's sociopathic indifference to law and the adolescent's pride in drinking and fighting. They have chosen from our society the defensive tactics used by frightened children against a cold and hostile environment.

A blurb which has been tacked onto this film remarks that, "Each day is like the last. Nothing is going to change." Perhaps this is so. Many of these people will continue to live in the same way. But it does not seem that simple. Hopefully perhaps, someone like Homer can manage to break away. There is much more to these problems and lives than is shown. The complexities could not be explained fully in a hundred films—let alone one. *The Exiles* is only a fragment; it does not pretend to be anything else. Yet it begins to uncover and reveal more depth than any of the incomplete "epic" approaches which pretend to have great scope.

—BENJAMIN JACKSON

ONE, TWO, THREE

Produced and directed by Billy Wilder. Screenplay by Wilder and I. A. L. Diamond from the play by Ferenc Molnar. Photography: Daniel Fapp. Music: André Previn.

"I try to reach for a simple, visual phrase that tells you what the picture is all about and evokes the essence of the story."—SAUL BASS

His design for *One, Two, Three* shows a cartoon of a girl holding up three balloon-breasts. Is he trying to tell us something about the picture? Is his come-on really a warning to stay away? Bass says, "A successful communication entices the viewer to participate. The minute you're in a position of getting him to pick up a shovel and hurl a spadeful on the pile, you're beginning to reach him."

Just about every reviewer of *One, Two, Three* has been "enticed" into shoveling it on. *One, Two, Three* has been almost universally praised: in *Show* Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., went so far as to call it an "irresistible evocation of the mood of Mark Twain. A couple of months

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ago, I lamented the disappearance of the uproariously funny film—the film which left one helpless, spent, and gasping for breath. My regrets were premature. *One, Two, Three* is such a film." And so forth. The critics have been picking up their shovels alright, but I think they're digging the grave of humor. As a member of the audience, I felt degraded and disgusted, as if the dirt were being hurled right in my face.

One, Two, Three is overwrought, tasteless, and offensive—a comedy that pulls out laughs the way a catheter draws urine. It is supposed to be a topical satire of East-West relations, and it was actually shot in Berlin and Munich (where the Brandenberg Gate was reconstructed), but the real location is the locker-room where tired salesmen swap the latest variants of stale old jokes. A few examples and you can descend to the level of its rancid humor: When Arlene Francis, the wife of the Coca-Cola executive James Cagney, learns that the young Communist Horst Buchholz doesn't wear any shorts, she says "Doesn't wear any shorts! No wonder they're winning the cold war!" Her little daughter, who has apparently inherited her mother's wit, explains that a girl is pregnant with the cute remark, "She's going to have puppies." People are described as sitting around on their "assets"; when Cagney is being bossy, Miss Francis addresses him as "My Fuehrer"; there is much humor about the SS background of various characters, and we are invited to laugh at the Russians for rejecting a shipment of Swiss cheese because it was full of holes. There is the by-now-to-be-expected female impersonation bit, with the man wearing balloons for boobies, so that the sequence can end with that weary old punch line, "I never saw one yellow one and one green one before." If you find these jokes fresh and funny, then by all means rush to see *One, Two, Three,* which will keep shouting them at you for two hours. It's like you-know-what hitting the fan.

Though I haven't seen anything but rave reviews for *One, Two, Three,* I think that, like Saul Bass, the reviewers give the show away by their tone, by the quality of the language they use in praising it. They, too, evoke "the essence of the story." Here, for example is *Time: "One, Two, Three* is a yell-mell, hard-sell, Sennett-with-a-sound-track satire of iron curtains and color lines, of people's demockeracy, Coca-Colonization, peaceful noexistence, and the Deep Southern concept that all facilities are created separate but equal. What's more, Director Billy Wilder makes his attitude stick like *Schlagobers* slung in the spectator's kisser . . . in the rapid, brutal, whambam style of a man swatting flies with a pile driver, he has produced a sometimes be-Wildered, often wonderfully funny exercise in nonstop nuttiness. . . ."

Surely it takes a very peculiar movie to drive *Time's* reviewers to such a rat-tat-tatty prose. And, as examples of what is called the "edge and temper" of Wilder's and I. A. L. Diamond's writing, *Time* quotes these remarks: "Cagney's wife (Arlene Francis): But she can't stay long. Doesn't school open soon? Cagney: In Georgia? You never know. Cagney's ten-year-old son, hopefully, when the boss's daughter has a fainting spell: If she dies can I have my room back? First Communist, bitterly: Is everybody in this world corrupt? Second Communist, thoughtfully: I don't know everybody." There is a temptation to ascribe this last remark to a bit of self-awareness on the part of *Time's* reviewer. It's almost inconceivable that he or they could write this way about a film they'd really enjoyed.

And here is Brendan Gill in *The New Yorker:* "The Messrs. Diamond and Wilder have had the gall to manufacture a hundred outrageous wisecracks about the desperate duel that Russia and the West are currently waging . . . the whole German people, as if in a trifling aside, are indicted as lickspittles or martinets, and we sit watching and roaring with delight. For this tour de force of fratricidal subversion we have to thank not only Mr.

Cagney, who makes it shamefully attractive, but, again, Mr. Wilder, who produced and directed the picture, and who could no doubt wring a hearty yock from bubonic plague."

Exactly. And it's hard to believe that a man who uses a phrase about wringing "a hearty yock from bubonic plague" doesn't somehow know that that's not how one would ordinarily describe a good comedy. Brendan Gill says that it "all miraculously works" but it doesn't work—not even in his own enthusiastic description: "Mr. Wilder's not very secret formula is to keep 'em coming. Gag follows gag at breathtaking speed, and one ends by consenting to his highhanded methods as one consents to a roller coaster that is already clicking up the first fearful slope; what else is there to do?" What else is there to do! You can get sick. Gill says, "By the time the picture is over, we are exhausted, but what has caused our exhaustion is laughter, and few of us will object to paying such a price for that." I don't think it's laughter that causes our exhaustion; it's the coercive, frenzied, insulting crudity of it all, the assembly-line approach to gags. As Gill said, Diamond and Wilder "manufactured" the wisecracks. *Time* and *The New Yorker* are amazingly accurate in their descriptions; what's astonishing is that having described a very bad movie they then tell us how good it is.

In Hollywood it is now common to hear Billy Wilder called the world's greatest movie director. This judgment tells us a lot about Hollywood: Wilder hits his effects hard and sure; he's a clever, lively director whose work lacks feeling or passion or grace or beauty or elegance. His eye is on the dollar, or rather on success, on the entertainment values that bring in dollars. But he has never before, except perhaps in a different way in *Ace in the Hole,* exhibited such a brazen contempt for people. Is it possibly life in Hollywood that is so conducive to this extreme materialist position—a view of the world in which human experience is reduced to a need for sex and gadgets (with even sex turned into a gadget), a view in which people sell out their souls and their convictions for a pair of silk stockings, in which Americans, Russians, and Germans—all men—are brothers in petty corruption and lasciviousness? Hollywood may see itself as a microcosm of America, and may consider that its shoddy values are the American way of life that the rest of the world aspires to, but is this degraded view of political conflicts and human values really supposed to be funny? It would have to be relevant to something first. Surely satire must have some closer relationship to its targets than these cheap "topical" jokes which were dated decades before Berlin was divided. Is *One, Two, Three* really the irreverent political satire the critics have called it, or is it just a lot of scattershot and noise and simulated action—*Hellzapoppin* in Berlin?

In *Eroica* in 1957 Andrzej Munk made a satire on a far more unlikely subject: the "heroic" 1944 Warsaw uprising. The black humor was in the disjunction between the humanity of the characters and the absurdity—the insane inhumanity—of the situation. Munk was tough and sardonic enough to laugh at the sentimental myths about courage, about war, about prison camp life; he used comedy as a way of reacting to disillusionment, and the horror in his comedy shocks us into a new kind of clarity and vision.

Perhaps a diabolic satire *could* be written on the theme of Coca-Cola haves and have-nots, but Wilder's comedy isn't black and there are no disjunctions: his method is as mercenary as the characters. In *The New Republic,* Stanley Kauffman, who thinks "the film has an over-all intelligent energy," says, "the picture is worth seeing just to watch Cagney . . . or to hear him say, 'the race that produced the Taj Mahal, William Shakespeare and striped toothpaste can't be all bad.'" Really? It's amazing how many critics can quote lines like that admiringly, and can sum up the movie with such boomerang compliments as "breakneck," "screw-ball," "hard-hitting," "relentlessly maintains the pace that refreshes," etc.

Dwight Macdonald, who picked *One, Two, Three* as one of his best films of the year, says "The mood is established when Cagney complains that the East Germans are hijacking his shipments—'and they don't even return the empties!' It's all like that. Wife (Arlene Francis is just right): 'Our marriage has gone flat, like a stale glass of beer!' Cagney: 'Why do you have to bring in a competing beverage?' " Yes, it's all like that. There is one nice touch—an old man singing "Yes, We Have No Bananas" in German, and there's also the dance of a behind on a table that's quite a "set piece." But even the portrait of Khrushchev slipping from its frame, revealing Stalin's picture behind it, was a reprise of a dimly remembered gag. And the three Commissars whom Wilder revived from his earlier script for *Ninotchka* have become coarsened with the years—another indication of the changing climate of Hollywood. They were grotesquely pathetic and sentimental in 1939; now they are even more grotesquely crude than the Cagney character.

This being the age of the big production and the big promotion, there is a tie-in with Coca-Cola which provides truck-banners, super-market ads, contests, and window displays. Who is laughing at whom? The target has been incorporated in the profits of the joke. Perhaps Wilder (who owns 90 per cent of the picture) is closer to his Coca-Colonizer than one might have expected. Is this dollar diplomacy?

I felt that we in the audience were all being manipulated in some shameful way, and that whenever this feeling might become conscious and begin to dry up the laughs, Wilder showed his manipulative skills by throwing in little sops to sentiment—even more ugly in their way than the "wisecracks." Arlene Francis has said of her role, "My character is a warm, sensible woman who has a good marriage." That's better satirical dialogue than anything I heard in *One, Two, Three*—a movie that shovels on the wit.—PAULINE KAEL

My Gorgeous Darling Sweetheart Angels: Brigitte Bardot and Audrey Hepburn

BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S. Director: Blake Edwards. Producers: Martin Jurow and Richard Shepard. Script by George Axelrod, based on the novel by Truman Capote. Camera: Franz Planer. Music: Henry Mancini. With Audrey Hepburn and George Peppard.

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"There is no comfort for us in ourselves. It is hard to get outside, but there's only despair within."—William Dean Howells, A HAZARD OF NEW FORTUNES.

Two gorgeous girls, Brigitte Bardot and Audrey Hepburn, trot down the runway of life as Beat antiheroines in pictures about a girl & her problems that carry us back to the days when Bette Davis and Joan Crawford endured their finest hours. In Clouzot's *The Truth* Miss Bardot is Dominique, on trial for murdering her lover. In *Breakfast at Tiffany's* Miss Hepburn, violently, pathologically miscast as Truman Capote's ex-hillbilly, Holly Golightly, is just plain On Trial. Let me make clear that I loved every minute of these terrible pictures, and would not have missed either of them for the world. But I do not say this as a Father Flanagan among movie critics who claims there is no such thing as a bad picture. For if I enjoyed both films, it is with the part of myself (the Fan) that I trust least (as Critic). And I am critical of the two pictures for the important reason that, properly speaking, neither of the leading ladies can act. But do not understand me too quickly.

Though the two girls are not actresses, they are beguiling personalities. Dance? Yes, they can dance. Mlle. Bardot does a mean shimmy, in bed and elsewhere. Every time Miss Hepburn strolls past her store at 727 Fifth Avenue (Tiffany's), it is like watching a whole Easter Parade. In *The Truth*, in Miss Bardot's big scene, where she struts into the judicial well to reënact her crime, as I saw those marvelous legs approach, for one awful second I did hope she'd do her stuff and break into a dance *(And God Created Woman)*. My hope is called Bar-

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The party scene from BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S

dolatry. But M. Clouzot restrained her. Restraint, indeed, is largely what has gone into both the acting and directing. The director has cut BB's pouts to a dozen, and has toned down the star's particularly hot combination of slut and Little Bo Peep, mainly by cutting away from Bardot every time she goes bad. At times, Clouzot's editing maims his story. When it becomes necessary to keep Bardot in view in the witness box, but let others get on with the plot, Clouzot literally makes Bardot hide her beautiful head in her covered arms: those are not bad to look at either. On the other hand, Hepburn's director, Blake Edwards, has learned a lot—too much—from his television series *Peter Gunn* and *Mr. Lucky,* and he might pick up a few pointers from Clouzot. I bet Edwards threw whole spots on Miss Hepburn's gleaming white teeth. He has allowed her to eke out a ballad, "Moon River," shot in a phony, oblique angle down an East Side fire escape. And he has encouraged her worst tendencies: she is so charming that both director and star should be canned and shelved.

Neither *The Truth* nor *Breakfast* is really well wrought—indeed, after *El Cid, Breakfast* is the worst picture ever made. Both are slick, both mire down in anticlimaxes. *Breakfast at Tiffany's* falls apart after the justly touted East Side party scene. Holly points out her own guilty apartment to the cops, wanders off into the night with an admirer; and George Axelrod's script meanders with her into glib, fake, sentimental gags. For one long episode, *Breakfast* switches its style to that of sinister melodrama. Buddy Ebsen plays Doc, Holly's cast-off mountain husband, in so dour a way that not until Doc is safely back on his Greyhound en route to the hills are we sure that *Breakfast* may not turn into a murder picture. The murder would have been just one crime more perpetrated on Capote's story. The comedy does resume, but by then the film's pace has been wrecked. The picture is still good for laughs. Item: When she discovers that the nude hero's mistress (Patricia Neal) has left $300 behind, Holly asks, "Is that by the week, the hour, or the what?"

The rhythm of *The Truth* is likewise uneven, and the movie is about twenty minutes (out of 127 minutes) too long. Clouzot could have shown Dominque's amorality with about half her number of lovers, and her self-destructive impulses with a couple of suicide attempts less. The hand of the master does show in Clouzot's marvelous integration of Stravinsky's music into the action of *The Truth.* One sequence where the orgasmic finale of *The Fire Bird* is used to drive Dominique into her last one-night stand with her victim-lover is memorable as pure cinema triumphant.

Now, why this pair? Ordinarily, Bardot and Hepburn are not thought of as lodging in the same boat, or bed. But here we have two crashing beauties, two personalities of around thirty who have been great at playing themselves for a decade, actresses who now have been convinced by their agents and other film cognoscenti that they can act. Worse, the two have convinced themselves and they presently aim for art as well as the world, the flesh, and, the box office. The actresses begin their careers anew by playing two Beat, gruntled girls of around twenty. Their egos—alter and otherwise—have talked them, as they say in Brooklyn, "in": and the acting plunge may do them in as personalities, too. As H. L. Mencken pointed out, one earlier talented and sexy dancer, Valentino, was spared this sort of sad, grand delusion by his death just past thirty. The results, in the cases of Bardot and Hepburn, are absurd: the part of me that didn't want to laugh at their performances, wept for them.

Though the French picture is a tragedy, the

American a comedy, the characters the two actresses play do share a lot in common. Both are waifs from the country—Bardot from a drab French provincial town, Hepburn an unlikely native of Texas (which just shows you what a couple of years in New York can do for a girl's speech). In the proper Freudian way, both have big sibling problems. Dominique hates her favored sister (the scrumptious Marie-Jose Nat): she steals, then kills, her sister's boy friend. Holly likes her idiot brother too much: in fact she does it all in order to buy baby brother a horse ranch in Mexico. Most significant, though, are their shared sexual attitudes. Both are good at gaminship; in a pinch, they make love for a living. Dominique, more than Holly, craves a steady supply of beef. Holly asks to crawl in platonically with the kept man (George Peppard, who should live upstairs from every girl). Holly asks: "Do you mind if I get in with you. Don't worry. It's all right. We're friends." Bunk. Beat in more ways than one, both girls know the value of a good beating. Inexorably self-destructive, they get what they ask for. Holly goes for the super slobs (snobs)—first, Rusty Trawler, the ninth richest man in America under fifty, who is really broke; then a Brazilian diplomat who drops her just because Holly gets arrested for pushing dope. Dominique's target is a rat, warm only for her form (weakly played by Sami Frey), though she might have had a more virile saloon keeper (sweetly played by André Oumansky). Together with Sylvia (Anita Ekberg) of *The Sweet Life*, the girls codify their neurosis and say they seek Love, Love, Love; but like Fellini's big blonde baby doll, neither character would have the least idea of what to do with any. Try as they may—and they do so constantly—the girls cannot love. Rather than being by love possessed, they are frigid: they lack the ability to surrender.

Given their bent, their trade, and their need to get into trouble, it may seem strange that neither girl ever does get into trouble of the old-fashioned sort. Pregnancy, in fact, is the *one* problem they never have. (The same is true of Elizabeth Taylor's tart Gloria in *Butterfield 8*, even Gina Lollobrigida's party girl Lisa in *Come September).* In the real world, the Beat girl would be not as chic, or good-looking as these movie stars. Certainly she would be dumber. She would have miscarriages and abortions, though maybe not babies. (I am pleased to report that in real life both Bardot and Hepburn are wed mothers.) Possibly, along with their Danish pastry, the Beat movie heroines munch oral contraceptives in their breakfasts at Tiffany's—or in bed. Conceivably, their sex practices do not lead to conception. More likely, unwed mothers are too out of date to make credible movie heroines. *Fanny* (Leslie Caron) shows how quaint, and *Blue Denim* just how young (15) and dumb (Carol Lynley), a bachelor girl must be to get impregnated nowadays. Fecund Leslie Caron's Mardou in *The Subterraneans* was got with child; but then, in the film, the wench was incarcerably insane, and from another country (France). Similarly, in *Breathless,* another international slut, Patricia, a dumb American broad in Paris (played by the deeply frozen Jean Seberg), may be *enceinte,* too; but neither she nor we ever become quite sure. In the main, the seduced girl is now good for laughs. To ram home my point, I'll cite a quintet of filmically unwed mothers, all from the good old days: Mrs. Fiske as *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1913), Lillian Gish dwelling *Way Down East* (1920), Bette Davis as *The Old Maid* (1939), Olivia De Havilland as the Academy Award winner of *To Each His Own* (1946), and, to keep the disgrace in the family, Miss De Havilland's sister, Joan Fontaine, as that well-known authoress of *A Letter From an Unknown Woman* (1948). A five-handkerchief maternity ward. Like any once fertile symbol, the fallen girl has been used too much. Knocked Up is no longer a drama of tonight: it is but a shred of yesteryear.

The Truth and *Breakfast* both have unhappy endings, one explicitly, the second logically. Clouzot does give us a graphic picture of criminal justice in France; he patiently explains

in a Prologue that in his country the accused gets it from three sides: the probing President of the Court (Louis Seigner), the prosecutor (Charles Vanel), and the advocate for the victim's family (Paul Meurisse): Vanel is especially good. Withal, Clouzot would have a tough time persuading me that any largely male group of judges and jurors would punish BB too hard. Both the story and the girl take the easy way out: she kills herself over her grasping, opportunistic victim. As for the end of Holly, Truman Capote's novella has been vulgarized. In Capote's story, the narrator remembers Holly after she has vanished into her continent - to - continent sluttings. George Axelrod's mutation has built up the writer, Paul Varjak, to provide a romantic lead for the "also starring" George Peppard. Paul is now, of course, in love with Holly. They get married after he has given her a lecturette on love, easily the equivalent of five years worth of analysis, in a gross cab scene. Their marriage is surely one made in hell.

Gone, then, are the virgins of twenty years ago, beribboned ingenues like Lana, Judy, Ava, and Esther, girls who swilled cokes while they swung on white picket fences. Swingers no more, these actresses have plunged professionally downhill. Mainly, the maturer girls have slipped into the rut of playing the psychological heavy, the dissatisfied woman of forty who seeks love in much the way that Holly and Dominique go at it. See Lana Turner as Marjorie Penrose in *By Love Possessed,* or in *Imitation of Life, Portrait in Black, Peyton Place, Another Time Another Place* . . . really any old place. I have trouble telling apart the cinematic and public selves of these older actresses; their performances suggest they do too. I hate to be ungentlemanly, and no offense meant since, obviously, I see *all* their pictures. But where are the present counterparts of Andy Hardy's girls? Doris Day and Debbie Reynolds perhaps, though even these two are going melodramatic *(Midnight Lace, The Catered Affair).* Virginity is indeed a losing cause among young movie heroines. On the left, there are *Shadows* and *Breathless;* on the right, television's Connie Stevens becomes, in chronological order, unchaste ("ape" is the word *she* uses), pregnant, then married to the man she doesn't love in *Parrish.* To show the wages of non-sin, it is chasity which drives that box-office darling, Natalie Wood herself, publicly mad in Kazan's *Splendor in the Grass.* To close my case with an exotic citation: in the latest of Soviet bourgeois melodramas, Chukhrai's *Clear Skies* (made in Moscow, 1961, though it is Hollywood, *c.* 1935), after a four-day whirlwind courtship, even a nice Russian girl is deflowered without benefit of clergy. Needless to add, good comes of it when Sasha delivers a fine Russian son.

Why, I wonder, does the idea of the Beat girl disturb? And why is it deeply sad to see two accomplished screen personalities essay the Beat girl? Perhaps it is because we know her too soon. Though the Beat girl may have buckets of charm, she is not really engaging. To herself perhaps, and for an hour a day to the men who have her: this is Dominique's grief in *The Truth.* Observe: I do not lament that Dominique and Holly are socially undesirable girls, detestable because they do not sew buttons for the Red Cross or entertain the boys at the front. They are bleak, ultimately dull, because they will never grow to be women—decent, workaday, viable women, both passive and giving, often shrewd, awesomely practical, occasionally crazy, those women who make the world a possible, amusing place. Because the Beat girls are not interesting, neither can films consecrated to their lot afford pleasure or interest of more than the most fleeting, desultory kind.

So with Dominique and Holly, my darling, gorgeous, sweetheart angels. Black angels. They lie undulating on their night and day beds, lunging after man after man, really from fantasy to fantasy, dragging along their never comforting, never to be comforted, bodies. After a time, nobody wants them. Nobody gets them: there is no need: they get themselves.

—HERBERT FEINSTEIN

Films of the Quarter

Pauline Kael

After a recent battle with the editor of this journal (his neo-neo-realism vs. my almost anything) he delivered a parting shot: "Have you seen a good drawingroom comedy lately?" No, but the only good new films I *have* seen (in the San Francisco area) have been examples of genres just as stylized and "artificial" —the boudoir farce *The Five-Day Lover* and the ghost story *The Innocents*.

Even those who are fond of recalling "the Lubitsch touch" are now praising *One, Two, Three* (!) as a return to the comic spirit, and we De Broca enthusiasts are made to feel rather apologetic, as if love of lyric, comic grace were a bit of an affliction—proof that we're frivolous and superficial, that we're not really "level-headed." Well, *The Five-Day Lover* is a split-level movie about lovers, dreamers, and role-playing, and it's so beautiful to look at that people can easily dismiss it as trivial (ugliness always looks so much more *real*). In the arms of her lover, the dreamy little adulteress looks out over the rooftops of Paris (a scene that inevitably recalls René Clair) and rhapsodizes, "all those cells for love." There is no bitterness at the end of an affair—"Love's a lie, a bubble," she says, "when it touches earth, it's over"—only a bit of melancholy, a nostalgia, as it were, for the bubble and a longing for the next one.

De Broca's kind of comedy stays aloft in its own sphere, and his technique calls up similar pleasures and the same sweet melancholy: the beauty of his compositions is so evanescent it disappears before one has time to seize it, to fix it in memory; his films leave one both happy and nostalgic. His originality as a director is in his use of incongruities, and in the idiosyncrasies of his characters, which turn out to be the substance of the film. *The Five-Day Lover* is an ironic comedy, a sophisticated idyll, so exquisitely choreographed that it recalls Max Ophuls, though the subject matter is more reminiscent of Clément's *M. Ripois*, Bergman's *Smiles of a Summer Night*, Renoir's *The Rules of the Game*.

So many of the elements are familiar, but De Broca transforms old jokes and the conventions of stage farce, and by his rhythm makes them new and surprising. In his love of love, and his feeling for folly, he does not need to be compared with other masters.

As for *The Innocents*, it is visually and verbally elegant, and it is the best ghost movie ever made.

Stanley Kauffmann

The best film I saw in the last quarter (Oct. 15–Jan. 31) is one of the best films I have ever seen—Antonioni's *The Night*. Several viewings make me think that the mid-20th-century anarchy of art, accelerated by the world's transition from history to question-mark, may be resolved to some degree by this artist; that in the as yet infantile art of the film he may be finding avenues not possible in ancient arts; that the texture of a good man's despair may in itself be a source of hope. Additionally, I admire this film's gently ruthless truth about the relations of men and women.

Celebrated directors stud the quarter. Kurosawa had three belated American premières, all partially disappointing: *Throne of Blood (Macbeth)*, stunningly done but emotionally remote; *The Hidden Fortress* (condensed), superb film-making without much content; *The Lower Depths*, excellently acted but immobile and tedious. Buñuel, a director whom I would like to be able to dismiss but certainly cannot, produced *Viridiana*, another of his exercises in cruelty and moral revolt, always watchable but freighted with sophomoric symbolism. (The difference between Buñuel and Antonioni is the difference between exhibitionistic perversity and profound pessimism.) The Argentinian Torre Nilsson was represented in New York privately (Cinema 16) by *The Fall*, a moderately interesting exploration of children's amorality, and publicly by *Summer Skin*, a minor ripple from the New Wave. To me, he is a talented director from whom little can be expected.

Cayatte, a fine film-maker as such, showed in *Tomorrow Is My Turn*, that he needs guidance with his scripts to keep them focussed and integrated. Cocteau's *Testament of Orpheus* was the mixture as before—two parts pose to one part poetry. De Broca's *Five-Day Lover*, although too conventionally "French" in theme and conclusion, was delightfully directed and played.

Among American films, which included the superficial *Judgment at Nuremberg*, the Lumet-lamed *View from the Bridge*, the ridiculous *Too Late Blues*, only Billy Wilders' *One, Two, Three*—despite its occasional straining for laughs—was the work of a capable man making the film of which he is capable.

Gavin Lambert

Happily, a 1.85:1, black-and-white quarter.

La Caida, directed by the Argentinian Leopoldo Torre Nilsson and written by his wife Beatriz Guido, is rather like *The Turn of the Screw* without the ghosts. A shy inexperienced girl, studying at the university, rents a room in a house occupied by four children and their speechless bedridden mother, whom they finally get bored with and allow to die. The style is highly wrought and the characterization of the children wonderfully ominous and sardonic at the same time. They are young-old, lovely monsters, wildly funny, occasionally sinister, appallingly self-reliant and totally helpless. The film falters slightly toward the end, but is none the less an extraordinary achievement, with the concentrated impact of a novella.

Le Testament d'Orphée, made two years ago, was Cocteau's valedictory to the movies, a unique piece of poetic cabaret and irresponsible in the best sense. The incredibly spry 70-year-old poet retraces his personal symbols, dies and is born yet again. Obviously there is no end to him.

All Fall Down is the best American film in quite a while. Its tale of a bad son, attractive but hopelessly corrupt, not only cracks a favorite American image (the sexy, jeansy "rebel" is unglamorized and shown finally as the prisoner of a horrible emptiness) but does it with real style, light, ironic and somehow deadly. The direction (John Frankenheimer) is especially brilliant in the family Christmas sequences, and Angela Lansbury's mother is a classic portrait.

La Notte. Antonioni virtually remakes *L'Avventura* and comes to a dead end. There's the same brilliant suspended surface, and at times it works (on the surface), but a depressing lack of substance in the central relationship of the "alienated" couple, which has a manufactured air. "Lack of communication between human beings" is the catchphrase here, which is fine if the human beings *try* to communicate. This glum, well-heeled couple is unbelievably passive. Boredom is inevitable (and boring) if you only do things, like going to bad parties and nightclubs, that you know will bore you.

For Resnais' *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad* the catchphrase is "reality as an infinite series of possibilities." "Repetitions" would be more accurate, but still won't do, because the film contains no reality. So where are we? In a kind of masturbatory baroque zombieland, with a man trying over and over again to persuade a woman that they've met before and should go off together. Past, present and future are intercut and interrelated, but interminably the same. All that's different is the heroine's costume, and she begins to look like a quick-change artist. The tricks are from the cinema's bottom drawer. A bombastic musical score provides false climax after false climax. The camera tracks very slowly along corridors and up to impeccably deadpan faces, maybe a hangover from Resnais' art film days, when it crawled over canvases to infuse "movement" into them. Stilted literary monologues are declaimed in the fashion of retired members of the Comédie Française. The taste of this picture is quite appalling. Although it hasn't the vulgar emotional exploitation of *Hiroshima Mon Amour,* it is almost as offensive, since it has what we might call the Higher Vulgarity of labored aspiration masquerading as poetic impulse.

Dwight MacDonald

Several minor victories this quarter, one major. A French director, Robert Dhery, has finally made a funny movie: *La Belle Americaine,* which, unlike *Zazie* and *The Joker,* has real, unforced high spirits and charm. Sidney Lumet's *A View from the Bridge* is about actual people and it has a fine cast. Mr. Lumet and his screen writer, Norman Rosten, have done Mr. Miller's play straight and unsensationalized and it comes across powerfully. Despite slick Hollywooden music and photography, *A Cold Wind in August* is worth seeing for Lola Albright's performance and for Alexander Singer's direction, which often breaks through into reality.

The major triumph is Antonioni's *La Notte.* The Antonioni boom is the most extraordinary, and gratifying, thing that's happened since I began doing movie criticism two years ago. Everywhere I go now, people begin to talk of just one film—*L'Avventura,* which has just placed second in *Sight and Sound's* all-time list of the ten greatest. *La Notte* is not as integrated as *L'Avventura*—the daylight scenes didn't hang together, brilliant as some were—but it is a mature work of perhaps the most original and interesting director now making films. (The "perhaps" is an emergency exit in case some one mentions Resnais, Godard, or Kurosawa.) I think Antonioni has three unique qualities. He has the eye and visual taste of a Poussin or a Veronese: each frame is beautifully composed and the tonal relations are harmonious. He is a master of filmic choreography, bringing out the emotional meaning of a scene by the interacting lines of motion of the actors. And he can suggest the kind of depth and nuances of character that have hitherto been the novelist's province—for example, the last twenty minutes of *La Notte.*

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R. M. HODGENS

Entertainments

Bachelor Flat. Archeologist Terry-Thomas rents Celeste Holm's beach house; Tuesday Weld moves in, and Richard Beymer lives in the yard. Terry-Thomas is much pursued by the ladies, and director Frank Tashlin stages the bedroom-closet scenes very well but reserves his special efforts for the big scene wherein the poor fellow, roaring drunk, pursues his pursuers all over the beach, where there is no place to hide. Meanwhile, there are such pleasantries as Francesca Bellini eating chocolate cake on a reducing machine, and Priscilla Dachshund burying a dinosaur-bone in the sand. The script is adapted by Tashlin and Budd Grossman from a play by the latter, but it doesn't look it. As for Tashlin's notorious tastelessness, the only important lapse is the narrated Revolutionary prologue, which throws the whole film off balance.

Bachelor in Paradise is not to be confused with the above. Controversial author Bob Hope rents Lana Turner's house in Paradise Village; Paula Prentiss lives next door with Jim Hutton. Hope is much given to pursuing the ladies, but something about Paradise changes his mind, and the big scene, with Hope hiding all the ladies in the bedroom closet, is not well staged by director Jack Arnold. The humor in this film is mostly verbal, and mostly unsuccessful.

The Comancheros. Comic Western action and unintentionally comic romance, and the familiar flavor of Texan nationalism. John Wayne's unflagging exasperation carries him through, but Aissa, Pat, and everyone else are lost. Michael Curtiz directed.

The Colossus of Rhodes. The distortions, the plot, the casting and the budget seem much the same, but some of the variations are dumbfounding. The Colossus itself is inadequate inside but spectacular outside, and it is deftly characterized. Sergio Leone directed.

Flower Drum Song. The primarily romantic affairs of some unspeakably quaint Chinese-Americans, with a few good songs and occasional choreographic excitement. Presumably, it is supposed to be lavish, but it all looks even more anemic than *Can-Can*. Henry Koster directed.

Paris Blues. Joanne Woodward, Paul Newman, Diahann Carroll, and Sidney Poitier wander all over Paris, talking. The cast and the set are all right, but the talk, which concerns race, sex, and jazz, is deplorable. Martin Ritt directed.

The Explosive Generation. Some high school students persuade their guidance teacher (William Shatner)

to discuss "sex" with them. Then they persuade him to make an issue of it. Then they persuade the authorities to re-admit the teacher to class, partly by unanimous passive resistance, partly by pointing out that the teen-age hero and heroine (Lee Kinsolving and Patty McCormack) have not slept together anyway. Through most of the film, the situation could not be that difficult. At the end, it could not be that easy, and the questions the film tries to answer have nothing to do with the questions it tries to ask. Buzz Kulik directed.

The Innocents. A neat, 99-minute version of Henry James's tale of the mad (?) governess and the corrupt (?) children (and the ghosts?). Adapters William Archibald and Truman Capote have made it rather difficult to believe in the supernatural possibility, but Jack Clayton's direction is as moody as anyone could wish. The film has the blackest blacks and whitest whites, the longest lap dissolves and most startling cuts, the most haunting score and the most thorough investigation of the most ingeniously cluttered sets . . . and if it looks too familiar for comfort now and then, it is still true that nothing better could have been expected. Deborah Kerr (the governess), Pamela Franklin and Martin Stephens (the children) manage to seem both frightened and frightening throughout; Megs Jenkins (the housekeeper), Clytie Jessop and Peter Wyngarde (the ghosts) are very good, too, but of course their roles are somewhat more limited in scope.

The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone. Another ageing beauty, two beautiful young men this time, more betrayal from all quarters, and a bit of avian imagery. . . . *Roman Spring* would be more interesting if Jose Quintero's rather theatrical direction did not suggest the filmed versions of most of Tennessee Williams's plays. Vivian Leigh suffers beautifully as Mrs. Stone, with a restraint that is a relief but seems to emphasize the extravagant nature of the abuse she must suffer from the caricatures (Lotte Lenya, Warren Beatty, Coral Browne and others) who surround her. The Widow Stone complains of "drifting," so it may be unfair to complain about the same quality in the film.

Tender is the Night is a bit longer, more lavish, and more sensible than most soap operas, but Ivan Moffat's adaptation of Fitzgerald's novel about the decline of a psychiatrist who marries a wealthy former patient is too faithful, too literal, and too tactful to suggest that anything is happening at all in the span of years it covers, not even when the baby gets sick on champagne and then the police call with the news that an expatriate composer has just gotten himself killed by a pianist, who has done him the additional disservice of finishing the title song. It all ends in divorce. On the wide screen, the inadequate if well-clothed cast is viewed from a great distance amidst sumptuous sets and lovely scenery. Henry King directed.

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