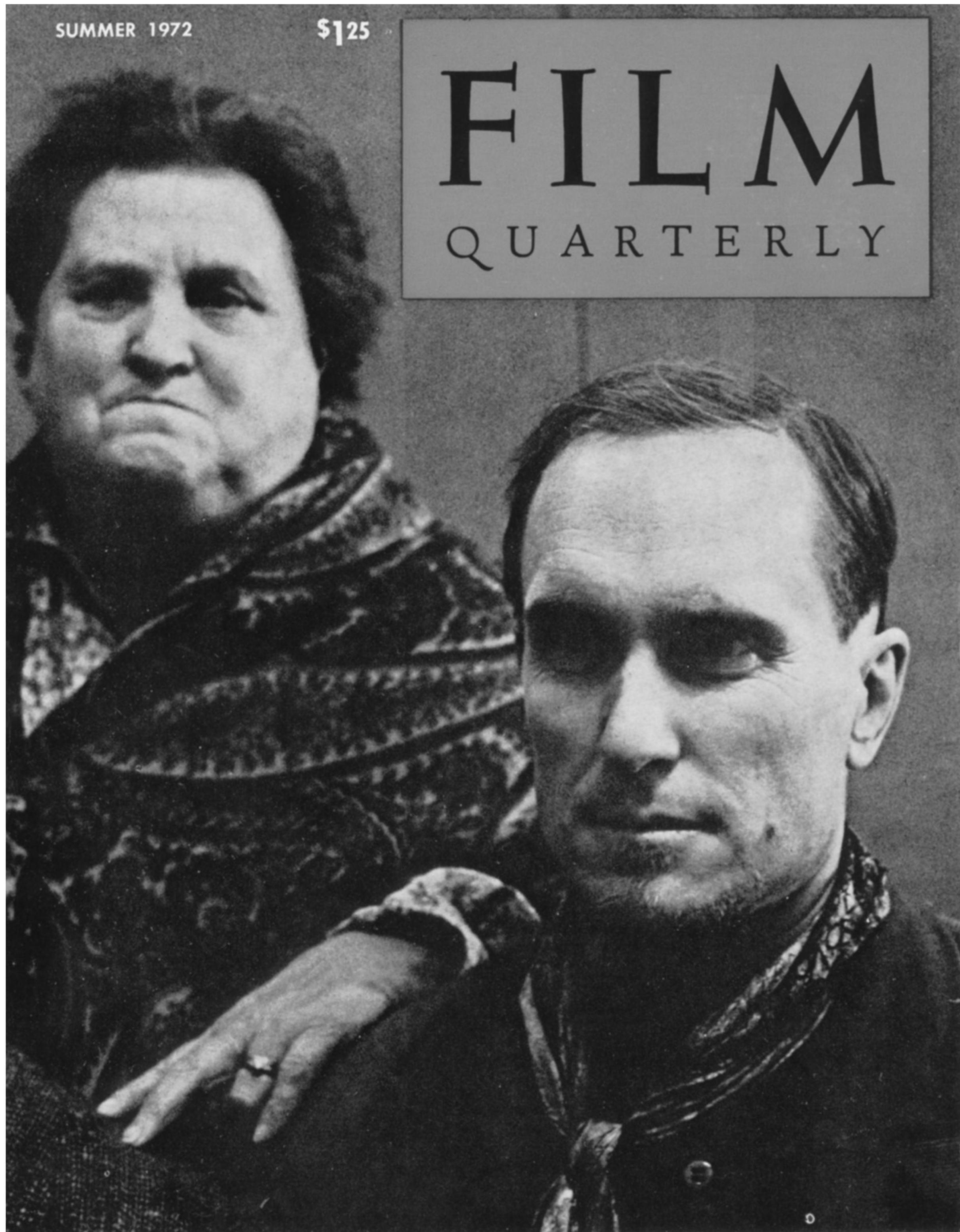
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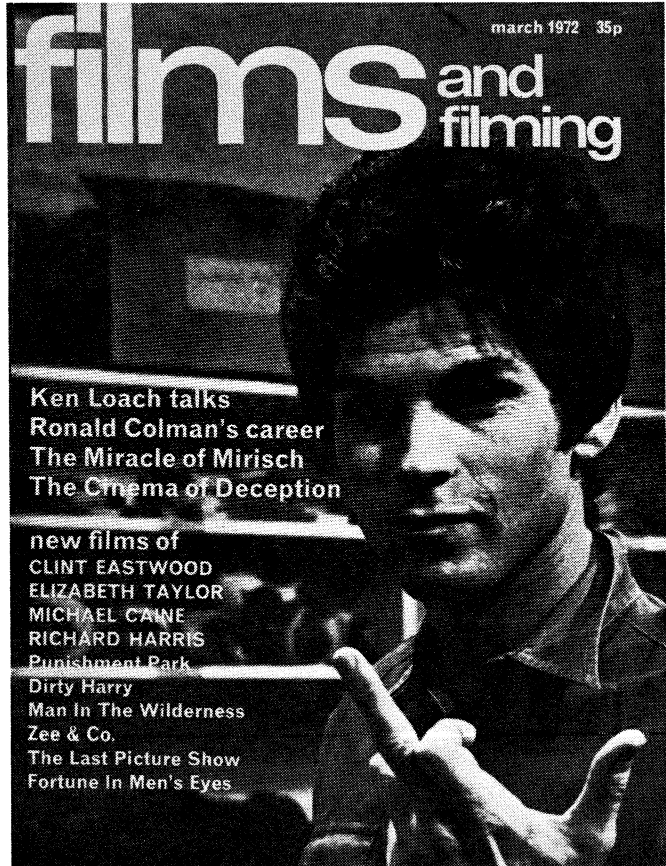

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of the silents, it is now clear, is based on a relative handful of films; no more than 300 titles are in the vocabulary of even the most dedicated enthusiast. In fact, of the 6606 films recorded in *Feature Films, 1921–1930* only about 15% are now known to have survived the coming of sound. It is the intent of the *AFI Catalog*, however, to present scholars with a *tool* that will make the total production accessible for the twenties, and, when the work is complete, for all films from 1893 to the present.

AFI Catalog, as an objective and multipurpose *tool*, is not directed solely at film scholars; it is also directed at students and scholars in the humanities and social sciences who recognize (or should recognize) as Kracauer stated long ago, that ". . . the films of a nation reflect its mentality in a more direct way than other artistic media."

It is to this latter group that the subject index, this first attempt to provide a content guide to feature films, is primarily directed, although its utility to all those involved with film should be apparent. It is to this latter group, as well, that the revelations on the often startling content of the pseudo-sociological or medical morality tales of the period may be more significant, while the importance of an accurate overview of the number and content of films intended for black or Jewish audiences should be obvious to the film scholar, even if he is not a sociologist or a political scientist. The value of the catalog to a student of films, after all, should be enhanced by the recognition that art reflects contemporary conditions and perceptions, that films were not produced in a societal vacuum.

The AFI Catalog was not designed to act as a substitute for viewing the film, whether the film survived or not. Hopefully we are reaching that stage in film scholarship where nothing in print is regarded as an adequate substitute. The catalog is a factual, not a critical synthesis. The style adopted for the synopses is deliberately direct, denotative and declarative. Because so many of the "lost" films were so poorly documented, many of the synopses lack details of characterization, atmosphere and even sequences of events, but even so they convey some sense of what the film is about, and more important, they identify the film and fix it in time and place.

This first volume of a nineteen-volume series owes a great deal to the efforts of a host of collaborators who supplied data and source material. The last stage in the research methodology was to circulate data "want lists" to over 300 film scholars, authorities, enthusiasts, and specialist buffs. Despite the checking and cross-checking there are inevitably human errors, and, surprisingly, machine errors due to defects in the computer methodology. The machines and not the humans, for example, take credits for the most outrageous miscue in *Feature Films 1921–30:* readers will find *The Blue Mountain Mystery* cunningly placed between *Wickedness Preferred* and *Wide Open.* The explanation is that *The Blue Mountain Mystery* is filed in the data bank as one of a distributor's list called *The Wid Gunning Series* and was accidentally placed in the volume under the series title. All corrections and additions are used to update the computer file in preparation for the day a supplement or a revised edition will be published.

AFI Catalog, by its size alone, is a silent witness to how little we know historically about American film production and how much there is to be done in the history and criticism of the silent film, an art form that flourished so brilliantly in the twenties. It is also a spur to the Institute's archive program, and those of the Library of Congress, the Museum of Modern Art, and George Eastman House. The *AFI Catalog* project was established as an outgrowth of the archive program and its primary purpose was to identify and describe every film produced in America in order to guide the archivists in selecting and acquiring films for permanent preservation in the public interest. It still serves that purpose, of course, but the Institute now recognizes that it is producing a major reference work in film scholarship with the potential for raising the standard in a field that is just beginning to establish standards. With new or supportive data from the community of scholars, both in films and in other disciplines where films are increasingly being used, and by both professionals and amateurs alike, *AFI Catalog* can fulfill that potential and also do its part to preserve the heritage and advance the art of film in America.

—FRANCES JONES, SAM KULA, AND STEVE ZITO.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK, cont'd.

series for the Oakland Museum and teaches at Merritt College. DONALD RICHIE is finishing a book on Ozu, to be published by the UC Press. MICHAEL SHEDLIN is preparing a book of interviews with cameramen. MICHAEL SILVERMAN teaches at UC Santa Barbara. CLYDE SMITH teaches film at UC Extension, Berkeley. BERNARD WEINER writes for *Night Times* and other Bay Area publications. STEVE ZITO is editor of *AFI Catalog.*

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MICHAEL SHEDLIN

Police Oscar: *The French Connection*

AND AN INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM FRIEDKIN

A film does not have to be made by Leni Riefenstahl or the USIA to be a propaganda film. All dramatic movies contain elements that either reinforce or reject dominant cultural phenomena. If prevailing social relations are reinforced or suggested as the normal state of affairs, then the film becomes propaganda for existing mores and institutions. While the film-maker may not deliberately set out to make an explicit political statement, he or she will select countless situations, settings, and visual details which point out the surrounding social context as either natural (virtuous) or unnatural (unjust). Most films, of course, are committed to the former mode. The great majority of commercial films are produced not to express a particular artist's passions, but to insure immediate cash income to the producers. To annoy the audience by rejecting or questioning its conception of reality would be bad business and therefore just isn't done.

Liberal directors often make "social comment" films that criticize egregious dysfunctions like capital punishment, bigotry, or even alienation, but these works nearly always imply that the overall social environment is valid and that the immorality comes from individual psychological weakness or deviation from essentially sound Western ideals. Certain directors of American films, such as Chaplin, Renoir, Lang, Kazan, Penn, Kubrick, and Perry, have consistently displayed a humane commitment to the broader social implications of their works—beyond the promulgation of liberal stereotypes or the condemnation of obvious injustice (cf. Stanley Kramer and Norman Jewison). European film-makers, from Vigo and Buñuel to Antonioni and Godard, have consistently moved beyond "social comment" into an exploration of the relationship between interpersonal communication and social functioning.

Since propaganda, whether blatant or subtle, and whether "left" or "right," works primarily through the emotions and not the intellect, it is not necessarily the explicit or easily recognizable elements of a film that produce the strongest effect on the consciousness of the viewer. Such is the case with a film like *The French Connection*. The explicit values are evident. The film is exquisitely made. An unnerving tension is maintained, not by the plot or the music, but by our fascination with Popeye's dementia, by the garish sound track of screeching tires, screaming engines, slamming doors and smashing flesh (Pauline Kael called the film "an aggravated case of New York"), and by the expert movement of the film's visual elements. The sequence in the nightclub where Popeye first smells the dope smugglers; the sequence when Charnier, the French connection, eludes Popeye's tail; and the tearing apart of the dirty Lincoln are masterful examples of visual story telling. Throughout, the acting is excellent, the script efficient, the camerawork bright and fast. Director William Friedkin is quite good at ensemble movement, his cutting is nervous and harsh, his use of locations surpassingly acute. As a director of action, Friedkin seems more complicated and technically superior to Don Siegel, Jack Smight, Peter Yates, and Richard Fleischer, but less formally sophisticated than Peckinpah or Penn. Stylistically, Friedkin resembles Arthur Penn most closely among American directors, although Friedkin is more New York-oriented and less prone to lyrical interludes.

Beneath the brilliant and diverting surface of *The French Connection*, however, is a net-

work of implications and assumptions that transmit rightist propaganda. The film itself is not especially complicated, but these implicit messages have a wide and equivocal significance.

It is necessary to stress again that an American studio production like *The French Connection* is only secondarily art. It is, above all, a product, a commodity, a consumer item. *The French Connection* was selected over all other available stories because its producers felt that it would appeal to enough filmgoers to make money. Friedkin, far from being the creator of the film, was a worker hired by big money to direct a package that was handed to him. Regardless of Friedkin's embellishments, the instigators, the originators of *The French Connection* control its essential meanings.

Who are these people and what are they up to? The film's executive producer was G. David Schine, once notorious as a member of the late Senator Joseph McCarthy's staff. Producer Phil D'Antoni's last effort, *Bullitt,* one of the big commercial hits of all time, was about a hip cop, certainly one of the most pernicious and opportunistic distortions ever devised. The final script was apparently written by Ernest Tidyman, who wrote *Shaft*, and was based on a book by Robin Moore, who wrote *The Green Berets.*

By playing on the confused fantasies of a frightened and schizophrenic culture, the makers of *The French Connection* have built a product that addresses itself directly to the major issues of our society—racism, corrupt power, brutality, drugs—and yet manages to subsume all social significance beneath an explosion of gaudy adventurism that ultimately reinforces the heroism of the authorities it seems to be criticizing.

The French Connection is a prime example of the cinema of manipulation over engagement. The final selective principle is not "What does this say?" but "Will it work?" The film is manufactured for eloquence of effect rather than communication of insight. While seemingly rampant with realism and social comment (gritty locations, funky language, white cops brutalizing black citizens, police detail, etc.),

THE FRENCH CONNECTION

The French Connection is actually devoid of social commitment because it refuses to take seriously the issues it raises. Through the utilization of a comic-book format, the inhumanity of the characters is minimized and turned into amusing mannerisms. Thus Popeye's leering male supremacism eventuates in a quirky fling with a willing young girl. When Popeye raids the black bar, our attention is drawn to his wisecracks and bullying rather than to the reality of colonized minorities who must use drugs to escape the effects of their oppression. Popeye's homey ethnic slurs draw laughs from the audience—racism becomes a gag.

There is no reason to expect all movies to reflect an anti-establishment analysis or to challenge injustice; however, since *The French Connection* purports to deal with social issues, it can be discussed as a serious film, a film with a message. When Gene Hackman and the "real Popeye" appeared on the Dick Cavett TV show, they talked about the tragedy of the junkie on the street rather than police malfeasance. The basic assumption of the film is that heroin traffic must be stopped at all costs. By objectifying evil in the form of heroin and heroin dealers, the authorities—be they police or studios—divert the public's attention from the essential cultural patterns that caused the drug use in the first place. They analyze the symptoms rather than the sources.

Popeye is fighting not just Frog One, but evil itself. Like Dirty Harry, who hunts a sadistic

random sniper, Popeye is protecting society from unimaginable menace. Thus the principal subliminal message of the film: arbitrary power is good because it keeps the society from falling apart; authoritarian action is necessary to protect us from the inferiors among us who would become criminals and drug addicts if unchecked by the incorruptible executors of law and reason. That this attitude is congruent with two of the pillars of Western political philosophy—the theory of innate aggressiveness and the lesser-of-two-evils strategy—indicates how inextricably the film is linked to broader issues. Irwin Silber points out three further subtle messages contained in *The French Connection:* (1) it is implied that police brutality is more the outgrowth of personal psychosis rather than the logical result of deliberate policy; (2) it is implied that heroin traffic has nothing to do with international capitalism, and that it is entirely a "criminal" venture; (3) it is implied that foreigners and American minorities are ultimately no match for the dogged white innocent out there battling a crooked world.

If we didn't know something about the producers of *The French Connection,* we might assume that it is consciously about the replacement of responsibility with ritual among authoritarian figures, about the psychopathology of power. Popeye, as a cop, is literally a representative of the authority of the state. He exists, like the state, to protect society from the horrors of disorder, invasion, and corruption. In the film, these dark energies are embodied in Frog One, the French connection. As the huge dope dealer, Charnier is the incarnation of professional wickedness, carrying a foreign plague to American cities, arrogantly flaunting our customs and laws and spreading immeasurable misery. Here, then, is a battle between two powers, two agents of control. One, Popeye America, signifies shrewdness, determination, incorruptibility, brashness, independence, patriotism, highly developed driving skills, and in general, guts ball. His minor character flaws, such as fascism, homicidal compulsion and white supremacy, are emphasized to make him "more human," "someone we can identify with," a "real character." This assertion of Popeye's "humanity" extends beyond a sense of irascible but strong-minded fallibility. Popeye is a kind of primal sentry at lonely odds with the innate human tendencies toward wrongdoing. Charnier represents more than a supercriminal, he represents heartless and elusive evil. He is a profiteer without conscience, a manipulator and a murderer; his suavity and sophisticated demeanor simply emphasize his professionalism. He is a threat to the national security and his specter is used to justify systematic brutality and repression in the same way as the threat of domination by a foreign ideology is manufactured or promoted to strengthen state chauvinism.

In the famous car-train chase sequence, the terrified and powerless public is literally railroaded by opposing forces of control. Their fate is out of their hands, they are at the mercy of unknown agents who are performing an elaborate ballet of violence and power through the dark halls of their own barbarous existence. Of course Popeye swerves to avoid the woman with the baby carriage, but one feels that this is simply because an accident would slow him down, interrupt his turn.

The car chase becomes the central propaganda device of the film. The essential evil of the dark forces is heightened by a rapid escalation of wanton murder; the essential goodness of Popeye (and the authorities) is emphasized by the extreme sacrifices made on behalf of the public. Popeye works so hard to protect us from harm that he falls down from exhaustion after apprehending and executing the French thug. It is during the car chase that we are manipulated into an excited state where we will be susceptible to influences which would ordinarily be subject to scrutiny. We *must* take sides at this point; it would be nearly impossible to resist the assumption that Popeye's actions are heroic while the assassin's actions are abjectly felonious. As Andrew Sarris points out, "In the American cinema, one must ultimately root for one side or another." The meaning of this critical sequence, which is consciously non-intellectual and non-dialogue, is precisely what it

seems to be and serves to define the overall intentions of the film itself: regardless of Popeye's crudities, he hunts evil and gets the job done.

At the end of the film, after additional displays of police efficiency and daring (complete with amusing snafus), we are informed that the courts have acquitted nearly everybody involved in the dope smuggling and that Charnier escaped altogether. Popeye's game has come to naught. In the final frames he is shooting at ghosts. In a very real sense, he does *not* get the job done. As William Burroughs remarks, the higher-ups on the heroin pyramid are infinitely replaceable, but as long as there are junkies on the street, dope traffic will exist to serve them. Popeye's job is ineffectual, meaningless; his manner is grotesque. His absurdity distinguishes *The French Connection* from conventional cop films; however, one has the suspicion that the producers injected this device with impure motives. As Pauline Kael notes: "Popeye's low character is used to make the cops-and-robbers melodrama superficially modern by making it meaningless." Popeye, essentially a moronic and obsessive robot, is elevated to the privileged position of Existential Hero. It is an indication of the extreme cultural polarization in America that the same character is seen as a monster and a guardian by different segments of the population. In the longer run, perhaps the dangerous undercurrents of a film like *The French Connection* will prove less significant than the fact that it portrayed a policeman as a psycho. Perhaps Friedkin and Hackman and the scriptwriter deserve approbation for taking a rightist propaganda project and turning it into a film of cold social criticism.

In any case, *The French Connection* remains a triumph of American commercialism. Opening in two theaters in New York City on October 7, 1971, it grossed $302,648 in 19 days. By November 24 it was at the top of *Variety's* weekly box-office list at $6,000,000. Fox estimates that the eventual world-wide revenue will be $30,000,000. Such are the rewards the American consciousness industry obtains when it successfully mixes reactionary and liberal propaganda, turns immorality into heroism, social psychopathology into personal idiosyncracy, and art into amusement. Although *The French Connection* may appear to be critical of the law enforcement mentality, it is, like *Dirty Harry,* very much a police movie. The "real Popeye" of course appears as Hackman's boss. The "real Cloudy," Sonny Grosso, worked as a production assistant. All the actors in the black bar that Popeye raided were off-duty New York narcs. The background detail, the police garage and other official touches certainly required the cooperation of the NYPD. Eddie Egan is now a story consultant at Paramount and has a three-picture contract as an actor. Perhaps Eddie, who used to refer to suspects or potential suspects as "germs," will become a producer or a production chief himself and then all the frills and fagotty artists can be done away with and the police can run the studios directly . . . .

Regardless of my ambivalence toward *The French Connection* as a cultural event, I feel that William Friedkin is one of the best young American directors. I visited him in his austere office at Fox in December 1971. At 32, he is friendly, vain and slender. He speaks quickly and precisely, anticipating the questions, glancing at *Variety* during his responses.

How did you come to direct The French Connection?

The producer owned the rights to the book, which he brought to me in galleys more than two years ago. He had known that I had wanted to do a thriller, and I was very interested in the story. I thought it was marvelous. I had done a lot of documentaries that had sort of delved into this area. But I really wasn't hooked on it until I went back to New York and met Egan and Grosso and started to hang out with them. Then we went through two disastrous screenplays over about nine months. They didn't work out at all, didn't have the chase in them, the writer just wasn't sympathetic to the characters, the atmosphere, the

life, etc. He got nothin' on paper. So the project was dead. National General went out of production right in the middle of all these lousy scripts we had. The project was dead for about ten months. No studio would touch it. We finally got a script that we were happy with and took it to Fox. Dick Zanuck and David Brown, who were running Fox, liked the script, met with us, and said Go. We started shooting November 30 of 1970. Principal photography was about 65 days. The budget was $2,200,000.

What is your background? How did you get started in the motion picture business?

I started in live television in Chicago when I was 17. I graduated from high school at 16 and answered an ad in the paper for a job in the mail room of WGN television. I had not read a book from beginning to end. Education was a joke, it meant nothing. This was 1955. Live TV was very new then in Chicago. Nobody knew anything about it. You had to go to school to be an engineer but not to be in production. It was a local station, and they weren't taking any shows from the networks, there were no filmed shows or reruns or anything. You had a live station and you programmed it live. I didn't know anybody or anything. I just hung around in the evenings after my job and watched the control rooms work. I used to go out and get sandwiches for the guys, and they took a liking to me. I was promoted out of the mail room after 8 or 9 months to a job as floor manager, like assistant director. Then, after 6 or 7 months I was directing. I directed about 2000 live shows over an 8-year period. Every kind of show: game shows, variety shows, quiz shows, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, baseball games, the first courtroom show on live TV—*They Stand Accused,* and so on. I was directing four and five shows a day, starting in the morning with a kid's show, lunchtime little theater, Bozo the Clown, an afternoon quiz show, then an evening news show, which is really good for a director to do. The news is fast, a lot of things happening. You've got to coordinate it and get it done on the clock. It gives you a sense of pace.

Then I did my first documentary in 1961, about a guy who was going to the electric chair in Chicago, a black guy who had been on death row for 10 years. I made this film without knowing anything about how to make a movie. The cameraman and myself did everything. The film won an award at the San Francisco Film Festival in 1962 and was instrumental in getting the prisoner a reprieve. Dave Wolper saw that picture in San Francisco and we started to correspond, and a couple of years later I went to work for Wolper out here. I came right from Chicago television, where by that time I had done a half a dozen more local documentaries for TV. I did one about Red Grange the football player, a documentary about Chicago, another one with the Second City actors, another about the Presbyterian Church's Ministry to Institutions.

Then, in 1965, at 26, I left Chicago. I did three documentaries for Wolper on the ABC network. One was called *A Thin Blue Line,* about law enforcement. Then *Mayhem on a Sunday Afternoon* about pro football, and the first was *The Bold Men,* about men who risked their lives for money, adventure, science, etc.

I had an offer to direct a feature film. My first feature was *Good Times* with Sonny and Cher. This was in 1967. That led to *The Night They Raided Minsky's.* Then *The Birthday Party, The Boys in the Band,* and *The French Connection.* Everything I've done, really, has been a kind of a sketch for *The French Connection.* This film pretty much sums up most of my attitudes, abilities, and interests at this point. It was the first film I've done where I really felt I could control the medium.

How did you prepare for The French Connection?

I spent a year riding around with Egan in the 81st Precinct, that's Bedford-Stuyvesant, and in the 28th Precinct with Grosso. They had been split up at the time that I got into the project. They worked as partners for about 12 years, and then they were split up after the French Connection case. Both worked in the highest crime areas in New York, black areas. I spent the better part of a year taking notes and making tape recordings.

The first week I met Egan, he said to me: "No matter how long you stay with me or how well you get to know me, you'll find that there's only three things about me that you need to know: I drink beer, I fuck broads, and I break heads." He was right. There is very little else to the guy. He's a kind of super-patriot. He really believes in what he's doing. He's really dedicated and he thinks it means something.

These guys really work hard, kill themselves and sometimes other people, yet basically they're involved in a line of work that is frustrated, ineffectual. This underlined my approach to the film, the ineffectualness of what they do. It becomes a game, a kind of quest or hunt, where they're playing parts like actors, or grown-up children, except that the guns are real. The outcome doesn't often warrant all the work that went into the case, as happened in *The French Connection.* The sentences those people should have received and the ones they actually did receive were quite disparate. What we didn't bring out in the film is that Frog One, Charnier in the film (his real name is Jehan), somehow slipped through a 50-man dragnet to France. They went to France with extradition papers, but his extradition was refused by deGaulle because Jehan had been one of the leaders of the Corsican Mafia during World War II, and they had cooperated with the Resistance. In return for those favors, he received a pass on his extradition papers. He was 71 years old when he pulled this caper; 6'6", shock of white hair, a great-looking guy. He lived a totally legitimate life, he was just into smuggling.

A tremendously thin line exists between cops and criminals. I've known a lot of cops and criminals, my uncle was a famous cop in Chicago, and I can't understand this absolutely cavalier attitude that these people have. I don't have a key to it. They're completely amoral people. I made *The French Connection* in open-mouthed awe at the way both the cops and the smugglers regarded their efforts. As someone who had been brought up with certain hang-up morals, I have no idea how they can do this, how they can live with themselves.

Narcotics control is an impossible job. There's too many ways to bring stuff into the country, too many people who want it. Obviously the only sensible thing to do is to legalize it. It's obvious to any fool that it has to be legalized. A store in New York like Bloomingdale's loses something like $22 million a year in theft, that's risen like 80 per cent since narcotics addiction has become widespread. The federal and local authorities estimate that 75 per cent of all theft relates to narcotics. In a place like Bedford-Stuyvesant, dope is not a problem, it is an insufferable plague. I think that a goodly percentage of the population of New York City is on drugs, hard or soft. These cops are doing a job that they can't function in. Everything they do is useless. But, given the fact that society at the moment wants the job done, the way Doyle and Russo in the picture and Egan and Grosso in real life do it is the only way possible. You gotta be tough, you've got to have the instincts of the people you're dealing with.

I was obviously trying to make the audience identify with Charnier. I felt the only way to get into the story was not to regard Charnier as a prick, but to see him as a businessman, a man with charm and taste, devoted to his woman in France, etc. Then you have Doyle, who has no taste, no charm, he's a brutalizer of women, he lives out of his car. Charnier embodies almost all the qualities that people are brought up to think are virtuous. The intention was to mix up these elements. It's not about black and white.

Do you see this film as an extension of themes that you've been concerned with throughout your work?

Definitely. In *The Birthday Party,* for instance, you have irrational fear. Everybody has this. And people oppress, they take advantage of these fears because of their own insecurity, needs, drives, ambitions. Everything I've done has had aspects of this irrational fear and this oppression, this manipulation of the irrational fears of other people. This includes even *Good Times.* But I was never conscious of this until recently. In fact, for the most part, every film I've done, except for *The Birthday Party* and

The French Connection, has been a kind of career step. I really got into this business not because I had an enormous drive to communicate on film, but because it was a good job, frankly. My father never made more than $50 a week in his life. I was brought up in Chicago to think that you start somewhere and you work your way to the top, to president of the United States. I grew up with the American Dream. I always liked movies, and it always seemed like a good paying job. After a while I began to feel certain responsibilities about what I was doing. I became a great deal more selective. But *Good Times, Minsky's* and *The Boys in the Band* were pictures I did to advance my career, period. It isn't that I didn't like them or that I thought they were a shuck, but I wasn't driven by anything to do them. *The Birthday Party* was something I believed in very strongly. Now I'm in a position where I can do what I want on film, and I'm interested in doing films that are primarily entertainment. Without pandering to the audience I want principally to involve their emotions. I really would like to stay with the suspense film, because they're the kind of pictures I enjoy seeing the most, they're the most fun to do, and they're the most fun for people in other countries. Less than half the picture has dialogue. A chase is terrifying in any language. Suspense is something I think is pure film. I don't want to do essays on film, I'd rather write the essay.

When did you decide to use Eddie Egan in the film?

At one time I had considered using Egan to play himself, but I disregarded that because I knew that I had a different view of him than he had of himself. But I always thought that what he was doing in his work, in the street, was acting. I hung around him long enough to know that he could be an actor. Gene Hackman rehearsed him and we auditioned him. He was damn good.

What are the mechanics of the car chase? You worked with Billy Hickman, who coordinated the stunts for Bullitt?

We really didn't have any stunts coordinated. All the guy did was drive fast. And Gene Hackman drove half of it. I laid the thing out shot-for-shot, I saw the whole thing very clearly in my head. We shot between Bay Parkway and 62nd Avenue on Stillwell Avenue. The script doesn't contain any of the shots, essentially. It just indicates that there is a chase. We had big meetings—the drivers, Hackman, the policeman who controlled the traffic for me, everyone. We divided it up into days on which we could shoot the stuff, and we built it up block by block. It really was not that difficult to shoot. The effect is the result of editing and, particularly, sound. The sound was all added afterwards. I went back to New York after I had shot everything and recorded all the tracks for the thing, just myself and the sound recordist. Shooting the chase was just a matter of putting the camera in the car with Hackman or mounting it on the hood, or on the front bumper. There are no opticals in the chase. You can't undercrank it or everybody would look like Mickey Mouse. It's all done at real speed. The two shots that really give you the sense of terrific speed are the shots from inside the car looking out and the shot from the bumper. Bill Hickman drove those shots, and he drove between 70 and 90 mph with a siren on top of the car. . . . That's all we had, we had no controls for those shots. I had wide-angle lenses so I could see both sides of the street. I operated. We went for 26 blocks, two takes. Once I hand-held it, once we set the camera inside and we had a bumper camera which I set off by remote control. Those were the most difficult shots to make. There's a crash in the thing where Hackman's car gets hit broadside by a white Dodge. That was a real accident, that wasn't intended. It was supposed to be a swerve and they missed. . . .

Were there any good scenes that didn't get into the final version?

Yes, a number of them. They were cut because they did not further the story. Character stuff. There's a scene where Popeye picks up a black hooker and fucks her in his car. There's

a scene with Frog Two, the killer, and an actual $100-an-hour sadomasochist. She does a full leather and whips number on him. It's one of the best things I've ever put on film. At the end of the scene he gives her $50, not knowing the currency. She comes on heavy with him. He grabs her by the throat and literally holds her life in his hand. It's a complete reversal of roles in an instant. I had scenes of Hackman sitting in Moochie's Bar talking with actual criminals, ad lib. I shot for two days on that scene. The only thing left of it is Doyle waking up in the bar the next morning. I also shot the scene where he picks up the girl on the bike, where now all you see is him looking at her. Originally that was a long scene where he gets out of the car and says, "You got a peddler's license?" She says, "What?" "You got a license to peddle that thing?" He gets on the bike and rides it backwards all around her and sings *Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head.* She says, "Gimme my bike back." He jumps off and whips out his badge; then cut to the next day. The original cut was 2½ hours, but I always wanted a 100-minute film.

What aspects of The French Connection *are you least pleased with?*

I don't think things are as totally clear as they could be. People all over the place ask me what the last shot means. I thought it was really clear what the last shot was in there for. Popeye is shooting at ghosts. He's just killed a federal agent, he's a borderline psycho, who perhaps has become a total psycho; he's like Ahab after the whale. He no longer is concerned about human life, so he's shooting at anything he sees. On a practical level, the movie ends with a bang, a gunshot, it was there for effect, it doesn't really mean anything. If you like the picture, don't bother about what it meant. I wouldn't have put it in if I could have foreseen that people would get upset about it.

Also, I never made it clear in the opening that the guy who was killed was a detective. I have a theory about thrillers. If you open with a murder in the first two minutes, the audience will hang around for 15 minutes of exposition without getting bored.

Also, people don't think you can put a car back together in 2½ hours after you've stripped it like we did. But that's what happened. I had an hour's worth of film on the tearing apart of the car, and then they actually put it back together in a couple of hours. I didn't spend a lot of time explaining that the police garage is the most fully equipped in the country. They can *build* a car faster than Ford. . . . However, the picture was not previewed at all. It opened two days after I approved the last print out of the lab.

What are you going to do now?

I'm making *The Exorcist* for Warners. It's about a 12-year-old girl possessed by a demon. Her mother takes her through medicine and psychiatry and she gets progressively worse. Finally she's taken to the Jesuits in Georgetown where they attempt to exorcise the demon. Exorcism still exists in the Catholic ritual. This is a case history, it happened in 1947. I intend to do it as a straightforward, realistic film about inexplicable things, which I think most of my work is sort of about. . . .

Transcendental Style in Film: Ozu—Bresson—Dreyer

By Paul Schrader

"This extremely fine book, one of the most important film studies of the decade, defines the major and most neglected attribute of the cinema — that very quality which makes it an art: its ability to transcend reality." —DONALD RICHIE

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ROBERT CHAPPETTA

The Meaning Is Not The Message

"In every land as far as man can go,
from Spain to the Aurora or the poles
few know and even fewer choose what's true"

—Robert Lowell, *after Juvenal's*
THE VANITY OF HUMAN WISHES

Aside possibly from recent Godard films, like *Wind From the East,* which make striking use of didacticism, not so much for communication, but for dissonant, abrasive effects, the two most interesting forms of contemporary political film still remain the *cinéma vérité* style, as in Robert Kramer's *Ice,* the kind of political film which is easy to interpret in ways other than those intended, and the metaphorically realistic style, as in Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Conformist,* the kind of political film which is easy to avoid interpreting, or to discuss in terms of style alone. Though neither Lasse Forsberg's *Mistreatment (Misshandlingen)* nor Bertolucci's *The Spider's Strategem (Strategia del Ragno)* have been released in the United States, they exemplify these two polar styles in ways worth discussing. *Mistreatment,* in unglossy, low-contrast black and white, is in a straightforward *cinéma vérité* style; while *The Spider's Strategem,* made for Italian TV in the usual, bright saturated color, is in an oblique, sensual, and metaphoric style; its saturated color being, I think, more acceptable in its squarer TV shape than it would have been even in a moderately widescreen one (watching *Claire's Knee,* for example, I kept wanting to lop off the relatively empty edges of the wide screen with its shallow use of space and its saturated color). These two polar styles are both opposed to message melodramas like *Z* in which everything is packaged for us and clearly labelled. While *The Spider's Strategem* is rich in abstract meaning, its metaphoric style is too oblique and ambiguous to provide a newspaper headline message. And *Mistreatment* avoids abstract meaning to affect us viscerally, having what message films usually lack: immediacy. In neither film is the meaning reducible to a message, yet both have been construed simply as texts to be read only one way, as if their meaning could be flattened out into some sort of univocal statement. But even when the meaning of a political film isn't radically misconstrued, there is a tendency to freeze our perception of it in terms of what we think the "message" is, and to block off further discovery of meaning. And even more basically, there is a tendency to block the very perception of a film as being political or as having political overtones, "content" being ignored as boring, especially *political* content, in however small a measure. Some of the most interesting popular American films of the last few years have had political overtones, even if they do not make political statements: *Easy Rider, The Wild Bunch, M*A*S*H, The Godfather.* And this principle works even if one doesn't like the politics of the film: I found *Dirty Harry* the most exciting Don Siegel film in years, even if I am suspicious of the politics the film implies. And stylistically, politics can give a film a sort of cutting edge, as in *Cabaret,* where the decadence is *not* used as an explanation of Nazism, but rather the Nazis are used to give nightmarish overtones to the decadence, making it the first German expressionist musical. And politics, even if it is used for mere topicality as in Woody Allen's *Bananas,* seems to give new life to old gags, helping it to be a better film than the overly harmless *Take the Money and Run.* Neither *Mistreatment* nor *The Spider's Strategem* are masterpieces, but I still found them interesting on second viewing, partly because of their odd political content. Both films are critical of the culture they were made in,

but they are also critical of their films' heroes —or anti-heroes—who are in revolt against that culture. In both films, one feels a pessimism deeper than the politics, a sense of the vanity of human wishes. But, given the self-satisfaction of those on top of any class society, what could be more political?

The audience both at the New York Film Festival and the Museum of Modern Art responded warmly to *Mistreatment,* but the critics were cool, assuming that the protagonist was meant as some sort of tabloid hero. This may seem plausible. The one strong performance in the film is by Knut Pettersen as the protagonist, Knut (the actors give their first names to the characters); and when he punches the Jaguar driver in the jaw, the action is replayed in freeze frames, allowing us vicariously to participate in his act of aggression. But this does not unequivocally make him a hero. Art, especially popular art, is often the homage virtue pays to vice, and the hero of a film, except in terms of style—what he wears, how he looks, etc.—is not usually a model for action; rather, he is the substitute for it. The "escapist" element even in political films raises questions about their efficacy. *Easy Rider,* for example, may use songs and pretty scenery to manipulate us into sympathy for the heroes, but does anyone except Diana Trilling really believe that drug pushing is being held up as a model of behavior? We may feel sympathy for the hero of *Mistreatment,* but his behavior is not being held up as a model: his form of rebellion is too infantile and self-defeating. Rather, political films provide some of the basic satisfactions of the gangster film and the Western, though usually on a more intellectual level (Godard, it should be noted, easily passed from making gangster-style films to making political ones). There is a good moment in an otherwise routine Western with right-wing political overtones, *Chisum,* in which Billy the Kid (Geoffrey Deuel) is reading the Bible near a river bank on a gorgeous, sunny day in what seems like the Garden of Eden. On coming to the story of Cain and Abel, Billy is moved to get to his feet and play-act the killing with his gun: bang-bang. The scene suggests that maybe Man himself was the snake in the garden of Eden; one enjoys both the irony—that reading the word of God should provoke a gesture of violence—and the acknowledgment of man's aggressive impulses. And without necessarily approving the hero's course of action, *Mistreatment* also acknowledges our aggressive impulses but in a left-wing context: against conformity and authority. But in *Chisum,* the script clearly tells us what to think of Billy the Kid. Noting Billy's faults, Chisum (John Wayne) excuses them since he himself was once as wild and impetuous as Billy is. In *Mistreatment,* there are no approving or excusing lines of dialogue about Knut, nor are there any approving reaction shots from a dumb side-kick as in *Five Easy Pieces.* There is no voice-of-the-common-man saying: "Comrade, when you punched that Jaguar driver in the mouth a blow was struck for workers everywhere." Nevertheless, critics still wrote as if they were being asked to endorse his behavior or his rhetoric (John Simon felt compelled to point out that in the communist countries, the hero wouldn't be likely to be driving a Jaguar either).

Remarking on a psychology of persistent "cardinal traits," Arthur Miller said that he would not want to write a drama about a character without contradictions; about a miser, for example, unless he was sometimes moved to gratuitous acts of charity. His point is clear, though in this precise form the example is too contrived (but compare *City Lights*). A better one is provided by the hero of *Mistreatment* who *is* a bully. Except occasionally in its gangster films, Hollywood depicted the bully simply as a one-dimensional character who could dish it out but who couldn't take it. The hero of *Mistreatment,* however, *can* take it, and he is articulate, funny, and perceptive. As played by Knut Pettersen, the hero has a rough resemblance to Sean Connery, who, in *A Fine Madness,* played a role similar to Knut's as Samson Shillitoe, a physically aggressive, mad poet who battled psychiatrists. And though Knut Pettersen is at times as personable an actor as Malcolm McDowell is in *A Clockwork Orange,* one can believe that Pettersen is

capable of violence in a way one never believes that McDowell is.

But our response to Knut's rebellion, unlike that to Samson Shillitoe's or Alex's, is tempered by the realization that this is not an entertainment, that the hero won't win out, and that he does need some form of treatment, if not the treatment he gets. For at 31, Knut is still not in control of his aggressive impulses, and his form of rebellion, unconnected with the meaningful political action of other workers, leads nowhere. But what happens to him seems out of proportion to his offense (the title, *Misshandlingen,* is a play on words, referring *both* to the charge of assault and battery and the treatment he gets—mistreatment). A *cinéma vérité* film is still a film, however, and I wondered while watching *Mistreatment* whether or not I would like someone like Knut if I met him in real life. Several months later, I met someone in some very striking ways like Knut: he was also politically radical, had an irreverent sense of humor, and was articulate—his recounting of the hassles at Woodstock that never got into the film were far more engrossing that *Woodstock* is. In early adolescence, he had been incarcerated in a mental hospital for a series of aggressive acts, climaxing in his having punched one of his teachers in the jaw. And like Knut he was a bully, who responded aggressively to people who would not rap with him. Though he was in some ways disturbing, I found myself liking him very much, responding to him as I had to the hero in *Mistreatment* with both empathy and critical distance.

At the beginning of the film, I was somewhat put off by the hero as he and his student friend, Bjorn, look down at the crowd at a transportation terminal, commenting on how contented the people look, how well scrubbed and conformist: a stale bit of news. But at least the hero confronts someone who doesn't share his views. A little later, he spies a business executive with his girl, taking in the view of the water, his Jaguar parked nearby. Knut begins to engage him in a harangue, suggesting that the girl is his secretary, and that as her boss he is taking advanatge of her. In a huff, the Jaguar driver and his girl go toward the car. Insulted, Knut socks him in the jaw, the replay of action in freeze-frames enlarging the impact of the event. Knut is quickly arrested and brought to a police station for interrogation, which, this being Sweden, is conducted without brutality or the third degree. A beefy policeman asks the hero some questions while typing out the answers with one finger: Why did he punch the Jaguar driver in the jaw? Not without humor or the desire to shock, Knut "explains" that the man had wanted to drive away in his (Knut's) Jaguar; that as the working class is entitled to the fruits of production, the car really belongs to him (Knut) as a member of that class. Puzzled, the policeman pauses blankly for a moment, and then soberly asks: "Do you have proof of ownership?" Unimaginative and overliteral perhaps, the policeman seems decent enough, the most sympathetic of the agents of the state Knut deals with.

Though not villains either, the middle-class professionals provide a better foil for the hero. In contrast to those who interview and test him, the hero is virile and spontaneous, lacking their self-satisfied earnestness. Still, the professionals of *Mistreatment* are not the offensive caricatures of *Five Easy Pieces;* they are merely complacent and blank. And Knut does manage to tease a smile out of a female psychologist, as if he were performing instant therapy. Yet Knut is diagnosed as a "psychopath," a term vague and subjective enough to be too easily applied to any social dissident examined by paid agents of the state.

But the director doesn't want to make it too easy for us to be sympathetic to the hero. Just before Knut is finally sent to a hospital, Forsberg reminds us of the hero's tendency to violence. In Knut's small, clean, bare apartment, Knut and Bjorn are playing chess; the large, sculptured pieces and the chess table are the only beautiful objects in the room. When Knut seems on the point of losing the game—or when a move is disputed, I don't remember which—Knut turns angrily on his friend, accusing him of playing with revolution only to spite his bourgeois father. What Knut is saying is supported by what we have seen earlier in the

film. With radical rhetoric, Bjorn had persuaded a young working class girl, Berit, to quit her job and live with him, but when she begins to ask him questions about the political magazines he is reading, he doesn't want to take the trouble to answer them. A working class girl is someone, not to explain things to, but to sleep with. Knut may be right in what he is saying, but his idea of communication is despotically one-sided. Before he had begun his speech, Knut had taken a revolver from the drawer, and he flashes it at Bjorn while talking to him, intimidating him and enjoying his moment of power.

The hospital ward to which Knut is sent is modern, clean, and bright; the scene is overlit as if to parody these virtues. The patients occupy themselves by playing simple games like Chinese checkers—or by doing nothing, quietly. Bored, Knut can only pace up and down restlessly. When a rather prissy-looking attendant tells Knut to be still, his response is defiantly to overturn a game of Chinese checkers, causing the attendant to summon help. Knut may be a bully, but he is not a coward, and it takes four men to subdue him, to strap him down in bed, where the head doctor can give him a sedative injection. Next day the doctor, refusing to release Knut from being strapped down, prescribes more tranquillizers. Knut tries to tell the doctor a story about a little fish who blows himself up to avoid being eaten by a bigger fish. At first, the doctor turns away, but when he decides to stay and listen, Knut tells the doctor that it doesn't matter, that the story is meaningless. Knut's idea of communication may have been defectively one-sided, but now he has given up trying to communicate at all. His feelings "under control," he now exists as a mockery of the normality he and his friend, Bjorn, had mocked at the beginning of the film. Part of the job of the *cinéma vérité* style film is not to give us new awareness, but to *remind* us of what we already know: here, that a mental hospital does not cure a man like Knut or help him to develop his potential; it settles for keeping him quiet.

The *cinéma vérité* style of the film counterpoints the content. The tone of the film is documentary and matter of fact, without any narration to lend portentous significance to it. The acting of what I take to be nonprofessionals is low-key, and, except for Knut Pettersen, without much projection. The very faults of a partially improvised film—the slackness, the occasional moments of tediousness—add to this matter-of-fact tone. To keep the slackness down, Forsberg (a thorough-going professional, with 50 TV documentaries to his credit) occasionally separates the sound from the visuals, enabling him to cut out slack dialogue more easily. This device is most noticeable in intimate scenes where there seems to have been more trouble in improvising: when Bjorn and Berit are going to bed, for example, their voices are edited over leisurely shifting shots of objects about the room, like a cocoon fixture over the light bulb in the ceiling. The effect of treating intimate material only obliquely, of focusing on objects in midshot rather than on faces close-up is apiece with the emotionally cool tone of the film. Yet in content, the film is a protest against emotional coolness, against the life style of the middle class. If Knut has too little control over his aggressive impulses, he does provide a foil for showing up the counter trait of over-control of one's aggressive impulses. In *Mistreatment,* as in *A Clockwork Orange,* the problem is man's freedom—that his potential for violence, for evil, cannot be rooted out except by rooting out his potential for creativity, for good. But *A Clockwork Orange* is an entertainment with a "happy" ending that winks at evil; unlike *Mistreatment,* it does not leave us with a sense that man's freedom *is* a problem. The strength of the *cinéma vérité* style is that it does not wrap things up with a fantasy "solution" or "resolution." The style will not work, however, unless we are willing to respond to the characters in the film directly, without the guidance of explicit "interpretation," and without our usual tendency to categorize people away if we don't approve of all they do. If we are willing, we can see Knut, not merely as a "clinical case" or a "psychopath"—categories used to deny human connection with someone—but as a reminder of how much of our vitality we give up

in the name of civilization and humanity.

While the bare, simple style of *Mistreatment* works better as a whole than in its parts (which is usually true of *cinéma vérité* style films), the elaborate, oblique style of *The Spider's Strategem* works better in its parts than as a whole (which is usually true of Bertolucci's films). Like Pasolini's *Teorema,* which also in its final images goes beyond naturalism into surrealism, its strength lies in its use of metaphoric images rather than in its dramatic power or suspense. Despite my being somewhat disappointed with the film on the level of mystery story on first viewing, I was nevertheless fascinated with the analogy in the film between its anti-Fascist hero and Mussolini himself. Seeing it again, I relaxed more with the film and enjoyed it on the level of playfulness, encouraged partly by the audience at the Museum of Modern Art which seems clued in to Bertolucci's humor. Still, I wouldn't want to deny that the plot unfolds at too slow a pace. The problem is that the Borges story from which the plot comes, *The Theme of the Traitor and the Hero,* is a brief anecdote only a few pages long. Using the shopworn devices of melodrama and mystery-story contrivance, Borges, by extreme condensation of the story line, an ironic tone of mock learning, and a self-reflexive form (the story becomes a story Borges is thinking of writing) achieves a kind of poetry of literary cliché. Its whimsy, however, is only a highbrow version of *Alfred Hitchcock Presents,* which in its half-hour format might have been ideal for adapting Borges. In the feature film, the straightforward use of the mystery form seems to be used up—except on TV where all good Hollywood genres go when they die. Of course, *The Spider's Strategem* was financed by RAI, to be shown on TV, and in that medium the style in itself has enough lushness to compensate for the attenuation of the basic story line. But if Bertolucci's film lacks some of the immediate impact of Forsberg's, it is, on reviewing, more rewarding. For it is so rich in inventive detail and nuance of meaning that it can be absorbing on this level alone.

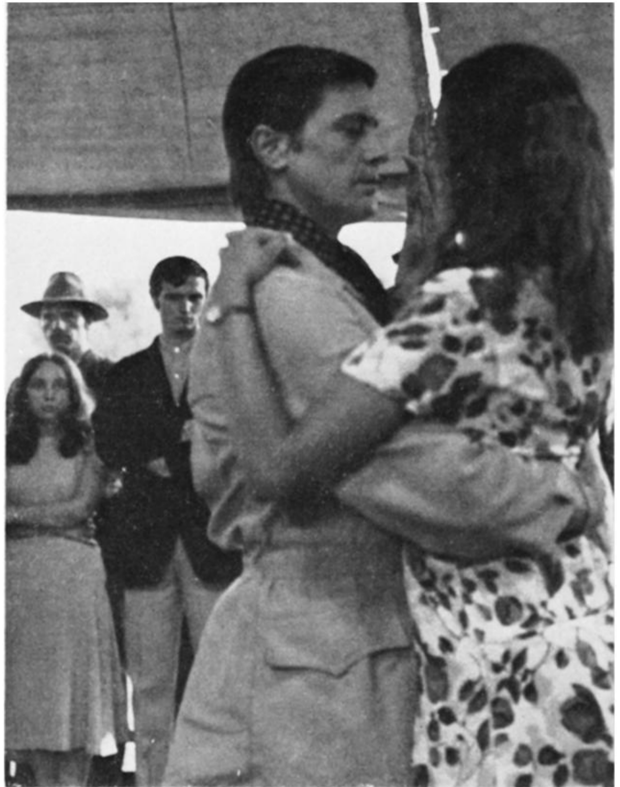
The film begins roughly in the present with a train stopping at a small provincial town in Northern Italy, Tara (the Irish place-name is a carry-over from the Borges story). In long shot, a sailor gets off, and then a little further in the distance, another man who looks nondescript and is hard to make out: Athos Magnani, Jr., who has been summoned back by his father's mistress to solve the mystery of his father's murder, although it took place long ago in the Fascist era. Both father and son are played by Giulio Brogi, thirtyish and pleasant-looking in a characterless sort of way. The son is an exact but blank replica of his dead father, and not having an identity separate from him is doomed to impotence. His father, who had led a band of anti-Fascist conspirators, had been thought to have been assassinated by unknown Fascists. But the son becomes suspicious of this story and presses his father's friends for the truth. He learns that his father, having betrayed their cache of dynamite to the police, had been assassinated at his own request by the other conspirators. Unable to reveal publicly that the legend about his father was false, he secretly assuages his impotence by desecrating a statue commemorating his father as an anti-Fascist hero.

When he returns to the railroad station to leave the small, provincial town, the final images of the film become a metaphor for this impotence. The station master announces that the train will be 5 minutes late, then 25 minutes late, then 30 minutes. As Magnani, Jr. looks around, he sees the grass overgrowing the tracks, the whole sequence of shots giving a sense of being *buried* in this small, provincial town. In terms of visual style, the device is Eisensteinian: the successive shots of grass are comparable to the successive shots of different lions in *Potemkin* to suggest the motion of a lion rising up (symbolizing the rising up of the masses). Here it is the environment which rises up to suggest the passivity of Magnani, Jr. This image of being buried or overwhelmed by one's environment occurs more strongly at the end of Bertolucci's *Before The Revolution.* There, in the elegant white corridors that seem to form a labyrinth, the hero furtively meets his aunt, who has been

his mistress. For a time, Bertolucci keeps the camera back, and the pair seem dwarfed by the bright, white corridor walls. A petulant remark the aunt makes about the opera seems to reflect a Gothic sense of fatalism overhanging the scene: "Verdi, Verdi, always Verdi." And Bertolucci seems to make the remark come true. The opera—*Macbeth*—blares even when it is over. Non-naturalistically, Bertolucci extends the music over shots of the audience rising and applauding the performers taking their vows. The hero, who had rebelliously flirted with the Communist Party and made love to his aunt, is now betrothed to a good bourgeois girl with whom he sits in the family box, his impotence elegantly sealed.

And the sense of impotence in *Before the Revolution* has a wider resonance than in *The Spider's Strategem.* The failure of its hero to escape being a good bourgeois is effectively echoed, on the one hand, by the failure of the land owner whose lovely woods and stream will be destroyed by industrial development; and on the other, by the failure of the communists to lead a revolution, encouraging instead the embourgeoisement of the workers. The title expresses the bittersweet lament that in Italy, it is always *Before the Revolution* (a sentiment echoed in the stasis of the final images of *The Spider's Strategem*).

But the surreal ending of *The Spider's Strategem* suggests a level of meaning missing in the merely non-naturalistic one of *Before the Revolution.* There is a playing on appearances like that which occurs in Antonioni's *Blow-Up,* also a mystery story of sorts, from another Latin American author, Cortázar, who has been greatly influenced by Borges. In both films, the playing on appearances has a moral rather than a metaphysical point: in Antonioni, it is a criticism of a hedonistic style of life, lived skin-deep; in Bertolucci, it is of the romantic hero, the apotheosis of a life style, which, according to Luigi Barzini, permeates Italian culture: the love of spectacle, of embellishing appearances (illustrated by the baroque style of the Catholic Church of the Counter Reformation and the sensuous theatricality of its best Italian artist, Bernini). What



Bertolucci's THE SPIDER'S STRATEGEM

Bertolucci is criticizing is the romantic hero as showman, as illusionist; that is, the romantic hero as Fascist. As Mussolini wrote in his diary near the end of the war: "Hitler and I are a pair of madmen who have given ourselves up to our illusions; our only hope is to create a myth." Mussolini had himself been influenced by the myth of D'Annunzio—poet, novelist, dandy, aviator, and lover of Eleonora Duse—who, after World War I, had led an unofficial force to seize Fiume, and who ruled there for a while, initiating practices taken over by the Fascists, such as the Roman salute, the use of balcony speeches, and the feeding of castor oil to opponents. What did it matter that D'Annunzio's regime had ingloriously collapsed? Like the romantic "hero" of *The Spider's Strategem,* he had created a legend.

For Bertolucci, the romantic "hero" is more absorbed in giving the appearance of being one than in taking effective action. In a key image of the film, a flashback, the elder Mag-

nani, after having been revealed as an informer, takes his fellow conspirators up to a high place—like Satan tempting Christ—and with his arms outstretched and silhouetted against the sky like a spider's, tells them of his plan to pay with his life for having betrayed them; they will assassinate him at the very performance of *Rigoletto* to which Mussolini was supposed to have come, and as he is well known as an anti-Fascist, the suspicion will fall, not on them, but on the Fascists instead. At this point, a narrator suggests that the father's strategy all along was to make himself a martyr—a romantic hero. Perhaps Magnani realized that even if Mussolini had come to see *Rigoletto,* his fellow conspirators might not have gone through with the original plot to kill him. The sausage-maker, for example, had revealed his doubts when he asked the elder Magnani whether Fascism was not too embedded in the people for the killing of Mussolini to do any good. But one can press psychological explanation too far in this kind of schematic political melodrama. What is clear is the moral out of the title of the Borges story: that as the romantic hero is more concerned with giving the appearance of being a hero than anything else, he carries within him the seeds of betrayal.

In a flashback scene at night, the elder Magnani and his friends are walking along the road quite drunk, when he announces that it is broad daylight out and that he will prove it. He begins to crow like a rooster and soon the rooster crows back; just then the first light of morning has begun to break. A small scene, not Bertolucci's best yet playfully rich in association. The familiar word *machismo* has an Italia equivalent, *gallismo*—from the word for rooster. And wanting to play the rooster characterizes a stock type going back to Roman comedy, the braggart warrior. If neither Mussolini nor Athos Magnani, Sr. were literally warriors, their bragging is part of the tradition of *gallismo*—raised to a high level of showmanship and rhetoric. And braggarts may not only be tolerated, but even admired if they put on a good enough show. How many Italians really believed in Mussolini's overblown rhetoric about living like lions and reviving the glory of the Roman Empire? And we too may enjoy Magnani's little show, even though we may know that this playful reversal of the truth foreshadows a reversal of truth on a larger scale, his plot to cover up his act of cowardice with romantic legend.

The heroes of Bertolucci's films are all anti-heroes, which seems to be almost a necessary condition of being *avant-garde.* But the problem is that one can be so insistent on exposing one's central character—as is Mike Nichols in *Carnal Knowledge*—that there is nothing to expose. Bertolucci might have given us more scenes like the Fascist dance scene in which the father appears with a red kerchief around his neck and a British military jacket, a romantic figure if not a hero. For here at least we sensually enjoy the father's moment of defiance even as we appreciate Bertolucci's ironic comment on it. To insult the anti-Fascist Magnani, the Fascists play their anthem, *Giovanezza.* Magnani boldly goes up to the most attractive girl there, and, to the astonishment of the local Fascists, begins dancing with her. The irony is that, despite his gesture of defiance, he is still dancing the Fascist tune. In his wanting to play the individual strong man, Magnani is like the man he would kill, Mussolini; like an adolescent son in rebellion, he is in some ways very much like the "father" he is rebelling against. Richard Roud, in the Spring 1971 *Sight and Sound,* pointed out the oedipal conflict in the younger Magnani, but the scenes which express this, like the desecration of the father's statue, come off rather weakly. Repeatedly, Bertolucci executes one of his favorite 360° pan shots around the father's statue, as if to suggest the son is simply revolving around his dead father's image. But the son is played too blankly for the camera work to convey strong feelings of any kind (it is an *auteurist* fallacy to believe that if the camera work is good enough, it can make up for the lack of interest in the performance). There is also, I think, a psychological reason the oedipal scenes do not work: a son resolves the oedipal conflict with his father by identifying with him, and since the son and the father are played by the

same actor, the sense of oedipal conflict is undercut. The defacement of the father's statue seems less an expression of oedipal conflict than that of dull self-loathing. Rather, the "identity" relationship between father and son is being used as a metaphor for the relationship between the elder Magnani and Mussolini. Admittedly, Bertolucci is fond of identical pairs, and Pierre Clementi does play a double role in *Partner*, but it is wrong merely to trace motifs a director uses from film to film without also showing when necessary how differently the same motifs can work. In *Partner*, the doubleness embodies two opposed aspects of one personality: one toward self-effacement and dejection—and an opposing one toward boldness and ebullience. Pierre Clementi's manic-depressive performance, which to me was truly felt, made this doubleness largely work. In *The Spider's Strategem*, the doubleness does not come out of any deep contradiction in personality; rather, it is an intellectual construct to make a metaphoric point; the doubleness fails to engage us—except on the level of playfulness.

Like the elder Magnani, Bertolucci himself delights in reversals and gleefully mocking appearances. Outside an opera house in medium-close shot, we see peasants listening intently to an opera, their heads wondrously cocked right up near the loudspeakers; the camera cuts away to reveal that they are standing on stools, which visually (if not in the retelling) makes them look absurd, fools for opera's sake. The old men of the town play pranks on the son, and then deny they have by repeating "We are all friends here." (It was of course his father's friends who had obligingly killed him). And the names of the characters are also used playfully. Two of the conspirators are named Tom and Sam, the names of two conspirators in *A Masked Ball*, an opera in which the hero is killed by his best friend. The father's mistress, Draifa (Alida Valli), was named in honor of Dreyfus; the reversal in adapting a man's last name to a feminine first one reflects that this is a reverse Dreyfus case: the father was a betrayer, not a martyr. In *The Three Musketeers*, Athos is the musketeer whose life had been poisoned by a great betrayal; Athos Magnani, Sr. poisoned his own life by betraying others. And the mocking of the idea of the romantic hero extends beyond the mocking of *machismo* to a playing on sexual identity. In flashback, an escaped lion that had frightened the father turns out to be old and toothless, the lion being a symbol of virility and courage, popular in Fascist rhetoric. Later, the son mistakes for a boy another child dressed like him but who turns out to be a girl. And by a Freudian "coincidence" the surname of the man in love with his own *machismo* and the politics of theater is that of one of Italy's greatest actresses, Anna Magnani. Thematically, the most important reversal takes place in the final images, in the surreal ending in which the train is delayed. On one level, the reversal seems a mockery of Mussolini's boast that he finally made the trains run on time. If "literally" true, as a symbol of Fascist efficiency, the boast was illusory. Under Mussolini, Italy remained economically backward; his government was so corrupt that, despite billions of lire spent on defense, Italy was even less prepared for World War II than it had been for World War I, as Mussolini himself ruefully admitted. But the final images of the film have a wider resonance than that of the Fascist era. Even before the Fascists took power, Italy's one great painter in the twentieth century, de Chirico, was painting images of stasis: large, empty, and somber railroad stations that seem to mock the monumental grandeur of Italy's past; railroad trains that seem, despite their puffs of smoke, to be going nowhere in the stillness.

The film's final images of stasis are set in the present, however, suggesting that the Fascist past is still present in Italy. The flashback form also suggests this, the past at times being confused with the present. Nor do the actors wear any make-up to differentiate between the characters they play in the past and the same characters in the present. Even non-communists like Luigi Barzini have complained of the stasis in Italian politics (which, of course, predates Fascism)—and of the lingering Fascist heritage; for example, that the Fascist penal code is still in force. Yet Italy no longer has an

authoritarian regime, and if Bertolucci does not have as much freedom as he would like to say things more directly in his films, he does manage to hint at them broadly in his oblique and metaphorical style. And I'm not so sure that the charm of the film, which lies in its ambiguity and playfulness, would have been kept with a more straightforward style in which Bertolucci's themes were delivered as a clear, political message. Anyway, if Bertolucci had that much freedom in a mass medium like TV, there would have been no need for this film.

The style of *The Spider's Strategem,* as in *Mistreatment,* counterpoints the content. In a flamboyant, sensual, and theatrical style, Bertolucci is critical of the politics of flamboyance, and of the absorption in sensuality of those who did not oppose it. Though the film is richer by this contradiction, it would have been richer still if Bertolucci had allowed his romantic hero to have been more compelling. At least in *Before the Revolution,* Bertolucci endowed his anti-hero with a lyricism that made him sympathetic. Some Marxist critics denounced the film because its lyricism is a lament close to self-pity. But it is a self-pity in the wider sense: a self-pity which moves from one's own suffering to the suffering of others. This empathetic "sentimental" sense of the dignity of other individuals, despite their shortcomings, even their illusions, characterizes some of the best Italian films since World War II: *La Terra Trema, Umberto D, I Vitelloni, Nights of Cabiria.* The greatest art may defeat our attempts to use it as magic, it may make us see how enslaved we are by shadows, but it also renews our sense of how compelling shadows are. For the power of art lies, not only beyond that of any simple message, but beyond that of truth; like religion but without a theology, it makes us acknowledge in wonder and in awe all that can not be comprehended.

BRIAN HENDERSON

The Structure of Bazin's Thought

Even before his death, André Bazin's disciples and opponents were "going beyond" him—absorbing what they considered new and important in his work, discarding the rest. Especially since the appearance of *What Is Cinema?* in English in 1967, this process has gone on extensively in England and America also. The project is a healthy and necessary one for film thought, but in the hurry to go beyond Bazin it has not been clearly established who Bazin was. If that which is gone beyond is not fully known, then neither is any subsequent position. We must know who Bazin was to know who we are.

What is needed is a theory of Bazin, which in turn requires a history of film thought in which to place Bazin; that is, a theory of film theory. In "Two Types of Film Theory," [FQ, Spring 1971] I tentatively formulated an analytical theory of film theory. What is needed also is an historical theory of film theory, one which would include the analytical moment. Toward this goal, the present essay addresses the structure of Bazin's thought; a later essay

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will address the place of that structure in the history of film thought, attempting to relate inner dialectic to outer dialectic. An analytic moment will be followed by a synthetic moment.

It is surprising that no one in Bazin's country of origin has studied the structure of his thought, for it is complex and interesting, with its own problems and laws. Perhaps the fact that Bazin was so clearly "wrong" in his formulation of many questions and answers prevented serious structural study. Paradoxically it is dialectical thought (notoriously interested in wrong positions) which insists on studying the structure of Bazin's thought, by making that thought as a whole central to its inquiry. Not the least importance of dialectics is its effective deployment of analytic thought; because only dialectics can say what it is important to study and why. Analytic thought has no internal standards of relevance; accounts of its successes invariably bring in hunches and instinct to explain its application here rather than there. But the dialectical reconstruction of a whole, determined by dialectics to be worth study, is itself dependent upon an initial analysis of that whole and its parts; and can only be as true, as precise, and as comprehensive as the analysis on which it builds.

For English readers, the structure of Bazin's thought is reflected in the principal source of Bazin texts available to them. Hugh Gray's translated volumes of 1967 and 1971 collect the principal theoretical pieces and many of the most important critical-historical pieces, respectively. (In addition to Gray's volumes there are now a number of other Bazin essays or excerpts available in English.*) The historical Bazin has not existed in English until the appearance of *What Is Cinema?*, Volume II, last year. Its immediate effect is to call seriously into question the widely held belief that Bazin's thought is a unified exploration "based on one central idea, an affirmation of the objectivity of the cinema," in Eric Rohmer's phrase. Upon closer examination, Bazin's ontological work and his historical work appear virtually as separate and opposed systems operating within the same body of thought. Since this division is central to the structure of Bazin's thought, it must be established in detail.

Bazin's writings on reality theory, what could be called his ontology system, consist of: "The Ontology of the Photographic Image" (1945),

*Other Bazin writings available in English include the following: "La Politique des Auteurs" [1957], in *The New Wave*, edited by Peter Graham (New York: Doubleday, 1968), also in *Cahiers du Cinéma in English*, No. 1 (1966); "Hitchcock versus Hitchcock" [1954], in *Cahiers du Cinéma in English*, No. 2 (1966), reprinted in *Focus On Hitchcock*, edited by Albert J. LaValley (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1972). Several brief Bazin pieces appear in the Seghers volumes on Cocteau, Welles, Renoir, and Fellini: "*Les Parents Terribles* [1948] in *Jean Cocteau* by René Gilson (New York: Crown, 1969); two brief pieces [1948] in *Orson Welles* by Maurice Bessy (New York: Crown, 1971); two extracts from a 1952 *Cahiers du Cinéma* article on Renoir in *Jean Renoir* by Pierre Leprohon (New York: Crown, 1971); *Federico Fellini* by Gilbert Salachas (New York: Crown, 1968) contains three extracts from "*Cabiria:* Voyage to the End of Neorealism" [1957], which appears in its entirety in *What Is Cinema?*", Volume II (Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1971). Substantial extracts from "*Le Jour se lève* . . . Poetic Realism" [1953] appear in *Le Jour se lève* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1970). *The New Wave* also contains Peter Graham's translation of "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema" [1952; 1955; 1950], which contains five pages (Pp. 40–45) on William Wyler not contained in Hugh Gray's translation, *What Is Cinema?*", Volume I (Berkeley, California, 1967); it appears that Graham has interpolated an article on Wyler [1948] into the text of "Evolution." A two-page excerpt from Bazin's *Orson Welles* (Paris: Chavane, 1950) appears in *Focus on Citizen Kane*, edited by Ronald Gottesman (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1971).

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"The Myth of Total Cinema" (1946), "Theater and Cinema" (1951), "Cinema and Exploration" (1953; 1956), and "The Virtues and Limitations of Montage" (1953; 1957). These essays concern the relations between cinema and reality, that is, between the camera and its objects. Their treatment of the problems concerned and of the films used as examples or as subjects of critical analysis is ahistorical. For Bazin's purposes in these pieces, it does not matter when these films were made, what their connections with current film styles are, nor even who made them. The later essays on this subject connect directly to the "Ontology" essay and its concerns, without any film-historical or individual-stylistic mediation whatever; they occur in the timeless realm of pure aesthetic theory.

Bazin's critical-historical writings, what could be called his history system or simply his history, divide into two continuous groups. There is "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema" (1952; 1955; 1950), Bazin's survey of the development of cinematic form, 1920-1945; and there are Bazin's essays on the cinema of his own period, centering on his neorealism essays, 1948-1957. Most of Bazin's other critical work takes its place within and fills out this two-part historical scheme. Thus his books on Renoir and Welles belong (in the main) to the 1920–1948 period and fill out his treatment of these two figures in "Evolution." This is true also of his piece on *Le Jour se lève,* his piece on Jean Gabin, his journal articles on Renoir, Welles, etc. Many other pieces fill out the 1945-1957 period: the essays on Bresson, Cocteau, Hitchcock, etc. Some of Bazin's other work, particularly the sociological essays and occasional discussions of genre, bear a tangential relation to the more stylistically-concerned historical work. Thus his two essays on the Western lie outside of his central historical concerns but are themselves historical in form and treatment. "In Defense of Mixed Cinema" (approx. 1952), concerned with the wave of literary adaptations which appeared from 1940 to 1951, occupies an odd place of its own. The four essays on Chaplin would seem to belong to the historical work but in fact they are largely ahistorical, that is, removed from Bazin's usual concerns with historical period and style. (The reason is that Bazin treats Chaplin as his own history: *Monsieur Verdoux* and *Limelight* refer back to Chaplin's early films, which Bazin sees as the world-wide myth of cinema itself. No other historical relation is necessary.)

Several things should be noted about Bazin's historical work. First, its two historical periods form a single, continuous history. "Evolution" ends, perhaps self-consciously, with mention of the neorealist films: one of the principal functions of the essay is to serve as formal and historical preface to the neorealist period and to the films of Bazin's time generally. Contrariwise, neorealism is the continuation and fulfillment of the formal movements which Bazin traces in "Evolution." Second, the continuity between these two areas of Bazin's work is methodological as well as historical. The same critical concerns and historical/developmental concerns are found in both. Thus "Evolution" is critical history and the neorealist essays are thoroughly historical criticism. "Evolution" does not collect titles, dates, and disembodied styles as most work that goes by the name of film history does; it is a conceptually coherent, developmental analysis of the films, styles, and movements covered. Its texture is thereby continuous with the neorealist pieces and with Bazin's other critical work. If "Evolution" is critical in this sense, it is also true that the neorealist pieces are historical: written year by year as the films appeared, these essays constitute a history of the aesthetic peaks of that movement better than any that has since appeared. Bazin accomplished this unparalleled feat by relating the work of each director to his earlier work, and by comparing the style of each to those of other artists—all within the framework of the neorealist movement, itself in process of unfolding but clearly set off from other historical periods and styles. The resulting network of relations is a comprehensive analysis/synthesis of the most important neorealist work and remains a model of criticism.

Thus Bazin's critical-historical work constitutes a single history of cinema, 1920-1957. Of course there are many gaps and a great unevenness in density; much of this history is no more than an outline. The important point is that Bazin makes clear what he believes are the principal movements, historical tendencies, and achievements of this period.

The opposition between ontology system and history system, and more generally between ontological thought and historical thought, is the central feature of Bazin's work. Neither of these systems can be reduced to the other nor the gap between them bridged in any satisfactory way. Similarly, in our analysis there is no way to proceed logically from one to the other; we must constitute and examine each separately and then the opposition and other relations between them. As we do so we will look for links between them but this cannot be done in advance. At the phenomenal or given level, these systems are utterly opposed. If they can be reconciled in any sense, it will only be in and through their contrariety.

The ontology system essays stand together by virtue of common concerns and similar reasoning, not by strict logical connection. The "Ontology" states that photograph and reality, image and object share a common being. It sets forth this relation for all cases; it does not discuss camera style or montage *vs.* long-take treatment. *All* photography bears a certain relation to reality; neither reconstructed expeditions nor Soviet montage nor German Expressionism is excluded. Thus when the ontology criticism judges certain exploration films and fantasy films to be more faithful to reality than others, and therefore aesthetically superior, it does not apply the "Ontology" nor even extend it. These essays must invent ontological principles of criticism since none are given or implied by the "Ontology."

"Cinema and Exploration" and "The Virtues and Limitations of Montage," dealing with expedition films and fantasy films respectively, attempt to develop critical equivalences for the descriptive propositions of the "Ontology." The connective reasoning, implied not given, seems to be this: in an expedition film or children's adventure, some real event is the object of the image. If the ontological identity of image and object is to be honored (in spirit as in letter), then the image should record the real event (not a reconstruction as in *Scott of the Antarctic*) as far as possible in its spatial-temporal integrity. (The struggle with the alligator on a fishing line in *Louisiana Story* fails on both counts as the "event" is synthesized by montage.) This is, strictly speaking, a reinvention of the "Ontology" principle, but a plausible one.

What are the features of this criticism? It is ahistorical: it does not matter when these films were made nor their relation to movements or styles. The film-maker is in no sense the subject of inquiry; his is merely the name to which credit or blame is ascribed. The sole category of this criticism is relation of camera and event, the sole judgment that of correct or incorrect relation, the sole logic that of non-contradiction. The ontological principle applied by these essays is not a critical tool at all but a narrow canon of validity. Its results are achieved mechanically and tend to be either trivial or tautological. Immediate documents of expeditions are superior to reconstructed

André Bazin ▶

ones. Fantasies and adventures should show dangerous or unusual events in a single shot rather than fake them through montage. If the ontology criticism eliminates the director, it eliminates the critic also. One who read only these pieces would not meet the viewer who wrote so well on Rossellini, Bresson, etc. It is a damaging critique of the entire ontology side of Bazin's work that it leads only to this. The ontology criticism is a dead end; if he had only done these pieces, Bazin would have small claim on our attention.

"Evolution" is Bazin's principal historical essay; but it also has an ontological aspect, even a function within the ontology system. We will consider that function here, as an adjunct to our consideration of the ontology system; and the rest of "Evolution," or rather "Evolution" itself again in discussing the history system. (Because "Evolution" performs several different functions, finely interrelated, within Bazin's system, we come upon it at several stages in the unfolding of that system.) One of the tasks of "Evolution" is to develop and apply ontological principles for the judgment of film styles, 1920-1948. The results are familiar: long-take, composition-in-depth style (Welles, Italian neorealism) is the most faithful to reality; American and French "invisible editing" of the thirties next so; Soviet montage faithful in image style, unfaithful in duration and relation of images; German Expressionism completely unfaithful. The critical principles by which Bazin reaches these results—the equivalences he establishes between shooting styles and relation to reality—are not unrelated to those of the ontology criticism. Indeed the latter pieces should be read in conjunction with "Evolution," in which the discussion of reality-stylistic equivalences is fuller. Of course, the "Ontology" is as silent on fiction film styles as it is on documentary styles; here too "Evolution" invents ontological principles, it does not just apply them.

The reality-relation of fiction films might seem to require different analysis than documentary and reality. Bazin seems to draw this distinction when he speaks in "Evolution" of "the scenario proper" . . . "the ultimate object of the narrative"; but it has no effect on his argument. In "Evolution" as in the ontological criticism, Bazin speaks again and again of "the event" and of the truth or falsity of different camera styles to it. Moreover, the ontological judgments of "Evolution" are hardly less simplistic and broad than those of the ontological criticism. Thus Expressionism and Soviet montage are invalidated (with what final critical consequences is not clear) by a single application of the principle; and Hollywood composition-in-depth and Italian neorealism are validated just as broadly and undifferentiatedly. "Evolution" goes beyond the very limited operation of the ontological criticism, however, because such ontological value-judgment is only one of its functions. (Those functions are so thoroughly mixed that the process of ontological judgment also involves, inextricably, superb description and analysis of styles and movements. In establishing ontological-stylistic equivalence, Bazin orders and exposits film-historical data with great clarity and comprehension; the relation could also be put the other way around. The two processes are mixed but not inseparable: we now read "Evolution" as history and discount its value-judgments, i.e., the rejection or demotion of montage and expressionism.)

The ontology system involves very simplistic judgments and is itself simple in structure. The history system involves far more complex, multifaceted judgments; as a structure of thought it is also far more difficult and complex than the ontology system. The first thing to note about the history system is that it is not derivable from the ontology system. The broad, undifferentiated approvals and disapprovals of "Evolution" are as far as Bazin's ontological thought carries into film history and the critical-historical work. As noted, this is not far at all. These validity-equivalences are not critical principles and cannot serve as the basis for a criticism. It is noteworthy that nearly all of Bazin's criticism takes place within the approved zones of "Evolution": thirties composition-in-depth (Renoir), American composition-in-depth (Welles and Wyler), Italian

neorealism and other postwar cinema. This approval, however, is no more illuminating than the disapproval of montage and expressionism. It provides no basis for evaluation or explication. Bazin's ontological principles could judge this exploration film inferior because it reconstructed historical events; it could judge that neorealist films are in some way better than expressionist ones (though Bazin was very hesitant to apply his ontology principles to specific judgments of worth; he preferred to critique movements generally). It could not elucidate the differences between Rossellini's style and DeSica's nor between early and later Rossellini, nor make evaluations between artists or within the career of one. Bazin might have used relation to reality as a scale of value for individual films: those films coming closest to reality are better or more interesting than others; but he does not do this. He never asks whether Rossellini or Visconti or DeSica is the most realistic; he asks how each approaches reality, sees, understands, shapes it. Putting this question rather than the other shifts emphasis from reality and its valid reproduction to style, temperament, world-view of the individual artist. Thus, the entire realm of Bazin's critical history lies beyond that of the ontology system; though, in systematic terms, it rests upon the conceptual foundation of ontology approval.

If we compare the history criticism with the ontology criticism, we note that the former is historical in several senses. The factor of history is introduced on both sides of the original image-reality model, and transforms it. Both object and image are historicized in the historical work: the films addressed (e.g., Italian neorealism) concern humans in an historical situation rather than in timeless relations with nature, and take their place also in a history of cinema—each film may be placed in a history of styles, of the artist, of movements. One might say that it is the interaction between historical object (human subject) and historical image that now becomes the central question: the historical reality of 1951 is different from that of 1945, the film styles of 1951 are (or may be) different from those of 1945. (Of course expedition films *can* be viewed historically and fiction films ahistorically; it depends on the interests of the critic.)

Since they are concerned with correspondence between image and reality, the ontology pieces employ a logic of noncontradiction and a vocabulary of like and unlike. The historical pieces employ a development logic and an historical vocabulary. Bazin's piece on *La Terra Trema* embodies this logic and vocabulary unmistakably:

> Visconti lets us see that the Italian neorealism of 1946 has been left far behind on more than one score. Hierarchies in art are fairly pointless, but cinema is too young an art still, too involved in its own evolution to be able to indulge in repeating itself for any length of time. Five years in cinema is the equivalent of an entire literary generation. It is the merit of Visconti to have managed a dialectical integration of the achievements of recent Italian film with a larger, richer aesthetic for which the term 'realism' has not too much meaning now. I am not saying that *La Terra Trema* is superior to *Paisà* or to *La Caccia tragica* but only that it does, at least, have the merit of having left them behind from an historical standpoint.
>
> (Volume II, Pp. 44–45.)

This is historical analysis but it is historical evaluation also. Bazin is careful to disown the descriptive bias that makes later works in a tradition richer or better than earlier ones, but he does make historical development itself into a value. *La Terra Trema* is important, and in that sense good, because it constitutes a stylistic development within neorealism and within film history more generally.

As mentioned above, Bazin had to go outside of the ontology system if he was to function as a critic at all; that is, to say more about the films of his period than blanket approval on ontological grounds. The historical work generally, and especially "Evolution" and the neorealist pieces suggest that he may have drawn his concepts and methods partly from art history. The historical criticism is concerned with distinguishing stylistic movements, relating movements and individual artists, making comparisons and distinctions between individ-

ual artists and between the stages of an artist's development—the classical concerns of art history. At times "Evolution" suggests Heinrich Wölfflin, not only in its admirable clarity but in its strong period-style emphasis, approaching at times an "art history without names," and in its underlying suggestion that "not everything is possible at all times." "Evolution" also contains hints of the Hegelian basis of much art history: given that each period of film history explores only one aspect of cinema (or complex of aspects), it follows that cinema itself—the idea of cinema in its fullness—exists only in the aggregate: in the historical totality of cinema. Bazin's entire critical-historical work would be clarified by a thorough-going methodological critique, perhaps along the lines of Arnold Hauser's *The Philosophy of Art History*. It seems likely from its surface that Bazin's historical work falls into many of the pitfalls in reasoning, concept, and method to which much art history has been subject. This is not surprising nor does it diminish Bazin's great value, in that he engaged himself in nothing less than inventing an art history of the cinema.

In structural terms, "Evolution" and "An Aesthetic of Reality: Neorealism" (1948) concern the characteristics and relations of periods and movements and their styles, while the other critical pieces concern artists and films within those movements. Both levels of criticism show Bazin at his best, which is not to say that all difficulties and tensions created by the two perspectives are resolved. In comparison to the ontology criticism, the historical work defines as large a role for the critic as it does for the director. It does this by its openness to integral artistic creation, which is not to be hampered by a priori critical rules (see "In Defense of Rossellini"—1955); and thereby requiring a comparably large scope in the critical function. Bazin's own work is generally excellent to the degree that his subject is: his Rossellini, Visconti, Welles, Renoir, Bresson pieces are perhaps his best individual criticism.

We have argued that the "Ontology" is not the logical basis for the ontological equivalences developed and applied in the ontology criticism and "Evolution." Therefore the "Ontology" is not, strictly speaking, the *theory of* the ontological work; let alone the theory of Bazin's work as a whole. It may state a theory of the photographic image, but it is not a theory of or governing the operations which go on in Bazin's ontological (or other) work. As said, "Evolution" and the ontological pieces develop their own theory. If theory consists of the assumptions and methods which guide a certain practice (or the formulation of these), then it must be that the critical-historical work contains an implicit theory of its own. We have discussed some of these methods and assumptions without attempting to formulate them. There exists at least a partial formulation of the methods and assumptions of his critical-historical work in Bazin's own words. These passages have the density and self-containment of theoretical formulations, but they occur in an essay devoted to nontheoretical matters and are certainly not presented by Bazin as a theoretical position.

> Let us hope, then, to have as often as possible films like *Le Jour se lève, La Règle du jeu,* or *The Best Years of Our Lives*. But these are platonic wishes, attitudes of mind that have no bearing on the actual evolution of the cinema. If the cinema turns more and more to literature—indeed to painting or to drama—it is a fact which we take note of and attempt to understand because it is very likely that we cannot influence it. In such a situation, if fact does not absolutely make right, it requires the critic at least to be favorably predisposed.
>
> If we take another system of reference we must say of the cinema that its existence precedes its essence; even in his most adventurous extrapolations, it is this existence from which the critic must take his point of departure. As in history, and with approximately the same reservations, the verification of a change goes beyond reality and already postulates a value judgment.
>
> Even if this critical pragmatism does not seem to the reader sufficiently well-founded, he must nevertheless admit that it justifies in us a certain humility and thoughtful prudence when faced with any sign of evolution in the cinema. ("In Defense of Mixed Cinema." Volume I, Pp. 71–72)

These passages certainly reflect in part the operative principles of the critical-historical

work; whether they theorize that work fully and adequately is another question. The passages formulate Bazin's "favorable disposition" to the unfolding cinema of his period and also that method of historical evaluation which we noted in the piece on *La Terra Trema:* "the verification of a change goes beyond reality and already postulates a value judgment." Here as in most cases, however, the fact of formulating or explicitizing the theory of a practice goes beyond mere reflection and is itself a qualitative change. Thus Bazin may have been favorably predisposed to the films of his period because he liked realistic style; his formulation *requires* of himself and other critics favorable disposition *in all cases.* In another respect also, the "Mixed Cinema" formulations go beyond the critical-historical work itself: they are entirely free of that ontology standpoint, of the predisposition toward realism in particular, that still colors most of the critical-historical pieces in some degree. Indeed these passages do not permit a position of privilege to any style or movement.

The "Mixed Cinema" formulations clarify and give definition to the entirety of Bazin's historical work. In so doing they sharpen the opposition between the ontology system and the history system. They may or may not affect the ontology criticism, which lies or seeks to lie outside of history; they certainly destroy the ontological equivalences of "Evolution." "Mixed Cinema" requires openness to montage and expressionism and all other styles, regards these changes in film history as valuable, etc. The effect of "Mixed Cinema" on "Evolution" is to destroy its (negative) value-judgments and thereby to recover it as film history. This is how we read "Evolution" in any case—for its admirable analysis/synthesis of film styles, 1920-1948, not for the information that montage and expressionism are bad because they distort the image. Because the structure of the essay is historical, its value judgments are easily separable. Where Bazin puts minus signs before the disapproved styles, we put plus signs; where he ranks in value and eliminates in order to form an ideal history, a history of realism, we recover all styles mentioned, in equal value, as a dialectical history of the film styles that have been. Bazin's good-bad-good gives way to a dialectical history of the whole. In short we are abreast of "Mixed Cinema," that is, somewhat beyond Bazin's actual historical work. Put another way, "Mixed Cinema" is something like the implicit theory of our own film-viewing and film-critical work.

Now that ontology system and history system stand opposed in theory and practice, we must consider to some degree the relations between them. The ontology pieces are unhistorical and self-contained; the critical-historical work has no impact on them—except that of over-shadowing them in bulk and importance. It is not true, however, that the critical-historical work is free of the ontological strain in Bazin's thought. The nature and extent of this impingement—in the overall and in each essay —is a difficult and complex question. Those who see Bazin's work as the unfolding of a single ontological idea, and therefore as a unity, presumably see the critical-historical work in this light also. It would be illuminating and valuable if someone would study Bazin's work from this point of view, particularly the critical-historical work. Such a study would surely uncover many important relations within Bazin's work, particularly between ontological and historical areas. We will consider certain aspects of this relation, which we do not at all see as overcoming the division we have argued, but cannot hope to do a complete job.

The issue of the ontological impingement on Bazin's critical-historical work centers on certain uses of language in that work; particularly, of course, the use of "realism" and "reality." This is by no means a simple question: for Bazin uses these terms in a number of different senses, sometimes within the same essay. The only adequate and complete way to study this question is to trace the uses and senses of "realism" and "reality" and related terms in each Bazin piece, both in the middle-level, period-movement pieces, "Evolution" and Neorealism" and in the individual criticism. We will have to limit ourselves to some generalizations about

Bazin's uses of these terms.

We recall first that there is no logical connection or carry-over between the "Ontology" and the critical work, ontological or historical. The "Ontology" says that photograph and object share a common being; the ontological criticism and "Evolution" concern the relations of different *styles of* photograph to reality; the historical criticism concerns qualities of and differences between styles within very large groupings of styles considered valid in relation to reality by the ontological function of "Evolution." This is the structure of Bazin's work from the ontology standpoint. As we have seen, this structure has no bearing on the historical criticism itself, except to provide a nonoperative ontological validation. That criticism is structured by an art-historical division of function between period-style analyses and criticism of individual artists and works within those periods. This structure and the concepts, methods, and working theory of this two-levelled criticism derive in no way from the ontological system or line of thought. This context defines and controls the meaning of all terms used within it. Thus when a critical essay uses the term realism, the word refers first of all to the definitions and classifications worked out by "Evolution" and "Neorealism." When one examines those essays one finds the term used to describe certain families of shooting styles (also script styles, acting styles, etc. in the case of "Neorealism"). These definitions do not concern reality or relation to reality, they describe artistic qualities. In the middle-level essays, realism is an art-historical term which is used to describe and classify. "Evolution" also supplies ontological analysis of the styles discussed, but this does not affect the descriptive function. The function of the term "realism" in the historical-critical essays is first of all to place the director or work in relation to a family of styles described by "Evolution" and/or "Neorealism."

The individual essays sometimes use the term "realism" in other ways, also, though almost always *in addition to* the art-historical sense described above. Thus Bazin sometimes uses the term to describe the *particular* qualities of a director's style; he speaks of Visconti's "aesthetic realism," Fellini's "poetic realism," etc. In this usage it is not the term realism itself, but how Bazin qualifies that term that is the center of the critical act. "Realism" becomes the name of the problem to be solved, a kind of "X." When Bazin has defined the kind of realism a director practices, he has defined his style (and vice versa). In this usage, which pervades the critical pieces, "realism" is Bazin's touchstone or basic critical concept, but it remains in itself a blank or open term. Moreover, the term becomes less distinct as Bazin applies it to more and more directors and uses it in different ways; it becomes diluted. This is true also in "Evolution" in which Bazin collects a large number of diverse styles under the term "realism" (Murnau, Stroheim, Welles, Rossellini). What happens here and in the individual criticism also is that the term fills up with diverse and contradictory contents: it becomes historicized as Bazin uses it to apply to his widening historical interests.

Sometimes Bazin uses "realism" or "reality" in the historical criticism in a sense that seems ontological, as well as descriptive in the ways discussed above. What operational effect this has on the act of criticism, however, is not clear. It may be no more than a kind of flavoring which Bazin uses to retain connection with his ideas concerning reality.

Despite its realist terminology, the history system is not assimilable to the ontology system. The opposition of the two systems remains irreconcilable. Each system, universalized by the theory, presents itself as the entirety of Bazin's work; but each can make itself into the whole only by enforcing certain modifications or mutilations on the other. The history system can take over the whole only by eliminating the ontology system and the ontological dimension of "Evolution," recovering that essay as descriptive history. The ontology system can take over the whole only by dissolving the structure of the critical history and recovering each piece as a serial application or exemplification of the idea

of image-object identity.

It might be asked why this conflict of possible structures, and hence of theories, is important at all. The reality or substance of Bazin's work, its bulk as well as that of greatest importance in it, is the critical-historical work itself. The systematic principles which seek to define this work are metaphysical excrescences in regard to it. They are competing ideologies of the whole which seek to turn it this way or that. The chief effect of "Mixed Cinema" as ideology is to turn the finite, finished, in-itself of the historical work into project: unfinished, forward-turned aspiration toward a comprehensive art-history of the cinema. The ideology of the ontology system turns it into an unstructured series of emanations of a single idea, essentially backward-turned. Arguably the conflict between the two principles has more to do with ourselves, the heirs of this work, than with the work itself. The project of completing an art history of the cinema is one which we take up, or not; Bazin cannot do it. For this reason alone the conflict is important; and also for the related reason that how a body of work understands itself is inextricably part of that work. This self-understanding does not control the understanding or the use of those who use the work; but it must be engaged by them if they are to understand both the work and their own use of it.

We have argued that Bazin's work understands itself in two ways and that these ways are irreconcilable. There is discernible in that work, however, a serious attempt to overcome this conflict; if it is not an intentional "attempt," it is at least a possible ground of its overcoming. Several passages in Bazin have a teleological flavor; "The Myth of Total Cinema" (1946) and "Evolution" are explicitly teleological. "Myth" argues that the idea of a total representation of reality was the inspiration which guided the pioneers of cinematic technology. The essay suggests that this project remains the aspiration of cinema. "Evolution" suggests also that film history exhibits a movement toward greater and greater realism; and supports this theme in several ways. The essay ends on the combined notes of composition-in-depth and neorealism, which have been presented as highest stages in film history's long progress toward realism, which Bazin explicitly calls its "vocation for realism." "Evolution" implies a technological base for this teleology: it traces the elimination of titles, the development of sound, of deep-focus lenses and panchromatic film stock, and the aesthetic alterations which followed each. Bazin sees each of these developments as in increase in realism.

It is easy to see how this teleology provides a ground for the unification of ontology and history. The ideal of total realism is gradually realized by film history; film history is a long progress toward the realization of its essence. Perfect realism will never be achieved but it will be approximated more and more closely; in any case this progress is the meaning of film history, its unifying pattern and spirit. This teleology or philosophy of film history overcomes the underlying divisions within Bazin's thought—that between ontology and history and, behind these, between value and fact, essence and existence. But this attempt fails on several counts. First of all, while film history to Bazin's day gave his teleological scheme a certain plausibility—neorealism and composition-in-depth *did* integrate the visual continuity of (certain) silent cinema with the "added realism" of sound—film history since his death has decidedly reversed this pattern: montage and collage forms of many kinds have appeared or reappeared and many kinds of expressionism also. Nor is Bazin's scheme unexceptionable in relation to his own period. The truth is that every technological and aesthetic development in film history has increased the expressive resources of realism in Bazin's sense, but those of every other form and style of cinema also. Finally, as mentioned above, Bazin makes film history into a progress toward realism (in "Evolution" especially) largely by including everything *but* montage and expressionism within that term. Instead of film history made realistic, "realism" is historicized.

The ontology/history conflict in Bazin's thought remains. In a subsequent essay we will return to this conflict from the perspective of the history of film thought.

Film Books

The past year has again brought an enormous outpouring of titles from both Britain and America. Definitively sorting out this wealth of material will of course take time and the contributions of many hands. In the coverage which follows, we have attempted to provide some sense of proportion, and will give later and fuller treatment to certain titles. (A few items have doubtless escaped us entirely.)

We will probably see a decline in output in 1972–73, since sales have now indicated to publishers that the film field is not quite the gold-mine they thought. We must hope that this will not mean a sacrificing of manuscripts which lack spectacular sales possibilities—but which usually include those books of truly lasting value.

THE WORLD VIEWED

By Stanley Cavell. New York: Viking, 1972. $5.95.

This little book seems designed to make anyone interested in good film criticism very unhappy. Armed with a vague feeling that Stanley Cavell is an intelligent man who has seen a lot of films, teaches aesthetics at Harvard, and therefore may have something to say, the reader hacks and slashes his way through the thickets of Cavell's style, in desperate search for a clearing. I must admit that I have been unsuccessful. I think I know what Cavell's ideas are *about;* but I don't know what they *are*. Film, he says, satisfies "the wish for the magical reproduction of the world by enabling us to view it unseen" (101). His bias is realistic and he has many harsh remarks to make about artificial styles like expressionism, along the lines of Bazin and Panofsky, believing that the *"a priori* condition" of film is that "its medium is photographic and its subject reality" (74). I could continue to pull pieces like this out of Cavell's book, but it is never clear to me what holds the book together, and my natural tendency to seek relation and coherence in the midst of seeming chaos finally gives out before the self-enclosed world of Cavell's prose.

The World Viewed has no index, implying that there is an argument that must be read all the way through. The reader should keep to his task and not cannibalize insights about particular films. (There are extended bits on *The Graduate*, *Liberty Valance*, *Vertigo*, *Rosemary's Baby*, and *Jules and Jim*, among others.) The message is 'Acknowledge the writer's hold over you and the subject. Don't question what he's doing. It might be your own fault.' This kind of submission to the critic is a usual feature of the criticism called affective or belletristic, in which the reader lets the refined sensibility of the critic pour sacramentally over him. Of course, all critical works are extended monologues. But there must be some reason why the reader goes along with the writer, some expectation of enlightenment and pleasure. Most critics tacitly promise the reader a basic clarity: "Whatever I say, in whatever style, you ought to be able to understand it." But Cavell makes no such promises. Subjects are brought up, dropped, and resummoned to serve the demands of a logic no doubt rooted in the author's psyche, but little in evidence on the page. Cavell fails to compel the kind of assent that would commit the reader to a second, third, fourth, or even fifth reading, at the end of which the mysteries might finally be revealed.

Cavell's style ignores clarity, as if it would be a compromise to express his difficult thoughts in any style but a difficult one. Some of his insights are good (for example, about Fred Astaire), some of his lyrical flights are heart-warming, some of his general points are interesting—but nothing is really developed. Cavell would rather be a great thinker than actually do some thinking. The mannerisms of linguistic philosophy, with its finicky obsession with definition, collide with the rhapsodies of Nietzschean aphorism, and a more poetic use of language. Chapter divisions appear mainly to imply the existence of an ordered argument, not to mark its stages. A great deal of the time the text is speckled with unhelpful and self-congratulatory allusions. Does it matter that Kleist's *The Marquise of O . . . .* is the "great modern telling" of the basic fantasy of *Rosemary's Baby?* Or that Kant "childishly thought" that happiness and virtue coalesced in a place beyond imagination? Well, it might matter in the hands of a writer who placed more value on coherence than Cavell does. But in *The World Viewed* such references dazzle without giving any illumination.

Words are very important to Cavell and he twists and distorts language to make them his own ("My business is to think out the causes of my consciousness of films as it stands"). One particularly annoying mannerism involves a punning in the name of paradox: it is true about modern man "that what is natural to him is not natural" (14); in general we "have forgotten how *different* different things are from one another" (19); "Everything was changing but nothing can be changed" (91). Whole metaphysics are implied, but never explained, by the various meanings of "screen."

Cavell rarely subordinates his words to any ongoing meaning. Instead, he manipulates them as counters whose apothesis is in formula-like equivalences: "Painting, being art, is revelation; it is revelation because it is acknowledgment; being acknowledgment, it is knowledge, of itself and of its world" (110). I am not here attacking the meaning of these phrases; in context, some are more, some less, intelligible. What bothers me is the willful and (I think) unnecessary obscurity of Cavell's language.

I find it hard to decide whether Cavell writes this way because he is perverse, because he thinks it's suitable to his subject, or because he just doesn't know he's a bad writer. Here, for example, is a comment about Truffaut's powers of observation in *The Soft Skin:* "The excited disorientation in finding a woman familiar in one place become a total and interesting stranger, is given in the deft pianissimo of gesture by which the stewardess nudges one heel against the other to slip off the flats of work and the step into her terms of privacy."(170–171). Whatever the formal errors in this sentence, it shows basically either an inability or an unwillingness to use figurative language with any expansive effect, to reach out to analogous layers of meaning and thereby enhance the reader's understanding. To all appearances Cavell would rather have a hermetic style. He doesn't seem very interested in the kind of criticism that explains or enlightens. His subject is the "ontology" of films, and he explicates his subject by reference to his own being. Everyone begins understanding with personal responses. But writing a book, especially a book of criticism, involves translating those responses into a form and a language that is valid for others as well as yourself. Cavell uses language to block any inroads on his mysterious and elusive ideas. His sentences all have the same message: pay attention to the speaker and not the sense. Cavell is the center of attention, not in addition to, but *in place of* anything he writes about, and his bad writing is paradoxically enough the main instrument of his self-aggrandisement.

Because Cavell makes the structure of his psyche the main issue in his book, it is difficult not to attack him personally. Therefore, also, the main appreciators of the book must be those who know him personally and can supply what the book so obviously lacks—a reality behind the clouds. Maybe the reader who doesn't know Cavell is supposed to turn for periodic sustenance to the brooding shirt-sleeved picture of the philosopher in his easy chair on the dust jacket. Perhaps a personal commitment can impel the loving exegesis this book seems to demand. But is this kind of guru-criticism what film criticism really needs or wants? Parker Tyler, for example, is an idiosyncratic and personal writer too. But you learn something from him, whether you agree with him or not. I find it difficult to learn anything from Cavell, even when I sense that we're both interested in many of the same problems. Some books make you want to meet the author. But it says sad things about an author and his language when that becomes a necessity.

Cavell might be a great person to talk to after a film, or lead a class discussion, when the mere act of speaking cuts down the abstractions, and the play of conversation forces him to say what he means (or a little closer to it than he does here). But shut in with himself to write a book, he stays shut in. The barrier Cavell sees between film and audience rests firmly between Cavell and his readers, and in the same way that he glosses over the ability of film (like the other arts) to show a keen and complex awareness of its audience, he ignores the need to communicate with his own. The reader of good will enters *The World Viewed* and indulges Cavell more and more, until his sympathy finally snaps, and he turns to wonder if the screen of incantatory and obfuscatory language doesn't actually hide an emptiness within.—LEO BRAUDY

POLITICS AND FILM

By Leif Furhammar and Folke Isaksson. Translated by Kersti French. New York: Praeger, 1971, $12.50.

Just the texts that have appeared in these pages over the last good year and a half make it clear why Praeger was moved to issue Ian Cameron's English-produced *Politics and Film* for sale in America. It might look as if the book would sell well, what with its modish title and all: everybody of and under a certain age, or almost, who is into film is into politics, too. The latter are almost as generally leftist. This is a fact of the market, so indisputable that neither the American packagers nor the English translators can ignore it. But in that case, neither can we not take them to task for traffic in such shoddy merchandise.

Politics and Film will find readers, if only for its title, which promises much, but they will be disappointed if they come looking either for a systematic historical treatment or for an exhaustive theoretical analysis of the subject.

The authors disclaim system, right from the start. Fair enough: *Caveat emptor.* Further, it seems unlikely that the subject can be exhausted, com-

Cavell rarely subordinates his words to any ongoing meaning. Instead, he manipulates them as counters whose apothesis is in formula-like equivalences: "Painting, being art, is revelation; it is revelation because it is acknowledgment; being acknowledgment, it is knowledge, of itself and of its world" (110). I am not here attacking the meaning of these phrases; in context, some are more, some less, intelligible. What bothers me is the willful and (I think) unnecessary obscurity of Cavell's language.

I find it hard to decide whether Cavell writes this way because he is perverse, because he thinks it's suitable to his subject, or because he just doesn't know he's a bad writer. Here, for example, is a comment about Truffaut's powers of observation in *The Soft Skin:* "The excited disorientation in finding a woman familiar in one place become a total and interesting stranger, is given in the deft pianissimo of gesture by which the stewardess nudges one heel against the other to slip off the flats of work and the step into her terms of privacy."(170–171). Whatever the formal errors in this sentence, it shows basically either an inability or an unwillingness to use figurative language with any expansive effect, to reach out to analogous layers of meaning and thereby enhance the reader's understanding. To all appearances Cavell would rather have a hermetic style. He doesn't seem very interested in the kind of criticism that explains or enlightens. His subject is the "ontology" of films, and he explicates his subject by reference to his own being. Everyone begins understanding with personal responses. But writing a book, especially a book of criticism, involves translating those responses into a form and a language that is valid for others as well as yourself. Cavell uses language to block any inroads on his mysterious and elusive ideas. His sentences all have the same message: pay attention to the speaker and not the sense. Cavell is the center of attention, not in addition to, but *in place of* anything he writes about, and his bad writing is paradoxically enough the main instrument of his self-aggrandisement.

Because Cavell makes the structure of his psyche the main issue in his book, it is difficult not to attack him personally. Therefore, also, the main appreciators of the book must be those who know him personally and can supply what the book so obviously lacks—a reality behind the clouds. Maybe the reader who doesn't know Cavell is supposed to turn for periodic sustenance to the brooding shirt-sleeved picture of the philosopher in his easy chair on the dust jacket. Perhaps a personal commitment can impel the loving exegesis this book seems to demand. But is this kind of guru-criticism what film criticism really needs or wants? Parker Tyler, for example, is an idiosyncratic and personal writer too. But you learn something from him, whether you agree with him or not. I find it difficult to learn anything from Cavell, even when I sense that we're both interested in many of the same problems. Some books make you want to meet the author. But it says sad things about an author and his language when that becomes a necessity.

Cavell might be a great person to talk to after a film, or lead a class discussion, when the mere act of speaking cuts down the abstractions, and the play of conversation forces him to say what he means (or a little closer to it than he does here). But shut in with himself to write a book, he stays shut in. The barrier Cavell sees between film and audience rests firmly between Cavell and his readers, and in the same way that he glosses over the ability of film (like the other arts) to show a keen and complex awareness of its audience, he ignores the need to communicate with his own. The reader of good will enters *The World Viewed* and indulges Cavell more and more, until his sympathy finally snaps, and he turns to wonder if the screen of incantatory and obfuscatory language doesn't actually hide an emptiness within.—LEO BRAUDY

POLITICS AND FILM

By Leif Furhammar and Folke Isaksson. Translated by Kersti French. New York: Praeger, 1971, $12.50.

Just the texts that have appeared in these pages over the last good year and a half make it clear why Praeger was moved to issue Ian Cameron's English-produced *Politics and Film* for sale in America. It might look as if the book would sell well, what with its modish title and all: everybody of and under a certain age, or almost, who is into film is into politics, too. The latter are almost as generally leftist. This is a fact of the market, so indisputable that neither the American packagers nor the English translators can ignore it. But in that case, neither can we not take them to task for traffic in such shoddy merchandise.

Politics and Film will find readers, if only for its title, which promises much, but they will be disappointed if they come looking either for a systematic historical treatment or for an exhaustive theoretical analysis of the subject.

The authors disclaim system, right from the start. Fair enough: *Caveat emptor*. Further, it seems unlikely that the subject can be exhausted, com-

manding selective tactics instead. Still, it does not seem too much to expect definitions of politics of film or of the relation or relations between the two such as these writers understand them. But the reader who comes expecting to have invested his twelve and a half bucks in some kind of order, even if it is only verbal order, won't find it. The writers take their subject for granted, which guarantees that their work will be useless.

Politics and Film is four years old now, its Swedish authors having added six pages of material (on *The Green Berets* and *Che!*) to a "revised and updated" Swedish text for the English-language edition. The contents are grouped under three headings: a series of texts on discrete historical "moments" and a series of "theoretical" texts (sub-titled "Principles") frame a central body of texts, 19 in all, named for particular films. These, like the framing texts, are largely descriptive, not analytical, and the description is largely anecdotal—first A happens, then B, C, and so on. This narrative bias might have some point if the films they choose to describe were not so easy to see in America. It is not the method itself that interests me, though, but the "principles" that underlie it, and the confusion in which they result.

In the first place, though only too prompt to deal in others' intentions, the authors are unwilling to make their own motives any more precise than an "interest." This term is alarming enough. Worse, this vague "interest" is pursued in the total absence of option on the specifically political front.

The authors have no point of view. Though their subject is politics and film, they take no sides. But in taking "no" sides, they take sides with the machine and its masters. For, precisely as there is no practice in "art" that stands above class, class-interest and -struggle, so it is impossible to think about "art," attack it, defend it, explain it, or simply "review" it from a position "above" class, class-interest and -struggle. Or, if you dislike paraphrase: in the world today, all culture, all art belong to definite classes and are geared to definite political lines; there is in fact no such thing as art for art's sake, art that stands above classes, art that is detached from or independent of politics. But, practically speaking, there are only two kinds of politics, and in class society there are only two kinds of class stand. If you do not consciously take the proletarian class stand, you take the bourgeois class stand, even if you take it unconsciously or unwittingly, as these two writers seem to. This is limiting, if only in the sense that the class to which they have rallied is the class in decline. But it is disabling when the history to which they refer detail after detail in film after film is German fascism. This obsession comes to determine the notion they make of the relation(s) between politics and film, for it compels them to identify this relation with "propaganda."

Their notion of "propaganda" is itself confused. On the one hand, they claim (page 152) that "the underlying assumption of propaganda films [is] that by manipulating the cinematic image of reality, one can also manipulate the spectators' *concepts* of reality . . ." But, on the other hand, they are just as convinced (page 154) that "it is of course the emotions, not the intellect, to which propaganda is addressed."

In any case, the reduction of the relation(s) between politics and film to propaganda limits their investigation in some very final sense, for it obliges them to ask a false question, which means one that has no answer. As they state it (page 243), "One has to ask whether it is intentions or effects that make a film a political act . . ." Intent is indeed as hard to define as effect is, both being local not in a society but in the individuals that compose it, which projects any attempt to deal in either into a specifically sociological domain. Intent and effect are, practically, inexhaustible.

Disabling as this reduction may be, nonetheless it points the way to ground on which the investigation might have been and still may be better conducted:

It is a matter of commonsense that a work of "art" is multivocal or "ambiguous," this ambiguity being identified by bourgeois ideology with "richness." Ambiguity or polyvalence is thus capital in the bourgeois "theory" of art. It is also a matter of commonsense that politics are basically optional in nature, involving choice, and that the format of political options, at least in class society, which is the only society that we know, is binary. You have to choose. If you do not choose A, you have to choose B, B being defined on the most abstract level as non-A, A as non-B. There is no middle term. Politics are as "poor," then, by their very nature, as poor or as "simple" as art is "rich" or "complex."

But politics is here in process, not "works." There is no such thing as a political "work." Films, though, are "works," in the classic (= the bourgeois) sense of the word. This suggests that films "are" politics or political only in the degree that they are process, not "art." Which in turn suggests that what one needs to examine if we are ever to fix the nature of the relation(s) between politics and film with any clarity is not intent and not effect, which in any case lie beyond the films in

which these writers mistakenly and misleadingly seek them. Instead what one needs to examine is precisely how it is that film in general and some films in particular, namely the films that make a "poor," unique, single, "political," non- or anti-"artistic" sense go about making it, if we are not to ask false questions, like the authors of this ill-named book.—DAVID DEGENER

THREE BOOKS ON EXPERIMENTAL CINEMA

VIKING EGGELING, 1880-1925, ARTIST AND FILMMAKER, LIFE AND WORK. By Louise O'Konor. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell (University of Stockholm Studies in History of Art 23), 1971.
EXPERIMENTAL CINEMA, A FIFTY-YEAR EVOLUTION. By David Curtis. New York: Universe Books, 1971. $6.95
FILM IM UNDERGROUND. By Birgit Hein. Ellstein Buch, 1971.

When one moves into the specialized area of experimental films, the usual problems of film criticism are accentuated. Among the many books on film, only a handful (good or bad) treat experimental films, and among those, the critical deficiencies are even more acute. Where a knowledge of the technical phenomena of cinema is of even greater importance, experimental-film critics seem relatively ignorant of techniques and the aesthetic implications of techniques. Where the very facts and dates are often little known and poorly documented, critics have taken little care with details and tragically parroted each other's errors and misapprehensions.

In view of these conditions, it is a great pleasure to come across Louise O'Konor's 300-page intensive study of Swedish film pioneer Viking Eggeling. Eggeling was one of the handful of artists who turned to film as the medium of the future shortly after the first World War. He produced only two short films before his lonely and early death (from syphilis, TB, malnutrition, exhaustion, etc.) in a Berlin hospital. One of his films is lost, and the other one known only from later re-edited versions. He is neither the most nor the least important figure in film history, but what Miss O'Konor has done for him must be done for every film-maker as the elementary basis of film criticism. She has written about 50 pages of pure, well-documented biography, collected about 50 pages of theoretical writings, notebooks, etc., by Eggeling himself, prepared about 100 pages of a catalogue of his artistic works (of which, curiously, about half are sharply executed realistic portraits and landscapes, and the other half wholly abstract studies and animation drawings for the two films), each item illustrated, exhaustive footnotes, bibliography, index, etc. But most important, perhaps, is a detailed, 10-page description of the 7-minute film *Diagonal Symphony* with an illustration for each new phrase, footage count, and a lineage of the prints studied for this description. While this may seem at first glance overly scholastic, it will prove a necessity, and I think future generations will scoff and curse us for being less accurate. Film is so subject to print-quality variations (darkness or color imbalance, even loss of one or more rolls in a certain printing) and print damage or alterations (especially lost head or tail sections; e.g., Clair's *Entr'acte* begins with a shot of a monkey, but I have only seen one print with this scene intact) that no intelligent discussion of a privately made and distributed film can proceed without an accurate definition of the film itself.

In the case of Eggeling, the critic's scholarly endeavor has yielded a great deal. If you look in any film history book, Eggeling will be mentioned as the maker of only one film, *Diagonal Symphony*, which is dated 1921 and often cited as "the first" abstract experimental film. This information derives from a single source, the artist Hans Richter who was once a friend of Eggeling's, and who has written much (including much that Miss O'Konor charges is incorrect) about Dada and film in the 1920s. Richter's writings center very much around himself and his own artistic activities, and he expresses strong opinions which sometimes warp the reader's attitudes. For instance, he dislikes Walter Ruttmann, and takes every opportunity to denigrate Ruttmann's works—particularly so, I suspect, since Ruttmann seems to have brought before the public many of Richter's "discoveries" and "experiments" a few years before Richter himself. Ruttmann's *Opus I*, an abstract film prepared with complex animation drawings, hand-colored, with a synchronous musical score, was premiered to audi-

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ences in April, 1921, before any public mention of the more primitive film experiments of Eggeling and Richter with their scroll drawings. Yet Richter has often said that Ruttmann (an unregenerated Nazi) followed in Richter's footsteps; according to Miss O'Konor, he has cleverly juggled names and dates to make it seem as if his own film *Rhythmus* and Eggeling's *Diagonal Symphony* were completed and seen in 1921. Now Miss O'Konor claims to have straightened out many of these details: Eggeling's first film *Horizontal-Vertical Orchestra* was in the process of being made during the year 1921, and was seen privately by some journalist friends in 1921 and again in 1923; Eggeling seems not to have been satisfied with the film and may never have shown it publicly. Richter and Eggeling quarreled late in 1921 and did not see each other again. Eggeling began work on a second film *Diagonal Symphony* in 1923, and this film was completed and shown privately in November, 1924, and publicly in May, 1925, just a few days before Eggeling's death. (There seems to be, by the way, little evidence that Richter actually produced films of his own any earlier than Eggeling; the early critics I have seen do not mention Richter at all, or mention him only as a follower of Eggeling, but this is not conclusive.)

Richter's role in Eggeling's affairs extends beyond this, in Miss O'Konor's account. Just about the time of their break-up, Richter published a theoretical article which was evidently written by Eggeling, under the name of Richter. After Eggeling's death, Richter married Eggeling's co-worker-mistress, and when they were divorced a few years later, Richter retained ownership of Eggeling's posthumous collection, including original film negatives, and the scrolls from which the films were shot. Thus almost all the primary artifacts of Eggeling's film life come to us only from Richter: the prints of *Diagonal Symphony* are from Richter's negative, and we have only Richter's word that *The Horizontal-Vertical Orchestra* is lost. The scroll drawings in art museums and private collections were donated or sold by Richter, with two exceptions. But Ré Soupault, the lady who actually did the animation work on *Diagonal Symphony*, says she believes that Richter's print is re-edited from the original, and indeed the footage count recorded for the original performance is different from the footage of the prints we now have. Miss O'Konor charges that two duplicate sets of scrolls for the films *Horizontal-Vertical Orchestra* and *Diagonal Symphony* which Richter sold to museums and collectors are forgeries, on the basis that they are drawn on a paper stock not manufactured during Eggeling's lifetime (Miss O'Konor says she attended the Criminal Investigation division of the Basel Police Department while this testing took place). Although the author refrains from making specific accusations in these matters, the conclusions are still pretty obvious, especially if you check out Richter's drawing style as it appears in the illustrations to his Swiss-printed autobiography.

Altogether the book makes interesting and exciting reading, what with Bohemian artists, feuds, and forgeries. Unfortunately for those who do not read French or German, quotations from documents written in those languages are not translated, but the text is perfectly intelligible without them most often. It is also unfortunate that Miss O'Konor's final conclusion had to be that we will have to wait for more genuine Eggeling items to be recovered from archives and estates before a definitive critical appreciation can be made. Miss O'Konor has a fine mind and eye (she is a film-maker in her own right, having worked in an apprentice capacity on Bergman's *Hour of the Wolf* and produced an experimental short *Reindeer Slaughter at Lake Krutvattnet* which is available in the US from the Los Angeles Film-maker's Coop) and I hope she will be able to write that definitive appreciation someday.

Also new from Europe are two experimental film history surveys, from England David Curtis's *Experimental Cinema, a Fifty-year Evolution* and from Germany Birgit Hein's *Film im Underground.*

David Curtis is one of the directors of the London Film-Makers' Cooperative and last year he organized an international experimental film festival in London. He also traveled through

Europe and America gathering information for this book. For this reason above all it is important and valuable: for the first time in English we have a survey that discusses film-makers from all over America and Europe together in the same critical context, organized by Curtis's sensitive, appreciative and unprejudiced eye. Here we can read about (even if we never get to see) Silvio Loffredo who for 20 years has worked on a series of collage films consisting almost entirely of single-frame or few-frame pieces selected from widely divergent sources for similarity in visual textures and movement; about Otto Mühl whose filmed happenings show naked participants perpetrating raucous violence upon each other and their environment; about Valie Export who wears a darkened "room" around her body and invites the public to reach in and feel instead of just look; about Antonio DeBernardi who makes only Super 8 portraits of his friends which he compounds in thick, richly-colored layers of superimposition and calls them *Gods.* But even more important, perhaps, one can see here the Los Angeles printing work of Pat O'Neill, Chick Strand, and David Lourie compared with the San Francisco printing work of Scott Bartlett and Michael Stewart (Robert Nelson is sadly absent here), with the New York printing work of Ken Jacobs, with the Canadian printing work of David Rimmer, with the London printing work of Fred Drummond, with the Cologne printing work of William and Birgit Hein, etc. This kind of unprejudiced cross-section is conducted with collage films, minimal films, sex films, structural films and a beautiful category, "The Informal Vision." The results are exciting and one can only wish that Curtis had been allowed to write at full length about his subject.

This is a serious flaw in the book for which I am sure Curtis is not at fault: the book is only 150 pages, of which 60 are photographs, so the text is much shorter than it ought to be, and it shows signs of being severely cut. There are many illustrations for films and film-makers that are hardly or not at all mentioned in the text; some major film-makers are discussed only in terms of one minor film (e.g., Robert Nelson with *Confessions of a Black Mother Succuba*) and some major film-makers survive only as a passing reference with no actual description or discussion (e.g., the Kuchar brothers); and when we read things like "*Relativity* (1966) and *Image, Flesh, and Voice* (1969, plate 46) both are too well-known to justify description here . . . ." we can be doubly suspicious, both because there are many fine, long descriptions of "better known" films than these, and because Curtis's strong point seems to be giving sensitive descriptions as opposed to Sheldon Renan's one-liners and lists of dates.

For those who read German, Birgit Hein's *Film im Underground* provides a better reference book, since its text is twice as long as Curtis's and hence provides more facts and details. As opposed to Curtis's focus on technical and aesthetic issues, Mrs. Hein's book seems stronger as a social study of Underground film, giving much historical information about distribution of film festival events, a topic which she is quite suited to discuss since she is herself a film-maker and film entrepreneur in Europe. The book betrays, fascinatingly, a specialized European point of view which is vaguely hostile and jealous of the predominance of American film-makers during the forties, fifties, aand perhaps sixties. Mrs. Hein favors European styles of film-making on various aesthetic grounds (she often judges American films as too cute, too pretty, too slick, etc.), and again her book provides a fascinating glimpse of even less-known foreign film-makers than Curtis's.

The Curtis and Hein books share two other, larger problems—accuracy and inclusiveness. Naturally both books have some inaccurate details of a simple nature (Mrs. Hein misspells Bruce Conner's name, something hard to do when you have watched it on screen for quite a percentage of some of his films). Curtis's book, however, (and to a lesser extent Mrs. Hein's) is shot through with a larger kind of inaccuracy arising from inadequate research. Thus Curtis reports that Satie's musical score for *Entr'Acte* and all of Oskar Fischinger's early films are lost, neither of which is true. Both books report that Oskar Fischinger did an animated abstract sequence for Ruttmann's *Melody of the World* (which contains no ab-

stract sequences at all), an error derived from Sheldon Renan or Hans Richter's 1946 *Art in Cinema* article, but totally unsupported by the film itself or its contemporary reviews and references. We have already seen the dangers of this with Eggeling in Miss O'Konor's work (which was revealed in all essential details in an article in *Cinema Studies* some five years ago, but both these books give Richter's information still).

Neither book is adequately planned in philosophical or critical terms. Curtis never defines what he considers "experimental," and Mrs. Hein skirts the term "underground" by saying that she prefers "independent," which might be all right if these terms had such a clear, commonly agreed-on meaning that the scope of the book could be dictated by them. But such is not the case, and the actual results are sad and enraging. For example, Curtis devotes five pages to a discussion of special effects on *Flying Down to Rio* and other Hollywood features but he never mentions at all the work of some first-rate, serious experimentalists like Walerian Borowczyk and Jan Lenica. That these men's works could be ignored entirely where they should most be discussed was able to happen, I think, precisely because of a weakness in critical principles, a failure to come to terms with the nature and meaning of experimentation and/or lyricism. What is the 50-year evolution?

Which brings us full circle: our shelf of books on experimental films is still incomplete. We need many more intensive studies such as Miss O'Konor's Eggeling book so that we may have a large and accurate encyclopedia of experimental film. We need a few critics who will wrestle with terminology and aesthetic issues (on a broad, international, historical basis) so that our encyclopedias can with precision and conciseness rest on a comfortable cushion of shared assumptions. And in the meantime we have three more steps in the right direction.

—WILLIAM MORITZ

SAMUEL FULLER

Edited by David Will and Peter Wollen. Edinborough Film Festival 69, 1969.

SAMUEL FULLER

By Phil Hardy, Praeger Publishers, Inc. 1970, $2.45

Peter Wollen and David Will's book catalyzed the process of critical discovery for B "mellermaker" Sam Fuller; yet, for a venture into uncharted waters (it was the first book on Fuller) there is little sense of adventure, a remarkable absence of diversity, and very little exploration that suggests anything like seminal importance. Wollen's introductory essay supplies the essential data: Sam Fuller—born 1911, early employment as a journalist and crime reporter, author of pulp novels (not assessed); preoccupations—violence and conflict, allegiance and loyalty, renegades and betrayal, America, nationalism, Asia, and societal harmony. In a concise style peppered with examples but with virtually no elaboration Wollen sets the tone for the entire book. After 18 essays (each on a single, separate film) amounting to some 80 pages, there is an interview with Fuller that adds another 40 pages to the book. As a conclusion and as implicit comment on what precedes them, Fuller's own words convey the overwhelming impression that his essential nature has remained unelucidated and the scope of his significance unexamined.

These essays, all by British critics, seem unanimous in insisting on the primacy of Fuller's politics. Like Phil Hardy, they want to locate his politics in a larger context, utilize this context to explain the dynamics of his characters' interaction while rescuing Fuller from glib labels of fascist. Virtually every essay does this through a strictly structural analysis of a particular film, indicating how the political referents affect the characters' actions and reflect the *auteur's* worldview. Yet, none of these critics brings either an extensive or acute political awareness (or knowledge) to his commentary, leaving the book's main recurring theme thin, without reverberation. Only Thomas Elsaesser's essay on *Shock Corridor* takes a decidedly different approach, stressing and co-

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Peter Wollen and David Will's book catalyzed the process of critical discovery for B "mellermaker" Sam Fuller; yet, for a venture into uncharted waters (it was the first book on Fuller) there is little sense of adventure, a remarkable absence of diversity, and very little exploration that suggests anything like seminal importance. Wollen's introductory essay supplies the essential data: Sam Fuller—born 1911, early employment as a journalist and crime reporter, author of pulp novels (not assessed); preoccupations—violence and conflict, allegiance and loyalty, renegades and betrayal, America, nationalism, Asia, and societal harmony. In a concise style peppered with examples but with virtually no elaboration Wollen sets the tone for the entire book. After 18 essays (each on a single, separate film) amounting to some 80 pages, there is an interview with Fuller that adds another 40 pages to the book. As a conclusion and as implicit comment on what precedes them, Fuller's own words convey the overwhelming impression that his essential nature has remained unelucidated and the scope of his significance unexamined.

These essays, all by British critics, seem unanimous in insisting on the primacy of Fuller's politics. Like Phil Hardy, they want to locate his politics in a larger context, utilize this context to explain the dynamics of his characters' interaction while rescuing Fuller from glib labels of fascist. Virtually every essay does this through a strictly structural analysis of a particular film, indicating how the political referents affect the characters' actions and reflect the *auteur's* worldview. Yet, none of these critics brings either an extensive or acute political awareness (or knowledge) to his commentary, leaving the book's main recurring theme thin, without reverberation. Only Thomas Elsaesser's essay on *Shock Corridor* takes a decidedly different approach, stressing and co-

gently arguing for an understanding of Fuller in terms of his characters and their situations: basically, they drive themselves to extremes where ostensibly political dilemmas serve to create conflicts far more existential than ideological in order to confront opposing alternatives and themselves. The conflict often centers on the search for an existential truth that demands the suspension of labile opposites and where neuroses, or insanity, threaten to dominate at any moment. Elsaesser seems to be on the right path to an accurate placement of Fuller's politics but his ideas are not elaborated. They are simply set adrift in a book that betrays its brevity and unanimity of viewpoint with redundancy, slap-dash thinking, and uneventful prose.

Phil Hardy's book shares much in common with Wollen and Will's. First, it is another paperback quickie with no index, no introduction, no conclusion, and a minimal text (further reduced by plentiful photographs). Second, it too stresses Fuller's politics but never explores them in depth or places them in a clear context. Hardy avoids distinguishing Fuller's preoccupations from the fascist elements of his vision, although he himself admits they exist; nor does he contrast Fuller's politics to Populism or imperialism despite their obvious relevance (Jeffrey Richard's excellent appraisal of Capra and Populism in *Cinema* #5 could have served as a useful example); nor does he distinguish Fuller's recurring uses of the war film genre from other films with common elements like Kubrick's *Paths of Glory,* Jancso's *The Red and the White,* or Godard's *Les Carabiniers.* Such distinctions would be valuable because Fuller's use of the war situation is highly personal yet not without parallels or influences. The effort would also help distinguish those elements in Fuller's unique vision that give such explosive impact and so resonant a linkage to politics and America, existence and decision. Fuller's work operates at such an intense level that criticism without appropriate comparison, vigorous analysis, or sound generalization falls flat and uninformative by comparison.

As a further impediment Hardy has chosen an unwieldy, perhaps unworkable, approach to his subject. As in the earlier book, to which he also contributed, the political analysis and the *auteur* analysis never find a satisfactory merger (save in Elsaesser's piece). The former demands reference to an historical formation—political theory, the formation and growth of nations, movements and ideas—while the latter restructures the characteristics of an individual vision of the world historically, stressing the inner significance which the artist discovers in and imparts to action whose larger referents are not explored. (Sarris's concept of American film history, for example, seems to be to summarize the style and sensibilities of Hollywood's foremost directors or to conclude a discussion of Hollywood in the forties as "nothing more than ten years in the lives of a group of directors.") Hardy, like most of the first book's contributors, seems to accept Sarris's conception of *auteur* criticism yet he cannot identify Fuller's universe without reference to a less personal, historical arena which his analytical tools leave him ill-equipped to correlate: brief reference to a single work, Hofstadter's *Paranoid Style in American Politics,* suffices to integrate Fuller's themes and politics; a two-page discussion of America's muckraking and sensationalistic press, without reference to any histories or primary sources, establishes Fuller's stylistic borrowings from that tradition.

Fuller certainly deserves serious consideration as a highly dynamic and innovating artist, but his use of form is never analyzed in any depth in either book. And in an art where one or two books often "exhaust" an entire field or artist, we can feel fortunate that two books are already available on Fuller with promise of a third. If *Cahiers du Cinéma's* estimation that Fuller, Welles and Kazan were the three most important postwar directors is anywhere near the mark, however, then this is clearly one man for whom two or three books only begin to tell the story. —BILL NICHOLS

INDEPENDENT FILMMAKING

By Lenny Lipton. San Francisco: Straight Arrow Books, 1972. $12.95 cloth, $5.95 paper.

Raymond Spottiswoode, whose *Film and Its Techniques* has been for two decades the standard manual and textbook for film-making classes, was a quiet British gentleman who looked a bit like T. S. Eliot. Last year, after completing his monumental Focal Press *Encyclopedia of Film and Television Techniques* (which will remain the voluminous last word on such matters for a long time) Spottiswoode finally acceded to his publisher's endless goading and began revising his book—but had only completed three chapters when he was killed in an auto accident, as so many other film people have been.

Spottiswoode had, of course, been drastically out of date for a long time, particularly in all that concerned sound recording and editing; and many attempts have been made to succeed him. It seemed likely that victory would go to someone who, like Spottiswoode, had a backlog of experience in small-scale documentary work and perhaps had developed his ideas in the process of teaching, as Spottiswoode had at UCLA after his work at the National Film Board.

In fact, as far as I can tell, victory is firmly in the hands of a hairy freak named Lenny Lipton—who studied physics at Cornell, wrote a film column for the *Berkeley Barb*, composed a pop song called "Puff the Magic Dragon," sits on the board of that marvelously anarchistic cooperative Canyon Cinema, and modestly titled his first film *Happy Birthday Lenny*. Lipton is not concerned to display the elegance of theory which makes Spottiswoode's *Encyclopedia*, especially, such an impressive achievement. Lipton is out to tell you what you actually need to know about film-making. He is always direct, almost chatty, personal, practical. But his book is impeccably organized, and in both scope and detail it far surpasses the Pincus paperback, *Guide to Film-Making*. It is, indeed, just as detailed as Spottiswoode, and in certain respects—even aside from its up-to-dateness—more useful.

Any technical manual faces many problems of organization, and the prospective user has to try and find one whose structure fits the way his or her mind works, and then get used to it. Pincus's book is satisfactory in this respect, but no more than that; its organization is drier and more formal than Lipton's. Lipton always has foremost in mind two things: what exactly you are doing with your eyes and fingers, and what background you need to make sense of it. He always opts for the practical connection over the abstract or "logical." No doubt he has left a few little things out, like the useful retrozoom devices that can extend zoom-lens ranges. (I missed a mention that scissors or razor blades used in sound cutting need to be demagnetized—but it turns out that it's there in the text, though not in the index—which is, however, generally excellent.) On matters such as film stocks, cameras, and editing equipment Lipton educates you painlessly and enjoyably, while studying Pincus is a struggle. Also, though his style may seem light, Lipton is really more complete: he discusses flashing, cartridge quality, adjacent-frame freezes, and many other relatively esoteric matters. On the fundamentals he touches the same bases as Pincus, but more briskly and pertinently. (Pincus: "*Never* use eyeglass-cleaning paper or any silicon-coated lens tissue, since they can permanently damage the lens." Lipton: "Eyeglass tissue is bad for your lens: it will scratch the antireflection coating." Lipton also mentions the desirability of occasionally cleaning the lens mounting flange.) Above all, he gives you some feeling for what it is to "know your lenses" on the intimate basis that any good artist (or craftsman) must attain.

From Lipton you also get something Spottiswoode never gave: a direct and personal sense of how contemporary young film-makers actually manage to get their films made. He knows that shopping carts can be borrowed to use as makeshift dollies; he knows that no matter how much horror "professionals" express, young film-makers up against the financial wall are going to project their original in order to chop out useless material before paying for a work print. He knows they will be using half-track tape recorders and a lot of home-made gimmicks, and he quietly and usefully points out the hazards along with the possibilities. He's also good at telling you how to deal with the laboratory, that particularly vexatious station of the film-maker's cross. He knows that exasperation can have awful consequences: "Splicers may go out of alignment through wear and tear, as all splicers will, or you may have damaged it by dropping it (or throwing it)." (Lipton, by the way, shows a healthy skepticism about hot splicers, which Pincus treats as an unquestionable Good Thing.)

There are, to my mind, only two defects in Lipton's book. He is occasionally lazy, and will drop a tantalizing remark like "the Precision motorized viewer, which can run precisely at sound speed, is reputed to be a very fine unit"—without bothering to check out what would be a crucial piece of

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water for a fake well in *Judith of Bethulia*. Nonetheless, the "real" Griffith eludes Henderson as he has eluded all others—as Henderson notes, he was a secretive man who allowed convenient publicity to mask him from the world, and the powerful mixture of realism and sentimentality which made him the Dickens of the screen will probably never be traced to its roots in his life. What can be known of him is readably recounted here.

RUN-THROUGH: A MEMOIR

By John Houseman. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972. $9.95.

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Working in an area where, for a variety of reasons, relatively few film scripts have ever attained publication, the zealous McCarthy was able to put together this large a compilation only by including a huge number of *excerpts* from screenplays. Such excerpts, often running only one or two pages, appear to make up at least half of all McCarty's entries; hence the total number of complete screenplays available in English is disappointingly much less than 388! At the same time, the *Checklist* does not include *literary* works from which film scripts were subsequently adapted. Such information has already been published in a sort of companion volume to McCarty—A. G. S. Enser's *Filmed Books and Plays, 1928–1969* (Seminar Press: 111 Fifth Ave., New York, 1970; $12); this is a 509-page compilation indexed by film title, by original author, and by literary title (when different from film title). —STEVEN P. HILL

FILM FOCUS SERIES

General editors: Ronald Gottesman and Harry M. Geduld. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc. Cloth, $5.95 per volume; paper, $2.45.

The format of these brief volumes comprises, generally, an introduction, several long essays by various hands, reviews from contemporary press, and script excerpts. Evidently aimed at classroom use, like other "casebooks," these volumes provide a useful diversity of views.

Focus on Hitchcock. Edited by Albert J. LaValley. Special feature: a shot-by-shot presentation in drawings of the plane sequence in *North by Northwest*.

Focus on *Citizen Kane*. Edited by Ronald Gottesman.

Focus on *Blow-Up*. Edited by Roy Huss.

Focus on *Birth of a Nation*. Edited by Fred Silva. A good collection of the attacks on and defenses of the film when it first appeared.

Focus on D. W. Griffith. Edited by Harry M. Geduld.

Focus on Chaplin. Edited by Donald W. McCaffrey. Greatest curiosity: Max Linder on Chaplin's working methods.

Focus on *The Seventh Seal*. Edited by Birgitta Steene. Includes the script of *Wood Painting,* Bergman's related play, which contains one of those incredible Bergman monologues—by the witch.

ARNO PRESS SERIES

Under the guidance first of the late George Amberg and now of Martin S. Dworkin, the Arno series is reprinting a huge number of out-of-print volumes. As is usual in the reprint field, prices are often steep, even for this era of generally rising book prices; but the series will be especially welcomed by libraries trying to upgrade their film collections. The volumes are generally well printed, with care evident in the reproduction of photos from the original volumes; they are sturdily bound in uniform purple or blue covers.

Because more than 60 volumes have already been issued (with a new series of dissertation publications announced for Fall 1972) we list here only those volumes which seem essential for any library with more than absolutely minimal film collections; an excellent brochure describing the full line is available from Arno, 330 Madison Avenue, New York 10017.

The History of Motion Pictures, by Maurice Bardèche and Robert Brassillach. $14.00. The best early continental film history (1938) but from a fascist point of view.
History of the Kinetograph, Kinetoscope, and Kinetophonograph, by W. K. L. and Antonia Dickson. $4.00. Dickson's own story of the invention: a prime historical document.
Film Music, by Kurt London. $9.50. The earliest (1936) book-length discussion.
Experiment in the Film, ed. by Roger Manvell. $10.00. A 1949 collection of essays.
The Negro in Films, by Peter Noble. $9.00. The base-line pre-Poitier (1948) study.
Close Up (Vols. 1-10, 1927-1933). $245.00. The full run of this pioneering film magazine, which bridged the abyss between silent and sound film. Indexed.
The Film Index: A Bibliography (Vol. I: Film as Art). $22.50. Probably the first example of organized film research in America—the product of a WPA depression project at the MMA.
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New York Times Film Reviews, 1913–1968. $395.00 (includes index volumes), 1969–70 volume, $12.00. A basic source of contemporary information about films theatrically released in New York.
Report on Blacklisting: The Movies, by John Cogley. $15. Thorough documentation on HUAC's rampages through the film industry.
Origins of the American Film, by Gordon Hendricks. $28.00. The three volumes joined together here go back to sources in a manner still very rare in film history.
Charlie Chaplin, by Theodore Huff. $20.00. The standard work, including synopses of all Chaplin's films, credits, and a running account of their making.

Greed. Compiled and annotated with a foreword by Herman G. Weinberg. New York: Arno Press, 1972. $50.00. A lavishly produced volume, basically comprised of stills from the existing version supplemented by stills from sequences eliminated in the studio mutilation of Stroheim's work. The stills are accompanied by titles and together they help to flesh out what Stroheim must have meant; but we are still, unfortunately, a long way from the complete "reconstruction" promised by Arno's publicity. The Lorrimer script series in London has just issued Joel Finler's edition of the full written script of the film, which will probably be more useful for most purposes and should be reasonably priced when it appears here.

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The Film Criticism of Otis Ferguson. Philadelphia: Temple, 1971. $12.50. To be reviewed in next issue.

Screening the Sexes. By Parker Tyler. New York: Holt, Rinehart, 1972. $10.00. To be reviewed in later issue.

Second Sight: Notes on Some Movies 1965–1970. By Richard Schickel, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972. $8.95. Rather bravely, Schickel has added to his *Life* columns many afterthoughts and reversals of his original opinions.

Movie Journal: The Rise of a New American Cinema, 1959–1971. By Jonas Mekas. New York: Macmillan, 1972. $8.95. Mekas's columns for the *Village Voice,* selected and with an introduction. Just arrived; to be reviewed in a later issue.

Marquee Ministry: The Movie Theater as Church and Community Forum. By Robert G. Konzelman. New York: Harper & Row, 1972. $4.95. A guide to using "secular" films in religious education.

Champ Libre: Cahiers Québécois de Cinéma. Montreal: Eds. Hurtebise, 1971. A carefully prepared issue on the situation of the French Canadian cinema.

"Film Scripts One": *Henry V, The Big Sleep, Streetcar Named Desire.* **"Film Scripts Two":** *High Noon, Twelve Angry Men, The Defiant Ones.* New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1971. No price given.

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Three Screenplays: *All the King's Men, The Hustler, Lilith.* By Robert Rossen. New York: Doubleday,

1972. $3.50. With a full list of the screenplays Rossen wrote or collaborated on.

From Fiction to Film: Conrad Aiken's *Silent Snow, Secret Snow.* By Gerald R. Barrett and Thomas L. Erskine. Encino, Calif.: Dickenson Pub. Co., 1972. No price given.

The Fox Girls: By James Robert Parish. New Rochelle: Arlington House, 1971. $14.95. Bionostalgia junk with some nice pix.

Church and Cinema: A Way of Viewing Film. By James M. Wall. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1971. $4.50. An enlightened religious approach by the editor of *Christian Advocate.*

The German Cinema. By Roger Manvell and Heinrich Fraenkel. New York: Praeger, 1972. $10.00. Capsule history (132 text pages, lots of leading between lines), stronger on financial and economic developments than on descriptions and evaluations of films and film-makers. The account of Nazi-period films and Goebbels's machinations is less full, and less interestingly written, than in David Hull's *Film in the Third Reich,* though verdicts on films mostly tend to reinforce Hull's. Chapters on postwar film-making are the most valuable part of the book, but would be a little skimpy even as magazine articles. Good illustrations, however.

Need Johnny Read? By Frederick Goldman and Linda R. Burnett. Dayton, Ohio: Pflaum, 1971. $4.50. A passionate and well-written introduction to using films and TV in education, but very broadly conceived and raising many despairing issues of American public life.

Film 70–71. Edited by David Denby. Essays by members of the National Society of Film Critics. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972. $2.95. If one looks to this annual assemblage for where films are going, answers are very sparse, and for that matter some of the year's most curious pictures get almost no notice *(My Night at Maud's, Performance).* As usual, Kael has the most ideas and the best writing.

American Theatrical Arts: A Guide to Manuscripts and Special Collections in the U.S. and Canada. By William C. Young. Chicago: American Library Assn., 1971. $9.95. Predominantly drama material, but useful for locating film items as well.

Films in the Classroom: Why Use It, How to Use It. By Ralph J. Amelio. Dayton: Pflaum, 1971. $4.50. Detailed run-down of a complete film course.

Filmmaking for Children. Written and illustrated by Arden Rynew. Dayton: Pflaum, 1971. No price given. A practical guide by an experienced teacher, and not without humor (recommends getting the football coach as an ally in buying film equipment).

Children as Film Makers. By John Lidstone and Don McIntosh. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1970. $7.95. Useful teacher's manual for elementary schools.

Film Editing Handbook: Technique of 16mm Film Cutting. By Hugh B. Churchill. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1972. No price given. Detailed nuts-and-bolts coverage. Glossary.

Eisenstein's ***Potemkin: A Shot-by-Shot Presentation.*** By David Mayer. New York: Grossman, 1972. $4.50. Meticulous description, well illustrated with frame blowups; based on MOMA print.

Blacks in American Films: Today and Yesterday. By Edward Mapp. Metuchen, N. J.: Scarecrow Press, 1972. No price given. A year-by-year survey of the sixties from a black viewpoint, with a brief summary of earlier developments (excluding, however, black-produced films). Notes on changing black roles as portrayed in the industry, with some speculations on the "superhero" syndrome, the "token Negro," the curious absence of major black female stars, etc. Many quotes from scripts, and a highly useful bibliography.

The Total Film-Maker. By Jerry Lewis. New York: Random House, 1972. $6.95. A cheerfully dismaying book, full of hardheaded Hollywood lore (it is based on talks given to film students at USC) about everything from relationships with crews to taxes and product payola: "During my last picture, twenty to thirty products came across my desk, each available for use if I could write them in. I used a few. No money is exchanged, and they aren't listed in the credits. They are visible on the screen, and in return, the companies guarantee magazine ad space or television time. . . . [For one film] that company spent seven hundred thousand for ads, plugging the film in each one. It was considerably more than the entire distribution-company-ad-budget." Interesting views on Chaplin, Laurel, and "The Idiot"—Lewis's own screen character.

The Talkies. By Richard Griffith. New York: Dover, 1972. $5.95. Articles and illustrations from *Photoplay* magazine, 1928–1940.

Perspectives on the Study of Film. Edited by John Stuart Katz. Boston: Little, Brown. 1972. No price

given. Anthology, with a special section on problems of film teaching.

New Cinema in Eastern Europe. By Allistair Whyte. New York: Dutton, 1972. $2.25. A brisk survey, chiefly concentrating on those films which have been seen in the West.

The Film Director. By Richard L. Bare. New York: Macmillan, 1972. $8.95. Business and technical advice from an old Hollywood TV director, with a good deal of dismal candor like this: "As I look back, I can only be grateful, for it pointed my energies toward a more lucrative profession—directing."

The Celluloid Muse: Hollywood Directors Speak. By Charles Higham and Joel Greenberg. Chicago: Regnery, 1969. $7.95. Interviews with 15 of Hollywood's great and not-so-great; a thoughtful evaluative introduction.

Fiction into Film. *A Walk in the Spring Rain.* By Rachell Maddux, Stirling Silliphant, Neil D. Isaacs. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1970. $10.50. Novella by Maddux, script by Silliphant, account of film's making by Isaacs.

Running Away from Myself. By Barbara Deming. New York: Grossman, 1969. $6.95. Original thematic criticism of American films of the forties.

Film and Literature: Contrasts in Media. By Fred H. Marcus. Scranton, Pa.: Chandler, 1971. $3.95. Anthology.

Science Fiction in the Cinema. By John Baxter. New York: Barnes, 1970. $2.45.

Outline of Czechoslovakian Cinema. By Langdon Dewey. London: Informatics, 49 Lordship Lane, S.E.22, $3.50. Useful factual information, indexed.

James Agee. Commemorative issue of *The Harvard Advocate:* 21 South Street, Cambridge, Mass. 02138, $2.00. Essays and documents, including photographs; chronology and bibliography.

The Serials: Suspense and Drama by Installment. By Raymond William Stedman. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972. $9.95. An entertainingly written history of film, radio, and television serials.

The Movie Moguls: An Informal History of the Hollywood Tycoons. By Philip French. Chicago: Regnery, 1971. $5.95. Brief and readable survey, including a skeptical account of Hollywood's left wing.

Grierson on Documentary. Edited by Forsyth Hardy. New York: Praeger, 1972. $10.00. Reissue.

Shakespeare and the Film. By Roger Manvell. New York: Praeger, 1972. $10.00.

Hollywood Today. By Pat Billings and Allen Eyles. New York: Barnes, 1972. $2.45. A handy supplement (chiefly on player coverage) for the forthcoming Sadoul *Dictionary of Film Makers.*

Basic Books in the Mass Media. By Eleanor Blum. Urbana: Illinois, 1972. Useful but not at all exhaustive; unnerving errors and omissions in the periodicals section.

Multi Media Review Index. Ann Arbor: Pierian Press, 1972. A guide to film, filmstrip, record, and other media reviews, useful chiefly for locating material on items not indexed in *Readers Guide.*

Guidebook to Film. By Ronald Gottesman and Harry M. Geduld. New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1972. An "eleven-in-one" reference book which provides information on festivals, archives, unpublished theses, film schools, books and periodicals, distributors, and other commonly needed items. The annotations are perhaps too gentle, but this is a valuable complement to such works as the *International Film Guide.*

Understanding Movies. By Louis D. Giannetti. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972. $7.95 cloth, $4.95 paper. A text, complete with reading lists and a glossary. 12-shot color insert from *Red Desert.*

Basic Motion Picture Technology. By I. Bernard Happé. New York: Hastings House, 1971. $10.00. A presentation of material rather like that in the same publisher's *Encyclopedia of Film and Television Techniques*, evidently aimed at readers who are less sophisticated technically (or poorer).

International Film Guide 1972. Edited by Peter Cowie. New York: Barnes, 1971. $3.95.

The Cinema of Josef von Sternberg. By John Baxter. New York: Barnes, 1971. $2.95.

France: An Illustrated Guide to 400 Key Figures in the French Cinema. By Marcel Martin. New York: Barnes, 1972. $3.50.

Ustinov in Focus. By Tony Thomas. New York: Barnes, 1972. $2.45.

The Cinema of Otto Preminger. By Gerald Pratley. New York: Barnes, 1972. $2.45.

The Cinema of John Ford. By John Baxter. New York: Barnes, 1972. $2.45.

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Telling It Again and Again: Repetition in Literature and Film. By Bruce F. Kawin. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell, 1972. $6.95. Example of an academic work which a decade ago would have concerned only printed fiction.

Documentary Explorations: 15 Interviews with Film Makers. By G. Roy Levin. New York: Doubleday, 1972. $10.00. Interviews with British, French, and American film-makers. Should be compared with Alan Rosenthal's *New Documentary in Action: A Casebook in Film Making* (Univ. of Calif. Press, $11.95); since UC Press also publishes *FQ*, we forbear an estimate of which book better copes with recent developments in documentary.

Von Stroheim. By Thomas Quinn Curtiss. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1971. $10.00. A biography supposedly authorized on Stroheim's deathbed. Dismisses the birth certificate unearthed by Denis Marion, which seems to indicate that Stroheim was Jewish, simply on the grounds that he was in adulthood a practicing Catholic, and its handling of biographical material is cavalier, if readable in the usual Hollywood-biography manner.

Anthologie du Cinéma. Editions de l'Avant- Scène du Cinéma, 27, rue St-André-des-Arts, Paris VI, France. 1966–. 40F per volume. Six volumes in this small encyclopedic series have now been published. The original principle was to deal only with directors who are safely dead. In subsequent volumes performers such as Musidora (Feuillade's *femme fatale*) and Judy Garland are also examined in the 60-page essay length devoted to Dreyer, Dudow, Dupont, Ingram, Jennings, Sternberg, etc. The essays are generally factual and interesting, though not critically brilliant. A useful supplement to Sadoul's *Dictionaries* and Peter Cowie's *Screen* series.

Japan: An Illustrated Guide. By Arne Svensson. New York: Barnes, 1971. $3.50.

Film: Readings in the Mass Media. Ed. by Allan Kirschner and Linda Kirschner. New York: Odyssey, 1971. No price given. Anthology.

The Films of Hal Roach. By William K. Everson. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1971. $2.50. A welcome contribution by one of our most knowledgeable film historians.

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Correspondence and Controversy

FACTS, FANCIES AND THE AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE CATALOG

In a long and thoughtful review of *The American Film Institute Catalog* (*Film Quarterly,* Winter 1971) Herman G. Weinberg poses enough hard questions on the function of an American film catalog to occupy a seminar on "Cinema Research: Prospects and Pitfalls." This article is an address to the basic issues raised by Weinberg and others who have commented on the first volume, *Feature Films 1921–1930,* published by Bowker last August.

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been mistaken by some critics. By consolidating and making readily accessible data from existing sources, primary and secondary, *AFI Catalog* offers a "synthesis," if you like, of the hard facts on American film production. It is not the last word on American films, but rather the first word: the bedrock on which to base further research on the films and film-makers of the period.

In this interpretation the essential criteria for an *objective* filmography are: (1) that it must be based on verifiable fact—research that is replicable (the catalog staff maintains a precise record of all sources used, available on request); (2) that the facts be presented in as consistent and as dispassionate a manner as possible; and (3) that all critical judgments be scrupulously eliminated even to the extent of drawing distinctions between films, based on some concept of "values." For the purposes of basic documentation all films are created equal.

Translated into research methodology, the policy of objectivity dictates, for example, that the production credits listed are "official screen credits," as taken from the screen, or studio records, or scripts or cutting continuities, or studio pressbooks. Conflicting claims in personal reminiscences (published or unpublished), hearsay evidence, or undocumented assertions in print are examined, but *AFI Catalog* rests on verifiable fact. Resolving the allocation of credit where studio politics and artistic temperament in a corporate enterprise are involved is left to research in depth on the politics and/or temperaments involved—the kind of research the existence of *AFI Catalog* is expected to stimulate.

Where factual evidence to suspect that the official credits are misleading or incomplete, is available, notes that reflect these findings are added. Two examples among hundreds noted in *Feature Films 1921–1930* should suffice: In *Children of Divorce* (1927), von Sternberg's directorial contribution is noted, although the official directorial credit is Frank Lloyd; in *City Girl* (1930), A. F. Erickson's directorial contributions to the sound version, after Murnau was relieved, are noted, as well as the plot variations between the silent and sound versions.

The notes result from the routine research methodology applied to each film, which includes checking and cross-checking studio records, trade publications, biographies and autobiographies, monographs, histories, dictionaries and encyclopaedias of the film (both domestic and foreign) and special authority files. Film scholars who have attempted to reconcile the differences that are rampant in these sources can appreciate the difficulties involved in making a final determination. There are times when determining even the hard fact of year of production is extraordinarily difficult. The year most frequently quoted is often less of a lead to a fact than a lead to a list of authors that have been to the same poisoned well.

On highly contentious credits where the disputants have taken to print, one can only conclude that there may never be a consensus in our lifetimes. Witness the intercontinental debate involving Peter Bogdanovich, Charles Higham and Richard Wilson on the Welles films of the forties—each of whom purports to glean their facts from the master themselves. When the questions raised by Pauline Kael in "Raising Kane" on the master's memory are considered, the research waters get thoroughly muddied.

Another effect of the policy of objectivity is that all films are given equal weight in presentation, insofar as the facts of their production are known. The *AFI Catalog* is not a guide to great films—the bookstores are full of subjective guides to the "classics"—and there are no judgments of any kind in the synopses, even implicitly in the choice of language. Chaplin's *The Gold Rush,* for example, is flanked by *Gold Madness* (1923), presented by E. de B. Newman and directed by Robert T. Thornby, and *The Golden Bed* (1925), presented by Adolph Zukor and Jesse L. Lasky and directed by Cecil B. DeMille. The former is an almost totally unknown quantity in production, direction, cast and credits. The latter may be a minor masterwork or another disaster in DeMille's decidedly uneven career in the twenties. All three films, however, are treated as though they were of equal merit. It is the catalog's strength that it assembles in one convenient place the facts on *Gold Madness* and *The Golden Bed* as well as the facts on *The Gold Rush.*

The common impression of "the golden years"

MOTION PICTURES FROM THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PAPER PRINT COLLECTION, 1894-1912

By Kemp R. Niver. The trail-blazing catalogue which provides detailed, factual information on the recently restored LC collection; a research necessity. $35.00.

University of California Press
Berkeley 94720

of the silents, it is now clear, is based on a relative handful of films; no more than 300 titles are in the vocabulary of even the most dedicated enthusiast. In fact, of the 6606 films recorded in *Feature Films, 1921–1930* only about 15% are now known to have survived the coming of sound. It is the intent of the *AFI Catalog*, however, to present scholars with a *tool* that will make the total production accessible for the twenties, and, when the work is complete, for all films from 1893 to the present.

AFI Catalog, as an objective and multipurpose *tool*, is not directed solely at film scholars; it is also directed at students and scholars in the humanities and social sciences who recognize (or should recognize) as Kracauer stated long ago, that ". . . the films of a nation reflect its mentality in a more direct way than other artistic media."

It is to this latter group that the subject index, this first attempt to provide a content guide to feature films, is primarily directed, although its utility to all those involved with film should be apparent. It is to this latter group, as well, that the revelations on the often startling content of the pseudo-sociological or medical morality tales of the period may be more significant, while the importance of an accurate overview of the number and content of films intended for black or Jewish audiences should be obvious to the film scholar, even if he is not a sociologist or a political scientist. The value of the catalog to a student of films, after all, should be enhanced by the recognition that art reflects contemporary conditions and perceptions, that films were not produced in a societal vacuum.

The AFI Catalog was not designed to act as a substitute for viewing the film, whether the film survived or not. Hopefully we are reaching that stage in film scholarship where nothing in print is regarded as an adequate substitute. The catalog is a factual, not a critical synthesis. The style adopted for the synopses is deliberately direct, denotative and declarative. Because so many of the "lost" films were so poorly documented, many of the synopses lack details of characterization, atmosphere and even sequences of events, but even so they convey some sense of what the film is about, and more important, they identify the film and fix it in time and place.

This first volume of a nineteen-volume series owes a great deal to the efforts of a host of collaborators who supplied data and source material. The last stage in the research methodology was to circulate data "want lists" to over 300 film scholars, authorities, enthusiasts, and specialist buffs. Despite the checking and cross-checking there are inevitably human errors, and, surprisingly, machine errors due to defects in the computer methodology. The machines and not the humans, for example, take credits for the most outrageous miscue in *Feature Films 1921–30:* readers will find *The Blue Mountain Mystery* cunningly placed between *Wickedness Preferred* and *Wide Open*. The explanation is that *The Blue Mountain Mystery* is filed in the data bank as one of a distributor's list called *The Wid Gunning Series* and was accidentally placed in the volume under the series title. All corrections and additions are used to update the computer file in preparation for the day a supplement or a revised edition will be published.

AFI Catalog, by its size alone, is a silent witness to how little we know historically about American film production and how much there is to be done in the history and criticism of the silent film, an art form that flourished so brilliantly in the twenties. It is also a spur to the Institute's archive program, and those of the Library of Congress, the Museum of Modern Art, and George Eastman House. The *AFI Catalog* project was established as an outgrowth of the archive program and its primary purpose was to identify and describe every film produced in America in order to guide the archivists in selecting and acquiring films for permanent preservation in the public interest. It still serves that purpose, of course, but the Institute now recognizes that it is producing a major reference work in film scholarship with the potential for raising the standard in a field that is just beginning to establish standards. With new or supportive data from the community of scholars, both in films and in other disciplines where films are increasingly being used, and by both professionals and amateurs alike, *AFI Catalog* can fulfill that potential and also do its part to preserve the heritage and advance the art of film in America.

—Frances Jones, Sam Kula, and Steve Zito.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK, cont'd.

series for the Oakland Museum and teaches at Merritt College. Donald Richie is finishing a book on Ozu, to be published by the UC Press. Michael Shedlin is preparing a book of interviews with cameramen. Michael Silverman teaches at UC Santa Barbara. Clyde Smith teaches film at UC Extension, Berkeley. Bernard Weiner writes for *Night Times* and other Bay Area publications. Steve Zito is editor of *AFI Catalog*.

Reviews

THE GREAT NORTHFIELD MINNESOTA RAID

Director: Philip Kaufman. Script: Kaufman. Photography: Bruce Surtees. Music: Dave Grusin. Universal.

At first sight *The Great Northfield Minnesota Raid,* Philip Kaufman's quicksilver comedy about the swan song of the "James and Younger boys," seems suspiciously similar to many other recent movies in which outlaws claim most of of our attention and sympathy. It is easy to tick off several episodes reminiscent of *Bonnie and Clyde:* a scene at a mule farm that brings to mind the hazy Parker family reunion, the eviction of a destitute woman from her home by a slimy mortgage-holder, lots of gabbing by both crooks and straights about what great stories their exploits will provide for newspapers and long winter nights; flash shots of a flat-hatted undertaker who ends up posing officiously with a pair of corpses. With *The Wild Bunch* the new film shares a preoccupation with the arrival of various contraptions to the frontier, a frolic by the gang in a bathhouse, a duel between two posses mistakenly blazing away at each other, and the execution of one dumb thief abandoned at the scene of the crime. Add a faltering train pursuit out of *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid,* plus the muck, rain, and whores of *McCabe and Mrs. Miller,* plus the plentiful bloodshed of all these films, and you have—a genuine, fresh-minted original that makes these aging dogs perform a lot of new stunts.

The true distinctiveness of Kaufman's approach lies in its modesty; unlike the aforementioned successes or flops like the birdbrained *Butch Cassidy,* the heavily-censored *Wild Rovers,* or the laboriously allegorical *Doc,* his film does not ponder the passing of the Old West, seek the roots of American imperialism, create a vision of dream-like alienation or perform any other such weighty thematic deeds. Instead *The Great Northfield Minnesota Raid* stays within its own framework, lets the larger

Cole Younger and members of his gang are caught in a storm: The Great Northfield Minnesota Raid

implications of its story take care of themselves and concentrates instead on working up an allusive densely detailed weave of character, mood and motif.

In defiance of current fashion, the movie revels in the intricacies of its plot, whose mainspring is a split between Cole Younger and Jesse James. Offered amnesty by the Missouri legislature, Cole wants to give up bank robbing and settle down to a life of regaling everyone in sight with his tall tales. But Jesse, being a "blinky-eyed little bastard," rides off with his bunch to crack the biggest vault in the midwest. Cole and his faction hop a train in hopes of heading the others off, whereupon they learn from an itinerant toy salesman that an obsessed Pinkerton detective has bribed the speaker of the house to veto the amnesty bill. So Cole proposes knocking over the bank to buy back the amnestry while Jesse joins in to uphold the honor of the Confederacy and the vengeance of the Lord. Meanwhile, a poltroonish bank president fills his vault with sacks of rocks disguised as sacks of gold, in order to lure new deposits for his financial speculations. This synopsis takes no account of the swarming minor characters who bounce around inside the film's narrative pinball machine. Kaufman so packs the movie with gunfights, robberies, schemes, chases, a baseball game, a parade, and sundry other incidents that the complexity of the story becomes comic in itself, enhancing the movie's feisty, carnival-like atmosphere. The film gives realism its due—the streets and buildings are resolutely unglamorous, the outlaws ragged and raunchy—but its goggle-eyed energy and mock-dime-novel ambience lift it above mere documentary reconstruction.

Another of the film's special qualities is its astonishing collection of bizarre settings and details. Shot in an ambush, the half-dead Cole finds himself under the care of an ancient herb woman whose bag of cures is worthy of the witches in *Macbeth.* Jesse's travels bring him to the museumy house of the old woman, who displays a trunkful of dolls that she calls "the children." Before riding into Northfield, one Younger, his upper lip shot away, pastes on a mule's tail mustache, while another, marvelously moronic, attaches a ring to his ear lobe "to ward off fear." Northfield itself offers unusual sights and sounds—a Swedish immigrant populace whose thick accents contrast with the gang's hillbilly drawls and the local wheeler-dealers' flat twangs; the primitive baseball game; the clatter of steaming land engines and the shriek of a broken calliope; even a small community college. Kaufman uses these and numerous other incongruities to create a comic composite of the wilder reaches of the American scene; from shreds and patches of gun mania, myth-making, romanticism, babbitry, chauvinism, graft, and superstition, he develops a world that is manifestly absurd and virtually inexplicable, yet charged to the fullest with life and fun. Even the occasional shadows of mortality lurking at the fringes do not cast a pall over the film's rambunctious enjoyment of American madness in all its forms.

Not that any of this should imply that the movie takes a sentimental view of outlaws. Although, like the other outlaw films, it points out the shared criminality of the bandits and the law-abiding citizens, it also tersely undercuts the gang's image of itself as people's heroes. Jesse and his crew smugly cast themselves as Robin Hoods after paying off the old woman's debts, and Cole calls his pursuit of Jesse a "knightly quest." But then Jesse bushwhacks the mortgage man, recovers his money, introduces himself to his victim, and murders him, leaving one of the woman's dolls beside the corpse in order to frame her for the killing. Afterwards he and his brother Frank elude the posse in the woman's buckboard; he wears the woman's dress hilariously, until we see him hide the traces of her blood that stain it. His casual cruelty is all the more chilling for being embedded in very funny situations; Kaufman's coolly detached view of the characters' follies and pretenses allows him to avoid populist softheadedness about them.

Nevertheless, the film's preference for Cole is crucial. One of its strangest images is a close-up of his bulletproof leather vest, deeply pitted by shells that would otherwise have killed him. Cole loves to flaunt this emblem of his tinhorn's invulnerability. At the outset he proudly dis-

plays it to some awed boys; at the end, bloody and dazed in a paddy wagon, he staggers to his feet and shows it to the cheering crowds. The gesture stamps him with the larger-than-life stature of a storybook hero. He is a genial optimist who looks forward to the future. Unlike the doomed protagonists of many other westerns, he is thrilled and fascinated by the changes that he senses in his world. Even at the end, when he rides off to a 25-year prison term, the narrator points out that Cole lived on well into the twentieth century, long enough to see the birth of a new age. By contrast, Jesse, his wits stewed in babbling-idiot religiosity and psychotic patriotism, is an anachronism that the movie refuses to mourn.

Kaufman has gotten a superb group of performances from his actors, who relish the amiable stupidity of his characters and the concise wit of his dialogue. Cliff Robertson gives an appealing, though slightly studied, portrayal of Cole. But Robert Duvall walks off with the picture. He has always displayed a versatile command of different kinds of parts; the isolated cop of *The Rain People*, the Family's favorite lawyer in *The Godfather*, and the rebellious automaton of *THX 1138* are among his most recent creations. This time he plays Jesse with manic intensity and inventiveness. Watch him howl out his divine visions or punctuate his lines with subtle explosions of single-minded mulishness or snicker at a plate of knockwurst. Without his imaginative work, the movie might not have come off.

The Great Northfield Minnesota Raid has the comic force and the easy control of disparate elements that clearly herald an important new director. The film is a bit like a sunnier cousin of Melville's *The Confidence Man;* though they differ greatly in tone, they both savor crazy Americana with the same zesty passion. Universal, typically, is releasing it in a careless and slipshod manner. Once again a small-scale but unique movie goes begging for some of the promotional support that routinely props up the standard studio bores.

—Michael Dempsey

Punishment Park ▶

PUNISHMENT PARK

Director: Peter Watkins. Producer: Susan Martin. Script: Peter Watkins. Editing: Terry Hodel, Susan Martin, Peter Watkins. Photography: Joan Churchill. Chartwell Films, 9720 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, Ca. 90212.

Consider the situation: Radicals picket, petition, demonstrate, teach-in, sit-in, block freeways, strike, on occasion even riot. Eventually the superficial public mood is altered—but not Establishment policies. The message is co-opted, the demands evaporate into token reforms, the movement's leaders are beaten and jailed and murdered—and still the war remains and the death-stain flows wider in Indochina; racism is as entrenched as ever; corporate monopoly grows; the poor remain powerless; pollution continues essentially unchecked. The more things (seem to) change, the more they remain the same. The alternatives for effective radical action narrow down even further.

In Paul Williams's film *The Revolutionary,* Jon Voight stands with a bomb in his hands as the film closes, and it is up to the viewer to decide whether Voight will (or should) throw it at the judge and thus head down that no-turning-back road to violent revolution. In an interview, Williams said that he ended the film that way because the question of

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whether to pick up the gun is the only important question facing the movement today. He did not know the answer.

Peter Watkins, the young radical English film-maker, doesn't know the answer either. But his most recent work, *Punishment Park,* is a natural extension of *The Revolutionary,* limning out the dimensions of the problem in exciting cinematic and political terms. *Punishment Park* is the most important contemporary film on the subject of the present and future of the American radical movement I have yet seen. (And I include in the category Robert Kramer's valuable *Ice*—which, in its visionary muddle, suggests that the objective conditions for revolution are at hand, and that all it takes is an armed vanguard to kick out the braces propping up a rotted capitalist structure. Surely, in 1972, we know that it's not quite as simple as all that.)

Watkins's technique here is the same one utilized in his earlier controversial film, *The War Game*—i.e., re-creating the future as documentary. In *The War Game,* he imagined an atomic bombing of England and used "documentary" camera crews to show the preparations, reactions and eventual holocaust. The political object of this approach, quite obviously, was to so frighten the viewers with the reality of atomic warfare that they might act to prevent it. (Though commissioned by the BBC, it was—you guessed it—prohibited from television and, to this day, has been seen only by the relatively few who have been able to catch it at a theater or film society screening.)

In *Punishment Park,* Watkins sets out to show how American fascism—in the name, of course, of patriotism and "national security"—eliminates its dissident elements. The time is a year or so hence as the U.S. continues its imperialist war in Indochina, expanding the bombing to the borders of China. Protests and acts of sabotage increase; the jails are packed with demonstrators. Detention camps are activated and the government hauls up various dissident elements before National Emergency Tribunals. The young people are given the choice of between 15-20 years in the detention camps or three days in something called "Punishment Park." Quite aware of the realities of what goes on in the nation's prisons, they all choose the latter.

The "Park" is located in the Southwestern desert. The object of the radical prisoners, who are given a two-hour head start (but no water), is to elude the pursuing cops and reach an American flag (!) set up at the course's finish 53 miles away. If they complete the course, they are assured, they will be freed; if captured, they will serve out their sentences in the concentration camps; if they attempt to escape the boundaries of the Park, or if they use violence, they are fair game for the cops.

Watkins's format is to have some British camera crews on the spot, to make a "television documentary" on the Tribunal deliberations and the chase. Through much of the film, they are "objective newsmen"—however, as the brutality mounts and the cold-blooded killing increases, they can contain themselves no longer and, toward the end of the film, we hear them off-camera denouncing the cops as murderers and worse. The cops just laugh nervously and tell them to fuck off. The off-camera director, screaming in outrage, threatens to show all that they have filmed on national and international TV. So what? the cops reply; we've been on television before.

The major difficulty with the various "documentary" devices in Watkins's films is that they don't work. At least not on a realistic level. The phony structure always intrudes, and the viewer is constantly reminded that he is watching a staged event—a kind of radicalized mix of "Divorce Court" and "You Are There." (Moreover, there is always the risk in attempting not to fictionalize fiction that you won't be believed even when you are stating nothing but pure fact. The film opens with a factual description of how, under the McCarran Internal Security Act of 1950—which was repealed only a few weeks before the film was first shown—the U.S. established detention centers for future anti-government "subversives"; the movie closes with a voice-over telling us that while the film was being edited, one of the members of the cast was arrested for his

radical activities and is now in prison. On the basis of all that has gone on in between, does Watkins expect the audience to believe this closing remark? If true, does it not lose its impact by virtue of the film's fiction?)

There's only one way to deal with Watkins's phony "documentary" structure, and that's simply to vault over it—the old willful suspension of disbelief. Once that leap of faith is made, the film is fantastically realistic, enough to make your stomach knot up in anger and fear. Ideally, Watkins might have structured the film differently so that one's disbelief would be suspended naturally rather than as an act of will—as, say, Pontecorvo was able to do with *The Battle of Algiers*—but, even as it is, *Punishment Park* is a most powerful allegory.

The film's dissidents gravitate into three representative groups and (via the accompanying "documentary" crews) we observe how each group resolves the question of violence in the heat of the desert chase: the militant revolutionaries who feel they have nothing to lose and who are ready to use violence when it is forced upon them; the "semi-militants" (Watkins's term) who are not quite sure but who find themselves forced more and more in that direction; and the non-violent types who believe that somehow they can beat, and thereby alter, the violence of the system.

Watkins's film does not necessarily urge picking up the gun, although it certainly can be read that way. The forces of Law'n'Ordure in the film are undeniably unfair and piggish. (Two examples: In an effort to insure that the radicals will play the chase-game, they are told that there is water for them halfway across the course; when they make their way there, they learn there is no water. Members of the non-violent group do elude the police during the three days and make it to the end of the course—only to find a line of cops in front of the flag; the frustrated and hysterical radicals are then beaten and murdered. Even when you play with their rules, going through all the Proper Channels, the game is still rigged.)

But the film can be read another way. As one of the semi-militants says, maybe the whole game is structured so as to provoke violence from them since that's the only way the System can win. In other words, the Establishment hopes for a violent reaction in order to justify its subsequent repression. And, even if radical counter-violence were strong enough to beat the cops, the Establishment would still win since the rules of the game would remain the same, and the radicals would merely be mirror images of that which they claimed to be fighting.

What Watkins's film does is to outline the arguments for and against radical counter-violence in a most realistic and exciting cinematic style. The script, also by Watkins, is excellent, much of it improvised during the three weeks of shooting; though sketched out by an Englishman, it vibrates with the nuances of the American Language, 1971. The casting, arranged by Linda Elbow and Laura Golden, is excellent and though almost all are amateurs (many of them California radicals in real life), they are not the least bit phony and it is easy to identify with their characters' sense of confusion and rage. The camerawork by Joan Churchill is dynamic and, for once in a modern film, the hand-held camera-jiggling doesn't seem forced or sloppy. The editing—by Terry Hodel, Watkins, and producer Susan Martin—is sharp and, in cutting from the Tribunal to the cops to the three groups of radicals, a powerful cinematic and political rhythm is composed.

Many reviewers have chosen to see the film as a warning against some future manifestation of American governmental fascism, failing to see what Watkins has devised is a contemporary Alice-in-Wonderland allegory: an Establishment maze-game which describes what is taking place in America *now*, and the resulting dilemmas facing white and non-white activists.

Every situation that exists today is dramatically covered in the film: the institutional racism (there is a virtual re-enactment of the binding and gagging of Bobby Seale from the Chicago Conspiracy "Tribunal"), the obtuseness and paranoia of the system, the robotization and bestiality of the police, the use of National Guard troops to murder unarmed youths (the mas-

sacre at Kent State is alluded to), the mesmerizing influence of America's educational institutions, the interlocking nature of the corporate power structure, the cops' willingness to kill hostages (a prophecy of the Attica-to-come), the place of music in the revolution, the rhetoric and anger of black militants, the thoughtful pacifism of draft-resisters, the fear of confused blue-collar workers, the rationalizations for America's global imperialism, the dilemma of the journalist (artist) as man-in-the-middle—it's all there. *Punishment Park* is the cinematic equivalent of McGuffey's Reader for the movement.

—Bernard Weiner

SILENT RUNNING

Director: Douglas Trumbull. Script: Deric Washburn, Mike Cimino, Steve Bochco, based on an idea by Trumbull. Photography: Charles F. Wheeler. Music: Peter Schickele. Universal.

"I am good at heart, but I am a monster," says the Beast in Cocteau's *Beauty and the Beast;* and much the same might be said of the science fiction film. The genre is full of exciting potential, but too often puts on a repellent face.

Science fiction starts from an event or situation that does not (yet) exist: hence its enormous imaginative potential. But the SF filmmaker runs into severe practical difficulties in trying to show the things that do not yet exist. Suppose his film involves a new environment, in the future or on another world. He must first create a convincing technological background (buildings, transportation, communications, etc.), which requires time, effort, and money. He must then—and this is far more difficult—create a convincing sociological background (anything from clothing styles to a political system). Even such SF classics as *Metropolis* and *Things to Come* have foundered on this difficulty, presenting future societies of grandiose simple-mindedness.

Not surprisingly, many SF film makers have shied away from the problems of depicting a future or alien environment. There is a simpler alternative: retain a familiar, present-day setting, and show the irruption into it of an unfamiliar phenomenon—scientific discovery, monster, visitor from outer space, catastrophe, etc. Films of this kind can be made with very little money, time, or effort—as producers in the past two decades have demonstrated only too well. The spate of monster films in the fifties fixed the public image of screen SF as a cheap and grubby little genre.

In the sixties there were some ambitious attempts at serious SF—films like *Alphaville, The Tenth Victim,* and *Fahrenheit 451*—but these were greeted tepidly by the critics and flopped at the box office. The public image of screen SF remained unaltered, and it was projected even onto films which handled the familiar-environment type of SF with skill and imagination. Thus *Five Million Years to Earth* (1967), which starts out like a monster film but unfolds a theme as exhilarating as that of *2001,* passed by almost unnoticed.

It was *2001* itself, in 1968, which cracked the SF film's unfortunate image. This was done first of all by pre-release publicity, with the stories of the film's long and costly preparations rivaling the ballyhoo for "normal" super productions like *Ben-Hur* and *The Sound of Music.* Many people who ordinarily avoided SF were attracted to *2001* and, whether they liked it or not, saw something entirely different from the stereotype.

While choosing the future as the main setting of his film, Kubrick made sure of coping successfully with the two basic problems. To create a convincing technological background, he acquired a budget large enough to let him lavish time and effort on the sets and special effects. He then sidestepped the problem of creating a sociological background by excluding all scenes of future life on earth, focusing instead on such highly controlled miniature societies as the moon base and the space station.*

With the critical and financial success of *2001,* the climate for making serious SF films

*Of course, he could not avoid all implications about the nature of society at large. Critics have noted, among other things, the absence of non-whites in the space team and the presence of capitalist corporations in the space station.

sacre at Kent State is alluded to), the mesmerizing influence of America's educational institutions, the interlocking nature of the corporate power structure, the cops' willingness to kill hostages (a prophecy of the Attica-to-come), the place of music in the revolution, the rhetoric and anger of black militants, the thoughtful pacifism of draft-resisters, the fear of confused blue-collar workers, the rationalizations for America's global imperialism, the dilemma of the journalist (artist) as man-in-the-middle—it's all there. *Punishment Park* is the cinematic equivalent of McGuffey's Reader for the movement.

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Science fiction starts from an event or situation that does not (yet) exist: hence its enormous imaginative potential. But the SF filmmaker runs into severe practical difficulties in trying to show the things that do not yet exist. Suppose his film involves a new environment, in the future or on another world. He must first create a convincing technological background (buildings, transportation, communications, etc.), which requires time, effort, and money. He must then—and this is far more difficult—create a convincing sociological background (anything from clothing styles to a political system). Even such SF classics as *Metropolis* and *Things to Come* have foundered on this difficulty, presenting future societies of grandiose simple-mindedness.

Not surprisingly, many SF film makers have shied away from the problems of depicting a future or alien environment. There is a simpler alternative: retain a familiar, present-day setting, and show the irruption into it of an unfamiliar phenomenon—scientific discovery, monster, visitor from outer space, catastrophe, etc. Films of this kind can be made with very little money, time, or effort—as producers in the past two decades have demonstrated only too well. The spate of monster films in the fifties fixed the public image of screen SF as a cheap and grubby little genre.

In the sixties there were some ambitious attempts at serious SF—films like *Alphaville, The Tenth Victim,* and *Fahrenheit 451*—but these were greeted tepidly by the critics and flopped at the box office. The public image of screen SF remained unaltered, and it was projected even onto films which handled the familiar-environment type of SF with skill and imagination. Thus *Five Million Years to Earth* (1967), which starts out like a monster film but unfolds a theme as exhilarating as that of *2001,* passed by almost unnoticed.

It was *2001* itself, in 1968, which cracked the SF film's unfortunate image. This was done first of all by pre-release publicity, with the stories of the film's long and costly preparations rivaling the ballyhoo for "normal" super productions like *Ben-Hur* and *The Sound of Music.* Many people who ordinarily avoided SF were attracted to *2001* and, whether they liked it or not, saw something entirely different from the stereotype.

While choosing the future as the main setting of his film, Kubrick made sure of coping successfully with the two basic problems. To create a convincing technological background, he acquired a budget large enough to let him lavish time and effort on the sets and special effects. He then sidestepped the problem of creating a sociological background by excluding all scenes of future life on earth, focusing instead on such highly controlled miniature societies as the moon base and the space station.*

With the critical and financial success of *2001,* the climate for making serious SF films

*Of course, he could not avoid all implications about the nature of society at large. Critics have noted, among other things, the absence of nonwhites in the space team and the presence of capitalist corporations in the space station.

in the US became more favorable. To filmmakers and their backers alike, a serious SF film seemed in less danger of slipping straight into the flophouse circuit, sharing double bills with skin flicks and decrepit westerns. In any event, the number of more ambitious American SF films has risen over the past four years: they include *Marooned* (Columbia), *THX 1138* (Warner), *The Andromeda Strain* (Universal), and *Z.P.G.* (Paramount), as well as *Silent Running.*

It should be clear from this rather odd assortment of films that, even when the fifties image of screen SF has faded and the practical difficulties of making an SF film have been overcome, some challenging obstacles still remain. SF is the least homogenous of genres. Its subject matter—things that don't (yet) exist—may range from the almost here-and-now of *The Andromeda Strain* or *A Clockwork Orange* to the far-outness of *Planet of the Apes* or the latter part of *2001*. Even more important, there are widely different ways of presenting screen SF, and these may cut right across the content lines. This in *Planet of the Apes* the far-out is treated matter-of-factly, while expressionism distorts the almost familiar content of *A Clockwork Orange*. There is no single SF audience to welcome all the permutations of content and style with the same enthusiasm. *2001* itself was condemned as fervently as it was praised: to many people the *Discovery* sequences were boring, or the ending was pretentious, or the whole film lacked humanity.

Although *Silent Running* is, in my opinion, the best SF film since *2001*, its particular combination of content and style—and its originality—are easy to misjudge. To begin with, while other recent SF films may owe their existence indirectly to *2001*, *Silent Running* appears to be a direct offspring. Trumbull, who graduated into direction by way of *2001*, seems to be offering a cut-rate version of the earlier visual effects—with spacecraft, star and planet backgrounds, computer readouts, and even a rudimentary Star Gate (passing through the rings of Saturn). What's more, the film is set in a future close to 2001, with a similar level of technology, and its central character

Bruce Dern in the space freighter garden.

finds himself, like David Bowman, stranded on a spacecraft with nothing but sophisticated machinery to keep him company.

Trumbull has acknowledged these parallels (in reply to questions from this writer). Like some critics of *2001*, he felt that it was too dehumanized, and in *Silent Running* he wanted to show alternatives to the kind of people and machines that Kubrick imagined. Where Bowman was cold and efficient, Freeman Lowell (Bruce Dern) is emotional and fallible: it is he, not any machine, that kills off the rest of the crew. Even these other crew members, who appear only briefly and share a "normal" insensitivity in contrast to Lowell, differ in temperament from one another more perceptibly than do Bowman and Poole. At the same time, the robot-like drones in *Silent Running* have none of the superhuman powers of HAL, and when Lowell reprograms them they do not dream of complaining that their mind is going. These differences extend to the settings: the space freighter *Valley Forge* is made to look impressive and convincing without any of the antiseptic beauty of *Discovery*. In short, the entire ambience of *Silent Running* is distinct from anything in *2001*.

There is another, more immediately obvious difference between the two films, and this is even more misleading than the parallels. *Silent Running* postulates a future where all plant life on earth has been destroyed. *Valley Forge* belongs to a fleet of space freighters that has been in orbit around Saturn for eight years, carrying

the last surviving specimens of plant life inside conservatory-like domes. Shortly after the film opens, the crews are told that the project is being abandoned: they must jettison and destroy the domes. At this, Lowell delivers a tirade against the deadly blandness of life on earth, and then he contrives to save one of the domes, killing his fellow crewmen in the process.

Thus far *Silent Running* seems to be a movie with a message, and a clumsily expressed one at that. "Kill for ecology" would be an excessive slogan even for such an apostle of fury as Peter Watkins, whose movies-with-a-message, from *The War Game* to *Punishment Park,* do at least show graphically what he is furious about. *Silent Running* discloses neither the causes nor the effects of the extinction of earth's flora.

It soon becomes clear, however, that Trumbull is aiming at something quite different from conservationist agitprop. After saving the dome, Lowell does not try to persuade himself that killing the crewmen was right. The emphasis of the film shifts. Its "situation that does not (yet) exist" is now that of a man alone in space, and the film concentrates on Lowell's attempts to relieve his loneliness by projecting human qualities onto the drones. This does not mean that Trumbull chose the ecological premises of his film merely to exploit a topic of popular concern—as is done blatantly in the pseudo-SF film *Frogs. Silent Running* steers a course as far from exploitation as from propaganda, heading for a more distant and elusive destination.

The metaphor "Spaceship Earth" has been worn into a cliché. At the beginning of the film, Trumbull brings it back to life. Close-ups of plants and blossoms, of frogs and rabbits, lead to a wider view of a stream-fed pool flanked by bushes and trees: though somewhat idealized, the scene looks solid and terrestrial. Then a still wider view reveals the lattice of the surrounding dome, and what seemed like the earth is suddenly reduced to a tiny preserve hanging precariously in space. The device of surprising the audience by holding back an essential part of the scene is nothing new, but rarely, as here, does it have a metaphorical force that persists when the surprise is over. Trumbull goes on to extend the metaphor. In scenes showing the exterior of the space freighter, the latticed domes suggest the faceted eyes of a fly—a resemblance that underscores their fragility. Later, when all but one of the domes are destroyed, the ease with which a touch of a button can rip loose a dome's moorings, blast it away from the freighter, and reduce it in a flash to atomic dust, makes the fragility of these miniature earths even more vivid.

Once Lowell is alone on the freighter, another metaphor comes into play. He reprograms the drones—whose normal duty is maintenance—so that they become his companions, tending the dome with him, playing poker with him, and listening to him talk. Before long, Lowell is treating them as if they were independent living beings—and the audience finds it hard not to do the same. Yet, unlike HAL, or Colossus/Guardian, or the sophisticated machines from other SF films, the drones have no will power, they cannot even communicate verbally, and they are fully capable of making simple mistakes. (This last point is amusingly brought out when Lowell first tries to teach the drones to plant a young tree.) With all these undisguised limitations,* the drones take on a fascinating ambiguity. They represent both life and nonlife. They are machines with at least as much claim to animate being as a responsive and well-trained pet. In treating them as sentient beings, does Lowell delude and degrade himself—or does he enrich his own

*It may be argued that the drones appear human largely because we know there are bilateral amputees inside them; but I found that this knowledge did not in fact weaken the illusion of seeing machines. A more valid argument is that Trumbull has given the drones certain gratuitous actions—impatiently tapping a "foot," nudging one another, etc.—in order to make them seem more human. When questioned about this, Trumbull explained that Lowell himself could have programed the machines to perform such actions. Even so, it would have been better if this had been made clear in the film.

human dignity by sharing it? *Silent Running* does not stray into any such abstract musings: it presents the metaphor of "living machine" in sharp visual terms. But the implications are extraordinary. The most suggestive scenes are those involving the TV monitors which show what each drone is "seeing." When two drones, standing side by side, bury a dead crewman, Lowell sees part of the body through one drone's eye and part through the other's. Later, this odd subjectivity is taken a stage further: when Lowell is talking to the two drones, we (the audience) are shown their monitor screens, through which we look at Lowell and Lowell looks at us. Alien's-eye views have appeared in a few other SF films—through the Martian visor in *War of the Worlds*, through the transplanted eye in *The Fly*, and of course through HAL's ubiquitous wide-angle lens in *2001*—but none of these can match the economy and density of the scenes in *Silent Running*. Here, through the drones' "eyes," man is linked with his creation in a single circuit of consciousness.

At the end of the film Trumbull brings his two metaphors together. Lowell had hoped to lose all contact with earth, but the *Valley Forge* is tracked down. The only way he can see to save the dome is to jettison it with one of the drones aboard, programed to go on tending the plants, and then blow up both the *Valley Forge* and himself. The final scenes show the "Spaceship Earth" and "living machine" drifting through space together—a complex souvenir of man's creative and destructive powers.

With his extended metaphors, Trumbull is drawing on what may be the greatest source of strength in SF: a kind of poetry. To put it in scientific terms, the poetry in SF radiates from the bombardment of the familiar by the unfamilar. Clearly, an SF film must contain things that *do* exist as well as those that do not; and the interaction between the two is crucial. With the realms of both the existing and the imaginary to choose from, a film-maker can all too easily lose his balance. Most often the unfamiliar smothers the familiar, as in films like *The Omega Man* and *Gas-s-s!* where novelty is piled recklessly on novelty. Sometimes the familiar smothers the unfamiliar, as in *Destination Moon:* here only one sequence—the astronauts' walk outside their rocket ship—breathes life into the metaphor of "men in space."

When an SF film does hit the right tension between familiar and unfamiliar, its troubles may still not be over. Even those film-goers who are ready for poetry may expect a more traditional kind. Thus several critics complained that the hero of Resnais's *Je t'aime, je t'aime* is too banal, although the point of the film is to present the banality of everyday life in a new light. Amid the glossy packaging of *The Andromeda Strain*, few critics noticed the vivid and ironic metaphor of the descent into Project Wildfire. From an agricultural tool shed, suggesting dirt and sweat, the team members pass through five clinical levels where their bodies are purged and sanitized, to end up with food that produces no excrement and a PA voice that may hint at sex to one doctor but is only a tape recording. All this is a fine *reductio ad absurdum* of man's increasing domestication of his environment.

Of course, most film-goers are not looking for poetry of any kind. As a result, many film-makers assume they do not want to see it, and give it even less play than in *The Andromeda Strain*. Too often a promising situation is distorted to fit an irrelevant plot, as in *The Mind of Mr. Soames*, the story of a 30-year-old man who has been unconscious from birth until awakened by a new surgical technique. There is one engrossing sequence when Soames runs away from the clinic to encounter the mysterious outside world and, in so doing, briefly crystallizes the human condition: man, stripped of the cultural accretions that shelter him, facing the ultimate mystery of existence. But the film soon runs for cover back to the tame drama of its plot.

Once or twice *Silent Running* verges on this kind of collapse. There is Lowell's tirade near the beginning, which seems to be setting him up as the good guy and his fellow crewmen as the baddies. Toward the end, the plants in the dome are beginning to die, and Lowell discovers the cause—lack of sunlight—at the precise moment he is tracked down; then, in a

sudden and implausible flurry of activity, he fits out the dome with sun lamps which, apparently, he expects to burn forever. In an even more curious lapse, Trumbull allows a couple of mediocre scenes—the *Valley Forge* moving across a flat and fuzzy background of stars and other space freighters—to strike a sour note among his otherwise impeccable visual effects, almost as if he were ashamed of too much overtly science-fictional excellence.

But Trumbull does not lose his nerve. He has made a film that is unmistakably SF. For most of its length he has steered clear of any incidental plot, focusing on the day-to-day life of his miniature world at the risk of having viewers complain that nothing happens. After *2001*, more film-goers should be ready to approach SF without prejudice, and even to enjoy its poetry. If so, in *Silent Running* they will find a "monster" that is very good at heart.

—WILLIAM JOHNSON

LE CHAGRIN ET LA PITIE

Director: Marcel Ophuls. Screenplay and interviews: Marcel Ophuls and André Harris. Photography: André Gazut and Jürgen Thieme. Sound: Bernard Migy. Editing: Claude Vajda.

The most important and controversial film released in France this past year will most likely not be given wide release in America; and that will be unfortunate because, aside from its interest as an historical document, Marcel Ophuls's *Le Chagrin et la Pitié* raises some basic questions about the way we watch movies. It almost went unseen in France: TV wouldn't touch it, though it was made by people associated with one of ORTF's most successful news programs; exhibitors judged it too lengthy (4½ hours). Nevertheless, when it opened in a small Latin Quarter house last February it averaged 95% attendance, though the first showing was at 10 in the morning; and when it moved to a prestige theater on the Champs-Elysées its commercial success was assured. *Le Chagrin et la Pitié* is Ophuls's record of a single French city (Clermont-Ferrand) under German occupation, assembled from newsreels and the memory reconstructions of interviewed participants. At its most complex, the film evokes from its witnesses a constant interplay between event and memory, and the Clermont-Ferrand of 1942 is reanimated in the way that Resnais's characters in *Muriel* repopulate the rebuilt city of Boulogne with the prewar city that exists in their minds. And the alteration of newsreel and interview augments the sensation of an event which resides as much in collective memory as in historical fact.

Politically, the film is surprisingly mild and steers a neutral course though such sympathies as it manifests are clearly with those who did not accommodate to the Vichy government. Nevertheless, the final approving statement on De Gaulle's wartime policies is articulated by one of his most vociferous opponents, Pierre Mendès-France; and the assessment of the role of the Clermont bourgeoisie ("They had more to lose, and therefore were frightened of helping in the resistance") is made by a homosexual British secret agent, whose ambiguously foreign status may endow his words with a certain impartiality, but whose views can hardly be understood in terms of class struggle. At one point, Anthony Eden is asked by the interviewer whether the reprisals taken against the collaborators after the collapse of Vichy were justifiable, and Eden remarks: "No one who has not lived under such an occupation can presume to judge." And ostensibly the film abstains from overt judgment, aside from the constant heaping of ridicule upon Pétain and Laval. Left-wing critics have been harsh on the film's omission of any indictment of the Michelin family, whose works at Clermont went on producing material for the Nazis. Ophuls simply replies that the family has a rule against granting filmed interviews, and so he did not bother with them.

Ed. Note: The distributors of the English-language version have, unfortunately, adopted a compromise dubbing system which makes the worst of all possible worlds: by superimposing a slightly delayed translation over the still-audible French dialogue, it prevents French-speaking people from hearing the original, and introduces disturbing conflicts of tone and accent between the original speakers and their dubbed "voices."

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There is, then, a stolidity to the film which may hamper any claims put forward with respect to a particular ideological persuasion or social argument. Partly this is so because the film does not consolidate and make palpable the constituent parts of its response to an historic event like the October revolution or the revolt of the crew of the *Potemkin*. For Eisenstein, montage could correlate film form with the dialectical processes of history. Thus a film must move with great deliberation and planning from shot to shot, idea to idea—and the audience moves, intellectually and emotionally, with the film. Ophuls's work is more randomly disposed, relying on the chance moment and the gleam of insight. He does not analyze systematically, but explores in the hope that thought and gesture will coalesce into illumination.

And yet, since this illumination, when achieved, will almost always impel a viewer toward both social and political judgment, it becomes imperative to analyze with great care the aesthetic means employed to arrive at this point of illumination. After all, it may not mean a great deal if a viewer fails to note every gesture made by the camera in a Chabrol film, remarkable as these may be. Perhaps he will even be affected subconsciously; at any rate, we may say that he is the poorer for having missed it, but that in the long run no great damage is done. But in an "inquiry film" on the Pentagon papers or the Calley trial, every zoom and every pan would become part of our political response. Only a film with a constant, single shot (as in Warhol's early films) can be called an absolutely neutral film, freed from all ideological and fictional apparatus. Indeed, daily experience with people and media shows us that facts reach us almost inseparable from fictions. Unlike ordinary experience, good art declares its constituent parts openly, and makes them accessible to scrutiny. Of course, only puritans want art never to lie; most of us just want to be told when and how we're being lied to, so that we may better enjoy the fictions.

The interviews in *Le Chagrin et la Pitié* are essentially conducted in three different ways, and thus imply a range of attitudes toward their own status as fictions. The camera's presence, when acknowledged from the outset both by interviewer and subject, helps to integrate—even to harmonize—the immediately visible situation with the recounted past. Conversely, when the subject visibly resists the camera, and when the film-makers do not openly proclaim themselves and are at pains to insist on the "candid" nature of their shooting, the effect tends to be divisive and unsettling. And there is a third situation, when, in the actual course of a single interview, things shift dynamically from one of these attitudes to the other.

The most revelatory interview in *La Chagrin et la Pitié* is with Christian de Mazoyères, one of 7,000 French youths who enlisted in the Charlemagne division of the Wehrmacht, and were sent to the Russian front. He is an immensely attractive man—poised, articulate, engagingly tentative. The camera maintains a discreet distance as he speaks, and when he begins to walk down a corridor, still speaking intimately, the movement is accomplished onscreen with a lateral track whose fluid grace is worthy of Ophuls's father, Max. More importantly, this is the only interview in which the questioner is present in the picture: a conversation results, rather than a cross-examination, and de Mazoyères' remarks are humanized. When he states, for example, "I felt that the Occupation was the inevitable judgment of history," the integrity with which his presence is maintained onscreen transforms that assessment from sub-Hegelian nonsense into the expression of a merely culpable human being. The gracious treatment of camera and interviewer sanctions and redeems this man's past, horrible though it may be—we feel that by exposing himself to our view and testifying to his actions he has succeeded in making that connection of past and present which is the film's great random strength.

The Mazoyères interview may be contrasted with the unsettling encounter between Ophuls and a coiffeuse who was arrested after the Liberation as a collaborator. She denies the complicity and calls it a fiction, but the camera is relentless in finding her guilty—zooming in to

pick up her nervous fingering of a hem, holding her eyes in full close-up, stubbornly refusing to follow her with a graceful lateral track when she gets up to make sure that the door is closed before revealing her story—it sits, relentlessly staring after her, waiting for her return. The very inclusion in the final edited film of that movement toward the door—a movement without any real bearing on the 20-year-old tale which she is about to tell—constitutes an indictment.

In a recent London talk, Jean Rouch spoke of the particular difficulties in making one of his films, *La Chasse au Lion*. "Every time I showed the tribe the film in its almost finished state, they said I had not quite got it right. Something had been omitted, some particular feature of the hunt. Or I had slightly deplaced the order of events. Or one of the tribe members had since died, and the others did not want him in the film. And so I would have to shoot part of it again." The relationship between film-maker and subject is one between reciprocating equals, and the resulting film constitutes an intellectual and social compact between the participants. It is the tribe's film, finally, as much as Rouch's, though it is his great skill that they employ. The model for this relationship, of course, is the one between Flaherty and Nanook. The fact that Nanook "staged" a hunt for Flaherty does not make that filmed hunt inauthentic, precisely because the subject's acknowledgment of the camera and his understanding of the project validates his presence in the film and sanctions our viewing, making all of us co-operators.

Of course an "inquiry" film will involve a different sort of relationship between film-maker and subject, though there would seem to be no harm in making sure that each side in a film on the Calley trial has its views represented accurately. But when a film-maker strives for the unsettling moment, the tell-tale gesture to be trapped by the zoom, he may tend to extort these through shock tactics. Ophuls has revealed that in the interview with the coiffeuse, he arrived with his mobile equipment, asked her some questions point-blank, and disappeared. Whereas with Mazoyères things were set up weeks in advance; Ophuls even absented himself from the actual interview, having revealed to Mazoyères that he was himself both a Jew and a refugee from Nazism, and feeling that this would unsettle the subject. In point of fact this preparation in no way invalidates Mazoyères's testimony. Indeed, the preparation seems to have enhanced its authenticity, helping to represent Mazoyères as a human being accessible to reasonable scrutiny, rather than as a subject to be shocked into blunder.

Lying somewhere between these two opposed ways of getting at the truth on film is the strange sequence featuring a former SS Captain, at one time in charge of occupying troops in Clermont-Ferrand. The interview was filmed at the wedding of his son, and other family members are present, and included by the camera. They are all in uniform—either those of the armed forces or police— except for the former *Hauptmann*, who wears a business suit with his medals unostentatiously displayed. The interview had been set up weeks in advance, and the conversation goes smoothly enough; comically, too, as at one point he solemnly chastises the *maquis* for not coming into the open and proclaiming themselves as the official opposition. "My men were getting killed," he says, "and these people were not even in uniform." And when the inevitable question about the Jews arises, the Captain moves forward under pressure, denying and explaining: but the remainder of his family lights up with ambiguous smiles which convey a wide range of dramatic possibilities—embarrassment, guilt, an attempt to cover up the social situation, an interest in seeing "the old man" try to wiggle off the hook. The confrontation issues from within the dramatic situation; it is not coerced; the camera has been an adjunct to the drama, not an instrument for producing it.

When the camera and its operator are fully revealed at the beginning of *La Chinoise*, we are being urged to place all subsequent events within a fictional framework. Godard's pirandellism may be heavy-handed, but is far from being didactic: various opinions and actions now arrange themselves as more or less valid

(each viewer will presumably have his own arrangement), but always within the director's admittedly fictional apparatus. Perhaps this is finally the most honest and responsible way to shoot documentaries; otherwise the delicate encounters betwen fiction and fact reside hidden within technique—both in shooting and editing—and may be deployed in a constrained fashion, since one of the chief objects of an "inquiry" film is to persuade us of its authenticity as data, aside from any questions of a more purely aesthetic nature. This question may be shrugged off (though one would hope not) when the film deals with a walrus hunt or a Bible salesman. But more and more films deal with overtly political material, and demand from the audience either some overtly political action (as in the recent *Murder of Fred Hampton*) or at the least a continuing enquiry into social and political problems once they have left the theater—not just the detached contemplation which even the most difficult and advanced fictional films have required. Without an open acknowledgment of the camera's presence and its attitude toward the events being filmed, without a film's calling attention to its editing in some way, a film may not be able to persuade of its own integrity. We cannot watch *La Chinoise* as uncritically as we may, in spite of our best selves, watch the 7 o'clock news: Godard sacrifices, perhaps, certain pleasurable illusions of objectivity to which *Le Chagrin et la Pitié* at times determinedly clings, but Godard is probably the more objective after all.

—MICHAEL SILVERMAN

Short Notices

El Topo, by the Chilean director Alexandro Jodorowsky, is touted as an underground classic, beloved by heads for its dazzling visuals, phantasmagoric violence, and instant mysticism. However, it's probably the most pretentious, self-indulgent, and sloppy sort of art you're liable to see in a long time. (Well, maybe not.) The influence of Fellini on young film-makers is amazing to behold, as anyone with a camera begins projecting a hodge-podge of personal dreams and nightmares on screen, with very little unified artistic vision behind the finished product and even less aesthetic coherence. But it's not only Fellini; before the film is over you've seen not only a lot of *8½* and *Satyricon,* but also snatches of Sergio Leone spaghetti westerns, Buñuel and Dali *(Andalusian Dog),* Antonioni *(Zabriskie Point),* Malle *(Zazie dans le Métro),* Todd Browning *(Freaks),* Bertolucci *(Partners),* and Has *(Saragossa Manuscript).*

As the film begins, with its Fellini-like prologue (a man dressed in black riding a horse across the desert, with a small nude boy holding an umbrella sitting behind him), one wants to laugh, but it soon becomes obvious that Jodorowsky wants us to take all the symbolism of *El Topo* very very seriously. And that's funny. I mean, how can you not feel like you're being put on when a masochistic lesbian performs cunnilingus on a piece of cactus fruit? Or when a shoe fetishist slobbers over a slipper for the 118th time? Or when a banana is castrated in the desert? Or when a bandito fucks a "woman" made of coffee beans? Or at the Rape of the Sabine Monks? To his credit, Jodorowsky doesn't devise a socially respectable meaning (at least in the first half of the film) to justify the horror; and the film occasionally works as an Artaudian vision of cruelty, a shock, a purgative. But such movies are made for the Cult of the Stoned (Pauline Kael called it *El Poto)* who will dig anything as long as it's outrageously unreal—like thinking crap is chocolate fudge.—BERNARD WEINER

Fritz the Cat. "The x-rating may dent the b.o. since cartoons are not by tradition porno."—Murf., writing in *Variety*, April 5, 1972.

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Short Notices

El Topo, by the Chilean director Alexandro Jodorowsky, is touted as an underground classic, beloved by heads for its dazzling visuals, phantasmagoric violence, and instant mysticism. However, it's probably the most pretentious, self-indulgent, and sloppy sort of art you're liable to see in a long time. (Well, maybe not.) The influence of Fellini on young film-makers is amazing to behold, as anyone with a camera begins projecting a hodge-podge of personal dreams and nightmares on screen, with very little unified artistic vision behind the finished product and even less aesthetic coherence. But it's not only Fellini; before the film is over you've seen not only a lot of *8½* and *Satyricon,* but also snatches of Sergio Leone spaghetti westerns, Buñuel and Dali *(Andalusian Dog),* Antonioni *(Zabriskie Point),* Malle *(Zazie dans le Métro),* Todd Browning *(Freaks),* Bertolucci *(Partners),* and Has *(Saragossa Manuscript).*

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steadily on the rise since the advent of *Mad* around the early fifties. Partly parodying the traditional comics, partly acting as vehicle for social criticism, and more recently, for pornography ranging from soft- to hard-core, the underground comics have built their own audience: teenagers, students, "street people"—not to mention post-McLuhanite non-readers. It is this audience that lines up to see *Fritz the Cat,* a feature-length animated film based on Robert Crumb's character. And it is this very audience—hippies, bikers, blacks, radicals—that the film mercilessly satirizes. Of the college students I know who have seen the film, many have been either offended by its racism, sexism, and generally insulting tone, or angered that Crumb's original character has been distorted. Perhaps when the word gets out, the lines will shrink. It is indeed true that *Fritz the Cat* is racist, sexist, and insulting. Exploiting and parodying the comic-book-cartoon tradition which makes all characters into animals, the movie has policemen as pigs (naturally), blacks as crows, a dumb woman a horse, a fascist biker a rabbit (nice touch), revolutionaries as lizards, and so on. Ethnic and social stereotypes are also used and parodied: nearsighted Jews in a synagogue rock and chant; bikers are stupid sadists; flashily dressed blacks are pushers or else lushes; women are gullible, sluttish, sadistic, or at the least, bitchy. What redeems all this is that the satire is laid on with such good nature that it is difficult to feel insulted, though obviously many manage to. Also, unexpected nuances break into the stereotypes: one of the cops is Jewish; the fat wife of a rich black pusher humiliates Fritz but then relents and kindly beckons to him. Insults and insights cancel each other out. Through this mock-macabre world, Fritz, a middle-class New York college student, runs the picaresque gamut—from an orgy, to fleeing the police, advocating black militancy and starting a riot, to getting involved with a creepy band of revolutionaries. Throughout, Fritz maintains an air of wonder and delight. His thirst for hipness is foredoomed by its very intensity, though he does manage to maintain a hip veneer most of the time. The exception is an incident in a Harlem bar, where he calls the bartender "boy." This is the one moment in the film which seems really incongruous, in which the character acts grossly out of character; but perhaps the film's creators write off this incident by the device of setting the film in the sixties (a whole three years ago!), when we were, of course, all so much less hip. Several huge panoramic shots, as if taken through a fish-eye lens, establish the setting—seedy New York, drawn in a loose, sketch-like line. Against this, Fritz and the other animals are set off in conventional smooth-outline "cartoon" style. The film ends, behind the titles, with sepia photographs of New York—some old, showing the lower East Side, others, showing street people and blacks, new. Finally these photos blend once more into animation, as if to say, "Well, folks, it's all just a movie, just another cartoon." This shifting from the serious, quasi-sociological, to the scatological, comic, satiric, points up *Fritz the Cat's* major flaw: the film never determines what its tone is to be. To regard it as High Seriousness, however, is to court disappointment and, as with some of the college students, anger.—HARRIET R. POLT

The Godfather. To exaggerate only a little, one criticism of *The Godfather* is that there are too many lengthy interruptions between acts of violence. Of course, it is these "interruptions" that make Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather* not only the longest gangster film ever made, but the best. In true Mafioso fashion, *The Godfather* has cannibalized many of the elements of earlier gangster films while going beyond them. The basic element is still amoral, up to a point; that is, it involves the temporary, at least *partial* suspension of moral judgment. "Crime," said Louis Calhern, the crooked lawyer, in *The Asphalt Jungle,* "is just a left-handed form of human endeavor." In *The Godfather,* it is not so much that the Mafia is being used as a metaphor for American business (as a moralistic indictment of business), but that American business is being used as a metaphor for the Mafia (as an ironic "justification" of the Mafia). As Calvin Coolidge puts it, "The business of America is business"—whatever that business might be. From thirties gangster films comes the figure of Sonny Corleone (James Caan): aggressive, a natural leader, enamored of the pleasures of life—women—Sonny is led by his animal energy to a fatal lack of caution and a violent death. He is the one figure even critics of the movie are drawn to, but more fascinating to me are the figures of Don Vito (Marlon Brando) and Michael (Al Pacino), who are of seventies gangster films: the gangster as politician, Don Vito's power being dependent on his being a "godfather" Tammany-style to so many. "Let us reason together," says Don Vito, "anticipating" LBJ, at the meeting in which he dupes the

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other families into thinking he has given up hope for revenge, to get back the Family's pre-eminent position. Unlike Sonny, Don Vito dies quietly in his garden. In long shot, we see the netting over the garden blowing tranquilly in the wind; Don Vito's corpse lies hidden in the grass, like his schemes of violence. Brando has always been good at gaining audience sympathy, his style of mumbling being partly a means to get us involved in what he is trying to say. But here, given the character of Don Vito, Brando boldly works against audience sympathy—until he wants it, as in the hospital scene in which he whispers almost voicelessly, "Where's Michael?" Michael, the youngest and favorite son, grows to manhood, not so much by killing the police captain and Sollozzo, but in the romance of the Sicilian interlude, one of the "interruptions" of the film's violence. And because we have seen the pleasanter, the sunnier side of Michael, the brutality at the end is all the more chilling. Similarly, without these "interruptions" in which we participate with some pleasure in the Corleone family rituals, the very simple device of intercutting at the end between Catholic ritual and killing would not have been so effective. "Nothing human is alien to me," said the Roman playwright, Terence—not even cold-blooded murder. Perhaps it is only in our gangster films that Americans have acknowledged—in crude but vivid terms—the price sometimes paid for the American success story.

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Harry Munter. The struggle to succeed Bergman goes on in Sweden, but dishearteningly; every new director seems to make one promising film and then collapses (artistically, if not commercially). Kjell Grede, whose *Harry Munter* follows his previous *Hugo and Josefin,* is like Sjöman after *419,* Widerberg after *Raven's End,* Troel after *Here's Your Life,* Donner after *To Love.* Nonetheless, he's an upcoming talent with a sense of framing and timing superior to most, and his films deserve at least to be *seen* in America. They won't be because Grede has had a dastardly run of luck at the hands of American show business. First, Warner Bros. in 1968 picked up *Hugo and Josefin;* the company's president at the time, Eliot Hyman, had "fallen in love with it," according to reports, and he spent a year having a top-quality English version prepared, so as to be able to release the children's film simultaneously in subtitled and dubbed versions. By the time he was ready, however, Warners had been bought by Ted Ashley's Kinney Services, which, in accounting jargon, "wrote off" any inheritance from the Hyman regime that it didn't like. Just a few months ago, Hyman offered to buy *Hugo and Josefin* back from Warners, and was rebuffed. Then, in 1970, Don Rugoff's Cinema 5 made an offer for *Harry Munter:* a percentage of the American gross, but no advance guarantee. Grede's producers agreed as long as televsion rights were not included in the deal. Rugoff refused on the grounds that this would set a bad precedent for Cinema 5; less than a year later, he paid an advance of $350,000 for *The Hellstrom Chronicle*—that is, for the remaining rights to *The Hellstrom Chronicle,* since producer David Wolper had already sold television rights to ABC. So much for "precedent" in the business world. As for *Harry Munter,* it's about a teenage scientific genius; alas, people like Harry don't exist except in the minds of those who make parables instead of films. He is a direct descendant of the heroes of Fellini and Bourguignon and Marcel Camus and Allio and Jessua: innocence with a capital I, but not the disguised or concretized or *interesting* kind found in Chabrol, for example. No teenage inventor ever looked, talked or acted like wide-eyed unshaven Jan Nielsen; we're in the Ideal World vs. Complexity of Real Life syndrome, which has little to do with real experience. This worldview had its place in *Hugo and Josefin,* where we first learned that there is no such thing as pure good and pure evil, that the people who seem the most pathetic may not be the ones in most need of help, that maturity involved a recognition of aggressiveness as a not-always-destructive human trait, that we're all alone in the end, and so on. We all have to learn these things as children, and a film that reminds us of them can be pleasurable if minor. But an 18-year-old who has to learn such things is a special case and only very schematic directors find themselves tempted to base a whole movie on him. Everything in *Harry Munter* is sickeningly calculated. A scene wherein Harry has sex with a girl who is never seen again is there only so that we won't assume that his idealism is based on his virginity. Grede always has it both ways, permitting crude juxtaposition of symbols: a 10-year-old blonde boy (innocence uncorrupted) on a construction site (junk yard, technological "reality"); a dream of all of Harry's friends having fun with each other (the world as it should be) which becomes over-sweet (but we really wouldn't want it that way).

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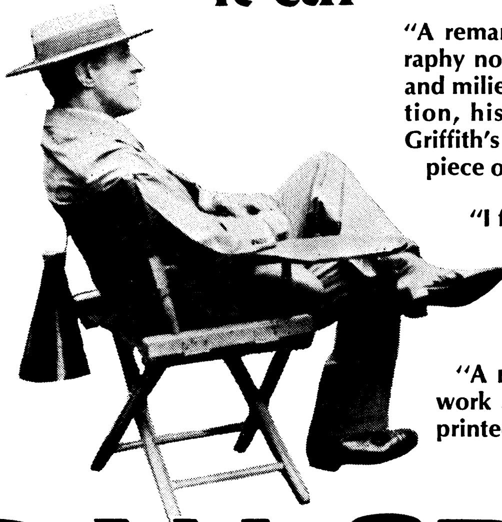

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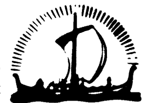

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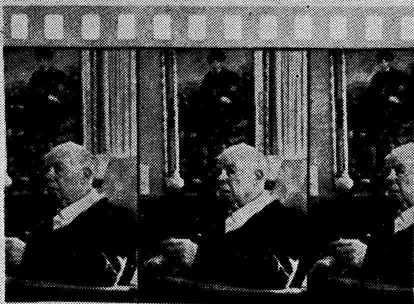

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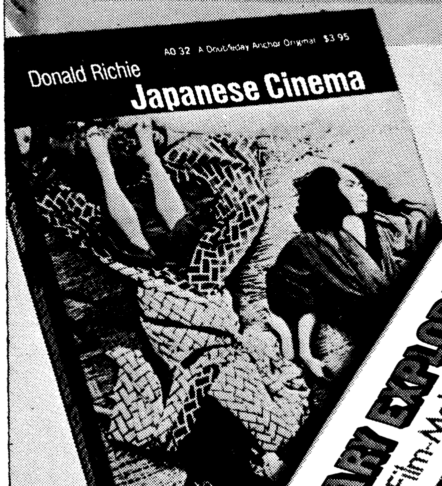

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