INDEX TO VOLUME XII
AUTHORS, ARTICLES, AND FILMS OR FILM BOOKS REVIEWED

[Titles of films and books reviewed appear in *italics*. First reference figure indicates issue number; second figure indicates page.]

FILM QUARTERLY

Vol. XII: 1958-59

AMS REPRINT COMPANY
NEW YORK

Reprinted with Permission
of the Original Publisher

AMS Reprint Company
a trade division of
AMS PRESS, INC.
New York, N. Y. 10003
1966

Manufactured in the United States of America

FILM QUARTERLY

FALL 1958
[VOL. XII NO. 1]*

ARTICLES

FILM REVIEWS 40

The Defiant Ones
The Key
Le Notti di Cabiria
The Bridge on the River Kwai
The Young Lions
The Naked and the Dead
A Tale of Two Cities
The Little Island
The Captain from Koepenick
This Angry Age

BOOK REVIEWS

---

* Successor to the *Quarterly of Film, Radio, and Television*, and continuing its volume numbering though with an omission of one year in dating. Views expressed in signed articles are those of the authors. Second-class mail application pending in Berkeley, California. Printed in U.S.A.

Editor's Notebook

Among Buster Keaton's silent comedies are rigorously constructed, demonically ingenious masterpieces that will probably remain viewable as long as any films yet produced anywhere. In this issue we present an article about and an interview with Keaton, in hopes of helping to restore him to the very high place he deserves. For new filmgoers, Chaplin's shadow too often obscures other figures. In actuality Keaton was Chaplin's equal in inventiveness, his superior in sheer acrobatic grace; and instead of Chaplin's pathos, which is coming to seem a little uncomfortably maudlin as the years pass, Keaton presented a cool, pure, and absolutely unsentimental comic vision. CHRISTOPHER BISHOP, who wrote the article and interviewed Keaton recently at his home outside Los Angeles, was formerly on the staff of the Museum of Modern Art. He wrote the article there; it is published with the kind permission of the Museum. He is now working in nontheatrical distribution in San Francisco.

About our other contributors: DONALD RICHIE and JOSEPH L. ANDERSON, who debunk hasty influence-tracing in criticism of Japanese films, have recently completed *The Japanese Film: Art and Industry*, a history and critique of the Japanese cinema from its beginnings which is being published by the Charles E. Tuttle Company of Tokyo and Rutland, Vermont. At present Mr. Anderson is with the motion picture division of Ohio State University's photography department. Mr. Richie, who lives in Tokyo, is film critic for *The Japan Times*, and continues to write for many publications, both in Japan and abroad.

GAVIN LAMBERT was a founder of *Sequence*, probably the liveliest film magazine ever to exist, and as editor made *Sight and Sound* the best all-round film magazine in any language. He is now a freelance scriptwriter, and lives in Los Angeles.

HERBERT FEINSTEIN is a lawyer who has practiced maritime law in Boston and Hollywood lore for MCA, the world's largest talent agency. He has been a writer for the Fund for the Republic, and poems by him have appeared most recently in *Imago*. He teaches poetry and short fiction at the University of California, Berkeley, and is writing a book on Mark Twain and copyright.

PAUL A. JORGENSEN is the author of *Shakespeare's Military World* and of many articles—some of them in our predecessor journal, the *Quarterly of Film, Radio, and Television*. He is Associate Professor of English at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Film Quarterly is coming in, of course, at a time when Hollywood is passing the end of an era. The great studio machines, which once ground out pictures like sausages for the maw of the block-booking system, have gone the way of the dinosaur. Gone are the big bureaucracies of story departments, art departments, music departments, shops, and expensive executive producers and their staffs. This scares people in Hollywood, at least those not yet firmly entrenched in the new television bureaucracies; but it does not scare us. The dissolution of the factory system in Hollywood is what many of

[*continued on page 56*]

THE COVER: Spencer Tracy in *The Old Man and the Sea* (Warner's). Photography by James Wong Howe.

Published by the University of California Press, Berkeley 4, California
Editor: Ernest Callenbach
Assistant Editor: Albert Johnson
Los Angeles Editor: Colin Young
New York Editors: William Bernhardt and Cecile Starr
Advisory Editorial Board: Andries Deinum, August Frugé, Hugh Gray, Paul A. Jorgensen, Gavin Lambert

$1.00 PER COPY $4.00 PER YEAR

Film Quartered

(CONDUCTED BY A. PISMO CLAM)

This department will feature regular competitions. Contestants may submit as many entries as they wish, but each must be limited to 250 words. Entries cannot be returned. One prize of $10.00 will be awarded each quarter to the best entry, and prizes of $3.00 will be awarded to all other entries published.

Entries for the competition below must be received by October 15, 1958. They should be addressed to: "Film Quartered," University of California Press, Berkeley 4, California. Prizes will be announced in the Winter 1958 issue.

COMPETITION NO. 1

Furnish a brief review of any one of the following "unrealized" films:

Claude Autant-Lara's *Le Grand Meaulnes*

Robert Bresson's *Walden*

Josef von Sternberg's *Other Voices, Other Rooms*

Carol Reed's *The Innocent Voyage* (*A High Wind in Jamaica*)

Henri-Georges Clouzot's *Death on the Installment Plan*

Orson Welles' *Falstaff*

David Lean's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*

Arne Sucksdorff's *The Jungle Book*

Abel Gance's *Paradise Lost*

Fred Zinneman's *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*

The review should be written in the style of any one of the following: Bosley Crowther; a Museum of Modern Art program note; Seymour Stern; *Variety*; Siegfried Kracauer; *The New Yorker*; Parker Tyler.

PHOTO CREDITS: Columbia Pictures, Daiei, Edward Harrison Pictures, Mark III, Museum of Modern Art, Richard Williams, Shochiku, Stanley Kramer Productions, Toho, Twentieth Century-Fox, United Artists, Warner Brothers.

[*Editor's Notebook, continued*]

us devoutly desired over the years, with the hunch that in a freer if poorer production market the creative initiative would pass from the financier and administrator to the film-maker. And although the results are difficult to assess because of the bifurcated pattern of present production (blockbusters on the one hand and quickies on the other) the situation today is that men with ideas—and one hopes, talent—go forth in search of money. It is a costly freedom, in certain ways; above all, the big stars, of whom only a handful can be counted on to bring back what they cost, now command fantastic prices. Other factors of production have all been rising in cost. And the assembly-line method *was* rational in this sense: it occupied studios, talent, and equipment as fully as possible. The new freedom is wasteful: if television or sponsored-film work does not keep production facilities busy, they sit there eating up interest money, maintenance, depreciation, and so on. And few films can be shot entirely on location—or if they are, other expenses result.

In many other countries, film production faces crippling economic problems, technical backwardness, harassing governmental or party supervision, and other disabilities. Here, and ultimately elsewhere, the development of pay-television may largely destroy the existing pattern of motion picture distribution, presenting us with yet another type of atomized audience. We face, then, a period of very large uncertainties in the film world: a world, as we have seen in the past, capable of exceedingly rapid change, a focal point of powerful economic and political interests. So we are confident that there will be plenty remaining to be said about movies and TV, and *Film Quarterly* is here to provide a place to say it.

A word on things to come: We already face the perennial problem of quarterlies—finding space for the material available. On hand, or in various stages of planning or execution, we have a study of present-day casting practices

in television and movies, by Lola G. Yoakem; a general study of animation; interviews with Rod Steiger and Michael Cacoyannis; a detached view of current experiment in the film; reviews of the work of Minnelli, Bresson, and Brando; an article on present-day documentary in America; an inside story on the exhibitors; a study of James Agee; an article on horror, juvenile-delinquent, and other types of exploitation pictures; and "others too numerous to mention."

One regular feature of future issues is necessarily absent from this one. Called "Correspondence & Controversy," this will be a regular column in which readers are invited to express their views, as vehemently as possible consistent with reasonably good manners, on issues raised by our articles or by events. Letters will be printed over pseudonyms if desired, but anonymous letters cannot be considered. Maximum length: 1,000 words.

Readers are also invited to send us information on current experimental activities. We hope to cover experimental films understandingly but without any condescending allowances. Postponed from this issue, for instance, was a pair of reviews, one *pro*, one *con*, of a recent experimental release.

We have on hand a complete listing of credits for Keaton's films up to 1933, prepared by George Geltzer, which was unfortunately too extensive for inclusion in this issue. However, we hope to print this separately as a supplement available free to subscribers upon request. Subscribers to whom it would be of value are requested to send us their names.

DONALD RICHIE AND JOSEPH L. ANDERSON

Traditional Theater and the Film in Japan

The influence of the Kabuki, Noh, and other forms on film content and style

Well, to be brief, there isn't any. All of the parallels, drawn in Japan as carelessly as elsewhere, are forced; all the pigeonholes are wrongly labeled; all the conclusions, so carefully jumped at, are as false as the assumptions upon which they are based.

As an opening wedge let us take the celebrated example of *Rashomon.* One read all sorts of learned nonsense about the influence of Kabuki, and even the Noh. Akira Kurosawa, the director, read it too and eventually made the statement: "I haven't read one review from abroad that hasn't read false meanings. . . ." If pressed, he will then tell the story behind the acting style of *Rashomon.*

One night, in Kyoto just before shooting started, Kurosawa and his staff looked at a print of a Martin and Johnson jungle picture. They were all much impressed by the animals, particularly with a sequence of a lion on the prowl. Kurosawa said: "Well, Mifune, that's Tojomaru. Make the human like an animal." Thus Toshiro Mifune made his role of the bandit Tojomaru as lion-like as possible.

A bit later, the head of the studio saw a movie in downtown Kyoto in which a black panther appeared. At his urging everyone went to see it. This is how they came across the model for Machiko Kyo's character in the same film. Kurosawa will at this point observe that, if he is not mistaken, the performances of animals in jungle pictures are somewhat removed from the Kabuki technique.

The truth is that the traditional theater in Japan has given almost nothing to the films. One would think that in a country with one of the most developed theatrical traditions in the world, influences and adaptations would be a natural and common occurrence. This, however, is simply not so. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule. Before going into precisely what these exceptions have been, however, it might be well to define the different categories of Japanese theater.

Among the better-known forms are the Noh and the Kabuki and the Bunraku—the Osaka doll-drama. Less familiar are the Shimpa and the Shingeki. The former is a dramatic form designed to express the enlightened emotions of the Meiji era. The latter is the "modern theater" of Japan, originally much influenced by Ibsen, Chekov, and Shaw, and now much given to polemic.

What remains are the various kinds of *yose* or vaudeville. This includes several forms of story-telling, among them the *kodan* and the *naniwabushi.* The former is comprised of individual stories, always historical, invariably complicated in plot, and endless in number. Since both *kodan* and Kabuki share a similar historical background, they very often share similar material. And it is from the story-telling art of the *kodan* that the Japanese film takes much of its ma-

NARAYAMA BUSHIKO: *The son (Teishi Takahashi) carries his mother (Kinuyo Tanaka) to the top of Mount Nara—there to leave her to die of starvation and exposure.*

terial. Hence the initial confusion. What is assumed to be a filmed Kabuki is often a *kodan* story on film.

All of the *kodan* material is so well-known, constituting what is in effect a kind of folklore, that the Japanese audience comes to the theater with the basic story memorized. This prior knowledge is assumed by the film-maker and there is no attempt to provide full exposition. These filmed *kodan* usually concern themselves with underdeveloped phases of a well-known character's life. The picture usually becomes a series of such tidbits; the better-known connecting sections are left out and anyone not familiar with the character is completely baffled.

The favorite stories are, naturally, those most often filmed. They usually center around a favorite feudal hero: Mataemon Araki, Chuji Kunisada, the Soga brothers, or Musashi Miyamoto. This latter hero even got himself exported to America where he won himself an Academy Award in the film called *Samurai*.

The movie, called *Miyamoto Musashi* in Japan, was the remake of a remake and, moreover, was merely the first part of a new version of the familiar *kodan* story—in this case based upon an even further popularization by Eiji Yoshikawa, the Kenneth Roberts of Japan. Its receiving an Academy Award surprised everyone because, strictly speaking, the film wasn't finished yet. In a way it was like giving an award to the first chapter of a Pecos Bill serial.

In it, Director Hiroshi Inagaki assumed that his audience would already know all about Musashi and did not feel at all constrained to fill in on anything that happened in between the portions shown. Foreign critics found much to praise in what they thought was "the director's devotion to the essence of a situation, unmindful of the superfluous exigencies of plot" and Inagaki was very surprised.

RASHOMON: *An unused publicity still satirizing the attitudes of the usual period-film. Toshiro Mifune hams it up with the sword while Machiki Kyo screams by his side.*

Such then is the usual *kodan* hero when he gets in the movies. There may be new interpretations and new minor characters but the story is assumed to be always the same. These *kodan* tales are the backbone of the period-film and are all hardy perennials. It is a rare year that doesn't yield its harvest of new versions, differing from the old versions only in that widescreen or color or different actors are used. There is no question of borrowing techniques from the traditional theater since the traditional theater is not involved.

One of the hardiest of all the perennials, however, just happens to be a Kabuki. This is the famous *Chushingura* (The Loyal Forty-seven Ronin), new film versions of which are made about twice every year. Here, one thinks at last, is Kabuki influence.

There is, to be sure, a certain amount. The story is taken directly from the Kabuki, yet anyone seeing any one of these film versions—and there must be near half a hundred of them by now—is not likely to confuse it with the traditional theater.

The reason is that, like the filmed *kodan*, they are all rigidly realistic, which the Kabuki as a theatrical form is not. One may be reminded of Errol Flynn's *Robin Hood*, or Robert Taylor's *Ivanhoe*; one is not reminded of the theatrical style known as Kabuki.

Even when well-known Kabuki actors appear (and *Chushingura* is the only Kabuki play favored by the films) they usually modulate their performances until they are just as matter-of-fact, just as like-you-and-me as everyone else. They may, however, include a bit of Kabuki business—for after all, their only reason for inclusion is that they are famous Kabuki actors and are intended to raise the tone of the production.

There is, for example, a celebrated Kabuki stance known as the *mie*. It is used to indicate moments of great emotional stress and consists of an attitude during which the eyes are crossed and the tongue is partially stuck out. In a 1956 version of *Chushingura*, the featured Kabuki actor indulged in a very modified *mie* during the letter scene. In the realistic context of the film, the foreign observer might well wonder what had happened, why had the man become cross-eyed, why was he sticking out his tongue in that odd way? The Japanese observer would recognize it as a fugitive glimpse of Kabuki technique, inserted to let you know that the actor was the real thing, and would disregard it.

And this is about all the Kabuki influence

there is on the Japanese screen. It gives a few plays to the films and shows itself in small and rather self-conscious ways. There are many reasons for this. One of them is that the content of the Kabuki drama is very slight. Everything depends upon the actors' performances. It is, in fact, an actors' theater. The audience already knows the story. It goes merely to see so-and-so in such-and-such.

Another reason is that the Kabuki style of acting is simply too big for the film. It incorporates and depends upon dancing and singing, neither of which are appropriate to the realism which the Japanese film has from the first insisted upon. Since the *kodan*, a story-telling art, has no theatrical style, the Japanese period-films have always contented themselves with an absence of style. Films about Musashi Miyamoto and Chuji Kunisada are therefore as much influenced by the Japanese traditional theater as are American films about Billy the Kid and Jesse James.

That acting in Japanese period-films seems very grand and expansive to foreign audiences is due more to the blustering way of the samurai and the truly native Japanese inability to hold back emotion than to any influence from the traditional stage.

If the Kabuki has any influence at all, if the period-film has any historical precedent in the traditional theater, it is in the Kabuki *aragoto*, the rough-house plays generally about famous swordsmen. This Kabuki genre is full of action, elaborate posturing and stylized swordplay—the kind of Kabuki that the Japanese love to show foreigners.

Some critics, however, think that even this link between Kabuki and film is suspect. The film critic Tsuneo Hazumi says: "Unfortunately, there has never been any real connection between Kabuki and films. . . . The Kyugeki [the earliest word for period-film], a poor substitute for genuine Kabuki, was given by rural troupes which had no connection with the great Kabuki tradition, and none of its art. The film star, Matsunosuke, was essentially an imitator of Kabuki rather than a performer of it." And even Matsunosuke—Japan's first full-fledged star—though his films were little more than photographed theatrical tableaux, was in full revolt against the traditional theater.

Thus, while Kabuki and the *kodan*-based period-film sometimes share similar material and often share similar themes (since both were brought to their present form entirely in the feudal Tokugawa eras) they share little else. This, one might observe, does not at all disturb the Japanese filmgoer. Fully ninety percent of the people in Japan have never seen the Kabuki. They know it exists, they have heard about it, they vaguely approve of it, but they don't understand it and they aren't curious about it. Along with the Noh and the Bunraku it is a part of the cultural heritage. It is taken for granted—that is, it is ignored. One even hears Noh defined as simply something that foreigners see when they come to Japan.

There have, however, been isolated experiments in adapting Kabuki to the screen. At least three of them have been highly successful films artistically and deserve the attention of the West.

The first of these was Kurosawa's *Tora no O o Fumu Otokotachi* (The Men Who Tread on the Tail of the Tiger) which was a film version of the Kabuki play *Kanjincho*. It was finished just before the end of the war in 1945 but not released until 1953. The reason for the delay was that the Occupation was using both the Kabuki and the period-film as whipping boys—in the meantime in-

stituting such "healthy and democratic" genres as the brutal gang-film. Thus, though the Kurosawa film is in essence antifeudal, it was banned.

The picture followed the Kabuki plot rather closely, though the style of the film was realistic, and inserted a subplot in which the comedian Ennoken became the embodiment of the common man. The comic irony of the film lay in the plot parallels between the inflated and sententious sentimentality of the Kabuki heroes and the sly burlesque of the comedian. The director's aim—as in most of his films—was to show the equality of all human emotions despite artificial class or social barriers, and he succeeded brilliantly.

Another successful experiment was Kimisaburo Yoshimura's *Bijo to Kairyu* (The Beauty and the Dragon), a 1955 film based on one of the eighteen chief Kabuki plays. Yoshimura had already richly satirized the period-film hero in *Mori no Ishimatsu* (Ishimatsu of the Forest) in which he maintained that the famous and blustering Ishimatsu owed his reputation mostly to good public relations. Now he used Kabuki as a vehicle for satirizing contemporary Japanese society. Japan is shown suffering a terrible drought; the priest who controls a dragon who controls the rain is so convinced of his own virtue that he is unapproachable. Finally a princess decides that the only way to save the country is to tempt the priest until he falls from virtue. This, she reasons, will release the dragon.

The film was made as a spirited attack on contemporary self-righteousness and bigotry: by inference the priests were the modern politicians and intellectuals. The princess, though very period-film-correct, really had the mind of a modern postwar girl. Like all good Japanese period-films it was an experiment, an exception to the general rule.

Technically the film was very interesting. Somewhat like *Henry V*, it began with a reconstruction of a performance of the play, an accurately created historical performance in the proper classical style, and then moved on, as a film, into a more cinematic interpretation. It was highly praised by the Kabuki authorities, not because it was a literal reproduction but because it was a freely adapted modern version made completely in the spirit of the original.

The third, and perhaps the most successful experiment is Keisuke Kinoshita's 1958 film *Narayama Bushiko* (The Song of Narayama), based on Shichiro Fukazawa's prize-winning short story of a mountain community, so short of food that they traditionally thin out the population by exposing the village elders to the elements on the top of Mount Nara. This story had been extremely successful in a Kabuki version in the summer of 1957, and although Kinoshita took his adaptation directly from the original, he deliberately chose a theatrical manner of presentation in order to heighten the dramatic effect.

The film opened in the manner of a Kabuki with one of the masked assistants banging the wooden *hyoshige* which heralds the beginning of the play, and then the running-curtain was drawn to expose the first scene of the film. Throughout, the Kabuki *nagauta* was used, that vocal samisen accompaniment which describes and comments upon the action. The samisen not only provided the background music, it was also used for sound effects. At one point it was heard instead of the natural noises of a storm; at another, it was the sound of snow falling. At yet another point it was used to create the sound of the aged heroine as she pur-

posely breaks her teeth so that she will look more presentably old.

The visuals in the film were handled with an effortless virtuosity. Divisions between scenes, for example, often consisted of sudden light changes at which whole sections of the scenery slid away; intimate conversations were accented by careful spotlighting; bushes and branches were parted to reveal a set piece behind; often the entire background would suddenly drop to reveal the new set, the new actors.

Yet, with all this stagecraft, Kinoshita remained constantly aware that he was making a film and hence there was nothing stagy about the finished picture. The moving camera was used to superlative effect, and color was most imaginatively designed: pistachio skies, blue snow, and sunsets which looked like forest fires. The pacing and general tempo of the film revealed the art of cinema at its most creative.

Shochiku 1956 version of CHUSHINGURA: *the moment before the final raid in a typical period drama. The man in the middle is from the Kabuki and that is about all the Kabuki influence in the film.*

Thus, all three directors—Kurosawa, Yoshimura, and Kinoshita—have pointed ways in which the Kabuki could actually enrich the film and make "Kabuki influence" more than an empty critical phrase. Still, however, no one follows their lead.

The other forms of traditional theater have, if possible, had even less influence on the Japanese film. The Bunraku shares its material with the Kabuki and, very occasionally, with the *kodan* and the *naniwabushi*. Both share the same repertoire, and occasionally films like Mizoguchi's *Chikamatsu Monogatari* (A Tale from Chikamatsu) use one of the plays. It is perhaps indicative of the self-consciousness of this use that Mizoguchi did not call his excellent film by its proper name, that is, the name of the play upon which it was based. It is a bit like calling *Othello*, in a film version, *A Tale from Shakespeare*.

The Shimpa has given even less. Originally it dealt with Meiji problems in Meiji settings and, with no vital creative impulse of its own, had to look elsewhere for its inspiration. After 1890, Shimpa playwrights relied more and more on popular novels or

KUMONOSU-JO: *The messenger brings the head of Duncan.*

sensational news items from the daily press. Originally the Japanese screen was cluttered with filmed Shimpa but nowadays, though the Shimpa attitude of sentimentality for its own sake has found a secure place for itself in the Japanese films, relatively few pictures use Shimpa stories. Of these, foreigners have seen at least one, the lachrymose *Konjiki Yasha* (The Golden Demon), based on a Shimpa version of a popular novel. Actually, at present the majority of Shimpa plays are based upon successful films.

Shingeki offers even less. Though it furnishes a few plays to the screen it is much more concerned with static discourse than visual action or even characterization. It is, in fact, an unhealthy little theater of pure polemic. Like the Shimpa it now adapts novels or gives foreign plays and is completely separate from the films.

Finally, one may at last think, there is the Noh. But, here again, no there isn't. There have been very, very few film adaptions of Noh plays and the Noh has had almost no influence on the film art of Japan. One of the reasons is that the form of the drama could not be further removed from the requirements of the film. A total adaptation would be necessary. Another is that only a relatively few Japanese have ever seen or care much about seeing the Noh. If one out of ten has seen the Kabuki, only about one out of a hundred has ever seen the Noh.

Despite all the nonsense about the influence of the Noh on the Japanese film (written, one might add, in Japan as well as abroad) the leading Noh critic, Michizo Toita, has rightly said: "One must look hard, almost invent influences if writing on this subject. . . . Movies in their early stages were often cheap imitations of Kabuki but although Noh is greater in its stage art, I know of no instance of its theories and techniques having been really utilized by film-makers."

If there is any Noh influence at all it tends to be oblique. In *Kumonosu-Jo* (The Castle of the Spider's Web), shown abroad as *Throne of Blood*, Kurosawa makes conscious use of elements of Noh. Scenes with the witch (this film version of *Macbeth* uses one instead of Shakespeare's three) were reconstructed from the director's recollections of a Noh he had once seen. The makeup of Isuzu Yamada—who played the role equivalent to Lady Macbeth, the background music, the movements, the general timing of the intimate scenes were all caught by Noh fans but by no one else. And all of these elements were consciously and experimentally included. Their appearance was most unusual.

One may perhaps understand better why the traditional Japanese theater, one of the richest theatrical traditions in the world, has given so little to the Japanese film by looking at the parallel reluctance to use Japanese music in films. (*Narayama Bushiko* is an exception.) It is used if it has a place in the plot: lonely girl finds solace in her *koto*; celebrated geisha shows off with her *samisen*; couple in love attend local festival. One of Japan's better-known composers, Yasushi Akutagawa, claims that he finds a positive reluctance on the part of many directors to accept film music in any way related to the Japanese traditional forms.

One of the reasons for this is that in Japan, Japanese traditional music is taken entirely for granted. There are at least a dozen nationally known magazines devoted to Western-style music in all of its various forms, but there is not one widely distributed publication of any repute devoted to Japanese traditional music.

Another reason is that, no matter how exotic the style and action of the period-film appears to foreign audiences, to the Japanese this film style is a part of the realist tradition, adopted from the West and therefore without connection to the classical Japanese drama. Because so much Japanese classical music exists only in relation to the classic drama, the use of this music in films must present a severe stylistic clash. The music is identified with classical acting but the acting on the screen is not classical.

Therefore many film producers in Japan find satisfying combinations which would chill most foreigners to the bone. In a 1934 version of *Chushingura*, the man who did the music used Schubert's "unfinished" symphony to back the climactic scene where the *ronin* attack their lord's enemy. This use continues to be highly praised by certain critics for its "perfect union" of a Japanese dramatic classic with a Western musical classic.

A more famous example is the music for *Rashomon*, during which surprised foreigners found themselves listening to something depressingly like Ravel's *Boléro*. Some have said that the film was made primarily for export and that the music was composed accordingly. This is not so: *Rashomon* was a self-conscious experiment and was made over everyone's dead body, including Daiei's. The fact that it was sent into competition at all was only because the Japanese representative for Italiafilm happened to know a good film when she saw one.

Actually, *Rashomon's* composer—the late Fumio Hayasaka—was one of Japan's most original composers, filled with an integrity rare in any country and rarer in Japan. He was ordered to write something like the *Boléro* because Kurosawa felt that it would be closer to the style of the film, a style which was never once intended to be "Japanese" in the period-film sense of the word. The critics—more astute than usual—agreed entirely, finding *Rashomon* to be "Kurosawa at his most Western."

This, then, is the real reason why the Japanese theater has had so little influence on the Japanese film. They are thought of as being entirely separate. The Noh, the Kabuki, are thought of as being entirely Japanese. And so they are, in a way. At least, those theatrical elements from other countries which originally helped inspire the Japanese forms have long ceased to exist. Movies, however, are only half a century old. The art of the film is still considered foreign to traditional Japanese theatrical art.

CHRISTOPHER BISHOP

"The Great Stone Face"

There seems to be an almost universal tendency to confuse Buster Keaton's talents with those of his principal rivals in silent film comedy. Yet, Keaton's qualities were, and remain, unique. Few of his shorts made before 1922 have survived for study, but it would appear from his own and contemporary accounts that, alone among the top comedians, he never tried to imitate Chaplin. While Lloyd started as "Willie Work" and "Lonesome Luke" in a frank attempt to emulate the "Tramp" figure, and Langdon never entirely shook off the same influence, Keaton from the first evolved a character and world of his own. The Keaton figure and its world were based on gifts largely derived from his thorough training in vaudeville.

The first was his completely immobile face Keaton's face seems to be the one thing most frequently remembered from his films. It was the sort of hieratic face one would expect to serve as the figurehead on a clipper, a head surrounded by a zone of non-resistance, encircled by cross-currents of violence, yet indifferent as Saturn to its rings. Keaton is most often referred to as "the frozen-faced comedian"; it is surprising how often the words "frigid" or "cold" were applied to him—in France, he was known at one time as "Frigo."

As James Agee wrote in "Comedy's Greatest Era" (*Life*, September 5, 1949), Keaton was "by his whole style and nature so much the most deeply 'silent' of the silent comedians that even a smile was as deafeningly out of a place as a yell. . . . Keaton's face ranked almost with Lincoln's as an early American archetype; it was haunting, handsome, almost beautiful, yet it was irreducibly funny; he improved matters by topping it off with a deadly horizontal hat, as flat and thin as a photograph record."

Yet when he wished, Keaton could create utter and hilarious disorder by the subtlest change of expression, the flicker of an eyelid, the beginnings of a frown. Agee notes that ". . . he used this great, sad, motionless face to suggest various related things: a one-track mind near the track's end of pure insanity; mulish imperturbability under the wildest of circumstances; how dead a human being can get and still be alive; an awe-inspiring sort of patience and power to endure, proper to granite but uncanny in flesh and blood. Everything that he was and did bore out this rigid face and played laughs against it. When he moved his eyes, it was like seeing them move in a statue." In a publicity still, Keaton's head was appropriately superimposed on the body of the Venus de Milo; his ageless, sexless countenance looks placidly out of the statuary without surprise.

Keaton's next great asset was his superbly trained body. In these days of professional stuntmen and rear projection, we tend to forget that comedians like Keaton and Lloyd carried out almost all their own stunts, with recourse to a minimum of photographic trickery. Keaton, in fact, made a point of showing his audiences that what

they had just seen was no trick of editing or camera work, by performing many of his best stunts in long shot, and with no cuts. Within the space of a few years, Keaton broke his leg on an escalator making *The Electric House*, was nearly drowned in *Our Hospitality*, broke his neck in *Sherlock Jr.*, and allowed the two ton façade of a building to fall over him for *Steamboat Bill Jr.*—a window frame passing within inches of his head.

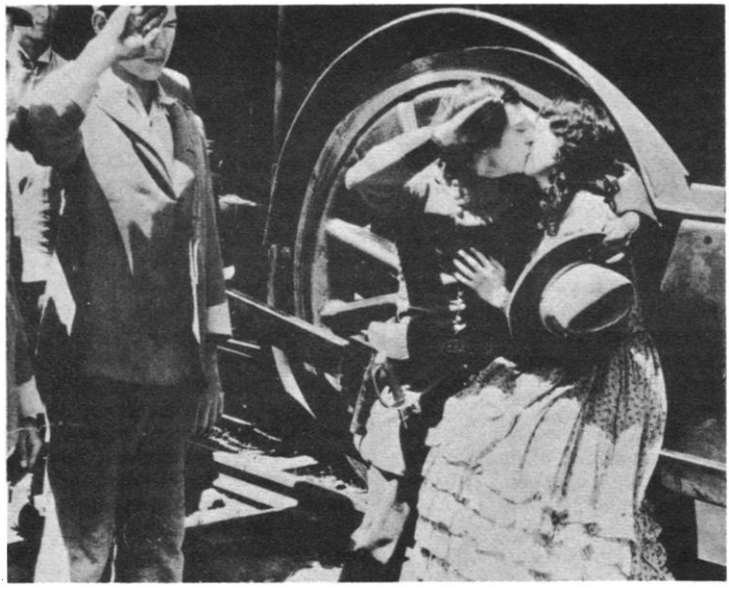
From his early childhood, Keaton had received a unique course in acrobatics, being subjected to the most violent treatment conceivable as part of the family act. He was flung about, kicked, tossed off into the wings and dropped for considerable distances by his father—an apparent brutality to which Sarah Bernhardt, appearing on the same bill, once objected, only to be silenced by the child himself. It is possible to see in this early experience the source not only of Keaton's exquisite physical skill, but one explanation of the exaggerated passivity of his screen character.

Keaton brought to the Sennett tradition of frenetic activity not only his own sense of purpose, but a superlative if misguided skill in the solution of physical problems. As with Fairbanks, part of one's pleasure in watching him perform comes from the grace and nonchalance with which Keaton is ready "to accept everything and surmount everything." In *Sherlock Jr.* alone, he drops on a wooden bar four flights into the back seat of a moving automobile; rides through a series of unbelievable hazards on the handlebars of a driverless motorcycle; dives through a window into a tire-case containing a dress, only to somersault to his feet fully clothed. His control over his seemingly rigid body was superb, much as it sometimes seems like a piece of errant machinery.

Keaton's third asset was his imaginative grasp of the visual possibilities of the medium. The basis of much of the best silent film comedy, and particularly of his films, lay in the recognition of possible disparities between apparent shape and conceivable function. Of the silent comedians, Keaton was not only the best trained physically to make use of these disparities, but possessed as well the keenest and most sophisticated visual sense. He constantly saw beyond and beneath shapes to new functions, destroying usual congruities to purposeful, if sometimes meaningless, ends. Such qualities as scale, speed, and direction are forever being diverted by the intensity of his inscrutable purpose.

In *Sherlock Jr.*, the great detective adjusts his dress suit before a mirror, and then proceeds to walk out through it—the looking glass has been transformed into an exit; a moment later, he is dialing the combination of a wall safe, only to reveal that this is, in fact, his front door. The meaning of these seemingly useless gestures is multiple: the detective as magician, a Merlin transmuting a mirror into a doorway; the detective as fool, mistaking empty space for a reflection of himself; the detective as wise simpleton, to whom the space could be either mirror or door. The safe door also suggests the detective as the prisoner of his own devices to protect himself from jealous and murderous enemies.

In a single sequence of *The Navigator*, there is a rapid succession of the most ingenious perversions of nature's and the manufacturer's intentions. Keaton uses one swordfish's sword to stage a duel with another swordfish; a tiny cannon, designed for signalling, to blow up his enemy; Roman candles as lethal rockets. His girl uses his diving-suited form as an emergency raft; and when a band of cannibals prop a coco-



THE GENERAL: *A characteristic combination: Keaton dutifully salutes while kissing his girl goodbye.*

nut tree against the ship as a siege tower, Keaton plucks the coconuts for cannon balls. In the film's most telling scene, Keaton emerges from the sea clad in his diving suit, like some monster from another planet. This apparition, involving the most unusual kind of visual intuition, is completely convincing: though the audience has already seen him in this diving suit, his appearance comes as a genuine shock. We are made to see him with the eyes of the superstitious cannibals, as something uncanny rising dripping from the waves. Much of Keaton's best work consists of visual metaphors like these, which constitute at times a biting commentary on the absurdity of human and mechanical functions, and the reverence in which they are held.

It has frequently been observed that Keaton's identification with machinery was unusual, that the real co-stars of his films are such mechanisms as the ocean liner of *The Navigator* and the locomotive of *The General.* One would expect these titles to refer to the character played by the star, but Keaton has carried his identification with the machines so far as to call the films after them. Erwin Panofsky has pointed out that —in contrast to Chaplin—Keaton is a mechanism in himself, driven by impulses beyond his control and unknown to him, while he is able to befriend a machine as an equal, by an "unfathomable congeniality." In *The Navigator,* when he slits open the front of his diving suit to let accumulated sea water out, it appears that he is slitting his own belly, so close is the identification between the canvas and metal contraption and his own body.

The acuteness of Keaton's visual sense is again nowhere better demonstrated than in *Sherlock Jr.* Here, he has chosen as protagonist a motion-picture projectionist, and

is literally projecting his own dreams, as part of the scheduled film (*Hearts and Pearls*, or *The Lounge Lizard's Lost Love*, a Veronal Films Presentation). He falls asleep as the film comes on the screen, and his dream-self, detached from his sleeping form, looks out through the projection booth port at the screen. The heroine and villain of *Hearts and Pearls* turn their backs—when they face the audience again, they are the projectionist's own girl and Keaton's real-life rival. Outraged by their presence, Keaton's dream-self walks down to watch from the center aisle, and then, climbing over the orchestra, attempts to enter *Hearts and Pearls* by walking into the screen.

But it is not until Keaton has changed his identity, and assumed the role of "Sherlock Jr." that the screen will receive him. As Keaton, the projectionist enters the screen; the shot changes, rejecting his advances, baffling and withholding from him a place in *Hearts and Pearls*. He finds himself outside a house; he starts to walk down its steps, and trips over a bench in a garden; he tries to sit on the bench and lands in a gutter; the street becomes the edge of a cliff; he looks over this precipice to find himself in a forest surrounded by lions; he escapes from the lions only to be run down by a train passing through a desert landscape; climbing onto a mound of sand, he is abruptly isolated on a surf-swept rock; diving into the water, he lands in a snowdrift; pulling himself out of the snow, he leans against a tree, and falls over the garden bench of the first shot. This scene then fades out, and as the next scene fades in, the girl and the villain are anxiously awaiting the arrival of "Sherlock Jr., the world's greatest detective."

The camera moves in gradually toward the screen, and the screen of *Hearts and Pearls* becomes our screen, the film is now ready for Keaton's entrance in his new role. *Sherlock Jr.* returns to this sequence at the end of the film—when Keaton wakes, is reconciled with his girl, and proceeds to instruct himself in the tactics of love-making from the characters on the screen (now metamorphosed back into their original selves by the fact of his waking). The subtle contraction and expansion of the ambiguities between the real world, the dream world and the projected world of the cinema place this *tour de force* with the very best produced in Hollywood.

In addition to these qualities, Keaton had finally the most sophisticated and modern characterization of his period. While Chaplin's Tramp is derived from Dickens and the music halls of the last century, and Lloyd's country boy from a literature which could still believe in pluck and luck, Keaton's character was very much of the twentieth century—is, indeed, an increasingly recognizable picture of at least one type of contemporary man. Erwin Panofsky states that "Keaton has no emotions; he obeys a metaphysical urge. He is neither a hero nor a victim; he is William James' 'under-witted saint', transported, to his immense bewilderment, from the age of St. Bernard to the age predicted by Samuel Butler." In his irresponsible character, one can find the elements not only of the saint, but of the monomaniac. His "unfathomable congeniality" with machinery increases as his alienation from human beings increases. Keaton seems detached from his surroundings, uninvolved to the point of lunacy, an extraordinarily neutral figure, driven by compulsions beyond his comprehension, his behavior without source in any conscious motivation.

One shot from *The General* expresses this personality with painful clarity. Johnny Gray has been turned down by the Confederate Army because he is more useful

as a railroad engineer. He wanders away from the recruiting office, and absent-mindedly seats himself on the shaft of a locomotive. Slowly, the wheels begin to turn, the shafts begin to move under him. As he looks straight out, he begins to rise and fall, rise and fall, until the train has carried him out of sight into the obscurity of a tunnel. The immobile face, the incomprehension, the solace he finds in the familiar machine, contrast with his immediate chagrin to result in an unbearable poignancy.

Where the goals in Chaplin's films are social, physical, and explicit, those in Keaton's are metaphysical and implicit. Chaplin's art is rooted in a period which could believe in social solutions, while, for Keaton, there are no solutions—or rather, the solutions, like the problems, lie somewhere just outside the frameline, somewhere beyond the film's conclusion. His films, unlike Chaplin's, end happily, his ambitions and those of his girl meeting finally at one point. But these endings suggest a temporary adjustment of ultimate divergences; any solutions fate may provide for this man are essentially irrelevant. One critic has spoken of "the admirable play of horizontals and verticals" in his films; the fundamental disparity between Keaton's line and that of the other characters is final and immutable. Keaton is willing to join in the game, a game not entirely innocent, in which the stakes may be life and death—but it is not his game, and one senses that, for him, all has already been lost.

THE NAVIGATOR: *Keaton cooks his breakfast egg in the smallest pot on board.*

Keaton moves in a windless vacuum of his own, his directions suggesting the trajectory of a bullet moving through a wind tunnel, buffeted by whirlwinds of ceaseless violence. His lack of engagement extends to his audiences as well, from whom he has always seemed separated as if by a glass and soundproof wall. His lack of emotional response, his endlessly rigid and inflexible behavior imply a previous hurt which even he cannot remember, but which controls his every movement. The dignity and silence of Keaton's suffering speak, as do Garbo's, of an immensity of early sorrow which cannot be put into words. There is in his films always something withheld, a little turned away from the audience, the nature of which is open to conjecture. It is this quality of reserve which in the end makes his performances so powerful. Agee sees in them a quality "insistently sardonic; deep below that, giving a disturbing tension and grandeur to the foolishness, for those who sensed it, there was in his comedy a freezing whisper not of pathos but of melancholia."

In fact, Keaton succeeded, where the surrealist films have not, in evoking a world ordered by the unconscious motives of the

protagonist, a paranoid world in which objects are genuinely possessed by his contradictory impulses. Keaton's world is never rendered in the usual "dream imagery" of surrealism, but made up of the same homely backgrounds and details which Sennett had used for his own purposes. Yet Keaton's presence in these settings creates another world, with an atmosphere like that of another planet a thousand light years removed from ours, where even the light seems less direct—reflected, like lunar light, from another source. Like Chaplin, Keaton succeeded in creating his own universe, but a universe keeping a much lower temperature, a place curiously barren of moral impedimenta; for Keaton is not moral like Chaplin, nor premoral as Langdon was, but beyond morality, as beyond the pleasure principle. If the standards are no longer human, no longer are the goals or achievements those of ordinary men.

CHRISTOPHER BISHOP

An Interview with Buster Keaton

Our readers would be very interested to know how you got into motion pictures.

Well, I was born with a show. My parents were already in vaudeville. When I was four years old I became a regular. When I was twenty-one we decided to try another branch of show business and told our representative to see what he could do and he immediately got me signed to the Winter Garden in New York, which was the Schubert's Theater for "The Passing Show of 1917."

This was an annual show?

Yes, it always started in the summer and generally ran for, oh, about six months in New York and a year and a half on the road. The Winter Garden was Al Jolson's home, and the show I was supposed to go in would have starred the Howard Brothers. But anyhow, they signed me for that show and I was walking down Broadway—down along Eighth or some place—and I met an old vaudevillian, and he was with Roscoe (Fatty) Arbuckle and he told me that he took his make-up off for awhile and was going to try running a motion picture company for Joe Schenck who was producing pictures with Norma Talmadge and Constance Talmadge at the Colony Studio on 48th Street in New York, and that he had just signed Arbuckle from Sennett. And Roscoe asked me if I had ever been in a motion picture, and I said no I hadn't even been in a studio. And he said, well come on down to the studio Monday and do a scene with me or two and see how you like it. I said, well rehearsals don't start for another week or so, so I'll be down. I went down there and I worked in it. The first time I ever walked in front of a motion picture camera—that scene is in the finished motion picture and instead of doing just a bit he carried me all the way through it.

This was The Butcher Boy?

Yes, *The Butcher Boy*. So I was very interested in it—the mechanics of it. I wanted to know how that picture got put together through

protagonist, a paranoid world in which objects are genuinely possessed by his contradictory impulses. Keaton's world is never rendered in the usual "dream imagery" of surrealism, but made up of the same homely backgrounds and details which Sennett had used for his own purposes. Yet Keaton's presence in these settings creates another world, with an atmosphere like that of another planet a thousand light years removed from ours, where even the light seems less direct—reflected, like lunar light, from another source. Like Chaplin, Keaton succeeded in creating his own universe, but a universe keeping a much lower temperature, a place curiously barren of moral impedimenta; for Keaton is not moral like Chaplin, nor premoral as Langdon was, but beyond morality, as beyond the pleasure principle. If the standards are no longer human, no longer are the goals or achievements those of ordinary men.

CHRISTOPHER BISHOP

An Interview with Buster Keaton

Our readers would be very interested to know how you got into motion pictures.

Well, I was born with a show. My parents were already in vaudeville. When I was four years old I became a regular. When I was twenty-one we decided to try another branch of show business and told our representative to see what he could do and he immediately got me signed to the Winter Garden in New York, which was the Schubert's Theater for "The Passing Show of 1917."

This was an annual show?

Yes, it always started in the summer and generally ran for, oh, about six months in New York and a year and a half on the road. The Winter Garden was Al Jolson's home, and the show I was supposed to go in would have starred the Howard Brothers. But anyhow, they signed me for that show and I was walking down Broadway—down along Eighth or some place—and I met an old vaudevillian, and he was with Roscoe (Fatty) Arbuckle and he told me that he took his make-up off for awhile and was going to try running a motion picture company for Joe Schenck who was producing pictures with Norma Talmadge and Constance Talmadge at the Colony Studio on 48th Street in New York, and that he had just signed Arbuckle from Sennett. And Roscoe asked me if I had ever been in a motion picture, and I said no I hadn't even been in a studio. And he said, well come on down to the studio Monday and do a scene with me or two and see how you like it. I said, well rehearsals don't start for another week or so, so I'll be down. I went down there and I worked in it. The first time I ever walked in front of a motion picture camera—that scene is in the finished motion picture and instead of doing just a bit he carried me all the way through it.

This was The Butcher Boy?

Yes, *The Butcher Boy*. So I was very interested in it—the mechanics of it. I wanted to know how that picture got put together through

the cutting room, and the mechanics of the camera, which fascinated me the most.

What part did you play?

Oh, in those two-reelers, they didn't bother to give you any character or name or anything, things just started happening.

Where was the studio at that time?

Forty-eighth Street between Second and Third Avenues in New York.

They were shooting this in a studio—not on location?

Yes, but we did in good weather sneak out and shoot exteriors. Well we stayed there and shot pictures until October—I went in in May—and altogether I think we made six pictures there—in the East. Then Arbuckle persuaded Joe Schenck that the East was no place for our type of motion picture—we needed too many exteriors and changes of scenery, while in New York in that neighborhood you were kind of helpless.

How many were there in the Arbuckle company at that time?

Oh, there'd be a standard troupe. Your cast were always your leading lady, your villain, and you always carried a handful of bit people —they were cops or whatever you wanted them to be—you certainly had two to three in the scenario department helping you lay out pictures, you had a cutter, you had a camera man—two camera men. It's just done on a bigger scale today, that's all.

Did all these films star Arbuckle?

At that time, yes. I was just one of his feature players. I stayed with him until the spring of '18 when I went into the Army, into the Infantry, the 40th Infantry Division. I was in France seven months. I was released the following May, 1919, and went back and made just two more pictures with Arbuckle when Joe Schenck sold Arbuckle to Paramount, and then turned Arbuckle's company over to me and got me a studio of my own in Hollywood called The Keaton Studio. Then I started there on my own.

I understand you made a feature in 1920 called The Saphead.

Yes, that's right. It was before I made one of my own two-reelers. Loew's Incorporated bought the Metro studio and its exchanges, and one of the first Broadway shows that they bought to make a special feature was called *The Henrietta*, and it had starred Douglas Fairbanks.

That was his first film, wasn't it?

He took the character but he didn't tell the story of "Henrietta." He took the character called "Berty." I made that special feature for Metro. This was quite a while before it ever became Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, because when I made my two-reelers then I released through Metro. I did, for two years, make shorts, and then I went into features in '22, in *Three Ages*. Wally Beery was the villain in it. It told a simple story laid in the stone age; the same thing happened in the Roman age and then in the modern age. Every sequence of this script was repeated, one after the other—just doing the same thing, only doing it three different ways.

Which of the two-reel shorts was your favorite?

A picture called *Hard Luck*. It was the biggest laughing two-reeler I ever made, but

---

Keaton Films Available for Rental

The Museum of Modern Art Film Library, 11 West 53rd St., New York 19, N.Y., has rental prints of *Cops* (1922), *The Balloonatic* (1923), and *The General* (1927). Film Classics Exchange, 8163 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood 46, Calif., has rental prints of *The Haunted House* (1921) and *Roaring Rails*, a 4-reel abridgement of *The General*.

The Museum also has in its archives and sometimes shows, although it can *not* rent them, *Our Hospitality* (1923), *Sherlock Jr.* (1924), *The Navigator* (1924), and *What! No Beer?* (1933). The George Eastman House, Rochester, N.Y., has but can *not* rent *Go West* (1925), *The General* (1927), and *The Cameraman* (1928).

At present, Mr. Keaton tells us, plans are afoot to put musical scores on his early films and release them for television showing.

OUR HOSPITALITY:
A characteristic gesture.

I had two other pets. One was called *The Boat,* where I had a wife and two small boys and I built a family cruiser in the cellar of my house and had to knock the end of the house out to get the boat out, and when I launched the boat it sunk.

Of the features, which is your favorite?

I have two—*The Navigator* and *The General.*

How do you rate Sherlock Jr. *now?*

I like *Sherlock.* It was a good picture for me. It was the trickiest of all the pictures I ever made because there were so many camera tricks and illusions. We spent an awful lot of time getting those scenes.

How did you ever do the scene on the motorcycle? Is that a camera trick, or were you actually—

No, there's no camera trick there.

There is one shot where you can see the motorcycle from a distance and see that it isn't attached to anything. How did you manage to learn to do that?

I'd just go out and learn to handle a motorcycle on the handlebars. It wasn't easy to keep a balance. I got some nice spills though, from that thing.

How did the scripts for these features evolve?

Well, now we will go back to our type of pictures. Now when I say "our type" you've got three people who were making them at that time: Chaplin, Harold Lloyd, and myself. Until I left my own studio and went to MGM—where it was a different proposition—we never had a script.

You never had any kind of a shooting script?

We never had a script. We didn't work by one. We just got to talking about a story and laying out all the material that we could think of, and then got it all put together—everybody connected with our company knew what we were going to shoot, anyway, and we didn't have a schedule.

How long did it take you to shoot a feature in the mid-20s?

We averaged about eight weeks of shooting.

And how much did a feature cost?

Our pictures cost, on the average, about twenty or thirty per cent more than the average feature—dramatic feature.

How much would that be as of about 1925?

Oh, I'd be spending around $210,000–$220,000 to a feature. At the same time Harold Lloyd would go higher—he would probably be going closer to $300,000. And Chaplin—you had no way of telling at all because he was liable to quit in the middle of a picture and go to Europe, take a trip, start and get lazy and only turn out about one picture every two years, so I never knew what his costs would run.

About the dream sequence in Sherlock Jr., *was this something that you thought of on the spur of the moment, or something that had been planned out ahead?*

No, it was planned out ahead because we had to build a set for that one.

How was that done—did you have an actual screen beforehand on which the characters were appearing?

No. We built what looked like a motion picture screen and actually built a stage into that frame but lit it in such a way that it looked like a motion picture being projected on a screen. But it was real actors and the lighting effect gave us the illusion, so I could go out of semi-darkness into that well-lit screen right from the front row of the theater right into the picture.

Then when it came to the scene changing on me when I got up there, that was a case of timing and on every one of those things we would measure the distance to the fraction of an inch from the camera to where I was standing, also with a surveying outfit to get the exact height and angle so that there wouldn't be a fraction of an inch missing on me, and then we changed the setting to what we wanted it to be and I got back into that same spot and it overlapped the action to get the effect of the scene changing. [See p. 13.—Ed.]

The illusion is perfect.

I know it was. I've seen it with many an audience.

Speaking of Chaplin and Lloyd and your other contemporaries, I wonder if you would care to express an opinion of their work as fellow comedians, or tell us which among the other comedians were your favorites?

Well, my favorites – I guess Chaplin, of course, was number one. But I liked Harry Langdon very much, and I liked an old one called Lloyd Hamilton. I liked W. C. Fields. Those were my pets, and then probably Lloyd.

Lloyd actually made the most films, didn't he?

Yes, he did. He turned out quite a list. He was doing the same as I was, he'd make a spring release and a fall release—two pictures a year.

How did you pick up the acrobatic skills that turn up in such films as Sherlock Jr.*?*

Well, I was just a harebrained kid that was raised backstage. He tries everything as he grows up. If there is a wire-walker this week, well he tries walking a wire when nobody's looking. If there's a juggler, he tries to juggle—he tries to do acrobatics—there's nothing he don't try. He tries to be a ventriloquist—he tries to be a juggling fool, a magician—Harry Houdini, I tried to get out of handcuffs and strait jackets.

Do you look at your early films—have you seen them recently?

Every now and then I see one. Somebody else gets them; I don't have any prints of them any more.

How did you feel about the coming of sound?

It didn't bother me at all.

You felt that you could function just as well in sound?

Why, sure. The only thing we did in laying out our material was to deliberately look for action laughs, not dialogue laughs. That has always been my fight with the brass. There were all these writers, and all these writers could think about was funny sayings and puns. I'd try to fight those down.

How do you feel about the comedians who have come up since sound? Do you have any favorites among people like the Marx Brothers, Fields, and Red Skelton?

Skelton I like very much. Lou Costello I like very much.

Did you like the Marx Brothers' films?

Some of them – when they didn't get too ridiculous.

Well, there you've got a good many verbal gags and sometimes–

That's Groucho.

The gags don't develop as they did in the silent comedies and as they certainly did in your films—where you get one gag and you keep thinking it is going to end, but it turns into something else.

Oh, yes, we deliberately tried to keep something rolling.

Have you seen any of the work of Jacques Tati, the French pantomimist?

I've seen very little of it, only what's been on television.

How do you feel about him?

Well, he's—I don't know what you'd call him. He is just out to be artistic.

Well, of course I bring him up because he is the one person recently who has made a conscious effort to make comedies almost entirely without dialogue. I wonder how you feel about making a sound comedy – whether they are silent comedies with music and sound effects added.

I wouldn't want to do that today. I still would look at it just the same as I looked at it when television first got a good hold and they put me out to doing half-hour shows. Well, I

said, here's what I'm going to do. We go ahead and talk—put all the dialogue in the first fifteen minutes—let 'em try for little laughs as we go—but for that second fifteen minutes deliberately go for places that just don't call for dialogue. In other words, we don't go out of our way to avoid them, but it is just a natural thing that two people busy building something—there's no reason to talk, you just go ahead and build. Well, that's the type of material I looked for.

If you were making a feature at this time, what sort of a film would it be?

I'd go back to my old format—that's the way I made 'em before. But I have no intentions of doing it. I just don't think it is worth while any more. I think in making a program picture today you're just asking for trouble. You can't get your money back. You've got to make an *Around the World in Eighty Days, The King and I*, you've got to get into one of those big things in order to get your money back. I'm anxious to see the day when television and the motion picture industry marry and set out a system, because it can't continue the way it is. I see only one solution to it. There should be paid television, and they could keep the costs so low that the poorest man in the world could have a television; they can keep the entertainment that low priced. And in that way you'd make pictures exactly the way you used to make them before television—I mean you'd think nothing of spending a million and a half for a program picture.

What kind of a future do you think screen comedy has—what would you expect a really good screen comedy of the future would be like?

There won't be any change. Everything seems to travel in cycles—it always did. Some fellow comes along like Jerry Lewis who gets all his laughs talking fast, screaming and making faces and things like that—and he is sure top box office for a while; I don't know but what he is still up there. Then along about this time when our back is turned, someone like W. C. Fields will come along—the funny character type of comic—and he'll be the rage—and you'll find nine more like him working. Then along will come another type and he'll be the rage for the next five or six years, and everybody will try to work like him.

Did you have imitators yourself?

Oh, yes.

Which was the most popular of your features?

My biggest money-maker was *The Navigator*. And next to that was *The General*.

How did Sherlock Jr. *stand up?*

Hospitality outgrossed it, *Battling Butler* outgrossed it, *College* outgrossed it, *Steamboat Bill* outgrossed it. And then at MGM both *The Cameraman* and *Spite Marriage* outgrossed it. It was all right, it was a money-maker, but it wasn't one of the big ones. Maybe it was because at the time it was released the audience didn't pay so much attention to the trick stunts that were in the picture.

Was there any single film, perhaps one of the shorts, that you think did the most for your reputation?

SHERLOCK JR.: *The girl does not appreciate that this, on Keaton's "frozen pan," is a loving look.*

Perhaps the first short I made, called *One Week*.

What decided you to go into feature films instead of continuing with the shorts?

Well, because the exhibitor would buy two pictures—he'd buy a feature-length picture and a short, and he would advertise one of my shorts, or Lloyd's, or Chaplin's above the feature he bought, and of course the feature he bought with us was always a second-rater. We didn't get William S. Hart, Mary Pickford, or Douglas Fairbanks on the same bill with us. We had the second- and third-rate stars on the bill with us. Well, for instance if the theater, a first-run theater here in Los Angeles was paying us $500 a week rental for our short, he was probably paying only $500 for the feature.

So it was mainly a financial decision?

As long as they were going to advertise us above it anyhow—we're the drawing card, we might as well get into the feature field and instead of getting $500 for the picture we take $1,500. It makes a difference.

Do you feel that there is anyone that you learned most from in your early days—perhaps your father?

Arbuckle. From the stage it was my father.

He was quite an acrobat himself?

Not exactly an acrobat, just a—he was a very funny man.

He appeared in some of your films?

Yes, I used him. He was the girl's father in *Sherlock Jr.*

And then you feel that you learned most from Arbuckle later?

Picture technique I learned from Arbuckle. But not from an audience standpoint—I learned that for myself and from my father, 'cause I had all that experience. See by the time I'm 21 years old I'm a vet.

Was it your father who persuaded you never to smile?

No. Nobody did that. I just simply worked that way, because I learned as a kid growing up with an audience that I just had to be that type of comedian—if I laughed at what I did, the audience didn't.

So you stopped laughing?

Sure. The more serious I turned the bigger laugh I could get. So at the time I went into pictures, that was automatic—I didn't even know I was doing it.

Have you ever smiled on the screen?

I did it for somebody once—just to prove a point—that an audience wouldn't like it—and they didn't. We actually went in the projecting room when I started to get a reputation from film magazines and critics of being a frozen-face, a blank pan. We ran our first few pictures to see if I had smiled—I was unconscious of it and didn't know it. I hadn't, so everything was fine.

When you worked with Arbuckle in the shorts, was your screen character essentially what it was in the later features?

I worked the same way. I always stayed the same way.

Do you feel that American or European audiences appreciated your films more?

I did a bigger business in Europe than I did in the United States. I was a box-office draw in the darndest country in the world.

Which was that?

Russia. I was a bigger box-office attraction than Chaplin in Russia. And it was the one country we couldn't get any money out of.

You mean you never got any money out of Russia?

No. The limit was $5,000. That went for Doug Fairbanks, Mary Pickford, Chaplin—anybody—$5,000 was the most you could get. The reason for this is that they bought from the Berlin Exchange. They rented a picture just to play one week in Moscow, and while it was there they made a dupe negative and made as many prints as they wanted, and they sent them all over the country. They paid you $5,000 for that one week.

How about the total gross on an average silent feature of yours?

We'd average between a million and a half and two million.

Were you much aware of what the critics were saying about you during the '20s? Did you pay much attention to them?

I hadn't because I'd been reading house no-

tices since I was born, and was used to that. This critic likes you and this one don't, so that's that. I've had some good friends. One of the best critics I think I had was when Bob Sherwood was editor of *Life*. He was always on my side. I could do no wrong for him. The majority thought that I was going to develop good. The biggest mistake I made in my career was leaving my own studio and going to MGM. Chaplin warned me, so did Lloyd – but Joe Schenck talked me into it. And it wasn't that they didn't try, but those types of pictures and those little independent companies working—you could do better. There was an old-fashioned expression that explains the whole thing —too many cooks. When they turned me loose at MGM, they gave me the entire scenario department—there must have been 300—all the brass turned gag men for me—and just too much help. And I guess it's silly to say, but it is a fact, they warp your judgment in the role you're working.

On the features that you made independently, you usually co-directed these—

Yes. And the majority of them I did alone.

On the co-direction, did this mean that you were directing the scenes in which you yourself didn't appear, or—

When I did appear.

The Navigator *is co-directed with Donald Crisp?*

Yes, that's right.

How did the responsibility for the direction break down in a case like that?

Well, when we first laid out the story of *The Navigator* ahead, a few dramatic scenes at the start of it were legitimate and not done in a comedy way, and I had mobs stuffed in there, such as the cannibal island we got onto, and things like that—you get a good dramatic director to take care of those sequences in the picture. We won't worry about the comedy part of it, we take care of that. We do that. The only one mistake we made there, and that was Donald Crisp—he was strictly from the D. W. Griffith school, a topnotch dramatic man—he had just made one of the best pictures for Paramount that year called *The Goose Woman*. But when he joined us, he turned into a gag man. He wasn't interested in the dramatic scenes, he was only interested in the comedy scenes with me. Well, that we didn't want. But we did manage to pull through the picture all right.

When did you start cutting your own films?

When I started to shoot my own pictures. I had learned to cut from Arbuckle.

He did his own cutting, also?

Yes.

Some of your films have more melodramatic situations than, say, the Chaplin films—you get into very dangerous situations and then get out of them. Was this something that you were particularly working on?

Our best format for our type of pictures was to start out with the normal situation, maybe some little trouble—not enough to handicap us for getting little laughs—and introducing our characters if we wanted to, getting into situations and out of them, but when we got down to around about that fourth or fifth reel, we would get into something serious and start getting laughs. And then get out of that situation and end up getting our biggest laughs in that last reel. That was always the perfect format for this type of picture.

How did you conceive of the screen character you usually played?

That's not easy. In laying out *The Navigator* for instance, we're going to end by putting two people adrift on an ocean liner and it's a dead ship—there are no lights on it, no water, nobody to wait on them. Well, all right. Now you go back to your first part to establish your character. Well if I was a laborer or a poor guy, or something like that—it would be no hardship for me to be on that ocean liner. But if I started out with a Rolls Royce, a chauffeur, a footman, a valet, and a couple of cooks and everything else to wait on me—and the same thing with the girl—in other words, the audience knows we were born rich, and never had to lift a finger to do anything. Now you turn those two people adrift on a dead ship, they're helpless. The same thing as going into the Army in making *Doughboys*. We start in the office with a very rich character, well dressed

and everything else. Now when you give me an Army outfit that I was too small for—everything was big that they gave me in the Army—I'm a misfit, and come to living in the barracks and eating in the mess hall, that was a hardship to me. But if I'd have been a bum in the first place, it would have been an improvement. Well, then you lay out your character according to the situations you're going to get into.

Of course this is very different from Chaplin's character.

Well, he starts and stays a bum at all times. He was handicapped there. He is always a bum.

He was always a bum and Harold Lloyd was usually the country boy.

Who went to the big city to make good.

There is a consistent character in all your films who, for instance, seems to be quite helpless with machinery.

Well, as a rule—I'll take two different comics. You took Harold Lloyd off of the farm and you put him into the Ford Motor plant in Detroit. He would be afraid to touch anything, unless he was forced to by one of the foremen or something. With me, I would be just as scared of it but I would take it for granted that I ought to know what I'm doing and to set out immediately to try and do it. And of course I'd gum it up—that's what would happen to me, because I don't know what I'm doing but I'd make the attempt.

Could you tell of some of your experiences in stunting for the films? I understand you broke your neck at one point.

They found a fracture—years later—I didn't even know it. I was doing a scene in *Sherlock*. I was running along the top of a freight train, and I grabbed the rope of a water tower to get on the other train, and of course all my full weight pulls on the rope and of course I pull the spout down and it drenches me with the water. Well, when you're up on top of a freight car you're up there twelve feet high and that water spout is a ten-inch pipe. I didn't know how strong that water pressure was. Well, it just tore my grip loose as if I had no grip at all and dropped me the minute it hit me. And I lit on my back, with my head right across the rail—the rail right on my neck. It was a pretty hard fall, and that water pushed me down. I'm pretty sure that's when I did it.

All of the comedians of that time did their own stunts, didn't they?

Yes.

Did you ever use a double?

Only for special things—such as one of a pole vault into a second-story window. That's in *College*. I went and got Lee Barnes from USC—he was the Olympic champion. When it comes to pole vaulting into a window—I mean, you've got to get somebody who knows what they're doing. But you know the cop that falls off the motorcycle—that was me.

Oh, that was you, too—your assistant?

Well, I doubled him because he couldn't fall off the motorcycle, so I took my assistant prop man, Ernie Rossetti, and put my clothes on him to be on the handlebars and I put Gillette's things on on the back seat and of course fell off. I doubled him. There's a pretty good beating in *Steamboat Bill*—working in front of those wind machines is tough. We had six of those machines and they were those big Liberty motor babies. One of them—in the course of a shot of running a truck full of paper boxes—about the size of shoe boxes—between me and the camera, that wind just emptied all the shoe boxes off onto me—just for one shot. We took a truck past there once and that one machine blew it off the bank, and it rolled into the Sacramento River. That's how powerful those wind machines are.

After he stopped making starring features, Keaton made a series of shorts, in Hollywood and abroad. He worked intermittently, after 1939, as a gagman for Red Skelton and Lou Costello. Skelton's *Watch the Birdie* was supposed to be a remake of Keaton's *The Cameraman*; Keaton, however, did not take a major part in its production and it was, he remarked recently, "not in the same class as my picture." Keaton has also made television and nightclub appearances, and has had bit parts in *Sunset Boulevard, Limelight*, and *Around the World in Eighty Days*.

An Open Letter to Orson Welles

Dear Mr. Welles,

Since you are reputed not to read personal mail, but to study publications devoted to the film, we feel we are not lacking in courtesy if we address you through an "open letter."

Of your status as one of the few great directors of the motion picture, and of certain subsequent discouragements in your career, the Festival authorities are acutely aware. Thus we offer our respects and at the same time invite you to attend the international film competition of 1958, as our guest of honor.

In the "unofficial" competition of last year we attempted to place special emphasis on the director's work in film production, and the Screen Directors' Guild recognized the tribute by sending members of its executive board to address the audiences.

It is our hope to convince you, Mr. Welles, that the San Francisco Festival represents an earnest attempt to shore up the faltering structure of the cinema, by giving public recognition, in this hemisphere, to the best of contemporary film production, and by making this sample available to a large audience.

And, to show our esteem of your work, we earnestly seek your acceptance of our invitation.

Sincerely,

The San Francisco International
Film Festival

PATHER PANCHALI: *This fine picture, with excellent art-house possibilities, has not yet gained wide American distribution. Festival showings help gain attention for such pictures, which otherwise would be left in oblivion.*

Film Festival in San Francisco

The San Francisco Film Festival is now official. The International Federation of Film Producers, which governs these matters, has declared itself satisfied by the "unofficial" festival of last year, and has announced that the rules of procedure, as proffered by the Festival organizers, are in order.

This clears the way for the permanent establishment of a film competition and festival which will be unique in the Western hemisphere. It should take its place with the more firmly established festivals of Europe, and the United States will thus be the first of the three major film-producing countries (India and Japan are the others) to hold an international film competition on its own soil. And with youthful flair and exuberance the Festival has invited Orson Welles to be the first guest of honor—scarcely indicative of a safe commercial approach.

The Festival has been a long time in the planning stage, and its realization is the accomplishment of a large group of film-makers, exhibitors, museum authorities, critics, and publicists, originally sparked by the late Frank Stauffacher, and latterly led by local theater circuit manager Irving Levin.

In 1956 Levin secured the coöperation of the resident Italian Consul-General, Pierluigi Alvera, in organizing an Italian Festival Week. Five recently completed features were shown in competition for the Golden Gate awards, with three of the leading prizes taken by Fellini's *La Strada*. The French colony followed in 1957, obtaining films and four leading stars. And finally, in December of last year, now with the sponsorship of the San Francisco Art Commission headed by industrialist Harold Zellerbach, Levin presented the fruits of a tour through New York and European distributors' vaults, and showed fifteen new features from twelve countries.

The selection was catholic and exciting. *Pather Panchali* and its director Satyajit Ray took the top prizes—and others shown included Andrej Wajda's *Kanal*, Akira Kurosawa's magnificent transliteration of *Macbeth*, *Throne of Blood*, Franchot Tone's *Uncle Vanya*, and films from Germany, Italy, Spain, France, Great Britain, Denmark, Africa, and even one from the Philippines—*The Last Warrior*.

Many of these films had been shown successfully at European festivals earlier in the year but the best of them have still not obtained a commercial release in this country, so that for most people their only chance of seeing *Kanal*, for example, was to be in San Francisco at the right time. It is to be expected that when the San Francisco festival gains in prestige, distributors' and exhibitors' representatives will as a matter of course attend, using the festival as a source of foreign films, and as a method of judging potential audience reaction.

Recently, at the ninth international festival at Karlovy Vary, Czechoslovakia, a British trade delegation made a reciprocal arrangement with a Russian group for the purchase of a number of films. The Russians agreed to begin with the Alec Guinness comedy *All at Sea* (in England *Barnacle Bill*) and two other features. The British received feelers from Mongolia for the Guinness picture. Perhaps it is too much to expect that the Mongolians will come to San Francisco, but a festival there should do much to encourage a freer flow of foreign product within the United States.

The Venice competition is the oldest of the European festivals. It was held first in 1932 as an adjunct to the Venice Biennial of Art, and now has the respect and prestige of age to guarantee continued support and significance. A rival festival was organized at Cannes in 1938, at least partly because of (political) dissatisfaction with the proceedings in Venice (Italy and Germany were doing rather well in the prize

list), but partly no doubt because the Venice festival had proven, by and large, to be extremely successful and a powerful tourist draw.

Both festivals were revived soon after the war, both enjoy substantial government support and subsidy, and both now have "palaces" to accommodate projection, reception, and press facilities.

Since the war, festivals have been organized in other countries. Perhaps the best known is the one in Edinburgh, which dispenses with the lure of competition and issues only certificates of acceptance, which in certain areas of film distribution (notably the nontheatrical) carry considerable weight. Conceived originally as an extended tribute to the realist and documentary tradition in film-making, the festival later dropped some of its barriers and raised a more liberal but less precisely meaningful banner of "Living Cinema," which in 1957 admitted films all the way from Bergman's *Seventh Seal* to the adaptation of Kingsley Amis' *Lucky Jim*. Nevertheless the Edinburgh festival still has an air about it which sets it apart. It is probably the most serious and single-minded of the European festivals and is certainly the least commercial.

Berlin and more recently San Sebastian (Spain) have added themselves to the list. There are "national" festivals in many countries, for example Yugoslavia, an Asian festival which was started two or three years ago, while for three seasons Stratford, Ontario, has been offering a film exhibition with its drama and music festival, and this year for the first time—but without the blessing of the International Federation—they have awarded prizes. (*Pather Panchali* won again.)

In terms of geographical distance alone, it is hard to see how San Francisco might be thought to overlap any of these. Since it will run from October 29 to November 11, the authorities will have the opportunity to select the best of the year's films. It is already the plan of the British Film Institute (publishers of *Sight and Sound*) to hold a London Film Festival in October, when they will exhibit the best of the films shown at Venice, Cannes, and Berlin. This, if done in San Francisco, would be service enough, but in the end the festival will have international significance only if it achieves a character of its own, and if its awards gain individual and not imitative prestige. It would not be sufficient to rely on the inherent attractiveness of San Francisco as a festival site, although it is in fact hard to conceive of a better one.

GAVIN LAMBERT

Good-bye to Some of All That

People often ask: "Well, what's it like, working in Hollywood after all those years as a film critic?" I should begin by saying there are two separate issues involved, of which the first is state of mind. E. M. Forster has shrewdly summarized the basic difference between creator and critic: *Think before you speak is criticism's motto, speak before you think is creation's.* In the long run, the critical state of mind is probably fatal to the creative. The unconscious becomes straitjacketed by the conscious. You become so conditioned to analyzing, judging, sifting, interpreting, that when you are faced with the

list), but partly no doubt because the Venice festival had proven, by and large, to be extremely successful and a powerful tourist draw.

Both festivals were revived soon after the war, both enjoy substantial government support and subsidy, and both now have "palaces" to accommodate projection, reception, and press facilities.

Since the war, festivals have been organized in other countries. Perhaps the best known is the one in Edinburgh, which dispenses with the lure of competition and issues only certificates of acceptance, which in certain areas of film distribution (notably the nontheatrical) carry considerable weight. Conceived originally as an extended tribute to the realist and documentary tradition in film-making, the festival later dropped some of its barriers and raised a more liberal but less precisely meaningful banner of "Living Cinema," which in 1957 admitted films all the way from Bergman's *Seventh Seal* to the adaptation of Kingsley Amis' *Lucky Jim*. Nevertheless the Edinburgh festival still has an air about it which sets it apart. It is probably the most serious and single-minded of the European festivals and is certainly the least commercial.

Berlin and more recently San Sebastian (Spain) have added themselves to the list. There are "national" festivals in many countries, for example Yugoslavia, an Asian festival which was started two or three years ago, while for three seasons Stratford, Ontario, has been offering a film exhibition with its drama and music festival, and this year for the first time—but without the blessing of the International Federation—they have awarded prizes. (*Pather Panchali* won again.)

In terms of geographical distance alone, it is hard to see how San Francisco might be thought to overlap any of these. Since it will run from October 29 to November 11, the authorities will have the opportunity to select the best of the year's films. It is already the plan of the British Film Institute (publishers of *Sight and Sound*) to hold a London Film Festival in October, when they will exhibit the best of the films shown at Venice, Cannes, and Berlin. This, if done in San Francisco, would be service enough, but in the end the festival will have international significance only if it achieves a character of its own, and if its awards gain individual and not imitative prestige. It would not be sufficient to rely on the inherent attractiveness of San Francisco as a festival site, although it is in fact hard to conceive of a better one.

GAVIN LAMBERT

Good-bye to Some of All That

People often ask: "Well, what's it like, working in Hollywood after all those years as a film critic?" I should begin by saying there are two separate issues involved, of which the first is state of mind. E. M. Forster has shrewdly summarized the basic difference between creator and critic: *Think before you speak is criticism's motto, speak before you think is creation's.* In the long run, the critical state of mind is probably fatal to the creative. The unconscious becomes straitjacketed by the conscious. You become so conditioned to analyzing, judging, sifting, interpreting, that when you are faced with the

creative act you can argue yourself out of putting pen to paper.

Also, professional film criticism becomes in the end a rather disgusting occupation. You arrive fresh and unafraid, full of ideas and prejudices and enthusiasms. You care about the cinema as a whole and what is happening to it. You are not a reaction-machine to individual films but, in Cocteau's phrase, a *rappel à l'ordre*; your particular verdicts reflect a general standard of belief and conviction. At least, I hope so—I hope that the value of *Sight and Sound*, whatever it is, has been in its total gesture, its beliefs and (sometimes officially muted) angers. But then comes the time when you have to admit you've shot your bolt. You are not disillusioned, or ready to throw in the sponge, but you realize there's a limit to what you, as a film critic, have left to say that is still vital and important. The phonograph needle is starting to stick in a groove. With a rather desperate effort at self-renewal, you discover one or two good films from an unfamiliar country, and you go off on a Polish or Hungarian kick—but though the enthusiasm is valid, the gesture is only playing for time. Fundamentally, you are disguising the fact that you are turning into a reaction-machine. Even John Grierson, when he wrote as a guest columnist in *Sight and Sound* a few years ago, could find nothing more definite to advise critics to do, beyond reviewing films, than stop "looking backward to the certainties," and remember to devote themselves to "the uncertain, tentative and risky business of guessing the future."

Of course somebody has got to say that films are good and films are bad, but prolonged exposure to mediocrity, which professional film criticism dictates, can only be a matter of personal choice. None of which means that I disbelieve in the value of criticism. But belief in the necessity of oneself as a critic is duly succeeded, if one is honest, by belief in the necessity of someone else taking over.

Coincidence is nearly always the half of change. I arrived at film criticism through a series of detours; I had wanted "to be a writer," and had started by writing short stories. Just at the time I was wishing acutely for the opportunity to go back to my starting-point, I had an offer to go to Hollywood and work as personal assistant to Nicholas Ray. "Personal assistant" is a curious, maddening, and invaluable job. Officially you have no real position. To the company you are "dialogue director," which means that you ask the actors whether they know their lines for the scene to be shot, offer to run through them, and call attention to mistakes or variations during shooting. To the director you are a combination of ideas-man, judge, encourager, and all the rest of it. You work, rather unsure of the basis from which you're operating, at every stage of the film: at script conferences, every day on the set, at rushes, during the first editing sessions. The first picture on which I worked in this capacity was called *Bigger Than Life*, with James Mason, who also acted as producer. Its script was based on a *New Yorker* article about a man who was prescribed cortisone for a dangerous rheumatic condition and was psychologically unhinged by it. Ray saw in the story a chance to make a comment on the "wonder drug" madness that afflicts the American attitude to medicine. When we first discussed the script, in England, we thought it was unsatisfactory—not only because of its rather conventional and sometimes shoddy dramatization of the subject; but because pressure from American medical organizations had removed the whole basis of the attack. The victim became psycho-

tic through an overdose of the drug; he became an addict and secretly obtained too much of it, thus absolving his doctors from blame. At the script conferences in Hollywood, we were unable to get around this fact. The script was patched and rewritten here and there, right through production, by Ray, Mason, and myself, and a completely new last scene added by Clifford Odets on the day of shooting it. . . . As an ex-critic, I couldn't help feeling that all anyone was doing was making the best of a bad job; finally, we were—but as someone involved in the creation of a picture, I came to feel caught up in a cruel but inescapable necessity. From the outside, I watched a director trying to create something firm out of shifting sands and felt it was impossible; from the inside, I wanted to believe it was possible. If I thought before I spoke, I couldn't, but if I spoke before I thought, I could.

The second experience was basically a reiteration of the first. In agreeing to do what was finally called *The True Story of Jesse James*, Ray rejected the idea of remaking the studio's picture of ten years ago, but wanted to dramatize parallels between the post-Civil War adolescent bandit and the delinquent youth of today. In the preproduction phase, I remember doing some research and finding anecdotes to support the point of view. But none of these, or of other ideas, were incorporated in the script. Producer and screenwriter never really understood the story in these terms; and, as so often happens, the depth of differences was never discovered until it was too late. As in *Bigger Than Life*, there was much day-to-day changing and revising, but in detail rather than substance.

On a superficial level, all this might be called frustrating. But the only important frustration was for the director, and some of the actors. As a critic, if I'd been asked to define the most pressing reality of the cinema, I would have said: the methods and values of an industry that forces compromise on the artist. Now I would say: the struggle of the individual artist against compromise. The shift of emphasis is significant. The first answer is perhaps theoretically correct, but the second is the more accurate. Mainly because it takes into account the psychology of collaboration. The nature of the medium gives to the director the final, over-all creative gesture of a film, but he has to fight dearly each time for permission to make this gesture. Many writers and most producers would deny it to him, apparently failing to realize that if the creative director didn't continue to fight for it, the cinema would cease to exist. Can one imagine a Hollywood without Chaplin, Griffith, Stroheim, Welles, Ford, etc., or an Italian cinema without de Sica, Visconti and Rossellini? No—but one *can* imagine a Hollywood without . . . The list is so long, it would be invidious to single out names.

This has been the first stage. The second concerns, partly, a more personal frustration. During *Bigger Than Life*, a producer called Paul Graetz (responsible for such European pictures as *Le Diable au Corps* and *M. Ripois*) had sent Nicholas Ray the typescript of a forthcoming translation of a French novel by René Hardy, *Bitter Victory*. We both thought it had exciting film possibilities. Contracts were duly signed, and while Ray was preparing *Jesse James*, René Hardy came to California to work with us for a few weeks on the first script. It was my first official assignment as a screenwriter and I was naturally elated—particularly as the subject was so promising and Graetz had a reputation for respecting creative integrity. The first weeks of work with Hardy (complicated by the fact that he had practically no English at all) revealed that

A Libyan desert scene from BITTER VICTORY.

he wanted a more literal transcription of the novel than either Ray or I thought desirable. When we arrived in Paris to discuss this with Graetz, he authorized various departures in the script, in spite of Hardy's objections; Ray and myself set about making them. However, two blows fell in rapid succession. The first was that Graetz signed the German actor Curt Jurgens—apparently because of a previous contractual obligation—for the key role of a British officer; the second was that he reversed his decisions about changing the script. The reasons for this were at first mysterious, and then only too clear. We did not know that in his contract with Hardy, he had given the author complete "script approval." The rest is a story of disappointed hopes, threatened litigation, continued struggle, and the "free" film that an American director came to Europe to make turning out to be as shackled as the most rigidly controlled Hollywood one. I bring it up not for itself, but to make a point. If, as a critic, I had seen *Bitter Victory* at a press show, I would probably have agreed with other critics who found it an interesting but flawed and confused work. Seeing it as one of the creators involved, I see two things: the film it could have been, and the film it is. This film has some passages in which the original intentions are clear, and others in which the suppression of these intentions is equally clear. There is absolutely no confusion about it at all. The effect of confusion is created by a breakdown of collaboration, by the denial of an over-all gesture. You can't blame the critic for not seeing this; the film becomes neither better nor worse for his inability to see it; but the ironic point is that the reality of the film is the personal struggle it entailed—ironic because one French reviewer who praised it highly, hailed it as an obvious example of creative producer-director-writer collaboration. This gives an ex-critic something to think about . . .

As a critic, of course, one knew intellectually that such things happen. But the knowledge is pallid beside the experience. In concrete terms, the bitterness of the experience is to think of the time spent—about a year—on a project which one believed in and tried to fight for. The fact that it happens all the time, and has always happened, doesn't mitigate it. It is the constant truth of creative movie-making, successful and unsuccessful. It is the climate in which films are made. It will never be completely described, only lived through—like the Zen Buddhist's *satori*, the experience of awakening that can never be captured in words. In fact, it is a mystical experience, in a very profane kind of way.

At present I am writing scripts for TV. I don't find the medium intrinsically interesting, but what is being done with it—on the general level, at least—is more interesting than what is being done with the greater medium of films. Basically, TV has taken over the entertainment level of movies in the 'thirties (a great many of which it shows). That is to say, quite a lot of it is concerned with stories about people, in black and white, on a properly shaped screen. For this very relative reason they

can offer satisfaction to a writer. Movies tend increasingly to be very large or very small. The big ones—*Around the World in 80 Days*, *South Pacific*, *The Vikings*, etc., chained to their best-selling source or to spectacle—don't offer much of interest to a writer. Other big ones—*The Young Lions*, *Bridge on the River Kwai*—are inflated to conform to the current obsession with size. Fifteen years ago they would have been 90-minute black and white films, and much better for it. The little films, mainly "B" westerns, horror and teenage pictures, are rather overwhelmingly sordid. One thinks it might be fun to write a horror picture—but they are conceived on so primitive a level that I don't think it would be. The remaining pictures that fit with neither category, and one would like to write—there are not, unfortunately, enough of them to go around.

The situation is changing all the time, and it would be riskier than ever to guess the future. One thing seems certain: so much money has been invested in the big screens—and therefore in size—that we are stuck with them for quite a while. The competition of TV has forced industry thinking into: "Let's give them something that TV can't give them." While the trade papers are always quoting themselves and producers who say, "It's still a good story that brings the public in," *Around the World* and *The Vikings* and the rest aren't good stories—yet they bring the public in . . . On the other hand, film-makers who contrive to achieve an imaginative work receive less publicity, less distribution, and less reward. The two best American films of last year were *Paths of Glory* and *Fear Strikes Out*; neither got so much as an Oscar nomination.

None of which is encouraging. And the critic's reaction is to write a forthright article analyzing Hollywood and its ills, to attack the shortsightedness and evasion of those responsible for them. There is no doubt that such articles should always be written—but they don't, however, solve the problem of what the creative film-maker is to do. The artist in any field, John Crowe Ransom remarks, "claims his freedom. He must earn this freedom by going on his own in society. He is like a businessman, perhaps a small one, but at any rate he is like one who is sole owner of his business. And nothing is guaranteed to him." In any country where the cinema has been broadly commercialized, the film artist is unfortunately not the sole owner of his business and, all the same, nothing is guaranteed to him. All he can do is continue the struggle and try to make worthwhile films; when he succeeds, he earns his freedom—for a while. It is here, perhaps, that the most vital shift in attitude from critic into writer or film-maker occurs. The critic, from the outside, batters away at the status quo, while the film-maker, from the inside, concentrates in his work on making individual dents in it. The position of each, to the other, always seems a little unreal. And each is right; because it is. Except that each, I suppose, has to make a living.

HERBERT FEINSTEIN

Lana, Marlene, Greta, *et al.*: The Defense Rests

A brief v. the Hollywood misrule of evidence

"A truth that's told with bad intent
Beats all the Lies you can invent."
—William Blake, "Auguries of Innocence"

Assorted leading ladies have been straining the quality of mercy, by flouting all rules of evidence and courtroom etiquette, since Sophocles' Antigone wrecked Thebes for Creon, or at least since Portia got Antonio out of his valid contract with Shylock, back in Shakespeare's Venice. This year's docket of films adds three more incredible lady witnesses to the tradition. Lana Turner appears for the defense—and very handsome too—in *Peyton Place*; Marlene Dietrich plays a tricky, two-faced *Witness for the Prosecution*; and Claire Bloom, as Katya, frames with finesse and gusto the only one-fourth guilty Yul Brynner – Mitya, the bald brother Karamazov, done in by shoddy justice in Old Russia. (It seems pointless to discuss these various deponents, or their *Ur*-sob sisters, under their film [fictive] names, since—to a woman—these *femmes fatales* manage, inexorably, to play themselves.)

Significantly, the three telling witnesses speak only the awful truth. Miss Dietrich and Miss Bloom play perjurers so skillful, so accomplished, that neither ever tells a literal lie under oath. No perjury raps for those girls! Nevertheless, in both cases, their testimony is a monstrous "frame." In the big dungeon scene, Mitya sums up Katya's damaging evidence of the day, "Everything she said is true." As Grusha (Maria Schell) astutely corrects him, "Out of her mouth it added up to one big lie."

Miss Turner, under examination, proves Oscar Wilde's theorem that life imitates art; she manages to reel off her personal true nonconfessions, much beside the judicial point, and thus lay the groundwork for the later big reconciliation scene with her estranged cinematic daughter (Diane Varsi).*

In *Peyton Place* Miss Turner's testimonial tactics persuade the town doctor (unerringly played by Lloyd Nolan) to tell all about the defendant Selina's aborted romp with her cruel, drunken stepfather and later victim (rather blowsily played by Arthur Kennedy). Naturally, Selina is acquitted as very not guilty, and is—as they say—carried from the courtroom cheering.

In *Witness* Dietrich, *das Ewig-Weibliche*, d/b/a a down-on-her-luck German actress living in sin with the accused, Tyrone Power, proves the biggest liar of them all. It remains the delicious fact that every word she utters under oath is the gospel truth. Item: Marlene never legally married Tyrone Power, so she could testify "against" him. Item: The black-

* Lana Turner has gained her considerable acumen in judicial protocol from long cinematic experience. In 1946 along with James Garfield, her guilty co-defendant, Lana got off after murdering her fat old nasty husband in an eviscerated version of James M. Cain's *The Postman Always Rings Twice*. Nevertheless, according to the best dictates of the then Johnston office, Lana paid with her life in a punitive "accident" a few reels later; while Garfield got his for doing in Lana, even though he *didn't* do it! The year following, in *Cass Timberlane* (forlornly based on Sinclair Lewis' novel of a May and December romance), Lana found her way around chambers so well that, even though the girl was merely a witness, she landed the judge (Spencer Tracy).

guard *did* come home after bludgeoning old Mrs. French, with blood on his hands, and beg Marlene to get him out of it—which is just what she does. (Since the picture has been out a goodly while, I do not spill too many beans.) Further, Marlene did write all those friendly letters on little blue notepaper to "Max"—though *not* the copy on the larger sheet which is read in open court. To be sure, no one ever gets around to asking Marlene if there is, in fact, a "Max" in the flesh—so that the "bad" witness for the prosecution becomes a dandy one for the defense.

The three instant witnesses are in the grand tradition, since Portia was a fake and inveterate liar, showing up in court "in loving visitation" under the falsest of pretenses as "a young doctor of Rome . . . Balthazar." Some precedents from beautifully false witnesses in earlier films may serve to establish the line of more recent authority. All cinematic ladies of intrigue take their cue, of necessity, from Greta Garbo, so it is no surprise that Greta lied her way out of the hangman's noose in her silent *Kiss* (1929, directed by Jacques Feyder). Greta played the bored, beautiful wife of a much older wealthy silk merchant of Lyons (Taylor Holmes); no sooner are the credits over than we find Greta, in a monumental black hat, on trial for shooting the Old Boy. Recruited for the defense is André, a sharp, up-and-coming young lawyer (Conrad Nagel); André is very devoted to Greta. Also lurking around the corridors is Pierre (the juvenile Lew Ayres), another fan of Greta's. The self-created widow receives a jury trial for which the civil code of France has imported all kinds of alien common law practices; the dramatic crux is that since the murder was committed in another country, we know from the outset that Greta has a sporting chance of getting away with it—whereas, in the film-maker's code, it's curtains for any murderess who works, say, out of Brooklyn.

Though André, in mingled guilt and pleasure, thinks Greta shot her husband for him, the audience knows she really did it for another guy, Pierre. Greta had been bestowing the titular kiss upon lucky Pierre when her husband intruded and caught the errant couple *in flagrante delicto:* hence all the fireworks. Given these facts, any movie jury's decision becomes obvious: death by suicide. Next case!

In an early talkie, soon after Greta's triumph over justice in *The Kiss*, an absolutely culpable Tallulah Bankhead, *qua* suicidal *Tarnished Lady*, was set scot free after murdering some great and good friend in the Canal Zone. A decade later Hedy LaMarr, at the *Crossroads*, was busily engaged in outwitting a Parisian D.A. bent on framing her much reformed husband (William Powell) on a murder charge. As I recall, Hedy kept invoking her *expertise* as a woman in love as her reason for knowing her husband didn't do it. In the course of the picture, Powell had to instruct Hedy to tell the truth if they were ever going to get out of the mess. —As they indeed did, mainly because Claire Trevor turned out to be the perjuring Other Woman in the case.

But back to this year's bumper crop. Lana, Marlene, and Claire are all incorrigible witnesses. Each has been "reached" by issues clearly extra-legal. All violate and defy (perhaps "seduce" is *the* word) the customary rules of evidence as adduced by Maitland, Wigmore, the Tsarist Specialist Mikhail Vladimirski-Budanov, or the American Law Institute's *Model Code of Evidence*. They lie like the proverbial well-laid rug. This threesome creates its own code, which is to stir up Academy Award-winning histrionic hysteria, and insert into the record as much self-serving hearsay as possible. For Exhibit A, we have Miss Dietrich hurling "Damn you! Damn you! Damn you!" at the nastily cross-examining defense attorney. Happily, her candidate for hell proves her match, since the barrister is played by that brilliant rhetorician, Charles Laughton, snortling under a wig, *sub nom de* Sir Wilfred—but like his uncoöperative witness, outrageously himself. But Laughton is never bright enough to catch the duplicitous "German bag" in a lie. How could he? Marlene speaks only true lies.

In her make-believe gambol with justice in New Hampshire, a lot goes on at Lana's place before the bar. Lana testifies mainly by chang-

ing the subject, and flings a few pointed questions back into the D.A.'s surprised face, all of them inadmissible as nonresponsive in any jurisdiction save Hollwood. Lana parries, "Why shouldn't a girl complain if her stepfather has been beating her?" Finally, when Miss Turner realizes that her answers are ruining things for Selina, she breaks down on the stand: as always, Lana has her own troubles. In chambers, Lana for once asks a relevant question: "What have I done to poor Selina?" Still, homicide outs. Perhaps Miss Turner modeled her testimony on a film of a decade ago, Joan Crawford's *Daisy Kenyon*, based on Elizabeth Janeway's historical novel of World War II. In one scene, though Joan was allegedly the co-respondent in a divorce action, she denounced the cross-examining lawyer for the aggrieved party (Ruth Warwick); the counselor had dared insinuate that Daisy had been committing adultery lately with the defendant in the case, another lawyer (Dana Andrews): all true. We thrilled to Miss Crawford's memorable exception: "And I object to you as a human being!" Thus, on screen though not in any court of law, women like the valiant Daisy codify the Hollywood rules of evidence.

Doubtless with Daisy's precedent in mind, Katharine Hepburn in *Adam's Rib*, a few years later, took up the cudgels for Judy Holliday, an unquestionably guilty husband-shooter whose line of defense was that she shot to kill, *not* wound. As an uppity defense lawyer punched out by Bryn Mawr and the Yale Law School, Hepburn—with able testimony from Holliday—managed to transmogrify Criminal Sessions into a legislature, with the judiciary passing a new law licensing wives to fire away at cheating husbands. —Standard Hollywood judicial legislation, for as *Twelve Angry Men* evidences, a jury's justice is determined by matters primarily extraneous, but meaningful in the context of the jurors' private lives. *Accord*: Ginger Rogers (and Dennis Morgan) as jurors "for the defense" in *Perfect Strangers*. The guilty may go free, since guilt and innocence are beside the point.

True, there are occasional miscarriages of justice. At the end of *The Tattered Dress*, Gail Russell (the perjuring witness) shoots down in cold blood the crooked Las Vegas sheriff (Jack Carson). The sheriff must atone since he has wronged Gail: the jury has refused to believe her tall tale. More egregiously, in Hitchcock's *Paradine Case* the maddingly fetching Valli got hanged for murder: but then she had only a clean-cut, all-British, gullible mouthpiece (Gregory Peck) and the hanging judge's drunken wife (Ethel Barrymore) to help her. Of course Valli, a poor sport, had poisoned her rich, old, titled, and blind husband. The hanging judge was played by Charles Laughton, Miss Dietrich's present adversary at the bar.

It is good to know that Mr. Laughton's justice is being tampered with mercy: by the time of the second ending in *Witness*, Laughton becomes a johnny-come-lately admirer of Miss Dietrich's talents as perjurer and killer. He suggests wistfully, "We could have worked together." And so they will: at the fade-out, the enthralled barrister is set to defend Marlene for "executing" with her breadknife that cad and bounder and devil of a man, Tyrone Power. Marlene's mayhem has been justifiably provoked; Power had essayed *the* most unlikely thing in the picture: to throw over a remarkable catch like Miss Dietrich.

As for *The Brothers Karamazov*, and its image of justice in Ryevsk in the provinces of Old Russia, MGM *has* stretched things a bit far. True, as both Tolstoy (*Resurrection*) and Dostoievsky depose, legal procedures under the Tsar *were* sloppy. In *Resurrection* the dumb muzjik jurors mean to write "not guilty" on the jury slip, but write "guilty" by mistake. Tsarist law being what it is, there isn't a thing the judge can do about it, so the defendant and her boyfriend go off to Siberia to suffer together.

Thus, according to either Dostoievsky or Tolstoy, the reformed judicial code of 1864, *Sudebni Ustav*, which transplanted some common law and civil law practices to Russia, was a big flop. But in the filmed *Brothers*, the code seems never even to have reached

Ryevsk. As soon as the reformed Ivan (Richard Basehart, more bleary-eyed than as Ishmael or the clown of *La Strada*) is about to vindicate Mitya, Claire Bloom's Katya, bubbling over with venom, dashes over to the D.A. from Moscow. Katya shows the on-the-make D.A. the very criminatory (though *falsely* circumstantial) letter, and she then runs up to the witness stand to read a few lines. Katya steps down, and the D.A. reads the rest of the scarlet letter. Verdict: guilty; sentence: Siberia; and the D.A. congratulates the wincing Katya on her good work. No offer of proof, no cross-examination, no objections to the hearsay epistle: nothing but Hollywood by remote control. However, director Richard Brooks, with his sense of mercy even more exquisite than that of Dostoievsky, permits Mitya to escape with Maria Schell: not quite the sort of punishment Dostoievsky had in mind. While the troika gallops off to the happy ending, Brooks has hacked to pieces one of the world's great works on guilt and atonement.

Occasionally a foreign film escapes Hollywood's and Wall Street's searching vines. That melancholy Dane Carl Dreyer, in his classic *Day of Wrath*, has his young witch, Anne the seductress (the flawlessly beautiful Lisbeth Movin) confess to everything before she is finally plunged into the flames. Though technically innocent, Anne knows she *should* be guilty, and has the good sense to own up to her deep-down sexual misdemeanors.* One foreign jurisdiction more: the French, with their perverse addiction to realism, were so un-American a few years back as to sentence a good-looking lady M.D. who specialized in euthanasia to five years at hard labor. This picture, appropriately enough, was called *Justice Is Done*. But *that*, after all, was in another country.

In passing we can note the adventures of a handful of Joans of Arc. Otto Preminger in his *St. Joan* (written for the screen by the Catholic Graham Greene over the protesting dead body of G. B. S.) does show respect for law and order. The uncannily hatchet-faced Jean Seberg plays the scourge from Domremy in deep-freeze. Shaw at least had the sense to sum up his historical Joan as guilty (see also Shakespeare's La Pucelle in *Henry VI, Part I*, but for a contrary opinion, *cf.* Mark Twain's sentimentally heroic Joan). That is, in the Preminger picture (which grossed some $95,000 on a negative costing more than a million) Joan gets just what Shaw says is coming to her as a witch, pest, and trouble-maker: burned up. Two other Joans in recent films have been a trial. Hedy LaMarr doing her comeback bit last year as the hysterical Joan in Warner's *Story of Mankind*–this time over the despoiled corpse of Van Loon's quasi-history–likewise took her fiery comeuppance like a man. And finally there is the sad exhibit of Ingrid Bergman, who portrayed Joan as an intellectual prig in a coat of mail, based vaguely upon Maxwell Anderson's cheap caricature. (This picture drove Walter Wanger into bankruptcy–which served him right.)

One might cite vast authority on various other brushes of Hollywood lure with legal order. A case for reversal in any court of aesthetic appeal was Judge Myrna Loy, mugging at counselor Robert Cummings in *Tell It To the*

WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION: *Marlene "breaks down" on the stand.*

* Elizabeth Taylor, in her splendid portrait of Sir Walter's Rebecca, was convicted of witchcraft in an obviously fixed trial. To be sure, Ivanhoe (Robert Taylor) saved her by battling the Templar (George Sanders) who was out to have–or burn–the nice Jewish girl.

THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV: *Both justice and film go to pieces in this trial scene.*

Judge, a grim, neanderthal stab at comedy. Ginger Rogers, again, has been through a lot. In *I'll Be Seeing You* she was out on Christmas parole; but the ex-hoofer truly made legal history when, as *Roxy Harte*, she was acquitted for murder—entering a plea of temporary lunacy by way of a "purple flash" (nothing permanent, mind you) in her fine incarnation of a jazz-age tart. Ann Sheridan was once a fugitive *Woman on the Run*; but she was even nobler as *Nora Prentiss*, a non-talking witness who refused to clear a man in order to save his honor instead. Remember the blurb on that one: "If you were Nora Prentiss, would *you* keep your mouth shut?" Annie did.

International relations, including mysteries of jewel theft, homicide, and espionage, are fecund fields for legal funny business. International murder will not always out; but vamps who for years have been swiping military secrets usually have gotten theirs. (*Cf.* Greta d/b/a *Mata Hari* and Marlene *Dishonored* but not dampened: she adjusted her stockings even as she faced those rifles.)

As for coming attractions, soon we are promised Susan Hayward in Walter Wanger's epic of Barbara Graham, *I Want to Live*. But how will the script rescue that wayward girl from the gas chamber, where California left Barbara a few years back? Possibilities for future perversion and distortion seem boundless, indeed infinite. Neither Brigitte Bardot nor Marilyn Monroe has yet tried her hand at crime or beating the rap. One quivers in delicious anticipation of what miracles this pair might achieve with the majesty of law.* Perhaps the revindication of Lizzie Borden and her busy ax might serve as a starter; Lizzie's name needs clearing badly since two disparate co-adjutors (Agnes de Mille and Joseph Welch on *Omnibus*) have challenged the Fall River jury that acquitted Lizzie. Then, Miss *Moll Flanders*, her trials and tribulations, remains to be made. True to her name, Moll led a full life of crime. She did it and she was glad. Like most non-law-abiding bodies imaged on screen, Moll shared Mr. Bumble's notion, attested in Dickens' *Bleak House*, that in so far as the law views women. "the law is a ass, a idiot."

The point of this essay is not to establish a line of travestied precedent, by way of Holly-

* As this goes to press, Marilyn is being launched into crime in Billy Wilder's *Some Like It Hot*. Marilyn, either leading or singing with an all-girl band, wants to tango some with George Raft, that classic and *bona fide* hood, who rubs out seven before MM gets to him.

wood *stare decisis*, nor is it an exercise in the free association of cinematic legalese. It is to suggest (diffidently, to deplore) that the usufruct of the courtroom and law in Hollywood is one to which reasonable men should take exception. To dwell on our opening complaint: the witness stand, as constructed by Hollywood this past year, has become a bandbox or podium from which elegantly shady ladies play games with all known rules of credibility and fair play. Ignoring rules of procedure indispensable to any court of law, Lana, Marlene, and Claire tell the immaterial (albeit intriguing) story of their lives, or swear to the lies, the whole lies, and nothing but the lies—thus emerging as admirable heroines. Instead of a weighing of justice there is a wiggling of it—or rather the scales register "Tilt!" Probative weight becomes a fake, and seductive scent is flung into justice's already blinded eyes. The only plot becomes, then, the one against the audience and its intelligence.

Art enjoins scriptwriters from running out to buy Wigmore, Maitland, or Vladimirski-Budanov. The rules of evidence *are* abstruse, and art need only reflect experience, not photostat it. But film is no proper venue for gross, willful distortion, though it should provide plenty of room for believable free-play. In *Peyton Place*, *Witness for the Prosecution*, *and The Brothers Karamazov*, the halls of justice become a surrogated battleground, a situs to carry on those wars of love more appropriate to the bedroom. No attention is paid—forgive me—reality. The screen courtroom becomes a haven for the prostituted word, where lying pays off even better than crime is supposed to, and the wicked flourish inexorably. This, lawyers and laymen like to think, is not verily the case. The cinema images a cathouse where life simply cannot afford to imitate art.

PAUL A. JORGENSEN

The Permanence of *Dragnet*

The recent promotion (June 19) of Sergeant Joe Friday to lieutenant and of Officer Frank Smith to sergeant brought to me, as it may to some of the millions of other *Dragnet* addicts, a rather humiliating realization: that I have been following for week after week a program which has not otherwise changed appreciably since it began—nine years ago on radio and seven years ago on television. The changes in rank will not, I suspect, seriously alter the nature of the program. I am accordingly prepared to acknowledge, not without some chagrin and disapproval, the basis in genuine artistry for the permanence of a program that I have for years accepted only on a week-by-week basis. I acknowledge this artistry and deserved permanence despite *Dragnet's* invariable routine, its seemingly casual structure, its rejection of almost all the proved requirements of the criminal suspense show, its unglamorous personnel, and the banality of its professed criminological message. For week after week Jack Webb, as both producer and Sergeant Friday of *Dragnet*, has demonstrated that only two elements are needed for the survival of a weekly crime show: a painstaking use of established film techniques and an accurate challenge, with a modicum of reassurance, to the complacency of the audience. But it is also important—as my belated realization attests—that these qualities be not made too obvious to the audience. *Dragnet* is, for this reason, a deceptively simple program. I shall try to show that it is neither artless nor innocuous, that its durability in fact represents a powerful assault on the public by an uncommonly shrewd film artist. I propose, at the

wood *stare decisis*, nor is it an exercise in the free association of cinematic legalese. It is to suggest (diffidently, to deplore) that the usufruct of the courtroom and law in Hollywood is one to which reasonable men should take exception. To dwell on our opening complaint: the witness stand, as constructed by Hollywood this past year, has become a bandbox or podium from which elegantly shady ladies play games with all known rules of credibility and fair play. Ignoring rules of procedure indispensable to any court of law, Lana, Marlene, and Claire tell the immaterial (albeit intriguing) story of their lives, or swear to the lies, the whole lies, and nothing but the lies—thus emerging as admirable heroines. Instead of a weighing of justice there is a wiggling of it—or rather the scales register "Tilt!" Probative weight becomes a fake, and seductive scent is flung into justice's already blinded eyes. The only plot becomes, then, the one against the audience and its intelligence.

Art enjoins scriptwriters from running out to buy Wigmore, Maitland, or Vladimirski-Budanov. The rules of evidence *are* abstruse, and art need only reflect experience, not photostat it. But film is no proper venue for gross, willful distortion, though it should provide plenty of room for believable free-play. In *Peyton Place*, *Witness for the Prosecution*, *and The Brothers Karamazov*, the halls of justice become a surrogated battleground, a situs to carry on those wars of love more appropriate to the bedroom. No attention is paid—forgive me—reality. The screen courtroom becomes a haven for the prostituted word, where lying pays off even better than crime is supposed to, and the wicked flourish inexorably. This, lawyers and laymen like to think, is not verily the case. The cinema images a cathouse where life simply cannot afford to imitate art.

PAUL A. JORGENSEN

The Permanence of *Dragnet*

The recent promotion (June 19) of Sergeant Joe Friday to lieutenant and of Officer Frank Smith to sergeant brought to me, as it may to some of the millions of other *Dragnet* addicts, a rather humiliating realization: that I have been following for week after week a program which has not otherwise changed appreciably since it began—nine years ago on radio and seven years ago on television. The changes in rank will not, I suspect, seriously alter the nature of the program. I am accordingly prepared to acknowledge, not without some chagrin and disapproval, the basis in genuine artistry for the permanence of a program that I have for years accepted only on a week-by-week basis. I acknowledge this artistry and deserved permanence despite *Dragnet's* invariable routine, its seemingly casual structure, its rejection of almost all the proved requirements of the criminal suspense show, its unglamorous personnel, and the banality of its professed criminological message. For week after week Jack Webb, as both producer and Sergeant Friday of *Dragnet*, has demonstrated that only two elements are needed for the survival of a weekly crime show: a painstaking use of established film techniques and an accurate challenge, with a modicum of reassurance, to the complacency of the audience. But it is also important—as my belated realization attests—that these qualities be not made too obvious to the audience. *Dragnet* is, for this reason, a deceptively simple program. I shall try to show that it is neither artless nor innocuous, that its durability in fact represents a powerful assault on the public by an uncommonly shrewd film artist. I propose, at the

least, that respectful scrutiny be given a program which survives in a hazardous genre, the weekly program of tension—a genre which has recently seen the demise of more neatly tailored thrillers such as *Panic!*, *The Court of Last Resort*, and now *Climax!* And I propose in general that we look for concealed artistic strategies in any television drama that holds an audience unwittingly captive for more than five years.

Despite its casual manner, *Dragnet* reflects a design that can come only from very hard work. Few of the *Dragnet* staff have been able to stand the pressure long. Except for the perseverance of Ben Alexander as Frank Smith, the turnover in personnel has been almost total. One writer recently died of a heart attack at the age of thirty-eight. Webb himself is wedded to his craft with a dedication that has already cost him two marriages and almost all social life. Not originally a film producer, he turned studiously from radio to television. Watching movies endlessly, running them back and forth to discover photographic tricks, he mastered the angle shot, the clean view of violent action, and, above all, the close-up. Few producers have equalled his sense of when the viewer wishes to see, closely and at length, the full face of an actor; few have so successfully resisted the temptation to fill the television screen with more than two or three persons.

He is, on the other hand, almost equally adept at the panoramic photography used to begin each program. Introduced by his harsh, tired voice announcing "This is the city, Los Angeles, California," shots of the city move across the screen. The pattern for these shots is effective. There is first an attempt to catch whatever architectural impressiveness Los Angeles offers—occasionally skylines but equally often freeways and miscellaneous expanses. Against a background orchestration suggesting honking cars, our eyes are forced to move rapidly from one kind of scene to a totally different one, usually from the imposing façade to the drab and less respectable. These fleeting views, centering significantly on the building occupied by the Police Department, convey the sense of a restless, uncomfortable city. It is a city in which the only center of responsibility is the ever-watchful, ever-concerned police force. It might be any large city vaguely uneasy about itself and distrustful of the soundness of its appearances. It is, of course, preëminently Los Angeles, which, as Webb likes to point out in these introductory travelogues, is many things at once. It is emphatically not San Francisco, photographed more beautifully but less disturbingly in the imitative *Lineup*.

Regardless of Webb's mastery of screen techniques it is instructive to remember that *Dragnet* was in the beginning a radio program and had to demonstrate its dramatic potentials without the assistance of photography. It is for this reason that, despite the fascination of its scenes and faces, I do not believe that the *sight* of Webb's drama is the major clue to its durability. One need only remember that the unmistakable trademark of *Dragnet* continues to be its somber, threatening orchestration. It might also be parenthetically remarked that television drama is probably still closer to its origins in radio than to the full resources of the cinema. For this reason, and because the country still has a huge radio audience, it has recently been suggested that television producers could save much money if they first submitted costly programs to the more austere artistry of the radio. It is the radio which can best screen out the irrelevant and ascertain what is the true dramatic nature of a program.

Webb's artistry has stood the test of radio. It is an artistry not always apparent on the screen or in the conventional modes of screen continuity. It depends so much upon the connotativeness of his free-wheeling direction that we are wrong to criticize his program for its lack of structure. There seems to be not a failure in arrangement of event but almost a disdain for economy of action and rising tension. Only a small portion of the program is devoted to crime solving. Most of the time Friday and Smith drive about the city following doubtful leads, or sit in their drab office speaking some of the most low-pressure dialogue ever heard on television. Always the case begins with identification of the weather, time, and the particu-

lar police division (all essentially radio rather than television necessities). Thenceforth the only coherence imposed upon events is a periodic announcement of time. What is more, the time intervals are almost never used to produce tension; they merely occur.

The result is no doubt realism, the virtue most often cited in commendation of *Dragnet*. And it is a comfortable explanation for the hold of the program, provided that we forget that the public usually refuses to support true realism in the films. Certainly Webb's extensive research for the program points toward a concern for the authentic. Thus he works closely with the Police Department, using their actual cases and jargon (M.O., A.P.B., R. & I.), and producing almost a replica of the very casualness of the detective office. There is a realism in the weariness of the personnel, in the absence of good converation between two men working constantly together, even in the drabness of most crime—well depicted by the dismal rooming houses in which the most dangerous of criminals are arrested. A still more impressive realism, one that often thrills the audience, comes from the sense of a powerful, scientifically equipped police force in action. Here, however, Webb utilizes only a fraction of the machinery available, seldom showing close-ups of parts of the crime laboratory that could not be conveyed to a radio audience, and seldom using stake-outs, the underground work of detectives, or the vast forces that promptly converge on a crime—all machinery such as can be found in the novels written under the name of *Dragnet*.

Instead of concentrating on the techniques of detecting criminals, or the exciting ways in which desperadoes are brought to bay, Webb devotes most of the strictly criminological part of his program to the questioning of suspects and witnesses—probably the most important legacy from his radio program. Approximately sixty percent of the dialogue on the show, according to one estimate, consists of questions. It is, I believe, in this questioning, and not merely in its realism, that the basic strategy of *Dragnet* is to be found.

Webb questions as many as ten persons on a single program. These are "fresh faces" (and

DRAGNET: *The crushing revelation.*

fresh voices), as he claims, and not the stale professionals, the familiar faces so reassuring to audiences. They represent men and women such as we meet every day but do not get really to know. Many other programs are of course popular because they bring ordinary people into the studio: individuals are interviewed briefly before performing on a quiz show, or their past is brought tangibly into the program. But the technique of *Dragnet*, depending partly on the unnerving authority of criminal law, makes for a far more devastating scrutiny of hidden personality.

The masks most easily removed on *Dragnet* belong to the record number of elderly people who appear on this program. These are the tired but garrulous saleswomen, hotel night clerks, rooming house proprietresses, and housewives and widows. Their "resistance" is usually due to no more than the indignity of being questioned by "police officers, ma'am. All we want is some information." Quite a number of these simple souls also have to be persuaded from their lapses of memory, or their inability to associate "so nice a young man" with a strangulation case. Much of their resistance is due to sheer garrulity. The camera catches their faces in energetic speech seconds before we hear the torrent of confident words expressing the shallow philosophy of life that has so far sustained them. Friday listens with his patient half-smile, before applying the surgical questions that will arrest the garrulity, purge the confidence, and leave the talkers with mouths still working but saying nothing.

Another favorite group of interrogees is that of girl friends. These have always more than ornamental value and seem to be played not by able actresses—which they usually are—but by any of the thousands of plainly or gaudily pretty working girls of low taste and strong ego found in the metropolis. These are not conventional molls. Their reticence to answer questions, if they have any reticence, is part of their pathetic vanity, for the threat that they can least tolerate is that against their respectability. They are frequently waitresses, ashamed of the cheap apartments in which they live. Sometimes they will offer Friday a drink. He always declines, even coffee. The audience, most of whom would have accepted the invitation, are probably less pained by his lack of humanity than impressed by his restraint. Significantly, Friday has no private life. There is never any female companion, as with Perry Mason, never even a hint of what he does when not working. He enters many homes, but we must never be allowed to see his own.

The most interesting victims of Webb's questioning are of course the criminals themselves. From time to time these are hardened professionals, on whom the detectives "pull a package" of past convictions. The interrogation in such cases is impressive as the clash of true professionals, but seldom the kind that Webb prefers. Lacking any hidden sense of guilt, wearing no psychological mask, these men cannot be startled into the unpleasant self-recognition that is the aim of Webb's questioning.

Webb has been quoted as saying (*Coronet*, September, 1953): "People should look like people. Who's to say who's a killer?" As criminology this has a dull ring. It would not go well at a cocktail party or over the family dinner table. Yet when translated into drama, the emotional result is fantastic. Week after week, sophisticated people—including the former Attorney General—sit fascinated before the spectacle of criminals-who-don't-look-like-criminals buckling under Webb's questions.

The secret must be that through these hundreds of "fresh faces," often representing first offenders, we are weekly invited to explore our own latent guilts. The strategy is as sinister as it is devastating. Weekly the audience is lulled into a deceptive sense of objectivity by the statement: "The case you are about to see is true. The names have been changed to protect the innocent." Actually the name change—usually in the direction of a more common name or the mathematical unknown—alters the identification from the comfortably specific to the uncomfortably universal. Millions of the "innocent" become promptly unprotected. No one, whether he sees himself as an ignorant party to the crime or as the culprit, emerges innocent.

Our response to the questioning would probably not be so strong if the establishment of guilt were not the inevitable conclusion of *Dragnet*. The final moments of the show unfailingly provide a sustained view of the criminal's face, no longer defiant, no longer expostulating in answer to questions, but naked in misery as the judgment is coldly pronounced. There is no coddling of the weak. Audiences sometimes gasp in protest or disbelief as massive sentences are meted out to sensitive, understandable culprits like themselves. Consider the case of the little-theater type who enjoyed a fantasy stardom by entering empty homes, claiming the scene as permanently his own, and carrying off odd bits of furniture as mementos. He had sold none of his loot, merely living with it. Meanwhile he had completely charmed the audience by his innocence of any hurtful motive and by his nervous, wistful manner. He was roughly apprehended and given, as a first offender, a heart-breaking commitment to San Quentin.

There can be little doubt that *Dragnet* holds its audience by frightening them. All crime stories have of course done this to some extent, though most of the Sherlock Holmes heritage have had comic diversions and considerable stress on ingenuity of detection. The fright, the primal thrill, has always been the "body," and often an opaque view of the crime. *Dragnet* rarely shows either the body or the crime. On a recent occasion, when a body came tumbling out of a closet, the viewer sensed how alien this crudity was to the refined horror of *Dragnet*.

Psychoanalytical criticism would possibly find meaning in the fact that the audience has no apparent knowledge of the crime. (The primal Freudian crime is one which the individual does not consciously remember. Hence the vagueness and helplessness of the guilt feeling.) It is not, however, necessary to go that side of madness in order to acknowledge the permanent appeal of *Dragnet* as a psychological, as well as merely criminological, exploration of guilt. Most of us now live lives not merely, as Thoreau said, of "quiet desperation," but also of precarious legality. Experiments with the elasticity of income tax and traffic laws, disagreeable scrapes with the less genial sides of credit firms, surmised investigations by the F.B.I.—all these add up to make us fascinated spectators when a wife-beating neighbor is entertained by two plainclothesmen.

And then there is the guilt about our ignorance. Most of the "innocent" on *Dragnet* are left badly shaken by their obtuseness upon interrogation. One wonders if the permanence of quiz shows does not derive from the kind of guilt awakened by *Dragnet*. Pilloried in the quiz booths, the contestants writhe like *Dragnet* "innocents" under questioning. Perhaps these contestants are rewarded so lavishly because they serve as public offerings in a ritualistic sacrifice, and because they are equipped to make a fairly good showing. How else can one account for the anxious attention with which millions listen to question after question in which they have no real interest and which they have not the slightest chance of answering? Ignorance is a guilt, legally and socially, in our time.

Given an age of guilt—a guilt so vulnerable because it is connected with widespread fear of ignorance—*Dragnet* should continue to thrive where programs offering doubtful amnesty fail. And through the casual but relentless progress of its questioning, it achieves a high degree of tension, an unperceived, natural artistry of construction far more telling than crime programs in which only the conscious facts of the guilt are hunted down.

The permanence of *Dragnet* does not depend upon the continuing resources—rich as they are—of crime files in Los Angeles, nor upon the authenticity of the cases. Fresh faces are more important than fresh stories. Webb may even, I suppose, continue to insult us with diversionary dialogue no better than that which concerned Smith's interminable preparation for the sergeant's examination. The one mistake Webb cannot afford to make, aside from relaxing his hard work on the program, is to let himself, as Lieutenant Friday, develop too transparent a personality. At present he is just sufficiently human, with occasional grim humor

and even an occasional hint of personal involvement in his eyes. He is considerably better as a police personality than the excessively casual officers on *M. Squad* and *Lineup*. But he must go no further in the direction of geniality. Were he to express compassion for criminals, or to respond humanly to the eager, frightened chatter of witnesses, or to indicate—as protracted remarks or answers to questions would compel him to indicate—his limited knowledge of human nature and the shallowness of his criminology, he would forfeit the superhuman (or subhuman) authority of his role. Like the questioner on the quiz show, he cannot afford to become involved in the hazard of *answering* questions. It is through the strength implicit in his taciturnity and his restraint, that the people who see their own wayward personalities exposed must be reassured that in the Police Department, with its monastic workers, there is a responsible force in the city.

Film Reviews

The Defiant Ones

In one of Alfred Hitchcock's English films, *The 39 Steps*, runaway hero and heroine escaped from the police while handcuffed together. They scrambled uncomfortably over Scottish moorland in the rain and were obliged to spend the inevitable night in a hotel bedroom. A frivolous episode, and rightly so. Hitchcock saw the situation in terms of comedy. Nathan E. Douglas and Harold Jacob Smith, the writers of Stanley Kramer's *The Defiant Ones*, see it in terms of symbolic melodrama. The symbols, however, prove much less durable than the handcuff.

Two chain gang prisoners make a break; one is a white man, the other a Negro. As they make their way through the swamps and turpentine camps of the South, unable to get rid of the chain that binds them together, they realize they have to get on with each other in spite of racial tensions. Survival depends on it. By the time they finally saw off the chain, at the farm of a young widow, they have begun to respect and even like each other—but betrayal quickly follows. The widow seduces the white man, persuades him to run off with her, and directs the Negro to almost certain death in a swamp. Discovering this at the last moment, the white man angrily rejects the widow and heads for the swamp to save his friend. The police catch up with them as the Negro, defiantly singing "Long Gone," nurses the wounded white man in his arms.

The situation is so freakishly contrived that its symbolic lesson has no meaning. Until the fugitives separate, the only conclusion one can draw from their situation is: if you find yourself escaping from the police with a Negro to whom you're handcuffed, you'll probably decide to get along with the Negro, whatever your racial views. (After all, until the chain is sawn off, what alternative is there—except to drag a corpse along with you?) For more than an hour, *The Defiant Ones* tries to disguise this simple dilemma, by dialogue scenes in which the two alternately quarrel and reconcile, and by exploiting the handcuff situation for thrills—they have to struggle out of a slippery clay pit together, they fight, etc. And the farmhouse scene, apart from some uncomfortable deficiencies in writing and handling, is based on an unlikely point: would the woman, having decided to trick the Negro, immediately risk everything by telling her lover about it?

In themselves, some of the scenes between the two men are effective and probing. The white man's attitude is well observed; not

and even an occasional hint of personal involvement in his eyes. He is considerably better as a police personality than the excessively casual officers on *M. Squad* and *Lineup*. But he must go no further in the direction of geniality. Were he to express compassion for criminals, or to respond humanly to the eager, frightened chatter of witnesses, or to indicate—as protracted remarks or answers to questions would compel him to indicate—his limited knowledge of human nature and the shallowness of his criminology, he would forfeit the superhuman (or subhuman) authority of his role. Like the questioner on the quiz show, he cannot afford to become involved in the hazard of *answering* questions. It is through the strength implicit in his taciturnity and his restraint, that the people who see their own wayward personalities exposed must be reassured that in the Police Department, with its monastic workers, there is a responsible force in the city.

Film Reviews

The Defiant Ones

In one of Alfred Hitchcock's English films, *The 39 Steps*, runaway hero and heroine escaped from the police while handcuffed together. They scrambled uncomfortably over Scottish moorland in the rain and were obliged to spend the inevitable night in a hotel bedroom. A frivolous episode, and rightly so. Hitchcock saw the situation in terms of comedy. Nathan E. Douglas and Harold Jacob Smith, the writers of Stanley Kramer's *The Defiant Ones*, see it in terms of symbolic melodrama. The symbols, however, prove much less durable than the handcuff.

Two chain gang prisoners make a break; one is a white man, the other a Negro. As they make their way through the swamps and turpentine camps of the South, unable to get rid of the chain that binds them together, they realize they have to get on with each other in spite of racial tensions. Survival depends on it. By the time they finally saw off the chain, at the farm of a young widow, they have begun to respect and even like each other—but betrayal quickly follows. The widow seduces the white man, persuades him to run off with her, and directs the Negro to almost certain death in a swamp. Discovering this at the last moment, the white man angrily rejects the widow and heads for the swamp to save his friend. The police catch up with them as the Negro, defiantly singing "Long Gone," nurses the wounded white man in his arms.

The situation is so freakishly contrived that its symbolic lesson has no meaning. Until the fugitives separate, the only conclusion one can draw from their situation is: if you find yourself escaping from the police with a Negro to whom you're handcuffed, you'll probably decide to get along with the Negro, whatever your racial views. (After all, until the chain is sawn off, what alternative is there—except to drag a corpse along with you?) For more than an hour, *The Defiant Ones* tries to disguise this simple dilemma, by dialogue scenes in which the two alternately quarrel and reconcile, and by exploiting the handcuff situation for thrills—they have to struggle out of a slippery clay pit together, they fight, etc. And the farmhouse scene, apart from some uncomfortable deficiencies in writing and handling, is based on an unlikely point: would the woman, having decided to trick the Negro, immediately risk everything by telling her lover about it?

In themselves, some of the scenes between the two men are effective and probing. The white man's attitude is well observed; not

crudely anti-Negro, he simply cannot understand why his companion refuses to accept "the facts of life," as he calls them—that is, an inferior place in American society. The scene at the turpentine camp, where the two men are helped by an ex-convict (interestingly played by Lon Chaney), has some gripping moments. As the two fugitives, Tony Curtis and Sidney Poitier give strong, vivid performances, and it is not their fault if they can't make certain things believable, notably in the farmhouse scene. Here the country girl (Cara Williams, with some improbable city mannerisms) steals Poitier's gun while he sleeps and he apparently never misses it; and the seduction scene with Curtis is done with a portentous, unreal sexuality reminescent of Kramer's *Not As A Stranger*, in which the *coup de foudre* between Robert Mitchum and Gloria Grahame was intercut with shots of a rearing stallion. In general, though, Kramer's direction is more successful than in his previous films. While his scenes tend to look too carefully staged, and his camera grows restless during the duologues, the narrative is kept spare and taut.

For the broader gesture of the film, its evidently sincere attempt to make a statement about a controversial issue, one would like to give more than theoretical praise. Unfortunately its implications are so deeply depressing that one cannot. No doubt the choice of such a negative, artificial point of departure for a "liberal" film was unconscious. But do we really have to *chain* a white man and a Negro together, then set bloodhounds after them, before they reach any understanding? In that overlooked but often excellent film by Martin Ritt, *A Man Is Ten Feet Tall* (also seen as *Edge of the City*) a relationship between a young deserter (white) and a dock worker (Negro, again beautifully played by Poitier) was delineated with less hysteria and considerably more truth. The two men were both "outsiders," as in Kramer's picture, but not gratuitously

THE DEFIANT ONES: *A crucial moment during the escape from the chain gang.*

forced together, and their relationship was dignified by the element of choice. Suspicion gave way to friendship not, so to speak, at the point of a gun, but through a free human exploration on both sides. It may be objected, in view of the desegregation incidents in Southern schools, that racial relations in the United States are now brought to the point of a gun. If there were any hint in *The Defiant Ones* of the implications of this—of the tragic state of a society in which, even at gunpoint, the two races are reluctant to come to terms—one might be able to accept the film. But, as it is, beyond the brave intention lies only a blank failure of vision.—GAVIN LAMBERT

The Key

The name of director Carol Reed has become irrevocably linked with memories of his earlier spy-chase thrillers with a continental background, most notably *Night Train*, *The Third Man*, and *The Man Between*. Filmgoers have come to expect sudden twists of plot and the menace of nighttime streets, enigmatic children who become symbols of danger or death, all elegantly photographed in lustrous black and white. Psychological insight into distorted human values reaches a high level of tragedy in Reed's best works (*The Fallen Idol*, *Outcast of the Islands*, *The Stars Look Down* and *Odd Man Out*), and it was hoped that *The Key* would be a noteworthy addition to this group of films.

The background of the tale is the wartime North Atlantic, when courageous tugboat crews ventured forth to aid stricken ships, while at the same time trying to avoid the barrages of enemy submarines.

This is fine material for documentary. Oswald Morris' photography captures sweeping views of the sea, the ability of the tugboats to maneuver swiftly (seen from above, making a viewer seem totally omniscient), and a rousing fire at sea, during which the crew is forced to abandon ship, with flaming bodies pulled from the engine room, etc. Mr. Morris and his technicians also manage to etch into the consciousness something of the conglomerate grey and black confusion of a British shipyard. Unfortunately, however, *The Key* is not a documentary; it has a plot, and an unforgivably and unrelievedly dull one. David, an American soldier (William Holden) is sent to Britain for training in tugboat maneuverings. He is assigned to take a kind of "refresher" course under Chris, a seasoned tugboat captain (Trevor Howard), whom (coincidentally enough) he had met and closely befriended years ago. They repair to Howard's flat which is enigmatically shared by his mistress, Stella (Sophia Loren). Since Mr. Holden and Miss Loren are, by film convention, sexually *simpatico*, one assumes at once that it is only a matter of time before they become lovers. So an engaging performance by Trevor Howard is cut short by having him blown up at sea in the middle of the picture. The captain has had the foresight, however, to present his assistant with the key to both the flat and Miss Loren's affections, just in case he should not return. So Holden becomes a tugboat captain and shortly replaces his friend as lover. After all, it is wartime. But one is definitely repelled by the fact that the basically cynical approach is "counterbalanced" by the purification of love. Loren remains only a kind of sloe-eyed sibyl, capable of doom-struck intuitions about the deaths of her lovers. (She has loved still another tugboat captain, it appears.) For about forty minutes or so, one entertains the hope that Loren is a German agent, linked with Oscar Homolka in some intricate network of shipyard intrigue, sending information about tugboats to the submarines. But no: she is merely one of Reed's favorite types, the Italianate woman of mystery, amoral and faintly tragic, like Valli in *The Third Man*; and Homolka is some inconsequential captain who insists upon singing "The First Noel" in church during an air raid, and gets blown up along with half the congregation.

All of Holden's suspicions about Loren's sexual somnambulism are lingered upon, but this is a false lead. Loren falls in love with him completely. But then, more intuitions—she sees a newspaper photo of a ship burning in the fire-

forced together, and their relationship was dignified by the element of choice. Suspicion gave way to friendship not, so to speak, at the point of a gun, but through a free human exploration on both sides. It may be objected, in view of the desegregation incidents in Southern schools, that racial relations in the United States are now brought to the point of a gun. If there were any hint in *The Defiant Ones* of the implications of this—of the tragic state of a society in which, even at gunpoint, the two races are reluctant to come to terms—one might be able to accept the film. But, as it is, beyond the brave intention lies only a blank failure of vision.—GAVIN LAMBERT

The Key

The name of director Carol Reed has become irrevocably linked with memories of his earlier spy-chase thrillers with a continental background, most notably *Night Train*, *The Third Man*, and *The Man Between*. Filmgoers have come to expect sudden twists of plot and the menace of nighttime streets, enigmatic children who become symbols of danger or death, all elegantly photographed in lustrous black and white. Psychological insight into distorted human values reaches a high level of tragedy in Reed's best works (*The Fallen Idol*, *Outcast of the Islands*, *The Stars Look Down* and *Odd Man Out*), and it was hoped that *The Key* would be a noteworthy addition to this group of films.

The background of the tale is the wartime North Atlantic, when courageous tugboat crews ventured forth to aid stricken ships, while at the same time trying to avoid the barrages of enemy submarines.

This is fine material for documentary. Oswald Morris' photography captures sweeping views of the sea, the ability of the tugboats to maneuver swiftly (seen from above, making a viewer seem totally omniscient), and a rousing fire at sea, during which the crew is forced to abandon ship, with flaming bodies pulled from the engine room, etc. Mr. Morris and his technicians also manage to etch into the consciousness something of the conglomerate grey and black confusion of a British shipyard. Unfortunately, however, *The Key* is not a documentary; it has a plot, and an unforgivably and unrelievedly dull one. David, an American soldier (William Holden) is sent to Britain for training in tugboat maneuverings. He is assigned to take a kind of "refresher" course under Chris, a seasoned tugboat captain (Trevor Howard), whom (coincidentally enough) he had met and closely befriended years ago. They repair to Howard's flat which is enigmatically shared by his mistress, Stella (Sophia Loren). Since Mr. Holden and Miss Loren are, by film convention, sexually *simpatico*, one assumes at once that it is only a matter of time before they become lovers. So an engaging performance by Trevor Howard is cut short by having him blown up at sea in the middle of the picture. The captain has had the foresight, however, to present his assistant with the key to both the flat and Miss Loren's affections, just in case he should not return. So Holden becomes a tugboat captain and shortly replaces his friend as lover. After all, it is wartime. But one is definitely repelled by the fact that the basically cynical approach is "counterbalanced" by the purification of love. Loren remains only a kind of sloe-eyed sibyl, capable of doom-struck intuitions about the deaths of her lovers. (She has loved still another tugboat captain, it appears.) For about forty minutes or so, one entertains the hope that Loren is a German agent, linked with Oscar Homolka in some intricate network of shipyard intrigue, sending information about tugboats to the submarines. But no: she is merely one of Reed's favorite types, the Italianate woman of mystery, amoral and faintly tragic, like Valli in *The Third Man*; and Homolka is some inconsequential captain who insists upon singing "The First Noel" in church during an air raid, and gets blown up along with half the congregation.

All of Holden's suspicions about Loren's sexual somnambulism are lingered upon, but this is a false lead. Loren falls in love with him completely. But then, more intuitions—she sees a newspaper photo of a ship burning in the fire-

place. Holden, half-afraid of this strange insight, vows that he will return; he runs off to his next assignment, and an almost certain dénouement—first giving the key to a sullen colleague (Kieron Moore), another captain who has hovered in the background from the beginning of the film. At this point, a spectator surrenders himself completely to the stranglehold of cliché against which he has fought throughout the story. The key's symbolism is now jettisoned. Any experienced moviegoer knows that Holden will survive where his predecessors did not. The still-struggling hope that he will die, and give the story some ironic depth, is unfulfilled. When he returns to the flat to reassume his position as Pan, Loren runs away in desperation: Holden's lack of faith in her has destroyed their relationship.

The finale, at least, is in the Reed tradition. The lovers are unreconciled. Loren settles down alone in a railway train which Holden vainly tries to overtake. There is a shot of Loren's face, sighing with relief and new hope for whatever lies ahead. And amid the white smoke-billows of the station platform, Holden and Kieron Moore stand disconsolately. Some utterance is made by the former about "I'll find her—someday," and then, the traditional backshot, with the two men walking away from the camera.*

The acting is uniformly superior to the story. By the very nature of his somewhat inflexible personality, William Holden is, as usual, thoughtful and genially American to the core. Sophia Loren's Stella is extremely human and beautiful to behold, but her characterization has every limitation involved with being both enigma and Cassandra at the same time. Trevor Howard is excellent.

Carl Foreman recently remarked: "*The Key* has the marks of a typical service picture. But its *not* a service picture: it suddenly goes off-beam; it changes direction; it approaches dangerously close . . . to every cliché there has ever been in this kind of film. And then it sidesteps it—at least I hope so."

But neither the character of David nor of Stella grips the emotions enough to concern the viewer deeply about the problems of fear and betrayal, and one's attention is instead drawn toward Morris' images of ships and subs, and the great gray ocean, or a bunch of raucous chorus girls in a military canteen singing "Flat Foot Floogie"—in short, toward the war. In an upstairs flat, full of hints and misses, the trio of tugboat captains and their symbolic girl and their keys all embody a legend of sexual inertia, really telling us, in ambiguous terms, the same old story.

That Reed has managed to hold an audience's attention during this film is mostly a tribute to the great expectations we have of him. Every sequence is, however, marked by his acute sense of timing, particularly in the dialogues between Holden and Trevor Howard. But compared to similar sequences in *The Third Man* or *The Man Between*, they lack real excitement. Actually, one cannot help but feel a sense of mystified frustration at the disparate effects of this film, written and produced by the Carl Foreman who wrote *High Noon*, and directed by Carol Reed. In all of the careful planning and execution of this production, the key to the conscience of the cinema audience is never found and never unlocked.—ALBERT JOHNSON

Le Notti di Cabiria

All the Fellini virtues are here: the fluent camera, the wit, the elegant composition, the theme-and-variations style, the mélange of theatrical and religious symbol, the parabolic eloquence, the vocabulary of private motifs. *La Strada* is more exciting, because it calls for the management of material more coarse, more extravagant, more dangerous, more mysterious. But in *Cabiria* Fellini's finesse is more impressive. His command is so easy it becomes almost idle, and we are sure to hear him accused of facility and

* In the version being shown in the U.S., Holden manages to get on the train; and although Loren's face remains enigmatic, one gathers that all is supposed to end well.

place. Holden, half-afraid of this strange insight, vows that he will return; he runs off to his next assignment, and an almost certain dénouement—first giving the key to a sullen colleague (Kieron Moore), another captain who has hovered in the background from the beginning of the film. At this point, a spectator surrenders himself completely to the stranglehold of cliché against which he has fought throughout the story. The key's symbolism is now jettisoned. Any experienced moviegoer knows that Holden will survive where his predecessors did not. The still-struggling hope that he will die, and give the story some ironic depth, is unfulfilled. When he returns to the flat to reassume his position as Pan, Loren runs away in desperation: Holden's lack of faith in her has destroyed their relationship.

The finale, at least, is in the Reed tradition. The lovers are unreconciled. Loren settles down alone in a railway train which Holden vainly tries to overtake. There is a shot of Loren's face, sighing with relief and new hope for whatever lies ahead. And amid the white smoke-billows of the station platform, Holden and Kieron Moore stand disconsolately. Some utterance is made by the former about "I'll find her—someday," and then, the traditional backshot, with the two men walking away from the camera.*

The acting is uniformly superior to the story. By the very nature of his somewhat inflexible personality, William Holden is, as usual, thoughtful and genially American to the core. Sophia Loren's Stella is extremely human and beautiful to behold, but her characterization has every limitation involved with being both enigma and Cassandra at the same time. Trevor Howard is excellent.

Carl Foreman recently remarked: "*The Key* has the marks of a typical service picture. But its *not* a service picture: it suddenly goes off-beam; it changes direction; it approaches dangerously close . . . to every cliché there has ever been in this kind of film. And then it sidesteps it—at least I hope so."

But neither the character of David nor of Stella grips the emotions enough to concern the viewer deeply about the problems of fear and betrayal, and one's attention is instead drawn toward Morris' images of ships and subs, and the great gray ocean, or a bunch of raucous chorus girls in a military canteen singing "Flat Foot Floogie"—in short, toward the war. In an upstairs flat, full of hints and misses, the trio of tugboat captains and their symbolic girl and their keys all embody a legend of sexual inertia, really telling us, in ambiguous terms, the same old story.

That Reed has managed to hold an audience's attention during this film is mostly a tribute to the great expectations we have of him. Every sequence is, however, marked by his acute sense of timing, particularly in the dialogues between Holden and Trevor Howard. But compared to similar sequences in *The Third Man* or *The Man Between*, they lack real excitement. Actually, one cannot help but feel a sense of mystified frustration at the disparate effects of this film, written and produced by the Carl Foreman who wrote *High Noon*, and directed by Carol Reed. In all of the careful planning and execution of this production, the key to the conscience of the cinema audience is never found and never unlocked.—ALBERT JOHNSON

Le Notti di Cabiria

All the Fellini virtues are here: the fluent camera, the wit, the elegant composition, the theme-and-variations style, the mélange of theatrical and religious symbol, the parabolic eloquence, the vocabulary of private motifs. *La Strada* is more exciting, because it calls for the management of material more coarse, more extravagant, more dangerous, more mysterious. But in *Cabiria* Fellini's finesse is more impressive. His command is so easy it becomes almost idle, and we are sure to hear him accused of facility and

* In the version being shown in the U.S., Holden manages to get on the train; and although Loren's face remains enigmatic, one gathers that all is supposed to end well.

decadence. Nevertheless, he here confirms his position as the greatest master now steadily producing films.

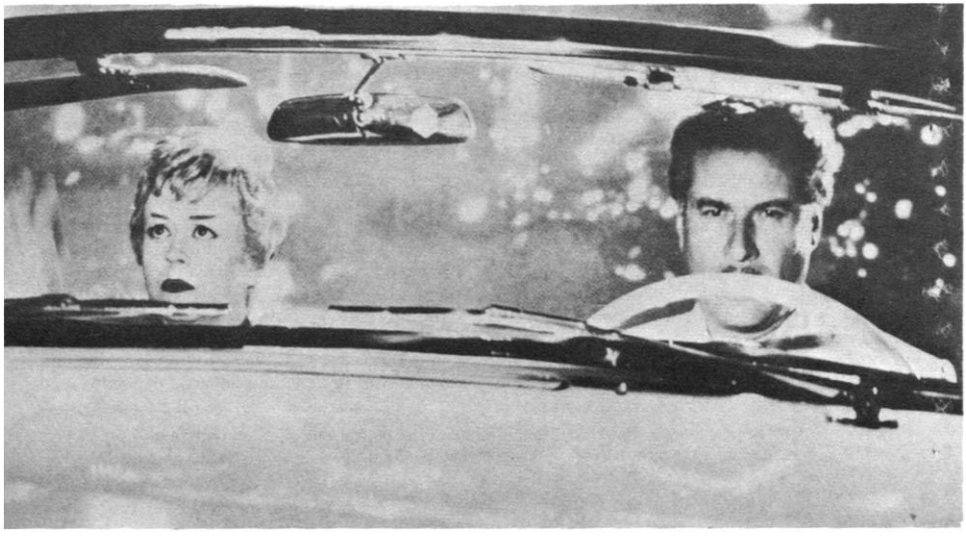
The center of the film is Cabiria, a good-natured small-time whore. She is our entrée into a series of backgrounds: the Caracalla baths, an outdoor staging area for The Trade; the world of loud bachelor chic into which she is briefly bought by a movie star crossed for the moment in love; a hectic, theatrical shrine, dense with believers in search of miracles; a kitschy theater presided over by a hypnotist; the spacious, nondescript byways of Rome, where she strolls with François Périer, her gentle betrayer. Everywhere Fellini makes Masina's responsiveness a vivid foil to the life around her, and there is so much plausible delight and drama in the simple shock of her intrusions that they alone nearly satisfy us. But under this literal flower is a strong formal scheme.

The story line is plain: Cabiria, robbed and abandoned by one boy friend, picks up for us her night- (and day-) life. Because she is looking (and vaguely planning) for an escape from it, she walks into a gross confidence trap set by François Périer, who promises to marry her, then runs away with her money. But this sturdy cliché in turn supports the film's real form, which is lyrical, the expansion of a germinal formula into a dramatic meditation.

The opening (key) episode is almost a parody of *neorealismo* melodrama. Cabiria, fond and gladsome, leads her punk (not Périer) to the river at the city's edge. He snatches her purse, pushes her in, and flees. Some boys pull her out and hand her over to a group of men who, neorealistically, pump her dry. When she awakes, she storms off, surly and ungrateful. The film then undertakes to transfigure this formula, to invert it, to give it religious, humane, and artistic dignity.

One measure of Fellini's style is to contrast the quality of the opening and closing passages of the film. The opening statement is in flat daylight, the camera distant, caustic, the motives neglected, the action abrupt, ugly, journalistic. The development, by contrast, is beautifully various in its staging, the camera endlessly caressive and sympathetic, the dramatic

LE NOTTI DI CABIRIA: *The temporary taste of luxury.*



inspection microscopic, the action delicate and suggestive. The reprise at the end is positively operatic in its amplification of the initial formula. The purse is now Cabiria's whole treasure, the locale is a glamorous cliff over deep water, twilit by a "strange light," the punk is now the sensitive, guilty (even this luxury Fellini can afford!). Périer, and the return to life is at first a solitary survival of humiliation and loss, then a dazzling welcome among children singing in the dark wood. This circling back has a formal value, but it also forces us to accept the repetition of trust and betrayal as Cabiria's destiny, whether it appears as a dingy accident or as a subtly studied complex of "things as they are" in her nature and in "the world." The beautiful sustained smile of the close is thus no vulgarly hopeful "Better luck next time," nor is it even a sign of accepted consolation. It is the sign of surviving grace, of a pure nature persisting, free, in its purity.

Grace, really, is the subject of the film. The sense that Cabiria is "chosen," whether as victim or redeemed, is established by various devices, but most directly by the number of times (and ways) she is "called" or singled out. As a prostitute she is of course open to calls, but Fellini converts this plausible condition into a significant one. Over and over again Cabiria is called—nearly always from behind (this obvious but unobtrusive device must appear a dozen times): she does not essentially *seek* to be chosen; and she usually responds with, "*A me*? [Who, *me*?]," looking for reassurance. If we ask by what sour analogy we must find, in the random, negligent, or sinister "lovers" who dispose of Cabiria's destiny, emblems of God, we may discover a rather lurid cynicism; but we would be unjust to Fellini. The lovers may choose her as a *victim*, but if they are emblems of any disposing deity, it is the god of deceit and gimcrack façade which Fellini exposes in his "church" scenes. But the impulse by which she calls herself Maria suggests a divine appointment clear of the welter of masquery which is Fellini's governing vision of life. We may not know what power has graced her, but the tribute is offered still.

Of Masina we need only say that, as in *La Strada*, her gift is the very moral of the drama. Hilarious and moving though she is, her inexhaustible, vivid candor is no mere *tour de force*, but a declaration of life. Under the cunning tics and grimaces, the reckless awkwardnesses of costume and gesture, there persists the angelic image that tames the spectators at her hypnotic scene.

The only just praise of Fellini's planning and direction is a close commentary. In stylish technical work and symbolic density (the title, with its hints at myth and garish romance, is an example) *Cabiria* has some of his best work. If his repetition of symbols (the sea, or "backstage" religion) shows a tendency to manner, the tendency is at least still gathering excitement; and at present no one else promises so much.—James Kerans.

"Madness! All Madness!"

One of the best of the war films in recent months, and there has been a spate of them, was Stanley Kubrick's *Paths of Glory*, curiously ignored when the awards were given out. Its strong indictment of war, stated in terms of the confusion felt by an officer in the line when he realizes his commanding officers do not accept his concept of human decency, can now be compared with a recent batch of more or less anti-war films which have received wide attention from both audiences and critics.

A small piece of steel, no larger than a splinter of shrapnel, would not register on a CinemaScope screen, even though it was big enough to kill a man. So we must be told in other ways that the man has been shot, and by whom—perhaps by seeing someone else drop a shell into the mortar, perhaps by something on the soundtrack. White-faced, or triumphant, the killer says, "I shot him."

One would have thought this too inconsequential to mention, but at the end of *Bridge on the River Kwai*, this year's winner of almost all the major Academy Awards, I was not at all sure who shot whom, or why. Jack Hawkins

inspection microscopic, the action delicate and suggestive. The reprise at the end is positively operatic in its amplification of the initial formula. The purse is now Cabiria's whole treasure, the locale is a glamorous cliff over deep water, twilit by a "strange light," the punk is now the sensitive, guilty (even this luxury Fellini can afford!). Périer, and the return to life is at first a solitary survival of humiliation and loss, then a dazzling welcome among children singing in the dark wood. This circling back has a formal value, but it also forces us to accept the repetition of trust and betrayal as Cabiria's destiny, whether it appears as a dingy accident or as a subtly studied complex of "things as they are" in her nature and in "the world." The beautiful sustained smile of the close is thus no vulgarly hopeful "Better luck next time," nor is it even a sign of accepted consolation. It is the sign of surviving grace, of a pure nature persisting, free, in its purity.

Grace, really, is the subject of the film. The sense that Cabiria is "chosen," whether as victim or redeemed, is established by various devices, but most directly by the number of times (and ways) she is "called" or singled out. As a prostitute she is of course open to calls, but Fellini converts this plausible condition into a significant one. Over and over again Cabiria is called—nearly always from behind (this obvious but unobtrusive device must appear a dozen times): she does not essentially *seek* to be chosen; and she usually responds with, "*A me*? [Who, *me*?]," looking for reassurance. If we ask by what sour analogy we must find, in the random, negligent, or sinister "lovers" who dispose of Cabiria's destiny, emblems of God, we may discover a rather lurid cynicism; but we would be unjust to Fellini. The lovers may choose her as a *victim*, but if they are emblems of any disposing deity, it is the god of deceit and gimcrack façade which Fellini exposes in his "church" scenes. But the impulse by which she calls herself Maria suggests a divine appointment clear of the welter of masquery which is Fellini's governing vision of life. We may not know what power has graced her, but the tribute is offered still.

Of Masina we need only say that, as in *La Strada*, her gift is the very moral of the drama. Hilarious and moving though she is, her inexhaustible, vivid candor is no mere *tour de force*, but a declaration of life. Under the cunning tics and grimaces, the reckless awkwardnesses of costume and gesture, there persists the angelic image that tames the spectators at her hypnotic scene.

The only just praise of Fellini's planning and direction is a close commentary. In stylish technical work and symbolic density (the title, with its hints at myth and garish romance, is an example) *Cabiria* has some of his best work. If his repetition of symbols (the sea, or "backstage" religion) shows a tendency to manner, the tendency is at least still gathering excitement; and at present no one else promises so much.—James Kerans.

"Madness! All Madness!"

One of the best of the war films in recent months, and there has been a spate of them, was Stanley Kubrick's *Paths of Glory*, curiously ignored when the awards were given out. Its strong indictment of war, stated in terms of the confusion felt by an officer in the line when he realizes his commanding officers do not accept his concept of human decency, can now be compared with a recent batch of more or less anti-war films which have received wide attention from both audiences and critics.

A small piece of steel, no larger than a splinter of shrapnel, would not register on a CinemaScope screen, even though it was big enough to kill a man. So we must be told in other ways that the man has been shot, and by whom—perhaps by seeing someone else drop a shell into the mortar, perhaps by something on the soundtrack. White-faced, or triumphant, the killer says, "I shot him."

One would have thought this too inconsequential to mention, but at the end of *Bridge on the River Kwai*, this year's winner of almost all the major Academy Awards, I was not at all sure who shot whom, or why. Jack Hawkins

(Major Warden), the leader of a three-man commando team sent to blow up the bridge, turns to the pretty young Siamese porters and says (in this case, white-faced), "I had to do it. They might have been taken prisoner." Until then the audience had reasonable grounds for thinking that his mortar, although possibly catching Colonel Nicholson, certainly had not caused the death of his two comrades, Shears and Joyce, who *seemed* to have been killed by Japanese fire. But then, we never know: and this, if you like, is what one must say about much of the film—we never know, although time after time we are compelled to feel very strongly.

For at least half the film's 161 minutes director David Lean is dealing with the familiar ingredients of an adventure drama, except that in this case the audience is not sure whose side it is on—or indeed is meant to be on. For whereas Lean stages his scenes brilliantly and with apparent effortlessness (where the reverse must have been the case), he seldom lets us know for very long at a time his point of view about it all. It is not simply that we have become so weak and sickly that we have to be told what to think—though heaven knows that is average for war films. It is rather that here we rarely have enough information to form an opinion either of the principal characters or the actions to which they commit themselves. And yet, at the end of it all James Donald, as Major Clipton, makes a last desperate attempt to be the film's Greek chorus: as the bridge collapses in a cloud of smoke and steam, as the bodies of Colonel Saito (Sessue Hayakawa), Colonel Nicholson (Alec Guinness), Shears (William Holden), Joyce (Geoffrey Horne), and several unnamed Japanese soldiers lie dead and dying at his feet, he shouts what is apparently the film's theme—"Madness! It is all madness!" But by now it is too late. We are strangely moved without knowing why, or we are not moved at all. And this with a film in which many critics have found a sort of pacifism, a wisdom about war and the destruction it brings with it, a strong denunciation of war as ultimately meaningless, self-contradictory action. I think that the film *says* none of these things, that it merely implies some of it, and that the critics are reading the rest of it into the film.

The trouble lies, I think, in the exposition of the central character, Colonel Nicholson, and in the treatment of one pivotal scene. The film introduces us to Nicholson as a disciplinarian, a highly principled Rousseau pragmatist—if there can be such a thing—a commanding officer who always has his eye on the effect of his actions and has firm convictions about what is best for his men. His opinions are questioned by only two men (apart from Saito and the other captors). The first is Shears, an American Marine masquerading as a naval commander. Shears plans to escape, and is unconvinced by Nicholson's argument that since the British general staff ordered the surrender, it would be an act of treason to attempt an escape. (He does escape.) The second is Clipton, the medical officer, who throughout the action is ambivalent toward Nicholson, sometimes quietly opposing him, sometimes openly admiring him. But he is the only one to demur when Nicholson announces that the best possible way to maintain morale in the camp is to have the British troops, under the guidance of British officers, build the bridge. This decision and its implications are easily slid over in the novel, in the screenplay (one must assume), and in the film. We are prepared, if you like, for Nicholson's decision. We are not prepared for the quick acquiescence of his officers and men. It is said many times, in the novel as well as in the film, that the bridge is to be used by the Japanese army in its advance on India. And yet we are to believe that Nicholson's officers will overlook this in the interests of morale and of the more nebulous Anglo-Saxon pride in a job well done. This does not sound like any British army to which one is accustomed, and if the dramatist wishes us to accept the officers' acquiescence, he must prepare us for it in some way—by revealing their stupidity perhaps, their narrow-mindedness, their single-minded devotion to Nicholson.

It is something like the latter method which is chosen in the novel, although it does so in a rather offhand way with some more or less cryptic remarks about his "immense authori-

ty" and his "unquestionable personal courage [which] made it impossible to attribute his conduct to any motive except sense of duty." It has always been argued against Kant and the rationalists (and by extension the British India officer) that a sense of duty is not in itself an adequate test of morality in an action. But apparently the officers, Reeves, Hughes, and the rest, were powerless in the face of such conviction. Certainly they fall in quickly with Nicholson's plan.

One looks in vain for a scene which will do for the film what the offhand aside did, or was supposed to do, for the novel. But what is there?—the scene in which Nicholson keeps his exhausted, battered, wounded troops marking time, his discussion about escape, and his remark that so long as the British officers command the men they will be soldiers, not slaves.

The troops' affection for Nicholson is cleverly worked out, even if this is in terms of Nicholson's refusal to have his officers treated as if they were in the ranks. In this case the massive and effective staging alone moves us to accept it—the men singing "For he's a jolly good fellow!" as Nicholson is led past them to the oven. But none of this prepares us for the other officers' acquiescence in a betrayal of one principle—"no aiding and abetting the enemy"—for the sake of another—"an officer must command his troops." Nor is it sufficient to insert a dialogue interchange between two soldiers in which one asks, "Will someone tell me why the old man wants us to build a *proper* bridge?" and gets the reply: "Don't you worry about old Nick. He knows what he's doing." And, in the "committee scene," in which Nicholson organizes the building program, instead of enjoying the manner in which Nicholson takes the initiative away from Saito, we are wondering what happened to the obligatory scene in which Nicholson won over his own officers.

The battle of wits between Saito and Nicholson is intriguing. But then there is a shift to an intended conflict between the force represented by Nicholson and the force represented by Warden and his team of commandoes, determined to destroy the bridge.

This, if it had worked, would have been fascinating, but we seem hardly prepared for the almost alarming way in which Saito vanishes as a character—inscrutably writing on rolls of parchment, enigmatically secreting a knife in the folds of his uniform. It is easy to imagine what is intended—that the shame of his surrender to Nicholson isolates him, removes him from the reality which he used to command. But again we need to be *shown* more, in transition.

But there is a second reason, in the end, why the switch does not work. The novel ends with the failure of the commandoes to blow up the bridge. This somehow or other rises above the unevenness of the plot, and is extremely moving. It is not certain that the film manages to do better. The final irony in the novel, of Nicholson refusing to understand that his work must in all reasonableness be destroyed by the British commandoes, is not successfully replaced in the film by the irony of his action, or accident (again we are not sure) of falling on the plunger of the detonator.

And yet with all this thematic confusion, technically the film is magnificent and mechanically the action is exciting, suspenseful, moving—an almost incredible tribute to the director's skill. Lean's habit of placing together in the frame the two elements which he wishes to contrast is particularly telling—shooting the arrival march of the British troops through the sick bay; taking the guards dragging Nicholson to the oven over the heads of the watching troops; placing Clipton, thoughtful, dubious, in the foreground of the shot in which Nicholson saunters off speculating about the elm piles of the London bridge which lasted for 600 years.

The question of theme in *Bridge on the River Kwai* has been treated at such length because there seems to be growing up a habit, notably among highbrow critics, to do much of the dramatist's work for him, filling in when he is vague, sorting out when he is confusing, looking the other way when he is self-contradictory. This applies with almost equal strength to Edward Dmytryk's film *The Young Lions*, in which

THE YOUNG LIONS: *Diestl and his commanding officer, who relentle rges him on, t. for safety a. the British break-through.*

an attempt is made to cover anti-Semitism and the kind of personal courage which is required to survive it, the possibility of private, individual responsibility within a Nazi war machine, and the transformation of a draft-dodger into a kind of front line hero. All in one film. There is no reason why something like this should not be attempted. And an attempt, as heroic as this one was, should be acknowledged for what it is. But the intention must not be taken for the deed.

Unfortunately, the film business being what it is, a critic who shouts "Near miss!" instead of bottling up his so-called insight and praising in a film what is successful, runs the risk of having advised his readers to choose some other diversion—and this in a day when, almost literally, a film needs every member of an audience it can find.

But as it is, no matter how hard Montgomery Clift tries as Noah Ackerman, the young Jewish recruit, there simply isn't enough in the script (as we see it on the screen) to make his scenes stand up as anything but a shorthand outline of why some men will castigate another. The film almost admits as much by failing completely to give any sort of transition when Ackerman returns to his old platoon. Mysteriously the money is returned, and the copy of the book which started all the trouble—James Joyce's *Ulysses*—lies neatly wrapped on his bed. And—"Make room for one more," says one of the latter-day killers at the card table. "I've just found a pigeon with twenty bucks." This catches the throat and the eyes and everything else, but as drama it is a cheat. And yet the film is undoubtedly well-intentioned.

Brando's story is told in much greater detail—the young German optimist who sees great promise in Hitler, but finds that he must change his opinions as, with one incident after another, he loses respect for his fellow Germans. It is an interesting character drawn by scenarist Edward Anhalt and performed by Brando, even if it is not the character supplied by Irwin Shaw in his novel. We are shown a man who admits that he does not have enough information to make a precise and definitive judgment, but is prepared to take some things on trust. He is for

most of the time, except under fire, a passive character, acted upon rather than acting. He refuses to obey his superior's command to kill a wounded prisoner, although his reluctance has no effect. He is saved from performing the act, but he will not otherwise interfere with the action; a statement of his own reluctance is as far as he will go.

This, in the main, is Christian Diestl, but the character grows as it departs from this norm. Appalled by the defiant arrogance of his commanding officer Captain Hardenberg—strongly played by Maximilian Schell—Diestl returns to Berlin and visits Hardenberg's wife. On an earlier visit they had been lovers, Diestl amused by her flagrant infidelity. But on this second visit, when he learns that she has broken her husband's spirit, he is revolted. His attitude toward Hardenberg may have changed—he is closer to understanding the particular megalomania which controls this type of Nazi. But more importantly he has come to a point, to a line, which in terms of his own self-respect he cannot cross. He throws Gertrude Hardenberg aside and leaves. And in case we should think that this is simply because he now prefers the French girl Françoise, after one night with her in Paris he leaves her too—although he is in love with her—because he is a German soldier.

But, having made this sacrifice, he joins an army in rout and finally, in his encounter with the commandant of a concentration camp, he is stripped of the last strands of his optimism. His sacrifice has been useless, for he is defending a monster.

Thus there is very little for Whiteacre to kill, in his sharp, angry (and surprisingly accurate) burst from the hip. With luck Diestl might, if he had lived, have become a good European—one of the Captain Greens, the men of humanity whom Ackerman talks about. But in effect he has already died in the concentration camp, and has gone beyond the place of guilt or innocence. It is genuinely moving when he is shot, for the killing—so well-intended, as a great act of revenge—is so thoroughly misplaced.

Tacked on to this is the boring, repetitious story of a draft-dodger, almost totally invented by the film-makers. Indeed, "Suggested by a novel of Irwin Shaw" would be a better credit for the screen, since Shaw had Diestl develop into an imitation of Hardenberg, almost take his place. Nevertheless, although (as some reports have it, for Mr. Brando's own reasons) Diestl is almost sanctified by the end of the film, he is still a fascinating character. The same can unfortunately not be said for Ackerman. The figure on the screen is a shadow compared with the one written by Shaw — a man who needed friends as others needed air — and if Montgomery Clift had not been selected to play it, the shadow might well have been a ghost.

Dmytryk controls his talented cast well, and stages some very moving scenes—among them those in which Brando plays opposite Liliane Montevecchi as Françoise—and some very powerful ones, notably the massacre in North Africa of a British detachment ambushed in the desert.

But the structure of the film leaves much to be desired. "Meanwhile, back at the ranch" was a typical audience reaction as the story swung from North Africa to a training post in the United States. There seemed little thought for what juxtaposition might accomplish as an added dramatic ingredient.

By comparison with these two films, Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead*, as it appears on the screen under Raoul Walsh's direction, is an absolute catastrophe, banal and pointless. We heard at one time that scriptwriters Denis and Terry Sanders, first with Charles Laughton and then alone, were attempting to hew out of Mailer's massive novel a story of futility in war, in which the principal characters are sacrificed to a chain of events which remains outside their control.

Not much of this is left on the screen. Many significant changes were made after Warner Brothers bought the story from the dying RKO, and the director is said to have changed more before and during shooting. Lt. Hearn, the rebellious aide-de-camp seeking some meaning in war beyond the chesslike maneuvers of his commanding general, who in the novel dies on a hopeless and irrelevant mission, in the film lives

to tell another tale, and put General Cummings in his place. And in the film, the patrol gathers the information which is instrumental in turning the tide of the campaign. "Love, not fear" dominates men's lives, is his testament (and presumably the film's), but it comes from so far out on left field that surely not even the most anxious critics will think this is an anti-war film.
—COLIN YOUNG.

A Tale of Two Cities

The Rank Organization has previously presented David Lean's distinguished film adaptations of Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* and *Oliver Twist*. Unfortunately, however, the success of the former films in recreating the variety and range of a Dickens novel is not repeated in this new Rank film. In the past there were silent versions of *A Tale of Two Cities* starring Maurice Costello and William Farnum, as well as MGM's full-scale version in the 'thirties starring Ronald Colman, which, if memory serves, was superior in every respect to the present copy. This time around, the self-sacrificing Sydney Carton, who takes another man's place on the guillotine for the sake of the woman he loves, is played by Dirk Bogarde in a strangely listless film that is, on the whole, faithful to the novel but lacks the sweep both of the novel and of the events themselves. The picture starts promisingly enough with the opening scene of the coach on the Dover road, thus raising the hope that it will be as successful an evocation of Dickens as the aforementioned *Great Expectations*, but that hope is soon dashed as the picture bogs down in an abundance of exposition and talk. Thereafter it succeeds in capturing the imagination and the interest of the viewer only fitfully as the story moves to France and the events connected with the Revolution.

The direction by Ralph Thomas is too restrained for the material. What was needed was a bolder, more forthright approach to Dicken's romantic and sentimentalized, but nevertheless forceful, account. The picture generates little excitement and not even the action scenes have the force they should. The storming of the Bastille is, in fact, rather tame, and the handling of the crowds is unimaginative. Nor is Thomas entirely successful in injecting the proper romantic atmosphere into the more intimate scenes.

The screenplay by T. E. B. Clarke retains most of the characters and all of the well-known episodes of the novel. Certain liberties have been taken with the story, among them the creation of a part to introduce a sweet-faced young actress named Marie Versini, and to this role has been attached the character of the innocent seamstress who goes to the guillotine with Carton.

The performances, by a cast including such competent players as Dorothy Tutin (Lucy Manette), Cecil Parker (Jarvis Lorry), Stephen Murray (Dr. Manette), and Athene Seyler (Miss Pross), are, in keeping with the film, somewhat too subdued and withdrawn. Rosalie Crutchley as Madame Defarge breathes some life into the picture whenever she appears, but only Alfie Bass in the minor role of Jerry Cruncher creates a fully Dickensian character. Dirk Bogarde's Sydney Carton is not enough committed to the spirit of the character to make his final act and words as effective as they might be. In all, despite some good moments, the picture is disappointing and must be regarded as a lost opportunity in adding to the list of memorable screen adaptations from Dickens.—WILLIAM BERNHARDT

The Little Island

The Little Island, an animated film which has been described as the best film shown at the recent Cannes Festival, is the result of more than three years' dedicated work on the part of 25-year-old Dick Williams. He came to Britain after working in cartoon studios in Hollywood and his native Canada.

"The idea for the film came when I was lying on a beach on Ibiza in the Mediterranean," he told me. "Friends were arguing about everything from nudity to religion with tre-

to tell another tale, and put General Cummings in his place. And in the film, the patrol gathers the information which is instrumental in turning the tide of the campaign. "Love, not fear" dominates men's lives, is his testament (and presumably the film's), but it comes from so far out on left field that surely not even the most anxious critics will think this is an anti-war film.
—COLIN YOUNG.

A Tale of Two Cities

The Rank Organization has previously presented David Lean's distinguished film adaptations of Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* and *Oliver Twist*. Unfortunately, however, the success of the former films in recreating the variety and range of a Dickens novel is not repeated in this new Rank film. In the past there were silent versions of *A Tale of Two Cities* starring Maurice Costello and William Farnum, as well as MGM's full-scale version in the 'thirties starring Ronald Colman, which, if memory serves, was superior in every respect to the present copy. This time around, the self-sacrificing Sydney Carton, who takes another man's place on the guillotine for the sake of the woman he loves, is played by Dirk Bogarde in a strangely listless film that is, on the whole, faithful to the novel but lacks the sweep both of the novel and of the events themselves. The picture starts promisingly enough with the opening scene of the coach on the Dover road, thus raising the hope that it will be as successful an evocation of Dickens as the aforementioned *Great Expectations*, but that hope is soon dashed as the picture bogs down in an abundance of exposition and talk. Thereafter it succeeds in capturing the imagination and the interest of the viewer only fitfully as the story moves to France and the events connected with the Revolution.

The direction by Ralph Thomas is too restrained for the material. What was needed was a bolder, more forthright approach to Dicken's romantic and sentimentalized, but nevertheless forceful, account. The picture generates little excitement and not even the action scenes have the force they should. The storming of the Bastille is, in fact, rather tame, and the handling of the crowds is unimaginative. Nor is Thomas entirely successful in injecting the proper romantic atmosphere into the more intimate scenes.

The screenplay by T. E. B. Clarke retains most of the characters and all of the well-known episodes of the novel. Certain liberties have been taken with the story, among them the creation of a part to introduce a sweet-faced young actress named Marie Versini, and to this role has been attached the character of the innocent seamstress who goes to the guillotine with Carton.

The performances, by a cast including such competent players as Dorothy Tutin (Lucy Manette), Cecil Parker (Jarvis Lorry), Stephen Murray (Dr. Manette), and Athene Seyler (Miss Pross), are, in keeping with the film, somewhat too subdued and withdrawn. Rosalie Crutchley as Madame Defarge breathes some life into the picture whenever she appears, but only Alfie Bass in the minor role of Jerry Cruncher creates a fully Dickensian character. Dirk Bogarde's Sydney Carton is not enough committed to the spirit of the character to make his final act and words as effective as they might be. In all, despite some good moments, the picture is disappointing and must be regarded as a lost opportunity in adding to the list of memorable screen adaptations from Dickens.—WILLIAM BERNHARDT

The Little Island

The Little Island, an animated film which has been described as the best film shown at the recent Cannes Festival, is the result of more than three years' dedicated work on the part of 25-year-old Dick Williams. He came to Britain after working in cartoon studios in Hollywood and his native Canada.

"The idea for the film came when I was lying on a beach on Ibiza in the Mediterranean," he told me. "Friends were arguing about everything from nudity to religion with tre-

to tell another tale, and put General Cummings in his place. And in the film, the patrol gathers the information which is instrumental in turning the tide of the campaign. "Love, not fear" dominates men's lives, is his testament (and presumably the film's), but it comes from so far out on left field that surely not even the most anxious critics will think this is an anti-war film.
—COLIN YOUNG.

A Tale of Two Cities

The Rank Organization has previously presented David Lean's distinguished film adaptations of Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* and *Oliver Twist*. Unfortunately, however, the success of the former films in recreating the variety and range of a Dickens novel is not repeated in this new Rank film. In the past there were silent versions of *A Tale of Two Cities* starring Maurice Costello and William Farnum, as well as MGM's full-scale version in the 'thirties starring Ronald Colman, which, if memory serves, was superior in every respect to the present copy. This time around, the self-sacrificing Sydney Carton, who takes another man's place on the guillotine for the sake of the woman he loves, is played by Dirk Bogarde in a strangely listless film that is, on the whole, faithful to the novel but lacks the sweep both of the novel and of the events themselves. The picture starts promisingly enough with the opening scene of the coach on the Dover road, thus raising the hope that it will be as successful an evocation of Dickens as the aforementioned *Great Expectations*, but that hope is soon dashed as the picture bogs down in an abundance of exposition and talk. Thereafter it succeeds in capturing the imagination and the interest of the viewer only fitfully as the story moves to France and the events connected with the Revolution.

The direction by Ralph Thomas is too restrained for the material. What was needed was a bolder, more forthright approach to Dicken's romantic and sentimentalized, but nevertheless forceful, account. The picture generates little excitement and not even the action scenes have the force they should. The storming of the Bastille is, in fact, rather tame, and the handling of the crowds is unimaginative. Nor is Thomas entirely successful in injecting the proper romantic atmosphere into the more intimate scenes.

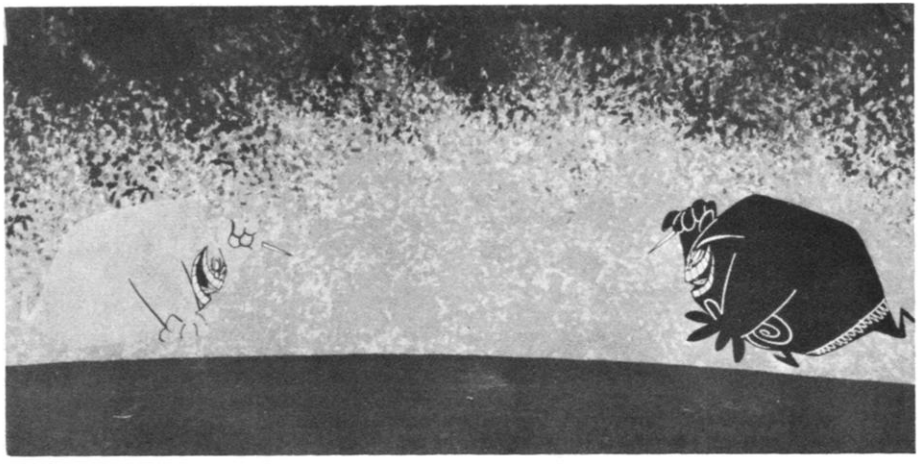
The screenplay by T. E. B. Clarke retains most of the characters and all of the well-known episodes of the novel. Certain liberties have been taken with the story, among them the creation of a part to introduce a sweet-faced young actress named Marie Versini, and to this role has been attached the character of the innocent seamstress who goes to the guillotine with Carton.

The performances, by a cast including such competent players as Dorothy Tutin (Lucy Manette), Cecil Parker (Jarvis Lorry), Stephen Murray (Dr. Manette), and Athene Seyler (Miss Pross), are, in keeping with the film, somewhat too subdued and withdrawn. Rosalie Crutchley as Madame Defarge breathes some life into the picture whenever she appears, but only Alfie Bass in the minor role of Jerry Cruncher creates a fully Dickensian character. Dirk Bogarde's Sydney Carton is not enough committed to the spirit of the character to make his final act and words as effective as they might be. In all, despite some good moments, the picture is disappointing and must be regarded as a lost opportunity in adding to the list of memorable screen adaptations from Dickens.—WILLIAM BERNHARDT

The Little Island

The Little Island, an animated film which has been described as the best film shown at the recent Cannes Festival, is the result of more than three years' dedicated work on the part of 25-year-old Dick Williams. He came to Britain after working in cartoon studios in Hollywood and his native Canada.

"The idea for the film came when I was lying on a beach on Ibiza in the Mediterranean," he told me. "Friends were arguing about everything from nudity to religion with tre-



Final CinemaScope battle: camera apparently tracks in as monsters rush together— but as CinemaScope lens can't track on the animation table, background and characters had to be animated together to approach the camera.

mendous passion, but somehow no one was getting through to anyone else."

All the creative work on the visuals and a very large proportion of the practical work was tackled by Williams single-handed. At the beginning the film was financed from his own earnings on television commercials.

But at an early stage in the production Williams met Tristram Cary, son of the late Joyce Cary and a leading composer and conductor of British film music. (The celebrated score for *The Ladykillers* was his.) Cary saw a few pencil tests and was immediately enthusiastic; so the two men formed themselves into a company.

The film cost £7,000. Made under normal commercial conditions it would have cost about £200,000. It is the second longest cartoon made in Britain, with a running time of 35 minutes.

The title comes on the screen with a bomb-like blast. Then: "This is a story about three little men. This one believed in truth. This one believed in beauty. This one believed in good." Three docile little figures squat beneath their respective ideals, while the words "truth," "beauty," and "good" writhe and glow above their heads.

We follow their arrival in an odd boat at a tiny, deserted island. Days pass; the three grow sun-tanned. One burps, another squawks, and the third rings a bell. They try to out-do each other's sound effects.

Each has a vision, watched suspiciously by the other two. The vision of truth is all eyes and decorative pattern. The truth believer spurns drink, and rebuffs a nude. The seeker after beauty becomes a pirouetting, flute-playing swordsman, with flowers springing from his footprints. His vision shows two connoisseurs of art seizing on a picture of a nude and going to immense pains to drag it to their collection—which consists of nothing but identical pictures of the same nude. Meanwhile critics and intellectuals sneer and shout at each other.

The follower of goodness embraces the other two and turns himself into a chanting church. Black figures pass through his door to turn white and float aloft. The visions end. The three little men squat on the beach as before, but with a new sense of tension.

Beauty begins to goad Good, who calls up his choirboys and turns them into soldiers. The inevitable battle begins, and the screen expands to CinemaScope to take in the two enraged monsters who rush at each other from what seems like opposite ends of the earth. Poised

in the air above them Truth, armed with a test tube, tots up the score as they collide. His blackboard is disclosed to be a vast, threatening bomb. The three little men leave the island as fast as they can.

No synopsis can do justice to the film, because Williams' story is essentially one which depends on the unlimited resources of cartoon production. It is virtually impossible to translate many of the sequences into words.

"I know the ending of the film is unresolved," says Williams, "but then so is our situation. The bomb hasn't gone off. This is just where we are. But don't look for a message—this is a descriptive film. It's concerned with the impossibility of communication, with the trouble caused by people with fixed ideas attempting to convince each other. If you want a message, the conclusion of the vision sequence, when the three men are having simultaneous visions, sums it all up.

"I was never consciously influenced by the style of other cartoonists," Williams told me. "I think the three main trends, Disney, UPA, and McLaren, all have their limitations. I started with the cartoon conventions and then let the film dictate its own style. Looking at the film now, I can see that some of it shows the influence of the Felix cartoons, and a bit of Klee. The intellectuals on their columns look a bit like Steinberg, but I didn't have this in mind when I designed them."

The sound track is remarkably complex, and includes *musique concrète*, electronic music, and sound effects played backwards. The collaboration between director and composer was exceptionally close, and both felt so satisfied with the result that they plan to continue working together.

The timing and inventiveness shown in *The Little Island* surpass any cartoon I have seen. The many comedy sequences, for instance, have a split-second punch that brought applause for scene after scene at the film's first National Film Theatre screening. The use of CinemaScope is, for once, apt and original.

But are the undoubted achievements of the film not to some extent weakened by its ambiguities? Without prior knowledge of Williams' purpose, it might be easy to suspect that his satire is aimed not only at his characters but at the things in which they believe—to start not only referring to them (as I have done in the synopsis for the sake of convenience) as Beauty, Truth, and Good but to assume that they themselves represent these ideals. Given such an interpretation, the film would suggest a philosophy of terrifying cynicism which one might be able to understand coming from a disillusioned man of ninety but never from a volatile young man of twenty-four. "But," insists Williams, "this is *not* a film about truth, or about good, or about beauty. It is just what the opening says."

—Derek Hill.

The Captain from Koepenick

Not knowing what to make to recapture that large portion of the world market they once had, the present German film-makers are turning to remakes of some of their most famous films of the past. Certainly, the new films, since the war, have lacked everything that once made the German film a byword, just as the industry itself has lacked the men that made it so: writers like Karl Mayer, directors like Murnau, Dupont, Lang, Pabst, designers like Robert Herlth, Walter Roehrig, cameramen like Freund, Hoffmann, and players like Jannings, Veidt, Krauss. To be sure, Pabst is still around but only as a shadow of his old self, and Lang is back remaking Joe May's early *Das Indische Grabmal*. But the old spirit is gone and the magic name of Ufa is only a memory. So, desperately, they are remaking *The Last Laugh*, *Maedchen in Uniform*, *Liebelei*, and planning remakes of *The Three Penny Opera*, *The Blue Angel*, etc. But, as von Sternberg

in the air above them Truth, armed with a test tube, tots up the score as they collide. His blackboard is disclosed to be a vast, threatening bomb. The three little men leave the island as fast as they can.

No synopsis can do justice to the film, because Williams' story is essentially one which depends on the unlimited resources of cartoon production. It is virtually impossible to translate many of the sequences into words.

"I know the ending of the film is unresolved," says Williams, "but then so is our situation. The bomb hasn't gone off. This is just where we are. But don't look for a message—this is a descriptive film. It's concerned with the impossibility of communication, with the trouble caused by people with fixed ideas attempting to convince each other. If you want a message, the conclusion of the vision sequence, when the three men are having simultaneous visions, sums it all up.

"I was never consciously influenced by the style of other cartoonists," Williams told me. "I think the three main trends, Disney, UPA, and McLaren, all have their limitations. I started with the cartoon conventions and then let the film dictate its own style. Looking at the film now, I can see that some of it shows the influence of the Felix cartoons, and a bit of Klee. The intellectuals on their columns look a bit like Steinberg, but I didn't have this in mind when I designed them."

The sound track is remarkably complex, and includes *musique concrète*, electronic music, and sound effects played backwards. The collaboration between director and composer was exceptionally close, and both felt so satisfied with the result that they plan to continue working together.

The timing and inventiveness shown in *The Little Island* surpass any cartoon I have seen. The many comedy sequences, for instance, have a split-second punch that brought applause for scene after scene at the film's first National Film Theatre screening. The use of CinemaScope is, for once, apt and original.

But are the undoubted achievements of the film not to some extent weakened by its ambiguities? Without prior knowledge of Williams' purpose, it might be easy to suspect that his satire is aimed not only at his characters but at the things in which they believe—to start not only referring to them (as I have done in the synopsis for the sake of convenience) as Beauty, Truth, and Good but to assume that they themselves represent these ideals. Given such an interpretation, the film would suggest a philosophy of terrifying cynicism which one might be able to understand coming from a disillusioned man of ninety but never from a volatile young man of twenty-four. "But," insists Williams, "this is *not* a film about truth, or about good, or about beauty. It is just what the opening says."

—Derek Hill.

The Captain from Koepenick

Not knowing what to make to recapture that large portion of the world market they once had, the present German film-makers are turning to remakes of some of their most famous films of the past. Certainly, the new films, since the war, have lacked everything that once made the German film a byword, just as the industry itself has lacked the men that made it so: writers like Karl Mayer, directors like Murnau, Dupont, Lang, Pabst, designers like Robert Herlth, Walter Roehrig, cameramen like Freund, Hoffmann, and players like Jannings, Veidt, Krauss. To be sure, Pabst is still around but only as a shadow of his old self, and Lang is back remaking Joe May's early *Das Indische Grabmal*. But the old spirit is gone and the magic name of Ufa is only a memory. So, desperately, they are remaking *The Last Laugh*, *Maedchen in Uniform*, *Liebelei*, and planning remakes of *The Three Penny Opera*, *The Blue Angel*, etc. But, as von Sternberg

once told me about the remakes of classics, "You can't really remake them, they were products of their time and exist in their full veracity *only* as products of their time." But that isn't stopping Hollywood from announcing a remake of *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* or the Italians from remaking *Siegfried*. And so it goes—they all hope that something of the luster of the original will rub off on the new version. Also, there's always the old argument that there's a new generation of filmgoers today who never saw the originals anyway.

So we have a slick and glossy remake of Richard Oswald's mid-thirties' *The Captain of Koepenick*, following the original script almost scene for scene and word for word—again done in collaboration with author Carl Zuckmayer and directed this time by Helmut Kautner, who is an excellent craftsman (witness his *The Devil's General*, with its aura of intelligence hovering over every detail) and this time in color. And we have Heinz Ruhmann, whose forte till now has been comedy parts, playing the title role so unforgettably played in Oswald's version by the late Max Pallenberg. Everything is done impeccably—acting, direction, dialogue, photography—everything is just right, including the reconstruction of pre-World War I Berlin, and, for *aficionados* of the music of language, the low Berliner *patois* is delicious. The story of that old cobbler, Wilhelm Voigt, who, in desperation to get a passport, commandeered a squad of troops in the guise of a Captain and made monkeys of the local burgomaster of Koepenick, his cohorts and sundry officials—all of whom kowtowed to his uniform —still has its risible moments and even some touching ones. As a satire on the national German temperament, it would have had more validity if we didn't know that the kowtowing to demagogues and the uniform on the part of the German people was a most sinister trait, indeed, and nothing to laugh at. Somehow, after World War I, we could still accept this joke and laugh with Zuckmayer in the recounting of it. After World War II, its initial premise is not so funny any more.—HERMAN G. WEINBERG.

This Angry Age

When Dino de Laurentiis decided to transfer Marguerite Duras' novel *The Sea Wall* (*Barrage contre le Pacifique*) to the screen he heaped upon it all the ingredients of an artistic and commercial success on the international market. To appease the bobbysoxers of the world he chose current idol Anthony Perkins, who happens, incidentally, to have acting ability. He gave it the benefit of a fine supporting cast; scriptwriter Irwin Shaw; the lush and exotic scenery of Thailand and Silvana Mangano; and the guidance of one of Europe's more renowned directors, René Clément (*Forbidden Games, Walls of Malapaga, Gervaise*). But the opportunity for viewing, at least in the Los Angeles area, seems to be the one ingredient no one took pains with: the film's release was almost surreptitious. Columbia's publicity department printed a synopsis six months before the film was released, which gave an indication of the kind of film they thought they were exploiting: it was written like an advertisement for photographs sent in plain brown wrappers.

In the film itself, we find these goings-on rather less sensational. In the shower scene, Miss Mangano, touched and flattered by the advances of the plantation owner's son, is about to allow him to watch until he offers to pay for the favor. And in the hotel scene, with an after-dinner seduction up his sleeve, Persoff's attempts to conceal the bedroom are touchingly comic, and the scene is one of the most moving in the film. These intriguing discrepancies seem only to have confused the distributor about how to sell the film to an American audience which generally likes its dichotomies between good and evil straight. The result is a change in title from *The Sea Wall* to *This Angry Age*, and a release in Los Angeles coupled with *The Screaming Mimi*, aimed at a fast general run. After this it disappeared swiftly into the hinterlands. It is reasonable to suppose that it is precisely this kind of handling which prevents the film from reaching the audience which would appreciate it.

This Angry Age is a film with values beyond

once told me about the remakes of classics, "You can't really remake them, they were products of their time and exist in their full veracity *only* as products of their time." But that isn't stopping Hollywood from announcing a remake of *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* or the Italians from remaking *Siegfried*. And so it goes—they all hope that something of the luster of the original will rub off on the new version. Also, there's always the old argument that there's a new generation of filmgoers today who never saw the originals anyway.

So we have a slick and glossy remake of Richard Oswald's mid-thirties' *The Captain of Koepenick*, following the original script almost scene for scene and word for word—again done in collaboration with author Carl Zuckmayer and directed this time by Helmut Kautner, who is an excellent craftsman (witness his *The Devil's General*, with its aura of intelligence hovering over every detail) and this time in color. And we have Heinz Ruhmann, whose forte till now has been comedy parts, playing the title role so unforgettably played in Oswald's version by the late Max Pallenberg. Everything is done impeccably—acting, direction, dialogue, photography—everything is just right, including the reconstruction of pre-World War I Berlin, and, for *aficionados* of the music of language, the low Berliner *patois* is delicious. The story of that old cobbler, Wilhelm Voigt, who, in desperation to get a passport, commandeered a squad of troops in the guise of a Captain and made monkeys of the local burgomaster of Koepenick, his cohorts and sundry officials—all of whom kowtowed to his uniform —still has its risible moments and even some touching ones. As a satire on the national German temperament, it would have had more validity if we didn't know that the kowtowing to demagogues and the uniform on the part of the German people was a most sinister trait, indeed, and nothing to laugh at. Somehow, after World War I, we could still accept this joke and laugh with Zuckmayer in the recounting of it. After World War II, its initial premise is not so funny any more.—HERMAN G. WEINBERG.

This Angry Age

When Dino de Laurentiis decided to transfer Marguerite Duras' novel *The Sea Wall* (*Barrage contre le Pacifique*) to the screen he heaped upon it all the ingredients of an artistic and commercial success on the international market. To appease the bobbysoxers of the world he chose current idol Anthony Perkins, who happens, incidentally, to have acting ability. He gave it the benefit of a fine supporting cast; scriptwriter Irwin Shaw; the lush and exotic scenery of Thailand and Silvana Mangano; and the guidance of one of Europe's more renowned directors, René Clément (*Forbidden Games, Walls of Malapaga, Gervaise*). But the opportunity for viewing, at least in the Los Angeles area, seems to be the one ingredient no one took pains with: the film's release was almost surreptitious. Columbia's publicity department printed a synopsis six months before the film was released, which gave an indication of the kind of film they thought they were exploiting: it was written like an advertisement for photographs sent in plain brown wrappers.

In the film itself, we find these goings-on rather less sensational. In the shower scene, Miss Mangano, touched and flattered by the advances of the plantation owner's son, is about to allow him to watch until he offers to pay for the favor. And in the hotel scene, with an after-dinner seduction up his sleeve, Persoff's attempts to conceal the bedroom are touchingly comic, and the scene is one of the most moving in the film. These intriguing discrepancies seem only to have confused the distributor about how to sell the film to an American audience which generally likes its dichotomies between good and evil straight. The result is a change in title from *The Sea Wall* to *This Angry Age*, and a release in Los Angeles coupled with *The Screaming Mimi*, aimed at a fast general run. After this it disappeared swiftly into the hinterlands. It is reasonable to suppose that it is precisely this kind of handling which prevents the film from reaching the audience which would appreciate it.

This Angry Age is a film with values beyond

its faults. René Clément has used his locations with the telling eye of a documentary film-maker (his early training) who can hunt out what is unique and exotic in a country and yet make us feel the reality of it. The color photography of Otello Martelli adds strongly to the film's effectiveness. Under Clément's direction, Silvana Mangano manages to look like an actress; Jo Van Fleet again proves herself one of the finest character actresses on the screen; Nehemia Persoff sheds the worst excesses of method acting so evident in his television appearances, and emerges as a convincing character; Chu Shao Chuan has a remarkably expressive face. Irwin Shaw and Clément collaborated on the screenplay (Diego Fabbri and Ivo Perilli receive credit on the version shown abroad) and the result is a literate script which gives the audience credit for more intelligence, sympathy, and understanding than they are used to in American films. It deserves an audience. If it had been slated for the art-house circuit it might have found one.—A.M.Z.

Book Reviews

Novels into Films, by George Bluestone (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1958. $5.00).

Authors, readers, and critics constantly complain about the inadequacy of Hollywood's adaptations of novels to the screen. These cries of anguish apparently pass unheard over Hollywood, where each year a large percentage of the total film output continues to derive from novels, new and old. Indeed, the percentage of such adaptations is greater among the A pictures than among the B and C, and many of the acknowledged film classics are based upon novels. More than that, even as they cry out, the public lines up at the box office for films based on books which they have read or heard about. Thus the phenomenon of the film adaptation is an interesting one: psychologically, sociologically, and cinematically.

In 1949, a study* attempted to describe, as objectively as possible, what happens when such adaptations are made. Its aim was quite simple: to tell what is left out, what is retained in altered form, and what is added when a famous novel becomes a moving picture. The present volume tries for something more difficult and more ambitious. While it uses the kinds of objective data which were gathered in the earlier study, it is not content to stop with a description of what happens. It tries, in effect, to be a *Poetics* of the film; to deal not only with what happened when the film version of the novel was made, but aesthetically and in terms of the film medium, what *should* have happened. This is a much more interesting goal, but it is much more difficult to attain.

Mr. Bluestone states as his basic assumption "that the two media are marked by such essen-

* Lester Asheim, "From Book to Film: A Comparative Analysis of the Content of Selected Novels and the Motion Pictures Based Upon Them." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Chicago, Graduate Library School, 1949. Articles based on this work appeared in the Spring and Summer issues, 1951, of the *Hollywood Quarterly*, and in the Fall 1951 and Spring 1952 issues of its successor, the *Quarterly of Film, Radio, and Television*.

its faults. René Clément has used his locations with the telling eye of a documentary film-maker (his early training) who can hunt out what is unique and exotic in a country and yet make us feel the reality of it. The color photography of Otello Martelli adds strongly to the film's effectiveness. Under Clément's direction, Silvana Mangano manages to look like an actress; Jo Van Fleet again proves herself one of the finest character actresses on the screen; Nehemia Persoff sheds the worst excesses of method acting so evident in his television appearances, and emerges as a convincing character; Chu Shao Chuan has a remarkably expressive face. Irwin Shaw and Clément collaborated on the screenplay (Diego Fabbri and Ivo Perilli receive credit on the version shown abroad) and the result is a literate script which gives the audience credit for more intelligence, sympathy, and understanding than they are used to in American films. It deserves an audience. If it had been slated for the art-house circuit it might have found one.—A.M.Z.

Book Reviews

Novels into Films, by George Bluestone (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1958. $5.00).

Authors, readers, and critics constantly complain about the inadequacy of Hollywood's adaptations of novels to the screen. These cries of anguish apparently pass unheard over Hollywood, where each year a large percentage of the total film output continues to derive from novels, new and old. Indeed, the percentage of such adaptations is greater among the A pictures than among the B and C, and many of the acknowledged film classics are based upon novels. More than that, even as they cry out, the public lines up at the box office for films based on books which they have read or heard about. Thus the phenomenon of the film adaptation is an interesting one: psychologically, sociologically, and cinematically.

In 1949, a study* attempted to describe, as objectively as possible, what happens when such adaptations are made. Its aim was quite simple: to tell what is left out, what is retained in altered form, and what is added when a famous novel becomes a moving picture. The present volume tries for something more difficult and more ambitious. While it uses the kinds of objective data which were gathered in the earlier study, it is not content to stop with a description of what happens. It tries, in effect, to be a *Poetics* of the film; to deal not only with what happened when the film version of the novel was made, but aesthetically and in terms of the film medium, what *should* have happened. This is a much more interesting goal, but it is much more difficult to attain.

Mr. Bluestone states as his basic assumption "that the two media are marked by such essen-

* Lester Asheim, "From Book to Film: A Comparative Analysis of the Content of Selected Novels and the Motion Pictures Based Upon Them." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Chicago, Graduate Library School, 1949. Articles based on this work appeared in the Spring and Summer issues, 1951, of the *Hollywood Quarterly*, and in the Fall 1951 and Spring 1952 issues of its successor, the *Quarterly of Film, Radio, and Television*.

tially different traits that they belong to separate artistic genera." But this is not as much his assumption as it is an hypothesis, the truth of which the data of his study are utilized to demonstrate.

The data are derived from a close, but essentially subjective, analysis of six books and the films based on them. These films—*The Informer, Wuthering Heights, Pride and Prejudice, The Grapes of Wrath, The Ox-Bow Incident,* and *Madame Bovary*—illustrate a great variety of both fiction and filmic styles; they represent the work of different adapters, directors, and producers; and they cover a span of fourteen years of film-making and a century and a half of novel-writing. Such a small sample to deal with such a variety of variables can obviously not add up to anything very convincing statistically; the data are essentially illustrations selected by Mr. Bluestone to support his personal views of a film aesthetics. The views are always interesting, whether statistically significant or not.

Because of the range of factors with which he must deal, Mr. Bluestone is forced to cope with different things in each of the chapters, making of the book a collection of individual essays rather than a unified attack on a well defined problem. What makes a film a successful adaptation, for example, is never quite pinned down. It shouldn't be its literal fidelity to the novel, of course, for the film is a separate genus. Yet when the film departs very far from the novel, Mr. Bluestone cannot forbear from deploring, for then why bother with the novel in the first place? Success at the box office is certainly an unreliable criterion, yet when a box-office success also meets the author's definition of a successful film adaptation, he tends to cite public acceptance as evidence of aesthetic integrity. On the other hand, when an adaptation is a success in Mr. Bluestone's eyes but not at the box office, he has to search for other explanations. This confusion of standards serves very well to illustrate the complexity of the problem, but I am not sure that this was the author's deliberate intention.

I found the book least interesting when it deals with the art of the novel. Although in his preface Bluestone promises to place his emphasis on the film rather than the book, "on the grounds that the novel has been studied more substantially and more competently elsewhere," he must inevitably devote a great deal of space to the novel if he is to have any base on which to build his film-novel comparison. Unfortunately, most of the critical analyses of the novels are quoted from the works of other critics, whose aim usually was to deal with the form of novels generally, rather than with that of the individual title in Bluestone's analysis. The result is that the quotations, out of their original context, are not always meaningful or pertinent to the film under discussion. For example, the chapter on *The Ox-Bow Incident* devotes considerable space to the other writings of Clark, which were hardly the film-maker's business; and the chapter on *Madame Bovary* goes into a lengthy discussion of the treatment of time in novels which, it turns out, was not something with which either Flaubert or his adaptors had to deal. I suspect that the continual obeisance to the aesthetics of the novel, in a study which attempts to establish an aesthetics for the film, derives in part from the necessity for the writer to justify his work to the Æsthetics of Literature program at the Johns Hopkins University, where it was submitted as a doctoral dissertation.

The book has real value to any student of the film despite these strictures. Anyone who has seen the films Mr. Bluestone discusses, especially if he has also read the novels from which they were derived, will find the discussions provocative. Whether he agrees with all of the judgments or not, he will have to admit that the writer provides a strong argument in support of the film as an art form in its own right. He makes a good case for the point of view that the success of a film adaptation must be judged in filmic rather than in literary terms. And he illustrates very well some of the visual devices which—different, but equally valid—are available to film-makers to replace the verbal devices of the novel. These are important points to make. Every reader of the book will, I am sure, bring sharpened insights and new awareness to the next films he sees.—LESTER ASHEIM.

Film Quartered

(CONDUCTED BY A. PISMO CLAM)

This department will feature regular competitions. Contestants may submit as many entries as they wish, but each must be limited to 250 words. Entries cannot be returned. One prize of $10.00 will be awarded each quarter to the best entry, and prizes of $3.00 will be awarded to all other entries published.

Entries for the competition below must be received by October 15, 1958. They should be addressed to: "Film Quartered," University of California Press, Berkeley 4, California. Prizes will be announced in the Winter 1958 issue.

COMPETITION NO. 1

Furnish a brief review of any one of the following "unrealized" films:

Claude Autant-Lara's *Le Grand Meaulnes*

Robert Bresson's *Walden*

Josef von Sternberg's *Other Voices, Other Rooms*

Carol Reed's *The Innocent Voyage* (*A High Wind in Jamaica*)

Henri-Georges Clouzot's *Death on the Installment Plan*

Orson Welles' *Falstaff*

David Lean's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*

Arne Sucksdorff's *The Jungle Book*

Abel Gance's *Paradise Lost*

Fred Zinneman's *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*

The review should be written in the style of any one of the following: Bosley Crowther; a Museum of Modern Art program note; Seymour Stern; *Variety*; Siegfried Kracauer; *The New Yorker*; Parker Tyler.

PHOTO CREDITS: Columbia Pictures, Daiei, Edward Harrison Pictures, Mark III, Museum of Modern Art, Richard Williams, Shochiku, Stanley Kramer Productions, Toho, Twentieth Century-Fox, United Artists, Warner Brothers.

[*Editor's Notebook, continued*]

us devoutly desired over the years, with the hunch that in a freer if poorer production market the creative initiative would pass from the financier and administrator to the film-maker. And although the results are difficult to assess because of the bifurcated pattern of present production (blockbusters on the one hand and quickies on the other) the situation today is that men with ideas—and one hopes, talent—go forth in search of money. It is a costly freedom, in certain ways; above all, the big stars, of whom only a handful can be counted on to bring back what they cost, now command fantastic prices. Other factors of production have all been rising in cost. And the assembly-line method *was* rational in this sense: it occupied studios, talent, and equipment as fully as possible. The new freedom is wasteful: if television or sponsored-film work does not keep production facilities busy, they sit there eating up interest money, maintenance, depreciation, and so on. And few films can be shot entirely on location—or if they are, other expenses result.

In many other countries, film production faces crippling economic problems, technical backwardness, harassing governmental or party supervision, and other disabilities. Here, and ultimately elsewhere, the development of pay-television may largely destroy the existing pattern of motion picture distribution, presenting us with yet another type of atomized audience. We face, then, a period of very large uncertainties in the film world: a world, as we have seen in the past, capable of exceedingly rapid change, a focal point of powerful economic and political interests. So we are confident that there will be plenty remaining to be said about movies and TV, and *Film Quarterly* is here to provide a place to say it.

A word on things to come: We already face the perennial problem of quarterlies—finding space for the material available. On hand, or in various stages of planning or execution, we have a study of present-day casting practices