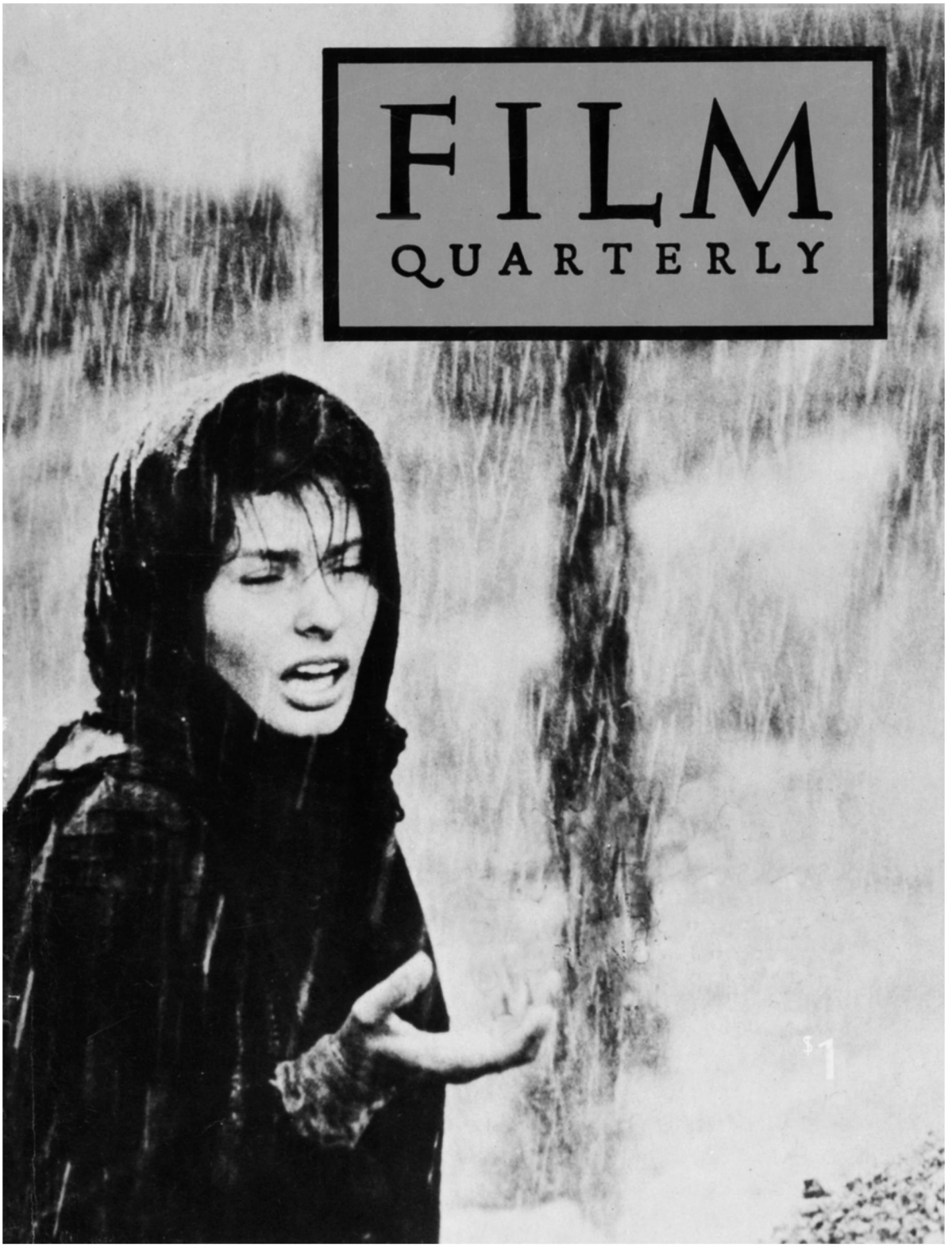
FILM QUARTERLY



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FILM QUARTERLY

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Editor's Notebook

Looking Ahead

Film Quarterly's circulation has grown steadily for the past several issues, and we hope that with the following issue we will be able to expand the magazine to 72 pages, making possible larger illustrations and a less cramped layout. We are grateful for the support of our advertisers, which is crucial to this proposed expansion; and we are grateful to our subscribers, whose commitment to the journal fundamentally sustains it. More advertisers, and more subscribers, will enable us to provide many new and exciting things.

Space allowing, we hope to print in the next few issues special groups of articles on Humphrey Jennings and Jean Vigo; a comprehensive study of the films of Antonioni; reports on the year's festivals and best films; a series of articles on the national film units of Canada, India, Australia, Cuba, and so on; "Classics Revisited" articles on *Earth*, *Strike*, and *Citizen Kane;* interviews with John Hubley, Norman MacLaren, Martin Ritt, William Wyler, Elia Kazan, and Akira Kurosawa; articles on Jean Rouch and new Polish short films; articles on new film-makers throughout the world, including both Hollywood and New York directors; and of course our regular intensive reviews of features and short films, book reviews, and an expanded "Entertainments" section.

In This Issue

In the following pages we present three articles on national cinemas (Britain, Italy, and Sweden) and two articles on directors (Torre Nilsson of Argentina and—via interview—Federico Fellini of Italy). If one wished catchphrases for recent developments in these three countries, one might dub them respectively social cinema, moral cinema, and theatrical cinema. Yet, although the industries in each of the three, and in Argentina as well, are small by contrast with those of such giant film-producers as Japan, India, the United States, and the Soviet Union, each sustains genuine diversity of style and intention, and has provided a chance for directors of great individuality. The economic problems of a small film industry are, of course, acute; its artistic problems sometimes seem to yield more often to the talent, ingenuity, and determination of its directors—though the relation between size and artistic excellence is not simply an inverse one.

The following articles, then, explore the recent climate of film-making in these countries. Several reviews in this issue also deal with films from Britain, Italy, and Sweden.

About Our Contributors

ALFRED APPEL, JR. is a student of literature at Columbia University and has previously contributed reviews to *Film Quarterly.*

JACKSON BURGESS is the author of two novels *(Pillar of Cloud* and *The Atrocity)*; his play, *The Cannibal Cat,* was recently produced in Berkeley.

CARLOS CLARENS is a Cuban who lives in New York; he has written many articles and reviews for *Films in Review.*

STEVEN P. HILL is a student of Slavic languages at the University of Michigan and author of the widely noted article, "Soviet Film Criticism," which appeared several issues back.

PAULINE KAEL, whom we are especially delighted to have lured into our pages at last, is well known among film devotees for her acid writings in *Sight & Sound* and other publications, for the program notes she wrote for the Berkeley Cinema Guild, and for her radio broadcasts on KPFA, Berkeley.

ANNE MORRISETT is an American free-lance writer who has recently been living in Sweden.

Her articles have appeared in *Evergreen Review*, *Liberation*, and various Swedish publications.

ENZO PERI is an Italian who studied film at the University of California, Los Angeles; he has now returned to Rome.

JAMES STOLLER studies at Columbia University and has written for the *New York Film Bulletin* and other publications.

MARIO TRAJTENBERG, film critic of the Montevido weekly, *Marcha*, has also written about films for other periodicals; he is now our Montevideo Editor.

VERNON YOUNG writes regularly on films for *Hudson Review* and for film magazines. He has recently been traveling in Europe, and has now returned to Stockholm.

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PAULINE KAEL

BRITAIN

Commitment and the Strait-Jacket

The new look in English films is reality: the streets, the factories and towns, houses and backyards of grim, modern, industrialized England. The young English authors and directors are striking at social problems of every type; but the backgrounds, the environment, show us a larger theme: the ugliness, the fatalism, the regimentation of daily life. In Hollywood, in the 'thirties, Warner Brothers produced the socially conscious gangster and depression melodramas that starred Paul Muni, James Cagney, Edward G. Robinson. Viewed today, most of those films don't look like much. But they were an angry reaction to the frustrations, poverty, and injustices of the 'thirties, and they had tremendous impact at the time. That English movie-making should now become just about the most socially conscious in the world is amazing when you consider that, as the critic-director Tony Richardson put it, "It is a frightening and disturbing comment on British democracy that certain institutions—the monarchy, the army, the church, the public school, the prisons, the police—are guarded from any candid presentation with as hard and tough an iron curtain as the Russian bloc has ever imposed." How can you produce social criticism when you can't criticize the official organs of power? You look at the way people live.

The new English movement got its impetus and much of its style from the documentaries made under the group title "Free Cinema." In the mid-'fifties, these short explorations of the modern cities, with their jazz clubs, night life, seaside resorts, factories, and markets were the first films shot by a group of young critics—Richardson, Karel Reisz, Lindsay Anderson.

But unlike the French New Wave group of critics who became both directors and scenarists, when the English critics began to make features, they did not prepare their own scenarios. They joined with some of the new English literary figures—John Braine, John Osborne, Alan Sillitoe, Wolf Mankowitz, and others. Their features are not so cheap as the French ones—nor so individual in style and subject-matter. They share the documentary look of the Free Cinema shorts; in fact, the five best films are all the work of two cameramen—Freddie Francis photographed *Room at the Top*, the first feature by Jack Clayton, *Sons and Lovers* by Jack Cardiff, and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, the first feature by Karel Reisz; Oswald Morris did *Look Back in Anger*, the first feature by Tony Richardson, and his second, *The Entertainer*.

The semidocumentary surface of these films is linked to an ideology which is in its way peculiar to English film critics—the ideology of commitment. If you read *Sight & Sound*, in which so many films are appraised for the degree of the director's commitment to a social point of view (good if left-wing, bad if not) you will discover that in this ideology, location

shooting, particularly around working-class locations, is, in itself, almost a proof of commitment. In judging works from other countries, the English will overestimate a film like *Marty*, and they'll suggest that a film that is stylized or that deals with upper-class characters is somehow "evasive"—that it doesn't want to come to terms with the material. This attitude gives the critics an extraordinarily high moral tone. They are always pecking away at failures of conviction or commending a show of conviction. A few issues back, the editor, Penelope Houston, praised some new actors in these terms: "This kind of purposeful acting is something encouragingly new on the British screen; and the cinema cannot be allowed to imagine it can continue to do without it." Doesn't that sound a bit like a high-minded social worker addressing her charges? As a result of this rigid and restrictive critical vocabulary, *Sight & Sound*, still the finest magazine in the film world, is becoming monotonous. The critics are too predictable—and this is a danger for the new movement in English films as well.

Look what happens to these critics when they confront a picture like *I'm All Right, Jack*—a cynical slapstick farce about the Welfare State. Wherever the innocent hero turns, he sees corruption, and when he tries to expose it, he is considered insane. The big businessmen are the villains in the plot, and they indulge in all kinds of familiar skullduggery, but the film also shows the trade-unionists as smug and self-centered. And though the satire of union practices is much more affectionate, it is so accurately aimed—and we are so unused to it—that it comes off much the better. As the shop steward, Peter Sellers is avid to protect the workers' rights—he's earnest—he's monstrously self-serious. He wears a little Hitler moustache—that moustache was always an oddly lower-middle-class adornment on Hitler; this shop steward is lower-middle-class in his habits, but he's a fanatical proletarian in theory. He speaks in a self-educated jargon that derives from political pamphlets. The movie satirizes this little stuffed shirt and the featherbedding practices of his union.

Now, we may assume that the English workers know what their unions are, but the committed critics still regard them as both underdogs and sacred cows. The reviewer for *Films & Filming* said, "Something rather frightening has happened to the Boulting Brothers. They have turned sour. *I'm All Right, Jack* is the latest in their run of social comedies. I hope

SATURDAY NIGHT AND SUNDAY MORNING: *Arthur Seaton will reject his pregnant married mistress and turn to his "proper, porcelain bride with an uplift so high it overreaches her mind."*

it is the last. . . ." Earlier satires by the Boultings, the critic went on, were innocent fun, but this was "malicious, and worse, depressingly cynical."

In its guide to film-goers, *Sight & Sound* dismissed *I'm All Right, Jack* as "more jaundiced than stimulating," and Penelope Houston wrote, ". . . this is a picture made from no standpoint, other than from the shoulder-shrugging confidence that 'everything is fair game.' It looks like the work of sour liberals, men who have retired from the contest and are spending their time throwing stones at the players." Doesn't that make you wonder what the "contest" is that movie-makers are supposed to be involved in? The only possible interpretation is that it's all right to see human folly on the right, but that it's not fair game if you find it on the left. It's a little like the old argument that you shouldn't point out anything wrong with the Soviet Union, or you were giving aid to the reactionaries. How long does it take for liberal film journals to catch up with what Shaw pointed out so long ago, that trade-unionism would be the capitalism of the working class? (As Stanley Kauffmann pointed out, *I'm All Right, Jack* is "a comedy about the new conflict—between two kinds of capitalists.") Miss Houston goes on to say of the Boultings, ". . . they are not social satirists because they too overtly revel in the dislocations that give them something to laugh at. One would hate to share all their laughter." Isn't that a preposterously prissy approach to satire—as if to say that if you really laugh at the social scene, there must be something the matter with you. The critic's jargon isn't far removed from the shop steward's.

There are other recent lightweight English films that deal with the contemporary scene that are worth a look. *Expresso Bongo,* a satire on entertainment crazes, specifically rock-'n-roll, is the best British musical comedy since the days of Jessie Matthews, Sonnie Hale, and Jack Buchanan. The script is by Wolf Mankowitz, who has an ear for the poetry of unlikely places. You may have heard of his fine dialogue in the short film, *The Bespoke Overcoat;* in *Expresso Bongo,* he stylizes theatrical sentimentality and vulgarity. The talent-agent hero—a liar and pretender who is more likable and humane than many honest heroes—is the closest relative in these films to Archie Rice, The Entertainer.

Sapphire is a thriller about a light-skinned Negro girl found dead on Hampstead Heath. The manhunt involves going into the Negro sections of London, and going also into the psychological areas of the antagonism of Negroes and whites. Although the movie has its self-conscious preachments, it goes much farther in some ways than American movies. There is an amusingly haughty barrister with a little beard—a Negro bishop's son, played by Gordon Heath. When asked if he had intended to marry Sapphire, he explains that he couldn't possibly—"She was part white."

You may note that the movie itself falls into a prejudicial racial cliché: nobody wastes any tears over high-yellow Sapphire—she was trying to pass, and so, presumably, she earned her fate as a corpse. But her dark brother is a physician in the Midlands. He's not ashamed of his skin; he wears a philosophic smile, and he's intelligent, understanding, and "dignified"—the type of Negro who's always praised for bringing credit to his people. He's a bore, but we see a lot of him, probably to offset some of the location shots of Negro streets and the view we get of jazz dives. Most of the Negroes I know aren't happy about looking Negro, but on the screen it's certainly a blessing that Negro parts must almost always be played by Negroes. In the movies, the unfortunate fact that Anne Frank was Jewish, and hence, not acceptable as the heroine of an expensive production, was rectified by casting Millie Perkins in the role. Soon, Jeffrey Hunter, like H. B. Warner before him, will make Jesus Christ more socially acceptable. (You may have observed that, although Christ is always played by a Gentile, a Jew is frequently cast as Judas.)

Another thriller, *Tiger Bay,* has good performances by Hayley Mills and Horst Bucholtz, and excellent use of locale—the dockland of Cardiff in Wales. Here, too, there is a large

concentration of Negroes in the overcrowded tenements. Until this last year, British pictures scarcely gave any evidence that there were Negroes on the island.

I regret that I haven't had an opportunity to see *The Angry Silence.* [See review elsewhere in this issue.] I'd like now to take up the others—*Room at the Top, Look Back in Anger, The Entertainer,* the Anglo-American production *Sons and Lovers,* and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning.*

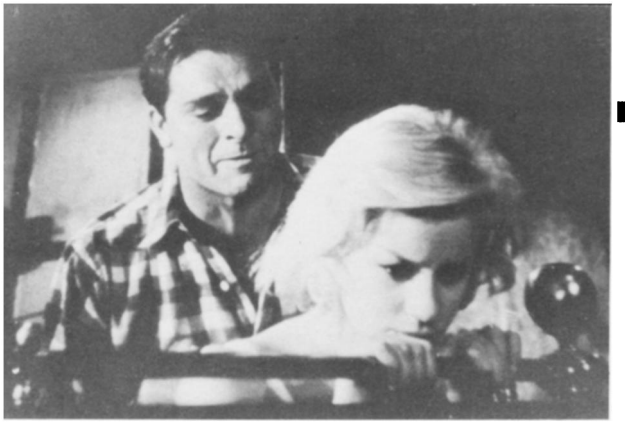
Room at the Top is the good old story of the bright, ambitious boy from the provinces who wants to make good in the big city. Stendhal set it in the post-Napoleonic period in *The Red and the Black;* Theodore Dreiser set it in the beginnings of industrialization in *An American Tragedy.* In *Room at the Top,* the boy comes from the modern industrial slums of Yorkshire; he has acquired a cynical education in a German prison camp; and he has become a civil servant. Like Julien Sorel and Clyde Griffiths, Joe Lampton is on the make; unlike them, he doesn't get killed for his sexual transgressions, though he does get beaten up in a manner which suggests a ritual punishment. *Room at the Top,* like its predecessors, is about class, money, and power—and about how sex, which is used to get them, traps the user. The theme of the opportunistic social climber is a good, solid theme; the surprise of *Room at the Top* is the English setting. We wouldn't be surprised by a costume picture which had, in a bit part, a comic parvenu whom the elegant nobleman could put down. But an aggressive, unfunny young parvenu, a slum-bred man who wants to break through the class structure and get into the Establishment—that's new. In this country, it would be a rags-to-riches story, the birth of a tycoon—but in English films it's the sort of thing that just isn't done.

The movie tells a story, and it's absorbing, and, for the most part, convincing in a way that few recent American films have been. In this country, it helped bring adults back into the movie houses. This was partly because of the superb love scenes, and partly, no doubt, because of the unusually blunt dialogue. "Frank," or "gamy" are, I think the words the advertisers prefer. The movie has the look, and occasionally the sound, of four-letter words.

Look Back in Anger doesn't need four-letter words: the hero's polysyllabic discourse is infinitely more abusive and shocking. British understatement is gone; the case is marvellously overstated. I'm afraid it's almost at the level of confession that I must state that although *Look Back in Anger* is obviously a mess in any number of ways. I think this mess—and *The Entertainer,* also a mess—are the most exciting films to have come out of England in this period.

During the years when I was programming for the Berkeley Cinema Guild, I developed some pride in being able to get people to come to see a picture I thought ought to be seen. But I couldn't convince any great number of people to look at *Look Back in Anger.* I wrote that it was like a blazing elaboration of that one stunning interchange in *The Wild One* when Brando is asked, "What are you rebelling against?" and he replies, "What have you got?" But the audiences that packed the theater for *The Wild One* didn't show up for the intellectual wild one.

Why did people who were so happy with *Room at the Top* ignore *Look Back in Anger?* It's true, Joe Lampton is a relatively simple man with a goal—he wants to get somewhere—and Jimmy Porter can't think of any place to go. But he tells us something about where we are—which Lampton is incapable of doing. Just as declamation, *Look Back in Anger* is exciting—and both it and *The Entertainer* are original in their dialogue and characters. And, after all, none of these English movies is great as a movie. Compared to the work of a great director like Renoir or De Sica, *Room at the Top,* or *Sons and Lovers,* or *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* are a high-school girl's idea of cinema art. *Look Back in Anger* got the worst possible reception from the American press. *The New York Herald Tribune* really invited an audience with the statement: "The hero is



LOOK BACK IN ANGER: *"about the way his sensitivity turns into pain and suffering and into torture of others." [Photo, from screen, by Jim Roof.]*

probably the most unpleasant seen on film in years . . . it [the movie] dodges not one dreary issue." Bosley Crowther in *The New York Times* lured them further with the information that Jimmy Porter was " a conventional weakling, a routine crybaby, who cannot quite cope with the problems of a tough environment, and so, vents his spleen in nasty words." I won't degrade you and me by attempting to quote the barbarous language of the local critics: they didn't distinguish themselves any more than usual. It's bad enough to look at *The New Yorker:* the masterly John McCarten opened with, "The hero of *Look Back in Anger,* a character called Jimmy Porter, is insufferable, and so is the film, of English origin, in which he figures." McCarten seems to judge characters on the basis of whether they'd be unassertive and amiable drinking companions. Wouldn't he find Hamlet insufferable, and Macbeth, and Othello, and Lear?

We tend to take for granted a certain level of awareness—the awareness that binds us to our friends, that draws us to new ones. If someone I knew said of *Look Back in Anger* what *Variety* did, I would feel as if the Grand Canyon had suddenly opened at my feet. On what basis could one go on talking with someone who said that "*Look Back in Anger's* thin theme is merely an excuse for Osborne to vent his spleen on a number of conventions which have served the world fairly well for a number of years." Like colonialism, one supposes, and the class system, and segregation, and a few other conventions. How can good movies reach an audience when they're filtered through minds like these? We need some angry young critics; we particularly need them in San Francisco, where a large audience for good films depends on the judgments of one not very gifted man who can virtually make or break a foreign film.

Look Back in Anger is a movie about the intellectual frustrations of a man who feels too much—an idealist who hasn't lost his ideals: they're festering. It is about the way his sensitivity turns into pain and suffering and into torture of others. It is about the failures of men and women to give each other what they need, with the result that love becomes infected. And it is about class resentments, the moral vacuity of those in power, the absence of courage. It's about humanity as a lost cause —it's about human defeat. Richard Burton brings to the role the passion his countryman put into the lines: "Do not go gentle into that good night. Rage, rage, against the dying of the light." And the sordid flat Jimmy Porter lives in becomes a fiery landscape when he cries out against ugliness, injustice, stupidity. "Will Mummy like it?" he taunts his wife. Her "Mummy" stands for all the stale conventions of class society; and it is the "Mummy" in her that he keeps striking at.

Much of the movie is in terrible taste—the hero crows like a rooster; but perhaps just because nobody seems worried about the excesses, something breaks through. If we're going to have talking pictures, let us acknowledge the glory of talk, and be grateful for rhetoric which has the splendor of wrath and of wit.

It was Osborne who once remarked that "The British Royal Family is the gold filling in a mouthful of decay." His play *The Entertainer*—also filmed by Tony Richardson—is a study of decay and desperation. *The Enter-*

tainer is what *Death of a Salesman* tried to be. Please don't misunderstand: I'm not suggesting they're on the same level. Osborne is immensely talented.

The Entertainer reached wider audiences than *Look Back in Anger.* But that doesn't mean it was well received. *The New Yorker* gave it a great send-off: Brendan Gill took care of it in a single paragraph, beginning with, "*The Entertainer* is a very good and a very depressing picture, and I hope you'll be brave enough to go and see it." Somehow one knows that few will. Everybody has heard that it's "depressing," but it's bad movies that are depressing, not good ones. The rejection of both these films as "depressing" seems to stem from the critical school which regards all art as entertainment for tired businessmen—and theatrical and cinematic art as after-dinner entertainment. The tired businessman doesn't want to get involved in the work or to care about it—it's just supposed to aid his digestion. But suppose the play or film tells you why your stomach is sour—or excites or upsets you so that you can't rest easily that night. Well, most critics, wanting to keep you just as you are—whether you're a tired businessman or not—will caution you against it. They have a whole stock of cautionary terms. They will point out that it is "slow" or "turgid" or deals with "dismal" or "squalid" life or "makes demands on the audience" or is "full of talk." You may have noticed that critics regard talk as something that is only acceptable in very small amounts—too much talk, one might think, like too much alcohol, cannot be absorbed in the bloodstream. If tired businessmen find *Look Back in Anger* or *The Entertainer* negative or depressing, who cares? No doubt, they find the plots of Shakespeare too complicated and the speeches ever so long. Is it the function of critics to congratulate them on their short span of attention by suggesting that all Shakespearean plays should be simplified and cut? The critic who does that has become a tired businessman.

Innocent American critics of *The Cousins* identified with the country bumpkin and took the intellectual protagonist of the film for a rat. Archie Rice, The Entertainer, was described by the Dean of American film critics, the colosssus of *The New York Times,* as "a hollow, hypocritical heel . . . too shallow and cheap to be worth very much consideration." In this country, the movie reviewers are a destructive bunch of solidly, stupidly respectable Mummies—and it works either way, maternal or Egyptian.

Archie Rice is no hypocrite; he is a man in a state of utter despair—but he is too sane and too self-aware to ask for pity or sympathy. He is one of the few really created characters in modern drama or films. And the movie, if it gave us nothing but Olivier's interpretation of this character, would be a rare and important experience. *The Entertainer* is not a satisfying whole work. Tony Richardson may not be the film director people hoped he was: in both these Osborne films, he tries to set stylized theater pieces in documentary, Free Cinema-type locations. And though the locations are in themselves fascinating, and although the material of the drama has grown out of these locations and is relevant to them, Richardson can't seem to achieve a unity of style. The locations seem rather arbitrary: they're too obviously selected because they're "revealing" and photogenic.

It is, by the way, something of a shock to discover that the overwhelmingly literate Osborne didn't attend a university; his mother was a barmaid. Which leads us to another author from the working classes.

Sons and Lovers was made with American money, but it was made in England, with outdoor shooting in the industrial Midlands. The director, Jack Cardiff, was formerly known as one of the finest cameramen in England. The script is mainly by Gavin Lambert, formerly the editor of *Sight & Sound,* and easily the best of the English film critics; and the cast, except for Dean Stockwell, is also English. *Sons and Lovers* is one of the best movie adaptations of a major novel of all time—still, when you think it over, that isn't saying as much as it might

Laurence Olivier in THE ENTERTAINER: *"a man in a state of utter despair . . . one of the few really created characters in modern drama of films."*

seem to.

The camera work by Freddie Francis, in black-and-white CinemaScope, is extraordinarily beautiful; the pictorial qualities, particularly of the outdoor scenes, make a stronger impression than the story line. It's a curiously quiet, pastoral sort of film; the rhythm is off—the pictorial style, exquisite as it is, is neither Lawrentian nor a visual equivalent or even approximation of Lawrence's prose. The visual beauties aren't informed by Lawrence's passionate sense of life. The artist's fire simply isn't there—the movie is temperate, earnest, episodic. Perhaps the writer and director are too gentlemanly for Lawrence, too hesitant. They seem afraid of making some terrible mistake, and so they take no chances. But it's like *The Beast in the Jungle*—if you're afraid something may happen nothing happens, and that's the most terrible thing of all. The movie becomes a rather tepid series of scenes illustrating Lawrence's themes, carefully thought out and, mostly, in very good taste.

The movie fulfills a genuine function if it directs people to the book—but this is a boomerang. Pick up the book again at almost any point, and the movie simply disappears. There's a richness and a fullness in the novel. So many of us for years have been referring to it casually as great, then you start reading again—and it really *is* great. But the movie has beauty for the eye, and the image of Trevor Howard as Mr. Morel is something to carry in memory forever.

From the sublime to the ridiculous: can the movies grant us a few years' moratorium on post-coital discussions? There are two sequences of this type in *Sons and Lovers*—and they're the worst scenes in the movie—embarrassing, even grotesque. The first is with the frightened, inhibited girl who has submitted sacrificially—and the young hero then accuses her of having hated it. The second is with the emancipated older woman who accuses the hero of not having given all of himself. Lawrence *does* have scenes like this, but they're the culminations of relationships that have been developed over hundreds of pages; they're not really adaptable to the theatrical convention which speeds them up. In the film, it's as if, as soon as two people hit the sack, they know exactly what's wrong with their relationship and why it's got to end. What happens to the crucial love affairs in the film version of *Sons and Lovers* is rather like what happened to the Crusades in the Cecil B. DeMille version—they became one quick, decisive battle.

In fairness to *Sons and Lovers,* I should point out that the worst of the current post-coital

sequences is in another film—the very fine experimental American film, *Shadows*. The despoiled virgin sits up, and with eyes swimming with tears, says, "I didn't know it would be so awful." Show me the man *that* won't reduce to insect size. If all these sequences from recent films could be spliced together, a good title might be "Quo Vadis."

The press treated *Sons and Lovers* quite respectfully; it's a very respectful movie. *Time* even announced that "this production, in only 103 minutes, includes everything important in Lawrence's 500-page novel." An incredible statement! Was it perhaps a deliberate suggestion to *Time's* readers that there was no reason to read Lawrence? But then, it's a little difficult to know what *Time's* reviewer thought was important in the novel—he tells us that "Wendy Hiller is repellently pitiable as the carnivorous mother who entraps D. H. Lawrence's hero." *The New Yorker* provided a further simplification. Paul Morel's struggle for freedom of spirit and for sexual expression—his problems with the two women—are summed up by Whitney Balliett as "short-lived alliances" with a girl who "devours only his spirit" and a woman who "devours only his flesh." Lawrence, it would appear, was writing a nice old-fashioned novel about sacred and profane love.

It was left to *Life* magazine to supply the final word: according to *Life*, "As in most of Lawrence's works, the villain in *Sons and Lovers* is overindustrialization, which in the process of reducing its victims to slavery, also subverts their healthy passion. Although the message is dated, the film is given immediacy and sharp reality . . ." and so forth.

Just how "dated" this message is you can see in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*—set in those same Midlands a half-century later. Industrialization has swallowed up the whole working class. The movie is supposed to be a young man's coming of age and accepting adult responsibility—becoming, to use the wretched new cant—"mature." But when you look at what he's going to accept, your heart may sink. He has spirit and vitality, and he has a glimmer that there should be some fun in life, and maybe a little action. What does he do to express his dissatisfaction? He throws a few spitballs, he has an affair with a married woman, and he announces that he's not going to become like his parents. But he picks a proper, porcelain bride with an uplift so high it overreaches her mind. Caught in this gigantic penal colony of modern industrial life, she looks ahead to the shiny appliances of a housing tract—for her, it's the good life. "Why are you always throwing things?" she asks him primly. The film ends sweetly and happily, but what future can the hero have when the movie is over but to fall into the stinking stupor of his parents, get drunk, quarrel with his wife, and resign himself to bringing up little working-class brats?

It's easy to see why *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* is a big boxoffice success in England: it expresses honest working-class attitudes and its characters are mass-audience characters. Unlike the people of *Look Back in Anger* and *The Entertainer*—both financial failures—they don't talk about anything outside the working-class range of experiences. They're concerned with the job, the pint, the telly, the house with plumbing inside. But it's hard to know why the American critics should be so enthusiastic about this rather thin film—in this country, it's playing to art-house audiences who, one might suppose, would be more excited by a wider range of emotion and experience.

Saturday Night and Sunday Morning goes about as far as a movie can toward satisfying the requirement for "commitment." It is entirely set in working-class locations, the hero is a Nottingham factory worker, and the film is all told from his point of view. That may explain why English critics have been calling it everything from "the finest picture of the year" to "the greatest English picture of all time," and describing the hero as the most revolutionary hero the British screen has had. I don't know what they're talking about. The film is brilliantly photographed—once again by Freddie Francis, and Albert Finney is very good as the hero. But the calculation is all too evident in the composi-

ROOM AT THE TOP: *the love affair which the hero sacrifices for position.*

tion and timing. Everything is held in check; every punch is called and then pulled. When the hero and his cousin are fishing, the caught fish signals the end of the scene; a dog barks for a fade-out. The central fairground sequence is like an exercise in cinematography, and the hero's beating is just another mechanical plot necessity. Couldn't we also have a long-lasting moratorium on the hero's being beaten up as a punishment for adultery? We had it in *Room at the Top,* in *Sons and Lovers,* and now in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning.* I don't care if I never see another man beaten up.

What we see in this "committed" movie makes hash of the whole theory of commitment. When we look at the way people live, what we see raises questions that go beyond the scope of the "committed" answers. This reality of working-class life is the dehumanization that the anarchist theoreticians predicted. The concept of creative labor or satisfaction in work would be a howling joke in these great factories —and a howling joke to the union men—a complacent mass of Philistines. How can anyone take pride even in honest labor? Featherbedding is an essential part of the system. Further advances in welfare—guaranteed annual wages, pensions—are rational social advances; but these lives are so impoverished that more material comforts are like the satin quilting in a casket. The workers are well paid and taken care of—and nobody's out to break any chains. The claims of industrialism are so vast, so interlocking, so inexorable that they have become part of the natural landscape.

The hero has no push, either intellectual or economic, to get out of his environment. He's a worker who's going to remain a worker—unless the final stage of mechanization gives way to automation—then the state may support him for not working. He knows that if he stays where he is, he has protection, security, medical care.

But Prometheus wasn't a hero by virtue of being chained to a rock. And what is revolutionary about showing us working-class life if

the rebellious hero is shown as just young and belligerent—a man who needs to marry and settle down? How is he different from his fellows? Most of them aren't aware that their lives lack anything. We rally around his poor little spark—but there's no fire. It's the old Warner Brothers trick: you identify with Humphrey Bogart, the cynic who sneers at hollow patriotism; then he comes through for his country and his girl. It turns out that he always really believed in the official values; he just didn't like the tone, the bad form of officialdom. Our worker hero tells us his acceptance of the conventions is somehow different from his parents' acceptance.

An artist's commitment must be to a fuller vision of life than simply a commitment to the improvement of working-class living standards; conceivably this fuller vision may encompass an assault on working-class values. There is a crude kind of sense in the notion that working-class life is reality: the lives of the privileged rich never seem quite real. But this often ties in with left-wing sentimentality and the assumption that the artist who attempts to deal with the desperate and dissatisfied offshoots of industrialism—those trying to find some personal satisfaction in life or in art—is somehow dodging the *real* issues. The English dress up their theory of commitment—but sometimes the skeleton of Stalinism seems to be sticking out.

Time magazine, perhaps by the use of God's eye, sees *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* as a "stirring tribute to the yeoman spirit that still seems to survive in the . . . redbrick eternities of working life in England. After 900 years, if Sillitoe is right, the Saxons are still unconquered." If that's unconquered man, how does conquered man live? The indomitable Bosley Crowther says, "Unlike *L'Avventura* and other pictures about emptiness and despair, this one is clear-eyed and conclusive. It is strong and optimistic. It is 'in.' " Crowther has never been farther out.

Isn't this Welfare State life just about what the Soviet worker looks forward to? Greater comfort, more material goods, less work. This endpoint of controlled, socialized capitalism doesn't seem very different from the ideals of industrialized life under the Soviet system—except that in the Welfare State one is not officially required to be enthusiastic. The worker feeds the machine, and if he doesn't want more material goods then what does he want? He may, one has the nagging suspicion, begin to want the romance and adventure of wars and catastrophes. Nobody in this parody of the good society is neglected or mistreated. Nobody cries out. We must supply our own cry of rage at this traducing of humanity.

These films, even *I'm All Right, Jack, Expresso Bongo, Sapphire,* and *Tiger Bay* share a true horror—the people live without grace. They live in little ugly rooms, and they get on each other's nerves, and their speech is charged with petty hostilities. The main difference between the English working class and the American working class experience may be the miracle of space—our space and the privacy it affords us—which allows for day-to-day freedom of thought and action.

Thinking about the attitudes toward life in this group of films, I became aware of a lack they have in common. For years, I've been making fun of the way the movies use love as the great healer, the solution to everything. And I suddenly realized that in these films, for all their sex, the only satisfactory love affair is in *Room at the Top*—and the hero sacrifices *that* for position. I'm not sure what conclusions can be drawn from this desolate view of the human spirit—but it's rather scary. Life without beauty, without hope, without grace, without art, without love—and Crowther finds it "strong and optimistic."

VERNON YOUNG

ITALY

The Moral Cinema: Notes on Some Recent Films*

"This is the tragedy of tragedies in all time but particularly in our epoch: the killing off of the naive innocent life in all of us, by which alone we can continue to live, and the ugly triumph of the sophisticated greedy."—D. H. Lawrence's introduction to his translation of Giovanni Verga's CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA.

The real subject of Italian film realism (the prefix, *neo*, simply implying a naturalistic mode) is the death of the heart which follows the frustration of vitality. In Italy many of the old barbarisms are only now breaking up, and with them too much of the old instinctual certitude. Western "social progress," which has everywhere produced unsatisfying emancipations and a complete urbanizing of the soul, is a relatively recent factor in Italy which has not been immunized against emotional reciprocity by three hundred years of rationalism—not civilized either. Finding themselves committed to the visible benefits and the concealed contradictions of the modern world, the Italians, remarkably naive where they're not exceptionally cunning, have experienced shocks of revulsion and alarm at every social level. By way of the motion picture, the shocks have been expressed in that rising scream of torment which has its climax in *La Dolce Vita;* elsewhere they have emerged as a snarl of fury, in *Riso Amaro* or *I Delfini*, or as a questioning moan—in *Umberto D* and the *ferroviere* films of Pietro Germi. While our commentators have hopped from one leg to the other every year, chirping over the death of *neorealismo* whenever a film has failed to duplicate the supposition they entertained of the term fifteen years ago, the real Italian film-makers (which excludes the sex-and-circuses inheritors of Nero) have been creatively occupied with a moral definition of man among his fellows.

Eminent among these film-makers has been, and endures, Vittorio De Sica. Like the late Giovanni Verga (and like Pirandello, for that matter, in his Sicilian sketches) he has chosen the settings of the poor where the irreducible motifs of bewildered social man are dramatically evident. D. H. Lawrence summarized Verga's return to Sicily and his adoption of it as the landscape of his subject in terms which are notably applicable to De Sica, allowing for the fact that De Sica is a Neapolitan whose film-setting is usually the streets of Rome. As Lawrence noted in the introduction quoted above, "Verga turned to the peasants to find, *in individuals*, the vivid spontaneity of sensitive passionate life, non-moral and non-didactic. He found it always *defeated.* He found the vulgar and the greedy always destroying the sensitive and the passionate. The vulgar and the greedy are themselves usually peasants: Verga was far too sane to put an aureole round the whole class. . . ."

* Since Michelangelo Antonioni is obviously in line for the exhaustive kiss-of-death treatment given to Bergman, I'm omitting him from this survey in favor of directors who are more likely to be neglected outside of Italy.

So is De Sica. And in *La Ciociara (Two Women)*, another De Sica-Zavattini collaboration, modified from a story by Alberto Moravia, he is less than ever concerned directly with the fate of a single class; more than ever and with more driving force than ever before, concerned with the fate of people. As before, however, his generalization is absorbed in the particular through that reconciliation of intense compassion with scrupulous objectivity which is his personal genius—and the particular, in the person of Cisera, the widow from Ciociaria, cries aloud that in "one world" there is no place to hide. Impudent and voluble, Cisera leaves endangered wartime Rome with her 13-year-old daughter, Ilena, for the safety of the hill country where she was born. On the way, death from a strafing plane brushes them and strikes down a lone cyclist instead. Peaceful reunion with the Ciociaria villagers is disturbed by Fascist patrols, importunate attempts at conversion by an idealistic student of Communism with whom the girl falls in love and whom the mother seduces, and by an air raid. Retreating Germans commandeer the student to guide them out of the region (later shooting him) and Cisera and Ilena start back to the "safety" of Rome, no longer threatened with bombings now that the tide of war has turned. Taking refuge for the night in an abandoned husk of a church, mother and daughter are discovered and raped by "allies," a silently grinning troop of Moroccans.

It may become an easy exercise for copywriters to describe the woman from Ciociaria as representing "the spirit of the Italian people": in which case it will have to be recalled that if she seems all but invincible she's far from invulnerable. The question remains with one as to how much, deep inside of her, has been permanently broken. Her talent for life has been powerless against violation and death and she has been confronted with a malice in the universe she can't comprehend and never before recognized. She might well be expected to go as mad as the GI's in the jeep, to whom she had vehemently appealed, said she was, if she were not body-committed to the rehabilitation of her daughter. It's inseparable from the De Sica view that misery *must* love company, in order to purge and renew itself. Faced with a condition wherein the church stands stripped, our brothers-in-arms are rapists, the Communist at home is wide of the human mark, and dead cyclists rot in the postcard landscape, the surviving individual can only turn to something he can cherish—and may God help those who have nobody to help. The American who may believe this is a War-II film of Europe, yesterday, and not a microcosm, will no doubt find my metaphor exaggerated. There remains the film itself, which is concrete enough in all conscience.

A De Sica film makes demands on one's talent for simplicity, since it deceptively appears to have no style; for style is the integration of an artist's temperament in the form of his art, and the De Sica film is one in which as far as possible the eye behind the camera betrays no consciousness of *itself*. Which is why De Sica baffles the aesthetic analyst: he directs one's own eye not toward art but toward life, thereby making pronouncements on the art nearly superfluous. We know it *isn't* life we're watching, but the cinematic subtleties it's our function and pleasure to elucidate have been predigested in the *conception* of the film,

Sophia Loren as Cesira and Eleonora Brown as Rosetta, her daughter, in La Ciocara *(Two Women).*

leaving the critic little to say of specifically cinematic import until De Sica commits an error of judgment. This is an extremely rare occurrence and the fact that he makes some in *La Ciociara* is no relief to me; all but the terminating one are too trivial to be recorded, but that one is puzzling enough to be questioned aloud. As in most of De Sica's films, life comes to rest at a fateful moment which is not so much the end of the *movie* as the point at which De Sica discreetly takes his leave—on tiptoe, as it were—of the characters whom he has been accompanying, making no untoward cinematic flourish that will disturb their moment of truth. This time the effect is shattered, owing to the prolonged finality of the backtracking shot that frames Cisera with her daughter in her arms, announcing all too heavily, "closing tableau," a disappointingly sententious touch which might have been less damaging if the preceding content had not been so excruciatingly untheatrical.

De Sica's "life-like" purism commits him to an exacting degree of consistency. And commits him to what would be in anyone else an anxious degree of dependence on his actors. Perhaps the secret of his success in this direction is precisely that he never expresses anxiety, only confidence. Hence, Sophia Loren's Cisera: as if De Sica had said—"You think she's just one of your big-doll stereotypes, amenable only to flesh-peddlers, all bread, love, and a thousand kisses; a *ragazza* playing at *Venus Naturalis*? I'll show you where her heart lies—exactly where, but not why, you've been looking all along!" So Loren, like Silvana Mangano and Gina Lollobrigida before her, leaves the International Doll House where the Monroes and Ekbergs still sit in the windows, sucking their thumbs, and reverts to human stuff. She is nothing less than the kinetic center of *La Ciociara;* she walks in beauty which has no glamor about it, unless untidy ripeness is glamor, and the assumption of insolence as if it were dignity, and the gift of seeming more womanly as she becomes more desperate and more stentorian. She doesn't give a performance; she gives an existence.

The actor, either "found material" or the professional article, is normally the king post of Italian film construction because what happens to people and why is the besetting concern of Italian film-makers. I'd be more impressed with Luchino Visconti's *Rocco e i Suoi Fratelli (Rocco and His Brothers)* if his *why* were clearer to me; but it's only fair to observe that my reservations may have arisen from seeing what I'm convinced is a drastically cut print. *(Caveat emptor!* One copy in circulation is headless and speaks French!) Judging by clues in the version I saw, Visconti's intention is to show the disaster that overtakes the Calabrian family as a consequence of its having left home for the dubious rewards of Milan. In a purely mechanical sense, he does this, but the internal character of the events depicted fails to substantiate his social determinism. The displaced family's poverty is a fact; thereafter the special reaction to this fact of one son, the boxer, Simone, is the horrible mainspring of the ensuing chain of ills. And I can't help believing that Simone's bestial retaliations as he rages downward from stealing to rape to murder, no more conscious of his connections with other objects in the world than an angered rutting animal, might as readily have been provoked back in Calabria by the first deeply sensed insult to his blind self-esteem. Naturally, the ramifications would have been different, in some directions, but I don't find this as important as the root emphasis: if, when opened up, Simone is rotten inside, life will discover that anywhere. I'm no fit mediator of the question whether Visconti's alleged "intellectual" Communism may construe the pathological Simone as a victim of society; on that point I remain unpersuaded. However, I don't want to belabor a point which may not, on Visconti's part, be intended dogmatically. But I'm still baffled by the crucial touch at the end of the film—Rocco's reaction to his brother Simone's murder of his girl (his, Rocco's; she had once been Simone's, and tried going back to him, virtually to save Rocco's life, but she couldn't follow through and in final effect she offers herself as a sacrifice). Young Rocco goes into

a hackles-raising operatic lamentation—not at all, mark you, out of pity for the dead girl but over the plight of Simone, who, by killing Nadia has finished himself and torn a gaping hole in the fabric of the family. This fanatical concern for the impaired family group, the closing of ranks against the outsider when the prodigal returns, even as a killer, is a characteristic of closed patriarchal communities in which the family *is* society, society *is* the family. Now, I'd be curious to know if, speaking for myself, Visconti would expect me to take this all on trust, as I did, finding it psychologically fascinating but in my soul *nauseated* by what reaches me as a perversion of humanity, the more so as Rocco's elegiac intensity smells to high heaven of homosexual masochism. *As acted* and directed it's a terrifying scene—don't mistake me! But the situation as a whole leaves me somewhat confused, perhaps for the wrong reasons.

I'm no more content with the style of the picture: Visconti's frontal approach and his dominantly center-focus composition is correlative with his dogged social-epic attitude. Gianfranco Poggi, whose article in this magazine last year [Spring, 1960] is the most perceptively sustained estimate of Visconti I've read, made the defining statement of his directorial method. "His camerawork is generally sober, his cutting measured and harmonious. The tensions of his films are usually 'inside the shot.'" This could almost describe De Sica's technique, for that matter, but the result in Visconti, most of the time, is to leave one outside, looking *at* the film, pictorially, an effect magnified in this film by the musical score he evidently found tolerable—with no inventiveness whatever, it infallibly yearns or becomes ominous in slavishly direct obedience to the "melodic line" of the story. Before De Sica and Fellini had transformed early *neorealismo* into something respectively more evocative and more plastic, *Rocco* would have seemed more venturesome. Today it's dry, hard, and solemn, except in the few fast-moving sequences; in retrospect it's the characters (i.e., the actors) who compelled me: Katina Paxinou's Rosaria, Renato Salavtori as the barely Cro-Magnon Simone, Alain Delon as Rocco (though I find it difficult to accept this long-fingered faun as a career boxer)—and not least, Annie Girardot (also French) incandescent with temperament as the ill-fated tramp Nadia.

The solidarity of the tribe is likewise the nuclear source of domestic explosion in Mauro Bolognini's rancorously beautiful study of Sicilian *mores*, *Il Bell'Antonio*—a sardonic gloss on the pagan text that "the lust of the goat is the bounty of God." Don Alfio Magnano, an old satyr of undiminished sexual appetite and diminishing funds, has arranged a marriage between his son Antonio, just returned home (to Palermo, I think it is) and Barbara Puglisi, daughter of a wealthy advocate. Mutual benefits are expected to accrue; the Magnanos need money, the Puglisis need an heir, and Antonio's fame as a stud on the loose in Rome has crossed the Straits to swell the concupiscent pride of his Dionysiac father. Antonio gratifies everyone, in fact, by obediently proceeding with the courtship and clearly falling in love with Signorina Barbara. Don Alfio, himself, trembles with vicarious anticipation, padding up and down and lashing his tail like a tiger in the zoo before meal-time. Although Antonio is in appearance a young man of gentle, civilized sensibility, the senior Puglisi is reassured by the principle that still waters run deep and at the urgency of Don Alfio's recital of Antonio's exploits he sees in his mind's eye countless swooning women in Antonio's wake, flushed with love, delirious with gratitude and egregiously pregnant. Seven months after the wedding, an outraged Puglisi visits Don Alfio to complain of the bargain. His daughter is untouched! She remains a virgin after seven months! Don Alfio storms in purple disbelief until the terrible news is confirmed. Dionysus has abandoned the Magnanos, and to prevent his world from crumbling, Don Alfio makes the supreme gesture of virility, crowing his intentions to the roof-tops. He goes to a brothel in order publicly to affirm the unabated blood of the Magnanos, and there perishes in his pride—the gesture kills him. Antonio's marriage is an-

nulled, he returns to a saddened home. Not long after this, the family maid, Santuzza, is patently with child and Antonio's sharped-eyed mother quickly deduces the welcome truth —her pride and joy Antonio is the father! Don Alfio's spirit is appeased, there is rejoicing in the family and dancing in the streets.

I understand that in Pavese's novel, from which the film was adapted, Antonio is simply impotent. Without having read the novel, I find the film elaboration much more subtle and certainly more cruel in its irony. For Antonio's tragic secret in the film is that he is impotent *only* when he really loves. The circumstance of his being celebrated for what, under other social conditions, would get him ostracized, is thereby doubly scathing; having paid the family debt to "society" he is bound to a girl he doesn't love and condemned to unbearable loneliness, since he is still deeply in love with Barbara Puglisi. In summary, the film may sound wildly comic and I saw it with an audience which seemed to think it was. (I suspect that much of the laughter was nervous.) For me it was just about as funny as something by Dean Swift. And I hope that critics don't waste their time discussing the indelicacy of the subject to the exclusion of the film's dazzling richness of texture and milieu. Bolognini's immediately preceding films have leaned, perhaps on order, rather heavily on certain exploitative resemblances to *nouvelle vague* mannerism and to slices of *La Dolce Vita* subject matter. (That great film could supply Italy's film-makers with ideas for the next decade!) Now Bolognini has come home—and he's potent. *Il Bell'Antonio* is lyrical, savage, and astute. A middle-class Sicilian world of stale paternalistic conventions, loaded with stifled vitality, is built up from incidental characterizations, balcony exchanges of gossip, a "stag" business meeting. Throughout Antonio's courtship, Barbara is staid, frozen-faced, formally polite. Once the couple leaves the altar, her face breaks from ear to ear, like a cat swallowing a still-struggling bullfinch.

Bolognini's shot selection is sensitive to mood (Armando Nanuzzi is cinematographer); noteworthy are the occasions on which he isolates Antonio (Marcello Mastroianni) in a car at night confiding his secret to his brother, or at the telephone studying his own unhappiness in a mirror. He gets fine moments from all his actors. Thimble-size Rina Morelli as the mother is a concentrate of electrical shrewdness; her stance when she is divining the lover of the literally prostrated Santuzza is an example of perfect empathy between actress and director—and inimitably Italian. If I deplore the increasing use of French actors, which seems to be a necessary commercial strategy, and disapprove of dubbing, I'll nonetheless concede that Pierre Brasseur's Don Alfio, played with ferocious Capricornism, is probably unsurpassable. Bolognini's first film was released in 1955. With *Il Bell'Antonio* he has broken through; he'll be among the lordly ones of the Italian cinema.

So will Mario Monicelli in his own way. He, too, is a master of Italian regional idiosyncrasies, revealed with a light touch. For the initiate there must be a wealth of extra humor in the dialects used in *La Grande Guerra,* notably

Vittorio Gassman and Alberto Sordi in Mario Monicelli's La Grande Guerra.

in the scenes that involve Giovanni from Rome with the camp-follower known as "La Furiera" (Silvana Mangano). Beside the dialects, however, there's nothing esoteric in this lively film, one among many recent Italian movies that has critically faced a less than creditable moment in Italy's past. The drift of *La Grand Guerra* is fabulous with surprise for it unites documentary vividness with knavish humor, taking a pair of unheroic clowns (Vittorio Gassman and Alberto Sordi) through the bitter fiasco of Italy's defeat in the north (this is War I), and makes the transition from farce to tragedy with skill unprecedented, save perhaps by René Clement's *Forbidden Games* or Lattuada's *The Overcoat.* Someone—I've forgotten who— said that life could be considered a comedy only if it were never to end. Giovanni and Oreste, the two gold-brickers who charm and dodge their way through a valley of death, are suddenly caught in a movie-comical situation from which the only way out is in life's terms, not cinema's: disclose important military information or be shot by an Austrian firing-squad. Giovanni, who had once tried to bribe his way out of this irrelevant war (comically then, Oreste was his untrustworthy go-between), rises to the terminal occasion with a stubborn smirk of defiance, more derisive than purely heroic. He'll be his own fool but not the enemy's and he goes to his death as to another KP duty. Given an unequivocal choice, Oreste would obviously make no heroic stand, but the fact is he doesn't have any information to impart, which the Austrians naturally disbelieve. Pathos ends the film: with shaking knees before the Austrian rifles he cries out to his already unheeding comrade-in-fun, "Giovanni! I am afraid!"

Directors of comedy are usually the last to be taken seriously. Monicelli's tempered wit makes him a formidable contender for a prominent directorial place in the sun, since *La Grande Guerra* is a funny film haunted by a sickening sense of waste; it's also an adroit piece of move-making. Giuseppe Rotunno (who shot *Rocco)* and Roberto Gerardi have supplied a fast-moving background of convincing period carnage, and the editing is flawless. Monicelli's handling of Gassman and Sordi has already been the occasion for laurels, in *I Soliti Ignoti.* That he has a way with Silvana Mangano, too, is further proof of his capabilities. Encouragingly (to me, an infatuate from way back), Mangano's exceptional performance in *Oro Di Napoli* was no passing ensorcellment of De Sica's; her Furiera, from another social and emotional level—all fireworks, elbows, flaring nostrils, and down-to-earthiness—is no less authentic, and a pendant to Loren's role in *La Ciociara,* without the grief.

Valerio Zurlini is having as hard a time as Bolognini had shedding his chrysalis. *Estate Violenta,* case in point, was seven-eighths derivative from *A Matter of Dignity* and the films of Jacques Doniol-Valcroze (even to having Jean-Louis Trintignant in the lead). *La Ragazza con la Valigia* at least gets him out into the open where something of his own style and intelligence is apparent. He hasn't altogether escaped French coöperation here in the form of Jacques Perrin, his angelic juvenile lead and in a script (with four Italian collaborators) that suggests Clouzot's *La Verité,* minus the tragic outcome. Tenderness is almost the prevailing ingredient of this film (an irreverent translation of the title, by the way, would be "The Bag with the Bag"), the chronicle of two youngsters from polar-opposite worlds whose very encounter is as absurd and as touching as it is brief. Aida, a local night-club thrush, is picked up and dropped by a young blood from Parma, then befriended by his 16-year-old brother, Lorenzo. After a bewildering interlude, like the meeting of two birds of unrelated species in the heart of a New Guinea forest, the girl is claimed by the pressures of her background; the indignant mother of the upper-class scion has slapped his face and terminated his allowance. The last shot watches the departing girl at the railway station, looking less with gratitude than with puzzlement at the money which Lorenzo has given her (he stole it from his allowance). I think I'm not far out

Claudia Cardinale and Jacques Perrin in LA RAGAZZA CON LA VALIGIA, *by Valerio Zurlini.*

if I read her thoughts in this wise: "But that isn't what I *really* wanted! And what **exactly** was I looking for?" This is as good a place as any for reserving sixty seconds of credit to Claudia Cardinale (Aida). She's in everything these days, as omnipresent as Jean-Paul Belmondo. She was wife to one of Rocco's brothers, she was Barbara in *Il Bell'Antonio,* she's the victimized landlady's daughter in *I Delfine,* she's Assuntina in Germi's *Un Maledetto Imbroglio,* she will be the tantalizing rural ingenue in Bolognini's next film, *La Viaccia,* opposite—Jean-Paul Belmondo! The girl is phenomenal. Since she always looks the same, you expect no more from her than you'd get from a mono-faced American or Swedish starlet, but she never *is* the same: she's always different *inside.* I suspect she motivates herself primarily from a feeling for the social stratum she is representing.

And that's a primary asset in Zurlini's *ragazza* film which is all nuance arising from wonder, the boy intrigued by this creature of curious plumage who exudes, for him, glamor of a kind he's not old enough to analyze or to engage. From her side, Lorenzo, or rather his environment, is just as alien. Thus they circle each other with no genuine clues to communication since neither knows who he is, himself; the boy, because he's socially insulated and very young, the girl because she's just as insulated and not much more resourceful, and whatever personality she wears is a rudimentary job of social dubbing. Zurlini's direction is at its best when by keeping his camera high in the intimate scenes he catches the little mobilities of social mannerism and reveals the personal hesitant explorations of the pair. The more's the pity that someone didn't have faith enough in the script and in the actors to subdue Mario Nascimbene's over-insistent "musical comment" (in itself an entertaining harpsichord recital).

The class attitudes in *I Delfini (The Dolphins)* yield considerably less charm. Written in acid by the director, Francesco Maselli (his first feature-length film), with the help of three others, among them Moravia, the scenario inscribes a dreary season of discontent and viciousness in the lives of a thoroughly unpleasant group of mostly rich youngsters in a small Adriatic coast city. Some levels of Italian society change very little, it seems, for these are the same young blackguards whom D. H. Lawrence described in *Twilight in Italy,* gathering at a local cafe in the afternoon and bitching each other up with an assurance born of irresponsible power. As an unsparing close-up of an Italian social groove with which we're not overly familiar to date, the film makes its point (unhappily with diluted filmic means, a wretchedly superfluous narration from one of the group): the social adhesion that guarantees the values of privilege also undermines the will to reform the corruption of those values. Nobody successfully escapes from the stultifying round; indeed only the principal hostess of the vicious circle makes a strenuous effort and she receives the circle's parting contempt for the manner in which she does it. A depressing film, but certainly not a nerveless one. It finally excited me to mayhem. Not for many years at the movies have I so wanted to get into the screen and beat a character to death as I did the young Count Alberto. (Why do people persist in believing a critic looks at a movie as if it were the inside of a clock?) I presume this was a tribute

to the *acting* of Tomas Milian; he was equally believable as the compassionate brother to the "bell'Antonio."

The crisis of a man unfitted to commit murder but who does (for a price) is not an unfamiliar situation in our crime films. *Il Sicario (The Hired Murderer)* makes it seem unfamiliar by treating moral catastrophe with respect and pity. The awfulness of the aftermath is compounded by there being *two* vulnerable killers: Riccardo, the respectable man who hires, and the needy man, Torelli, the hired one. Our assumption is that Riccardo, the thinking man, is sufficiently complicated to rationalize his deed in a way not permitted to the simple Torelli (a moral and class distinction of a kind once pointed out by Pietro Germi as a clue to the tragic fate of his railroad man in *L'Uomo di Paglia).* What actually transpires when the "justifiable" murder has been committed and Torelli, already half destroyed by belated remorse, comes to collect his money, is that Riccardo, desperately concentrating his will power to hold Torelli together is himself in a state of near collapse. The outcome is predictable but the film ends before that point with an inspired image of guilt too good to be summarily disclosed for the reader who has yet to see the film. Much of the film's credibility and power arises from the separate domestic relationships of the two men; Riccardo and Torelli don't exist in a shadowland unimpeded by social obligations. Both of them are married and love their wives and these connections are amply suggested, not just sketched in. The disaster leaves you wondering about its later effect on the two women. This is Damiano Damiani's second film; since I didn't see the first, *Il Rossetto (The Lipstick),* I don't know how much credit belongs to Zavattini, co-scenarist. If I'm tempted to infer a lot of it does, it's because Zavattini has written the scripts of at least fifteen of the outstanding Italian films since 1935, including all of the masterpieces of De Sica.

As much as any film I've noted here, *Il Sicario* illustrates the essentially moral sensibility of the Italian film-maker—by contrast with, for instance, that of the British, which is merely social, of the French which, exceptions allowed for, is intellectual, or of the Swedish (when you can find any that isn't converted to stainless steel) which is lyric. The men who write and direct the serious Italian movies are of a culture in which death is important and murder is a serious business. A full-time ghoul such as Alfred Hitchcock would find no place in Italian film production. Where man is still connective tissue in society, anything destructive that overtakes him, from within or without, is a radically important subject. And that subject forms the basis for those consistent values which we admire in the Italian film.

Alberto Lupo and Sergio Fontani in IL SICARIO. *The hired one and the hirer.*

ANNE MORRISETT

SWEDEN

Paradise and Paradox

It is ironic that at a time when Ingmar Bergman has reached the pages of *Time,* and his films are to be seen in most major American cities, the Swedish film industry has been suffering one of its worst slumps in decades. There is now a television set in every other urban home in Sweden; in 1960 less than twenty films were made by the four major Swedish companies, whereas forty or fifty were being made in the late 'forties; most of the films made in recent years have lost money, despite foreign distribution and the very low cost of producing films in Sweden. During the early 'fifties, ownership of theaters by the film producing companies, and a partial rebate granted by the government from the 25% entertainment tax, helped to offset losses. But today the Swedish film, whose history is an illustrious one for so small a nation, and whose directors and producers have been among the most talented and responsible in the world, faces a most uncertain future. At home it is leaning more and more heavily on the production of light comedies; abroad, especially in the United States, it is leaning on the showing and reshowing of Bergman films.

The first Swedish film to make any headway in the States, in the mid-'forties, was *Torment,* directed by Alf Sjöberg and written by Ingmar Bergman. It was the young Bergman's first chance at a film script, and it brought him the following year (1945) a further offer from Carl Anders Dymling, Svensk Filmindustri's strong-handed chief who just died this year, to direct his own script. This was *Crisis,* based on a Danish play called *The Mother Animal.* It was poorly received in Sweden, and has never gotten to the United States. Bergman's succeeding films for the next half-dozen years were also poorly or moderately received. [For a critical account of them, and the rest of Bergman's work, see Eugene Archer's article, "The Rack of Life," *Film Quarterly,* Summer, 1959.] Then, in 1953, Bergman was asked by Sandrews, Sweden's second largest production firm, to write and direct his own film. The result, *Gycklarnas Afton,* ran as *The Naked Night* in exploitation houses in New York until the success of *The Seventh Seal* and Bergman's other later works put it into the art theaters; photographed by Sven Nykvist (who also did *The Virgin Spring* and *Through A Glass Darkly* for Bergman), it is now regarded by many people as one of Bergman's best.

The mixed reception of Bergman's efforts in the late 'forties and early 'fifties did not discourage Svensk Filmindustri from continuing to give him a more or less free hand for experimenting. In the next few years this policy resulted in artistically (and later financially) gratifying films such as *Lesson in Love, Smiles of a Summer Night, The Seventh Seal,* and *Wild Strawberries.* When the film industry began to feel the first impact of TV around 1957, Bergman was already so well established that SF was able to let him go on unhampered when no other director could.

Alf Sjöberg's 1960 film, *The Judge,* made for Sandrews, marked the perhaps only temporary return of a leading theater personality of the

past two decades to film production. Although he started in films as early as 1928, directing a silent film called *The Strongest,* for more than a decade afterwards Sjöberg worked only with the Royal Dramatic Theater. Between 1939, when he returned again to film-making, and 1943, he directed four films. Then in 1944 he directed *Torment.* Just as this (and the improving world situation for film-making) had opened up possibilities for Bergman, so it expanded them for the more seasoned Sjöberg. He directed two notable firms for SF, *Iris* in 1946, and *Only a Mother* in 1949; then in 1950 he was asked by Sandrews to direct Strindberg's *Miss Julie,* which won the 1951 Grand Prize at the Cannes Film Festival.

Sjöberg and Bergman collaborated once again for Svensk Filmindustri, more than ten years after their successful *Torment.* In 1955-56 they put together a "problem" film entitled *Last Pair Out* which was poorly received by critics and audiences; by this time they had apparently gone different ways. With Swedish cinema-going—and consequently production—dropping off, this was the last film Sjöberg directed until 1960.

Like Bergman, Sjöberg seems basically undisturbed by the decreased production of films. Both men feel themselves to be primarily directors of theater, and as Bergman put it to me in a conversation, "The theater is my home: this is where I want to grow old." Bergman has also compared film-making to a demanding and fickle mistress whom he is ever ready to abandon for his faithful wife: theater.

"Film-making," he told me while he was directing *The Sea Gull* at the Royal Dramatic Theater in December, 1960, "makes one bleed too much. It is always exciting, and difficult, and fascinating, but it make one feel hurt, humiliated. I do not think it is a healthy form of artistic work. . . . I am mainly a director of theater." (This does not seem to be quite the way he felt several years earlier, when he wrote "The motion picture and its complicated process of birth are my methods of saying what I want to my fellow man.")

Sjöberg's observations on film-making were less vehement: he likes working in theater and film equally, he told me—but perhaps his actions inadvertently belie his words, because in his thirty-five years of contact with both, he has directed only 15 films, but nearly 150 plays. Also, Sjöberg does not write his own original manuscripts, and it is undoubtedly in this process of dual creation that Bergman does much of his bleeding.

The thing that these two outstanding directors have in common, however, not only with each other but with most of the other directors and actors connected with Swedish film-making, is their theater background: and this is a significant key to the high artistic standards (and occasional over-theatricalization) of the industry. Whereas Hollywood had its roots at least partly in the tradition of vaudeville and circus entertainment, Swedish film-making developed from the efforts of photographers, particularly Charles Magnusson who became head of Svensk Filmindustri, and from adult theater. (It is this, in fact, which now presents it with something of a problem locally in competing with Hollywood, as the largest part of the remaining Swedish movie-goers are teen-agers.)

With few exceptions, Swedish actors and directors of the recent decades have been trained in the dramatic schools and theaters of Stockholm, Malmö, and Gothenburg. Bergman,

Alf Sjöberg's THE JUDGE *(Domaren): Ingrid Thulin and Gunnar Hellström.*

now directing for the first time at the Royal Dramatic Theater in Stockholm, was from 1953 to 1960 a director at Malmö. This has its practical side, of course, since film-making is almost a seasonal occupation in Sweden, taking place mainly in the summer when there are endless hours of daylight and most of the legitimate theaters are closed. In the winter, when it is dark much of the time, film artists return to the theaters, to occasional radio work, or to rest. A few of them sneak off to television.

Gunnar Björnstrand and Max von Sydow, two of Bergman's most frequently used actors as well as his personal friends, stated quite emphatically in our conversations about television that it was not a medium that interested them. Perhaps for such leading figures there is little to be gained there, but lesser-known actors often feel similarly, and Gunnar Fischer, the excellent cameraman Bergman has used for 13 of his 22 films (including *Seventh Seal* and *Wild Strawberries*) told me that he personally felt not at all tempted by work in television. However, a TV director I talked with who formerly worked in films told me that the film companies have actively prevented members of the film community from working in TV, and that he himself is now "blacklisted" mainly for this. (He was one of the few, incidentally, who expressed—or perhaps was willing to express openly—negative views concerning Swedish film production, although the negativeness was largely in regard to the past few years, when he has been working only in TV and claims he has literally been barred from film work.)

Actually even Bergman and Sjöberg have occasionally directed plays for television, and according to TV film commentator Gunnar Oldin, new directors are tending to come to television, especially now when the film industry is so cautious. But on the whole it is looked upon more as a medium of communication than of art, and good directors are more likely to stick with the theater. Dr. Dymling told me before his death that he did not think TV could do the same thing at all that films can: for the latter, one is in a different mood, different environment, one shares the experience with many others — as in legitimate theater — with darkness and larger proportions adding to one's concentration. As to TV's undercutting of film production, Dr. Dymling appeared not too pessimistic: "I'm glad there are fewer films made now than there used to be," he told me. "We are a small country, we don't have that much talent available. It is better used now." He felt that the film industry's relation to television would become stabilized, was perhaps already doing so, and each would take its proper place. His successor, young director Kenne Fant, seems to share this mild optimism.

But the taxes, and the mounting production costs, and the passing of the "golden years" are all no doubt things that weighed heavily upon Dr. Dymling before he died. One of the grand old men of Swedish film-making, he had a gentleness (as well as stubbornness, I am told) and scholarly dedication to the film as art which perhaps obscured for him the possibility of admitting that there might be others who would go into film-producing largely for material gain. But these qualities were also responsible for his devotion to seeking the best, and his willingness to take risks which was both a cause and result of his having given chances to such strange young rebels as Bergman. Recently Svensk Filmindustri has been trying out two new young directors, and the naming of Kenne Fant as production chief was a surprise move in the apparent direction of revitalization; still, everyone admits that if another Bergman were to turn up now (a new rebel, an innovator), he would never be given the chances that Bergman was given in the 'forties. The present Bergman, now a partial executive in SF, is gentler, perhaps, with more humor and less fire (or with the flames now more concentrated into a cold white heat); but it is always disturbing for an innovator to find himself accepted, and he seems to sit on his pinnacle uneasily and with some skepticism. The fickle mistress has put him up there, and she can cast him down again. His popularity in the

United States, limited though it largely is to art theaters, is one of the reasons for his present freedom to work, yet clearly he cannot afford to let himself care about it. Already his vogue is passé in some European intellectual circles, where articles about Bergman appear acceptable only if they find fault with him. (In a recent issue of *Chaplin*, a highly regarded magazine of Swedish film criticism, a number of attacks on Bergman were topped by one which was revealed in a subsequent issue to have been written by Bergman himself.) But with the cynical light touch of such recent films as *The Devil's Eye*, and with a technicolor "rococco" film now planned, Bergman's apparent departure from problems of life and death and heavier symbolism may not prove to be the best turn for him either. It is understandable that he takes refuge in the faithful theater; but it is more than refuge, too, since in Sweden theater is also the film's life-blood.

A kind of throwback in this theatrical family picture is photographer-director Arne Sucksdorff. I use the term photographer in its best sense, for there is no question Sucksdorff is an artist with the camera, supremely sensitive to the forms and pulse of nature. Obsessed by the shapes and shadows and movements of its relentless, rhythmical struggles, Sucksdorff (now in his early forties, like Bergman) has for some twenty years captured the world of nature and animals in hundreds of thousands of film meters, only a small proportion of which are seen by his audiences. He is known as one of the most perfectionist and extravagant of film-makers, and until recently has almost always been his own writer, director, cameraman, and editor. Originally he was even his own financier (he comes from a wealthy Swedish family), but after his fourth short film, *A Summer's Tale*, made in 1940 and sold to Svensk Filmindustri for distribution, he was taken on SF's payroll.

Up to 1951 Sucksdorff made 17 short documentaries, most of them exquisitely savage yet gentle odes to nature, with the exception of several later shorts such as *Rhythm of a City* (a film about Stockholm for which he received an Oscar) in which he began tenatively to explore human constructions and activities—and even the faces and emotions of human beings themselves. Children and old people came off best, and Sucksdorff confesses to a preference for them, next to animals, because they are so "purely themselves."

Sucksdorff, like Bergman both gentle and strong-willed, a sort of visual sensualist and moralist at the same time, also came from a strictly religious home. He was not permitted to dance, to see cinema or theater, could not even own a camera. As a student of theater direction in Germany he took his first pictures—and, as he told me with some pride, with his third photo he won first prize in a difficult competition. When he returned from Germany, he came bearing a movie camera.

With his first attempt at a full-length feature, *The Great Adventure* (Sandrews, 1951-53), Sucksdorff relates many of his earlier nature images to the world of two small boys, and the result, while not entirely integrated, is a tender picture which explores the tenuous alliance of children and animals and throbs with an awe of nature—a feeling which he says he has had since early childhood.

Sucksdorff's admiration for creatures "purely themselves" next took him to India where he lived with and filmed the Muria people, culminating finally in his *Jungle Saga* (1955-57, also Sandrews), released in the United States in 1960 as *The Flute and the Arrow* [see *Film Quarterly*, Winter, 1960]. An exciting short nature film he made in the 'forties, *A Divided World*, was also recently shown in the United States, running for a while with *The Virgin Spring in New York*.

After several years of film inactivity, Sucksdorff has just made *The Boy in the Tree* (1960), which departs radically from his previous efforts. To open in Sweden later in 1961, it is a Swedish-located aspect of the currently popular theme of amoral youth with nothing to do but seek destructive excitement. Mixed with the musical background of Bach, Beethoven,

and Handel is a jazz counterpoint for which Sucksdorff went all the way to New York (which he dislikes intensely), to composer Quincy Jones (whom he likes very much). Whether or not Sucksdorff has handled this theme, and his first professional cast (including Birgitte Petersson of *Virgin Spring*) in both a new and humanly dramatic way is a question many film people I talked with raised. Gunnar Fischer, the chief cameraman for the film and the first other than himself Sucksdorff has ever used, told me that despite certain difficulties, he felt Sucksdorff had very possibly succeeded. If so, perhaps the new era of Swedish dramatic films will include not only directors coming from the strong tradition of theater, but also men such as Sucksdorff who have worked from the beginning mainly in the film medium and are minimally influenced – for better and worse—by the techniques of the stage.

But through all the changes and upheavals that are ocurring in Swedish film-making, one characteristic which would be most regrettably lost is its democratic sense of community. A feeling of working together rather than against each other pervades the atmosphere of both film and theater production in Sweden. The star system for all practical purposes does not exist; even—or perhaps above all—the director, who is in a sense the most important figure, must have a humility and sensitivity to his group—actors, cameraman, script-girl, technicians—which can inspire and maintain an integrity and unity of purpose. Bergman expressed something of this aspiration when he wrote (in *Films and Filming*, London) about the legendary rebuilding of Chartres: "All kinds of people came and together they began to build up the cathedral on its old site. They all stayed there until the building was completed—master builders, workers, artists, clowns, noblemen, priests, burghers. But they remained anonymous and no one knows to this day who built the cathedral of Chartres. . . . If thus I am asked what I should like to be the general purpose of my films, I would reply that I want to be one of the artists in the cathedral on the great plain." (Like Chartres, Bergman's "cathedral" seems to loom lofty and alone when seen from the distance; closer, its gets a little lost in more mundane surroundings.)

Max von Sydow told me that people newly working with Bergman are often surprised at his taciturn gentleness in dealing with them. I too was impressed with this quality, seeing it in action (along with a rather stern moralism) when I made a careless—albeit true—observation about one of his co-workers for which Bergman rightly, firmly, but gently reprimanded me.

In his "Page from My Diary," Bergman describes a chilly day in the shooting of *The Virgin Spring* when "it would have been an exaggeration to have called the atmosphere cheerful, but on the other hand we were not downhearted. All were caught up with that unique family feeling which is typical of film-making in Sweden." He describes the sudden appearance of two cranes flying overhead; everyone drops his work to run and watch. In the back of his mind, apparently, he had been mulling over a comfortable offer from an American film company. "We returned to work in a happy mood, enchanted by this experience," wrote Bergman. "Then this thought started playing on my mind: '. . . it would be very pleasant to have a camera track that was not buckled, a camera truck that does not creak, and it would be quite an event *just for once* to make a motion picture with a budget of over two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. . . . However, despite all that I am turning the American offer down flat.' I felt a sudden happiness and relief. I felt secure and at home."

It is this family feeling which (together with a respect for individuality and art) characterizes the atmosphere of Swedish film-making and most strongly impresses the observer. Recently I was hailed in a telegraph office by Max von Sydow, who told me that he had not yet decided to accept an offer from Hollywood's George Stevens to play Jesus "opposite" Liz Taylor's Mary Magdalene. I could not help re-

flecting on the virtues of a society large enough to produce an actor of von Sydow's sensitivity and stature, yet small enough to enable him to remain human and thoughtful, and polite enough to leave him unassailed by mobs. When he does take his family off to Hollywood this fall, as is now scheduled, one can hope that he will have more of an effect on Hollywood than Hollywood on him; that has been arguably the case with at least one other Swede, Garbo.

The family feeling of film-making is supplemented by the fact that when a film is contemplated, a producer gets together with the director (or a director can bring his idea to the producer) and soon they are also discussing the film with the actors as well. Roles are sometimes written by the director—particularly Bergman—with certain actors in mind, but not as vehicles for "stars." Björnstrand and von Sydow told me that they have never disliked a role Bergman had assigned them, although Björnstrand confesses he never did quite understand his part in *The Magician*.

In talking with actors, directors, producers, cameramen, I consistently felt the civilization and decency of these people, their sympathy with each other's problems, their sensitive understanding of the broader artistic aim of their efforts. Undoubtedly there are neuroses and petty jealousies underlying many relationships here, as anywhere, but one feels about most of the film community that they would not readily try to undercut each other, belittle each other's work, seek easy and cheap and sensational ways of achieving their effects. Simple and inexpensive and intriguing, yes; but they seem to find it difficult to turn to the extravagant or trick devices used so often by Hollywood with so little purpose. Gunnar Fischer, for example, a usually gentle and reticent man, is vehement and voluble when it comes to the double frame necessitated by the wide screen, a kind of imitation CinemaScope which Swedish film companies used very much during the 'fities. "This was the biggest step backwards in film-making," he told me. "Please write that, so people will know! Often the hands, which can

Harriet Andersson in Bergman's GYCKLARNAS AFTON *(Naked Night), which moved from exploitation houses to art theaters.*

be so expressive, must be cut off, there is useless space at the sides, furniture must be raised so that you get artificial disproportions, you can never get a clean close-up. It is really up to the projectionist whether or not the actors will have heads. I have often had to use the double frame in recent years, except for most of Bergman's films: Bergman himself now refuses to use it." (It is now never used, in fact, according to Dr. Dymling.)

Cameraman Fischer's comments on his work with Bergman, Sucksdorff, and others (including Asquith and other non-Swedish directors) reflect the delicate feeling of mutual respect characteristic of those engaged in all aspects of the industry. In regard to Sucksdorff, Fischer told me that while it is difficult for a photographer to work for another photographer, he agreed generally with Sucksdorff's photographic directions, and feels he has a great visual sensitivity. Bergman, says Fischer, has perhaps more concern with the face, the eyes, the human being, but also has very definite ideas as to how he wants the camera, which he looks into frequently. "A good cameraman," Fischer says, "must always consider that he is not playing first violin." Fischer also expressed a few wistful longings that less consideration of economy might make his work easier; there is never enough time or materials, he says, but it is an industry too, after all, there is always some

compromise, and one cannot afford to do everything one wants.

The thing about American and English film production which most dismays Swedish filmmakers, on the other hand, is the excess of people and materials and time squandered. When a Swedish film is being made, the director, an actor, or anybody else can pick up a prop and move it anywhere it is needed without bringing the wrath of over-organized labor down on their heads. Actors sometimes direct, leading actors play bit parts, directors sometimes act and often write. There are not so many people standing around that one stumbles over them or has no idea who they are. There is not the frantic disjointed tension and temperament and pressure of heavy investment pushing them; yet there is often a tension of another sort, a creative and unifying kind of tension which carries them through the month or six weeks of shooting time usually taken for a Swedish film. It is almost a truism that they are forced by material limitations into considerations of art; on the other hand a preoccupation with art makes financial extravagances unnecessary and even undesirable.

The most of the films made in Sweden are little artistic and philosophical gems is of course far from the truth: Sweden also has its thrillers, its family comedies, its spectacles – some of these well done, some flops, some both. Such directors as Arne Mattson *(One Summer of Happiness)* and Hasse Ekman, have turned largely to light comedy and thrillers; Göran Gentele and Kenne Fant, more recent popular directors working with Europa and Nordisk Tonefilm, have perhaps been limited by what the recent market would bear in showing the full scope of their talents. Some of these directors also work in TV, some direct at the Opera (where Bergman also had a great success in directing Stravinsky's *Rake's Progress* last season). Fant, of course, will now have a chance to show what he can do both artistically and financially as SF's new production chief. At present he is still engaged at Nordisk Tonefilm, which—either despite or because of the recession—is producing a large and expensive color spectacle on the order of *Around the World in 80 Days.* This will be *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils,* based on Selma Lagerlöf's delightful stories about the aerial adventures of Nils and his goose (well known also in the United States). A Swede's-eye view of Sweden's pleasant geography could be a refreshing addition to the collection—if it does not, on the other hand, turn out to be too little and too late. Tonefilm, which in the 'forties had Lorens Marmstedt starting off its production and Karl Kilbom—one of Sweden's most colorful old Socialists, now retired—as its president, has been headed since 1953 by Arne Elmgren, a journalist-economist who is another of the less artistically grounded few in Swedish film-making. The company is owned by the Folk Houses (union-run community centers which have their own theaters) and major Swedish coöperative, labor, and agricultural associations. These do not in any way affect the functions of the company, however, which like other Swedish film producers today must operate on closely calculated considerations of finance. Tonefilm produces as well as imports a number of comedies and thrillers, and is Swedish distributor for Disney films.

The story of Europa, second to SF in age though not second in production among Swedish film companies, is largely the story of one man, Gustav Scheutz, who started the company in 1930 and has been its owner, director, and production head ever since. In 1950 Scheutz was one of the three major Swedish producers who went to Hollywood (with Dymling and Waldekranz) at the invitation of the Motion Picture Association of America. Originally in the glass industry, Scheutz is a good businessman whose interest in films has led him chiefly to produce sprightly comedies—an example of which is *Three Wishes,* currently very successful in Sweden and, with Eva Dahlbeck in one of the leading roles, possibly due for an American showing. Tonefilm also had a successful comedy recently running for some time—*Wedding Day,* with Bibi Andersson and Max von Sydow.

In any discussion of Swedish film-making, even limiting it to recent years, one cannot overlook the name of director-actor Victor Sjöström. With Mauritz Stiller he gave Swedish films in the earliest days their artistic ambitions and orientation. When his own great era of silent film (which, like the more recent "golden years," also began during a war—World War I) had passed, with the intervention of recessions and shifts of Swedish film personnel to Hollywood, and with the development of the new Swedish cinema of the 'forties and 'fifties, Sjöström remained not only as a grand old monument of the past, but as a spirit still active in and pervading the film community and epitomized, perhaps, in his final scene as the old doctor in Bergman's *Wild Strawberries*. Perhaps more significantly than the advent of TV, Sjöström's death last year, and Dr. Dymling's death this spring, have marked the end of a great and productive half-century of Swedish film-making.

What can one learn from it? The reasons for the relative excellence of Sweden's films, in a country less populous than New York City, can perhaps be summed up in two phrases: regard for film as an art form, and a spirit of community. Not that Swedish producers object to making money, nor are they bad businessmen; but to paint a painting with the object of making it sell is quite another thing than to paint what one wants to express with the incidental hope that others will respond to it. In the medium of film-making, however, as Dr. Dymling put it, "the economic problem is born with the production." The investment of time, talents, and materials is sufficiently great and, as in theater, so directly dependent on an audience that financial considerations cannot be ignored at the start. Such men as Dymling, Marmstedt, Scheutz, and Waldekranz combined a practical sense of what was financially possible with an imaginative sense of what could and should be artistically possible. They brought to film-making experience in various other arts: Dymling headed Swedish Radio up to 1942, when he came to Svensk Filmindustri, had a doctorate in history of literature and published studies on his original research on Shakespeare; Molander was chief of SF studios and a Ph.D. in arts; Waldekranz of Sandrews took his MA in history of literature and theater, and wrote extensively on cinema before becoming production chief at Sandrews in 1942.

Now Dymling is dead and a 38-year-old director has replaced him; Bergman has joined Sjöberg at the Royal Dramatic Theater and says he will make perhaps eight or ten more films before he is 50, then retire to work only in the theater; Sucksdorff is trying a realm new to him; few other personalities seem likely to emerge. Sweden is a small country, as the Swedes keep saying, and increasingly open to the cultural and financial invasions of the world —particularly of the United States. American influences on Swedish youth are everywhere evident; teen-agers can be seen on the streets in boots, black leather jackets, and duck-tail haircuts; they ride around in jointly owned cars picking up girls; and most of them go to the movies.

What Sweden can salvage from its peaceful isolation and democratic "neutrality," and what role its film-makers will play in the years ahead, is still to be seen. One can hope that something of the spirit of its "golden years" of film-making will remain.

ENZO PERI

Federico Fellini: An Interview

The roar of a powerful car stops me after I have taken only a few steps from the old building where the director of *La Dolce Vita* has his office. The repeated blowing of a horn makes me turn around in curiosity. An arm waves frantically from the window of a luxurious Jaguar 3-4 and, as the car door opens, I see that the arm belongs to the tall and rather stocky Fellini. Fellini is often referred to by Italians as the "Maestro." A typically charming Italian, and a clever actor, he comes toward me smiling and shakes my hand with such warmth that no one can hold a grudge for his delay.

"Shall we go for a coffee, or shall we talk in the car?" he asks, patting my shoulder. The question is simply a formality, since the "Maestro" has his plan already designed. He will drive me around town and then take me to the new, towering buildings of the Universal Exposition some ten miles out of Rome, where the set for his current film has been built.

It is an unusual experience to be chauffeured through the Eternal City by the director of *La Strada*, *Cabiria*, and *La Dolce Vita*, which in New York, the news runs, is sold out for a year in advance. Fellini seems to be very much at ease in conversation while driving in the confused and risky Roman traffic. Sitting beside him, I can observe his every facial expression without being noticed. He talks much with his free hand, alternating the left with the right on the wheel. From time to time his sharp brown eyes meet mine when he is trying to bring out a particular point and his intense face might have just emerged from a Michelangelo fresco. Once assured that his driving skill is perfectly compatible with his well-known conversational fluency, I begin asking questions.

"Maestro, what would you say is the relationship, if any, between Italian neorealist movie-making and your personal art?"

"First of all," Fellini answers, "we must agree on the meaning of neorealism. The neorealistic experience intended to portray a certain social reality; it had a political meaning, more than an aesthetic one, and this engendered some confusion. In good or bad faith, because of stupidity or simply interest, certain political parties tried to take advantage of this new form of picture-making which appeared in Italy after the war. I would say that neorealism had little to do with art-qua-art; except for one director, Rossellini, who invented his own way of making movies. But, you see, we cannot really even say that there was a school. Even De Sica, he is more than anything else a delicate executor of stories. And Visconti is the product of a more refined and decadent trend. His *La Terra Trema* has nothing to do with the powerful realism of Rossellini. I don't believe in schools; I believe in artists who, if they are great, will open new roads and, thereby, create imitators. One thing is true: Italy, during Fascism, was a closed country, a nation that was imprisoned in absolute falsity. The horrid Fascist lie made us believe for twenty years that we were the most beautiful and perfect people in the world. When the dictatorship was overthrown, we discovered our own country. That is why the war, even if horrible in itself, was a benediction on the human level, as far as we are concerned. We could look freely around us now, and the reality appeared so extraordinary that we

couldn't resist watching it and photographing it with astonished and virgin eyes. This is why Rossellini could move the entire world. However, this was the first stage. Whoever would go to the moon now, and bring us the first pictures of it, would also cause a great commotion around him. But after a while, we wouldn't be satisfied to have photos and reports only. We would want to send a poet there, the artist who would give us a new vision of that new reality."

"And this artist, this poet, is it you?" I ask bluntly.

"Well, I didn't mean that," Fellini replies in a serious tone.

At this point a bus almost runs over us from the left, but Fellini calmly wheels away and goes on talking. "The really important contribution of neorealism is that it suggested a way to look at things – not with the narcissistic glasses of the author, but with equilibrium between reality and subjectivism."

"Shall we conclude therefore that neorealism is dead?"

"It is dead today as a movement which bore the stamp of social reality as an exclusive object of interest. Today the interest is drawn to man himself–his metaphysical, psychological, and total structure."

"Of this man as the object of modern cinematographic art, it seems that you prefer to stress his situation of loneliness in the midst of today's world, in *La Strada* as well as *La Dolce Vita*?"

"Yes. More exactly *La Dolce Vita* is the private and confidential confession of a man who speaks of himself and his aberration. It is as if a friend were telling to other friends his confusion, his contradictions, and his deceptions, trying to clarify for himself his own sentimental aridity. Marcello, the hero of *La Dolce Vita,* is from this point of view very similar to Zampano, the hero of *La Strada,* although the first is more cultured, and more guilty because he is more intelligent."

"What other directors, if any, do you think have influenced your style and inspiration?"

"Without being conceited, I must say that I don't recognize anyone as my father in art. There have been, of course, some fortunate meetings, as with Rossellini, but nothing more. My only master has been life, since I believe that cinema must derive from life, and not vice versa. I feel a solidarity of intentions with some other directors, but not a solidarity of expression."

"Could you describe an evolution of themes and style from your early movies up to date?"

"Evolution? I would rather say it is a journey progressing along the same road. There is no real difference between the inspirational motives of *The White Sheik* and *La Dolce Vita.* The difference is only exterior. There is the same meditation, the same look—surprised, astonished, ironic."

"Speaking of *La Dolce Vita,* many critics have said that you wanted to depict some aspects of real life in Rome; others have spoken of symbolism as, for instance, with regard to the last scene showing the monstrous fish. Did you want to call to mind a well-known front-page story of a woman who was found dead on the Roman beach, presumably after an orgy?"

"*La Dolce Vita* is a pure fruit of imagination," answers Fellini in a tone which doesn't sound totally convincing. He immediately adds: "There may be, of course, a coincidence between the episodes of the movie and some episodes of reality. You see, in the film there are some scenes involving aristocrats; but I've never been associated with titled people in my life. As to the monster at the end of the movie, it is for me a remembrance of my childhood. I was walking along the sea of Rimini in the early morning when I saw that the sea had vomited a monstrous fish. Images of this kind find their right place in a movie, if properly sowed in the context with the skill of acquired experience." (Yet Fellini doesn't deny completely the symbolic meaning of many of the scenes in his last movie whose end, he says, is one of "folly and hope.")

"The last scene in *La Dolce Vita* doesn't seem to be what is called a 'happy ending.' It is true that the young girl smiles at the hero, but her smile is enigmatic and Marcello goes his own way. Do you purposely keep away from happy endings?"

"I think it would be immoral to present a ready-made solution at the end of a movie. Such a solution would necessarily be forced and, therefore, false." Then, as if talking to himself, Fellini adds: "I haven't found a final solution myself and I would consider myself finished if I had found it. I don't have any certainty or clarity myself; it would be dishonest to give it to the characters of my movies. It is more honest to leave in the viewer a torment that can engender meditation, instead of offering an euphoric solution at any price."

We drive along the avenue that leads to the Vatican; soon we approach the columned square of Saint Peter's. I remember that Fellini is considered by many as a Catholic artist (he is known to be the friend of bishops and cardinals), yet there are others who call him a Latin existentialist. His attitude of spiritual torment may justify the latter definition. His position may even recall Plato's "skepsi" (in the etymological meaning of a continual search), but cannot be interpreted as skepticism.

"I have faith in humanity," the Master goes on. "All of us are children somehow."

Now our conversation turns to his current movie. It is a twenty-minute episode titled "The Temptations of Dr. Antonio" and is designed to be a part of a sort of anthology with the title *Boccaccio '70.* (Boccaccio was an Italian writer of the fourteenth century, well known for the spicy content of his short stories in the *Decameron.)* The other episodes will be directed by Rossellini, Antonioni, De Sica, Monicelli, and Visconti. Fellini's episode tells the story of a serious doctor who becomes obsessed by the billboard image of a girl (Anita Ekberg) who, lying lasciviously on a couch, offers the passerby a glass of milk.

"*Boccaccio '70* is a joke," says Fellini. "I accepted this competitive coöperation because the title is a challenge to censorship. All of us are fighting censorship because it is just a politi-

cal weapon. No one has the right to elect himself as a tutor of others, in art. There are still attempts to restrict individual freedom in art, but [and here Fellini speaks with an almost prophetic accent] these are the last attempts to impede the birth of modern man. There may be some martyrs in this battle, but I feel that we are at the end of the night, even if dawn is still a little far."

"Is it true that you are a friend of a cardinal who helped you out of censorship troubles concerning *Cabiria* and *La Dolce Vita?*"

Fellini smiles at this blunt question. "What is wrong in being the friend of a cardinal?" he answers, trying to evade. Then he adds: "I didn't have much trouble with *La Dolce Vita,* except after the movie had been shown. The Americans are seeing the movie in the almost uncut version, except for the two scenes that were cut in the English version; this same print was sent to the United States."

We have now arrived at the set and, as soon as they spot the Master, assistants and technicians rush to greet him and crowd around him murmuring respectfully, "Buon giorno, Maestro. . . ." It is a welcoming scene that resembles a mystic and spectacular ceremonial. Fellini walks solemnly, patting shoulders here and there, almost paternally. Later he will tell us that he is well aware that such ceremony may amuse someone who is accustomed to the somewhat different atmosphere of the Hollywood studios "but," he says, "here we still maintain the atmosphere of the craftsman and his disciples. It may be a leftover of the Middle Ages, but it is colorful and useful for the close coöperation necesary in producing a work of art." At this point I leave him, after accepting his invitation to return the following day. "We'll have lunch together in the interval between shooting. . . ."

The following day I arrive at the set in time to witness Fellini's directing style. It is easy to see that he is a perfectionist. He stays behind the camera only long enough to check the shot he wants, then he leaves it entirely up to the cameraman and carefully watches the performance. He calls eight takes on a short scene in which a young widow has to cry beside a coffin. By the eighth take the girl is really crying. The 20-minute episode for *Boccaccio '70* has taken more than a month in rehearsals and shooting. He justifies this length by saying that at the present point of his career he can not allow himself to be less than perfect.

It is more than rare to see the Maestro ever lose his temper. He sometimes becomes excited when he talks, but during the shooting he is absolutely calm and friendly with the actors and the crew—encouraging and, at times, almost tender. Always carefully dressed, he takes his jacket off only if it is really hot or if he has to show an actress how to move her hips. (Even this job he does very effectively.)

At lunch in a modern restaurant called "Old America" we also meet Mrs. Fellini, actress Magali Noël, and actor Peppino De Filippo. Mrs. Fellini is better known as Giulietta Masina, the gifted heroine of *La Strada* and *Cabiria.* Fellini informs me that she will star again in his next movie. "What will be the subject of your next movie?" Fellini answers that he has promised himself not to talk about it until the time comes. But a few moments later he decides to reveal the general story idea. "It will be an attempt to study what the little girl says with her enigmatic smile to Marcello at the end of *La Dolce Vita.*"

"Would you like to make a movie in the United States?"

"Flattering offers have come to me from America, and I was recently in New York for two months attempting to find inspiration for story ideas. I even found some. One, for instance, on American women, but I decided not to do anything about it. Directing is a work of youth in the sense that it requires spirit of adventure, as it would mean for me to go to discover America. . . ."

"But, Maestro, I thought you felt young. . . ."

Fellini smiles. "Yes, maybe the real reason is something else. I can't talk of things unless I feel I know them in detail. I think that an artist is like a tree. It can grow only where it has its roots. . . ."

MARIO TRAJTENBERG

Torre Nilsson and His Double

There were only thirty people present when *La casa del ángel (End of Innocence)* was shown at the Cannes Festival in 1957. But once the film ended, so the legend goes, applause lasted for five minutes and the select personalities rushed to congratulate Leopoldo Torre Nilsson. Overnight he became a question mark: who had ever foreseen such high standards in an Argentine director? A Toulouse newspaper hinted that Torre Nilsson's Swedish name accounted for the influence of Sjöberg and Bergman he evidently showed.

I am writing from a Latin American point of view; so let me hasten to add that if *End of Innocence* was a "discovery" and a "surprise" for the larger movie world, it came almost as a shock to the skeptical Argentine audiences, to critics who had despaired of the national product—or conveniently chosen to bolster foreign imports. "Our cinema, in order to survive, would rather not be discussed," said Torre Nilsson in 1952.

During the war Argentine film-making had attained, if not respectable artistic status, at least a solid hold on Latin American audiences. It rivalled the Mexican cinema in a plentiful output of comedy and melodrama which was either cheap or pretentious, or both; it even allowed itself a good picture now and then, such as the classic *Prisioneros de la tierra (Prisoners of the Earth*—1939) by Mario Soffici, based on three stories by Horacio Quiroga. After 1945 Argentina started losing ground to Mexico in the underdeveloped markets. Some ascribe this to the flimsiness of its international distribution, some to the loss of creative freedom that came with the Perón decade. Whatever the cause, Argentine films ceased to be a paying proposition although standards were as low as ever; simply fewer and fewer people wanted to buy them. It is against such a background that the impact of *La casa del ángel* should be measured.

There is also a private background for its director. His father Leopoldo Torres Ríos* was a film-maker in his own right, and some of Torre Nilsson's achievements may perhaps be explained as a reaction against his father's. Not that they were in any way opposed; both sustained a deep admiration for each other's work. But Torres Ríos was for his son too much on a traditional line of Argentine film-making. Born in 1899 of Spanish parents, he tried with varying success to capture the immediate truths of Argentine life. His own formula was "lack of action, time wasted on superfluous details." It was used for *La vuelta al nido (Back to the Nest*—1937, reputedly a very good film) with such disastrous commercial results that for years he was forced to stick to potboilers. Success returned in 1949 with *Pelota de trapo (Ball of Rags)* and later with a couple of morose, sensitive films which brought him a certain fame.

Leopoldo† was born in 1924. His early life and education were rather hazardous because of his father's unstable luck. At 15 he started working with his father, sometimes reluctantly because of the routine work he had to watch

* The original form of the name, later readopted by his son, is *Torre*.

† His Nilsson grandfather was a Swede who married an Englishwoman.

him perform. But he also became an unsatiable film-goer and learned the facts of life and cinema the hard way. Early familiarity with failure and with the pettiness of the local film colony accounts for a streak of bitterness that can now and then be detected in his talk, and also for a certain commercial shrewdness which later allowed him to stand on his own.

Torre Nilsson did a short film and wrote a script for his father before he had his first chance to direct. This was *El crimen de Oribe (Oribe's Crime*—1949), done between the two, as was *El hijo del crack (Son of the "Star"*—i.e., football star—1953). Torres Ríos, after his unsuccessful Expressionist ventures of the 'thirties, had settled for his own brand of popular subjects, warmly treated; his son probably had a hand in choosing the story for *El crimen de Oribe,* a cold, semifantastic tale by Adolfo Bioy Casares. When he finally directed a film of his own in 1954, *Días de odio (Days of Hate),* the script was based on a short crime story by Jorge Luis Borges, an Argentine writer as notoriously detached, intellectual, aristocratic as Bioy Casares (and as strongly attacked by the new generation of "involved" young writers). These beginnings are already a far cry from Torres Ríos's style and subject-matter. But Torre Nilsson's subsequent experiences seem to echo his father's. After failing with *La Tigra (Tigress*—a nickname—1953) to the extent that the film was never shown in Buenos Aires, he had to bow to Argentina Sono Film and take a strictly commercial assignment, *Para vestir santos (The Spinsters*—1955), which meant, as usual, a cheap story, star comedians, and almost no directing at all.

Traces of his conflict can be found in *El protegido (The Protégé*—1956), the only original script he ever filmed. The plot starts promisingly enough, focusing on the conflicts between an idealistic young scriptwriter and a cunning producer; but it goes to pieces as soon as romance between the protagonist and the producer's wife takes over. According to Torre Nilsson, the film was ruined by the cast he had to accept; the woman was younger than her role, and the actor Guillermo Battaglia, as the producer, underplayed all the homosexual traits that gave any meaning to the lurid story. For his previous film, *Graciela* (1956), which he describes as "an exercise in style for *End of Inocence,*" he had had to adapt a Spanish novel whose situations were interwoven with the plight of post-Civil War Spain. As a result the plot, dealing with the youth of Graciela and the sordidness of her tragic family life, is somehow oddly off balance, the over-all effect being one of visual preciousness. It is interesting to note that some reviewers of *Graciela* already detected the lurking shadow of Sjöberg.

TORRE NILSSON *with his wife, Beatriz Guido.*

The turning point in Torre Nilsson's career (indeed, in the history of Argentine cinema) was the beginning of his work with Beatriz Guido. There is a great leap between *El protegido* and *La casa del ángel*, though less than a year intervened; suddenly the old anchors of bad taste, bad dialogue, and bad acting are aweigh. Although Sra. Guido (now Sra. Torre Nilsson) is credited with part of the script, all she did was allow Torre Nilsson a free hand in the rehashing of her novel.

La casa del ángel was Beatriz Guido's first novel, and it had been a best-seller for two years before Torre Nilsson undertook its adaptation. Her first books draw on a rich but not very wide experience of Argentine life; her instinct is for introspection rather than for observation, although her memory has a sharp eye for detail. Her tone and subject-matter are what one might call upper-middle-class, except that in Argentina the middle classes usually do not write. Although her upbringing was not particularly strict, owing to the Bohemian and artistic strains on both her parents' sides, she is to this day quite bitter about Catholic education and morals.

The story of 14-year-old Ana, protected by her bigoted mother and apocalyptic nanny from the knowledge of sin, is in many ways typical of her manner; in the end Ana is malignly drawn to throw herself into the arms of a man who is going to fight a duel in the house. Thus she is "branded" for life, together with her first and only lover; for in the province of Sra. Guido's fiction, sex is spelt with a scarlet letter.

Significantly, Torre Nilsson is most successful where he sticks most closely to the book. The new sections of the script, inventing a background for the man who in the novel was but a cloudy figure in the distance, are done in an older style than the rest; they are exceedingly verbose and facile. There are also political allusions aplenty; they are slightly opportunistic but forgivable, if one remembers that Perón had been ousted only one year before.

La casa del ángel is as yet Torre Nilsson's most fascinating film, a piece of inventiveness whose style has perhaps been further perfected, but whose depth of impact has not repeated itself in later films. Almost everything in the opening sequences is new for Argentine cinema; the subtle, involved camerawork by Aníbal González Paz, the twelve-tone music by Juan Carlos Paz, the critical intent, the atmosphere. This is due less to a fortunate coincidence of photography, music, and so on, than to the fact that Torre Nilsson was at last working with material entirely congenial to him. From this point onward he and his wife must be seen working together.

El secuestrador (The Kidnapper – 1958), based on a very short Guido story, was to be her first experience in scriptwriting. In the process of turning a tale into a full-length feature the poignancy was lost; Torre Nilsson took the whole idea as an occasion for filming in a poor district of Buenos Aires and perhaps, on the side, paying tribute to his father's favorite subjects. The chosen site was a "Villa Miseria," one of the ugly Buenos Aires slums. It is perhaps characteristic that Torre Nilsson should have had to build a couple of extra blocks for the shooting, and use the real thing as a background; he is never exactly comfortable when he has to film the surrounding world literally (it seems that in this instance the dangers of doing so were quite physical). That is why *El secuestrador* turned out to be such an unrealistic film, in spite of the settings, which are really used to symbolize inner corruption and bleakness. The main characters are children who spend their time rummaging in the dirt and have a precocious knowledge of vice, or adolescents whose very attempt to escape through love only leads to the girl being raped by two other men. After that, the film indulges in unmitigated catastrophe; a baby is eaten by a pig, the girl tries to commit suicide, another child is accidentally killed. Torre Nilsson avows that these high strung sequences were perhaps "a diplomatic mistake"; they certainly added to his reputation for morbidness. His direction of the children is admirable, although a contrived happy end gainsays his pessimism.

If *El secuestrador* shows children about to be corrupted, his next film, *La caída (The Fall*–1959), equates children with corruption. This time, as in *La casa del ángel*, Sra. Guido had had her say in the novel and took little part in the script. The protagonist is once more a young virgin, although this time she is slightly older. On arriving at an old house, as a boarder, she finds it peopled by four children and their mother, who is locked up in her room because of asthma and nerves. As the girl gets to know the children, to accept their eerie blend of perverseness and affection, maturity and innocence, she has her first encounters with men: a prudish lawyer who proposes only after "testing" her virtue, and the mysterious uncle of the children, whose sudden arrival sparks off one of those lethal crushes inevitable for Guido heroines.

The real *trouvaille*, both in the novel and in the details of Torre Nilsson's recreation, is the sinister quartet of children playing their precocious knowledge of life against the girl's righteousness (again, with undertones of grudge against Catholic mores). As in *End of Innocence*, a strictly feminine point of view causes the male characters to be extremely stilted; their is a gulf between Elsa Daniel's wordy scenes with the lawyer and the nightmarish progress of her relationship with the children.

Torre Nilsson's next two films were to stand apart from the rest of his work, and their interest is likely to remain local. Although Mrs. Guido once again provided a novel as a basis for the script of *Fin de fiesta (The Party Is Over*–1959) its style is so different from that of the two previous books as to be almost unrecognizable.

The film can only be superficially understood except with reference to the book; its attempt to follow closely a plot packed with incident and character only results in patchiness. It is understandable that Torre Nilsson should have been so careful to avoid simplifications. The subject is in itself a major one. Adolfo, the grandson of Braceras, a political chieftain of the 'thirties, grows up in the stormy years between the conservative coup of 1930 and Perón's first demagogic speeches in 1943. Thus the political prelude to Peronism is set as a background for Adolfo's sentimental education, the awakening of his political conscience through a love-hate relationship with grandfather Braceras, and his initiation into the local myths of manhood through his friendship with Guastavino, Bracera's henchman.

The latter relationship is made the nucleus of the film partly because of Lautaro Murúa's very good acting, partly because it afforded Torre Nilsson his best view over the subject (and the chance for a use of symbols which now seems definitely engrafted in his style–there is even a gory initiation ceremony where Adolfo bites a bullet from Guastavino's flesh and drinks his blood; then he is strong enough to cause the death of his grandfather). Guastavino stands for all the new things to be discovered; his fights, his mistress, his shady assignments, his murder, all will turn Adolfo into a man and show him the disgusting counterpart of Argentine political life in the suburbs: gangsterism, corruption, intolerance, crime. *Fin de fiesta* was unique not only in that its point of view (as fiction) was successfully masculine, but in that the chronicle was linked with a definite chapter in Argentine history.

Although Beatriz Guido did not collaborate in the next film, *Un guapo del 900* (1960), Torre Nilsson kept exploring unfamiliar ground, further back into the early 1900's. To be sure, the film involved a much smaller involvement on his part; the play had been a popular success and Torre Nilsson did not attempt to go further than an extension of this success to the screen. But his style was by now so developed that even such hard theatrical dialogue as he had to deal with becomes a pretext for a fascinating peep into turn-of-the-century Buenos Aires. The film is very irregular; as in *El secuestrador*, Torre Nilsson finds it difficult to accept native reality at face value and tends to overwhelm it with analytical photography. His biggest asset comes from the brilliant performance by Alfredo Alcón as the henchman who

Top: UN GUAPO DEL 900.
Bottom: LA MANO EN LA TRAMPA: *Elsa Daniel and Maria Rosa.*

goes to prison in order to protect the honor of his boss, and is meant to represent, as the "guapo" or he-man, the native sense of courage and loyalty. The film was Torre Nilsson's first popular success.

With *La mano en la trampa (The Hand in the Trap*—1961) we are back in familiar territory. Elsa Daniel, in a third avatar of the tortured adolescent, this time sets out to break the mystery. She is home for the summer vacation, in a provincial town. Her spinster aunts keep a secret in the attic; it is said to be a half-wit, the illegitimate child of her father. She eventually discovers that the inhabitant of the room is another aunt, who had twenty years earlier yielded to her fiancé only to be forsaken by him, and had locked herself up to cover her shame. The girl's discovery also involves her seduction by the ex-fiancé, now a rich married man, and the death of the secluded aunt.

The film demands a little more attention than the previous ones, because both in its virtues and its mistakes it sums up a good deal of the Torre-Guido double personality. It appears to follow two parallel lines: investigation of the mystery leads to the loss of virginity, both anecdotes being kept separate. Actually the *whole* plot deals with the dread and accomplishment of deflowering in symbolic terms. The quest takes the girl back to the prenatal cloister: she sees horrid animals in the house (rats, toads, cockroaches), and to find out who lives in the mysterious room—overcrowded with furniture—she crawls into a dumb waiter and is lifted exactly as if she were returning to the foetal position. There are many other indications of this unconscious movement (according to Sra. Guido they were also entirely unconscious at the time of writing the script) towards the definition of sex as only confinement, surrender, death. Only lifelong seclusion can cover up the "shame" of her aunt; and in the surprising epilogue we behold the girl preparing to repeat exactly the same story in a Buenos Aires furnished flat, where she is to be "kept" after the loss of purity.

The emotional implications of the Torre-Guido subjects here explode with astonishing unconscious energy, and Torre Nilsson is most effective where he visualizes the odd atmosphere in which the search and the seduction take place. He makes excellent use of Alberto Etchebehere's photography to invoke the symbols and imaginings of the girl's obsession with chastity. There is a delicate interplay between individual and socal repression.

Unfortunately Torre Nilsson felt he had to spice up his plot with a couple of very unconvincing "modern youth" sequences in the Italian style. They fail because the girl's plight remains throughout largely imaginary. It can-

not be said to belong in modern Argentine society, but rather in the legends of Bécquer and E. T. A. Hoffmann.

I have found it useful to study Torre Nilsson's development together with Beatriz Guido's, because of the curious symbiotic alliance they form. "I contribute to her novels as much as she contributes to my films beyond the script," he says; they have a unity of purpose that reminds one of Bergman, and really constitute a sort of Bergman with a split personality. Sra. Guido lives in a world very much her own, where innocence is faced wtih evil and corruption. In *La casa del ángel*, *La caída*, and *La mano en la trampa*, Catholic morality (at least in its Spanish-Argentine variety) is almost a disease of the imagination; the three girls (all played by Elsa Daniel, a bit overrated by English and American critics) are obsessed with temptation and purity until at last they fall and are branded forever by their act. In *El secuestrador* corruption takes the outward form of filth; in *Fin de fiesta* it becomes the three-headed sphinx of adult life, with its unsolvable riddles of sex, courage, and politics; in *La caída* the children themselves are uneasily viewed as the vehicles of corruption. The Torre-Guido characters have been mainly children and adolescents, he says, because "in youth is bred all that later becomes a problem."

Their latest film, called *Piel de verano*, or *Summer Skin* (to be shown this year at Venice) bodes a change of wind. It is a story of a young man about to die, who falls in love with the girl who is hired to comfort his last days, and commits suicide when she leaves him after learning that he will not die. The film is set in Punta del Este, the Uruguayan seaside resort; the visual influences seem to have shifted from early Bergman to late Antonioni, and even a touch of the French "New Novel" technique of discarding emotion and remaining on the hard surface of visual image. If light, camerawork, and cutting are as successful as ever, the script drowns out the director's efforts with pseudo-literary repartee, which falls oddly short of the mark considering Beatriz Guido's familiarity with the ways of the otiose rich. The beautiful summer-autumn symbolism is seriously handicapped by this unwieldy dialogue. Other projects for the future seem to indicate that Torre Nilsson (as he explicitly tells me) will try to develop a feeling for narration; he senses in his past work a cluttering of description and atmosphere. His most ambitious plan is to film *Martín Fierro*, the classic Argentine epic poem; he also has plans for a Spanish-Argentine production based on Beatriz Guido's play, *Homenaje a la hora de la siesta (A Tribute to the Siesta!)*. Another plan is to film a period piece, "but not in order to repeat the superficial, scenic style such films usually call forth. What I want is to put myself *inside* a moment in history and tell a story from within. Not to turn any given anecdote into a period piece, but to find such a plot and such a set of characters as will describe the chosen moment, as will only exist on its account. I know of only one example: Visconti's *Senso*."

The Torre Nilsson lair is somewhat different from his habitat in fiction. He and his wife live in a spacious apartment in Buenos Aires, replete with beautiful Indian handiwork and Spanish Colonial furniture collected by Beatriz's diplomat father. She is a lovable, generous character; Torre Nilson does not exactly answer to the imposing physique one sees in photographs. Beneath the Martian tinted glasses, a short-sighted Dr. Jekyll with kindly blue eyes is discovered.

If the couple fell so readily together as a

Shooting PIEL DE VERANO *at Punta del Este.*

working team, it is because his style, as it developed, matched her universe to a detail. In *End of Innocence* there was still a reliance on effect, and a cleavage between the style of reality and the style of adolescent day-nightmare; there is no such difference now, nor is there a clash between form and content. The problem lies rather in the responsibility Torre Nilsson placed on his own shoulders by starting a revolution.

Several facts conspire nowadays against film-making in any Latin American country: the lack of an accepted body of drama and novel; the lack of technical schools, the excess of film imports from Europe and the United States. Argentine cinema in the 'forties, if for the most part unoriginal, did not face any inextricable budget or audience problems. Latin American lowbrows supported it enthusiastically, and it was inexpensive; cultivated audiences simply kept apart, knowing what to expect. The films were cut to unchanging patterns. Latin American cinema has tended elsewhere to create an image of uniformity, though the image may differ; while André Bazin expected *"mélodrames bourgeois,"* John Gillett [*Sight & Sound,* Autumn, 1960] braced himself at Santa Margherita for "whippings, slashings, rape and religious hysteria." This image is strongest in Uruguay and Argentina, which accounts for the fact that European and American critics do not mind certain aspects of Argentine cinema that we bridle at instantly.

Each year 250 foreign films are shown in Buenos Aires; but an Argentine film cannot finance itself without State aid (which Torre Nilsson has been fortunate to get). Néstor Gaffet, Torre Nilsson's partner, gives the dramatic facts. Out of twenty million inhabitants, only five million are the potential audience for any given film; the rest are the peasants, the aged, the crippled and the very poor. Thus, although a standard feature costs only about $90,000 to make, the ventures are fewer each day. Theater-owners, for one thing, resort to every trick in order to evade the law demanding consistent screening of national films; also tickets are priced low. The recent protectionist policies, although they have allowed men like Torre Nilsson to go on with their work, are also a double-edged sword: they discourage young film-makers if their presumed politics are too pinko for official taste.

Torre Nilsson's way of tackling this composite problem of producers, State, and audience has been surefooted. With *Fin de fiesta* he started producing his own films; his company, called Producciones Angel, also intends to foster the work of young directors, and has indeed begun to do so. He has been admirably tenacious, and can do virtually whatever he likes.

But his position is not so clear as regards the public. Like Bergman and Kurosawa, he is a creature of the international age; "I made a career through Festivals," he admits. If this sounds ironic it really has an undertone of sadness, because he has not received all the support he deserves at home.

Now local critics are right to be exacting, because they have too long expected a film-maker with a sense of reality and are a bit disappointed with the fictionalized account of these early youth traumas. Torre Nilsson, however, does not see his work as limited by his approach. "Of course I do feel a compulsion towards Argentine life. . . . But I believe that social matter dominated by psychology is as vast a field as psychological matter overshadowed by social concerns."

The real crux is with the audience. I have already pointed out how difficult it was for good Argentine film-making to create a new image of itself—to convince local sophisticates that it is worth seeing. Perhaps another way out would be to raise the level of the unsophisticates; but here Torre Nilsson makes no claims and is content with his lot. "In all countries there is a cultivated audience with a keen interest in the human being, its ways of life and patterns of behavior. The lowbrows, on the contrary, differ widely from country to country, and they can only be satisfied with the local product. I aim at the former."

The fact is, he is at home in a world of his own which precludes a too direct confrontation of contemporary Argentine life; this even shows in his way of working. He does not like open-air shooting very much, and says "I feel a lot more at ease on the set, with the actors." There are many directors like him; but in their own countries they are usually the exception rather than the one-man rule. Faced with primitiveness and artificiality, he started by creating a refined language far in advance of his surroundings; this, although it is too readily taken for granted by foreign critics, is so far his biggest achievement. But, from our point of view, he should not be content with a brilliant international role. Perhaps there is another way to put it: he badly needs company—in his position, he is too much alone.

Film Reviews

IN GENERAL RELEASE

THE ANGRY SILENCE

Director: Guy Green. Producers: Richard Attenborough and Bryan Forbes. British Lion. With Richard Attenborough, Pier Angeli, Michael Craig, Bernard Lee, Geoffrey Keen.

This is a film about an industrial dispute in an English town. Much of it was shot in a real factory, though a rather antique one. But so oddly is it made that one can forgive Paine Knickerbocker of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, usually the West Coast Bosley Crowther, for thinking that the local union chairman was the foreman. (There are no foremen in the plant, only a works manager.)

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The film is new-wavy in some ways; one is encouraged by the suitably drab photography in many sequences, the occasional frank language ("Do you expect to get it the first time?"

asks a beautiful blonde), the occasional sharp sense of milieu. But as the reels go by these pleasures recede, and one realizes that they are only devices, window-dressing. Fundamentally, the film is a studio-concocted piece of fluff, as falsely "dramatic" as any family picture.

The makers of *The Angry Silence* have not learned anything since Lindsay Anderson, in *Sight & Sound*, wrote his definitive analysis of what was wrong with *On the Waterfront*. The new film shares the obliqueness, and perhaps the dishonesty, of the earlier work. As *On the Waterfront* raised a real and grim social problem, the corruption of dock unions (and companies), and then reduced it to a personal problem that could be "resolved" by a moral gesture, so exactly does *The Angry Silence* reduce the problems of democracy in unions to a matter that can be dealt with through a beating and a speech.

Kazan's film has a certain arty appeal; the personal problem there is handled with grace and poetry, and a great actor was at work. *The Angry Silence* tries to be ingratiating, and leaves a bad taste. This is because its realistic surface attempts to cover a preposterous handling of a situation that could have been painfully real.

The workers in the factory are extremely peculiar. They number about sixty men, and in long shots they appear to be ordinary British workers. Yet they are supposed to be mesmerized by the chairman, an affable sort, and by a mysterious bespectacled agitator, presumably a Communist, who comes down from London to disrupt the plant. The men never talk about what is said to be "the real issue," establishment of a closed shop; they do not carry on the backchat and chaffering of shop talk, except about women. And when the film moves in on individuals they are characterized, except for the hero and his buddy, solely as sheep-like idiots on the one hand and sinister juvenile delinquents on the other. With such personae, the alleged conflict is doomed to be a farce. The hero refuses to go out when a strike vote is taken. He is ostracized by his fellows. Violence ensues; newspapermen arrive. The explicit villains include not only the agitator (whose conversations on the telephone exactly parallel the TV-watcher shots in *On the Waterfront*) but also the irresponsible and sensation-seeking journalists.

The side-issues of this situation are sometimes neatly done. Pier Angeli as the hero's wife is excellent. There is a frightening sequence in which their son has been beaten up in the street. But these are, of course, precisely the sensational elements sought out by journalists; and the film, in the end, is itself that same kind of journalism.

This is too bad not only because it makes for a confused film, but because the underlying issue *is* a real and important one: the extent to which men in labor-management conflicts should be coerced by their fellows *vs.* the extent to which they should be allowed to go their own way even if it means harming the interests of their fellows. No easy sentimental answer can be given to this problem. And in this case no real illumination of the dilemma occurs at all, because the film makes the central conflict totally irrational on both sides. Even the hero cannot put his own position cogently; to us, and indeed to himself, he seems to be resisting his mates' pressure merely on emotional grounds; and no one in the shop ever states any of the cogent arguments that have brought the closed shop into existence or caused unions to seek it.

Now this kind of failure results, I suspect, because the film-makers could not imagine dealing directly with the actual kinds of events involved in any situation central to their "problem." These events are the interaction of numbers of men, who have worked with each other in a shop for some time, who have complicated relationships with their leaders and with the management. They involve rational calculation as well as emotion; and they involve immense amounts of talk about what is to be done. The usual hero approach to plot construction is dismally and obviously impossible as a means of coping with such events.

Why spend so much time on such a film? Because it is bad in an especially instructive way. On other occasions I have expressed the

wish that film-makers would deal sometimes with the industrial lives which, after all, most of us live, and broach the conflicts that circulate through the factories and offices and stores as well as the *Executive Suites*. This kind of subject must be "gone out to" as much as, or more than, the lives of bushmen or fishers on the Ganges, if our cinema is to preserve its vitality. Not because of a need for tracts (the bargainers at the table don't need them, on either side) but because there too are men and women caught up in our special human condition. The challenge of coping with it is a challenge to create new forms.—ERNEST CALLENBACH

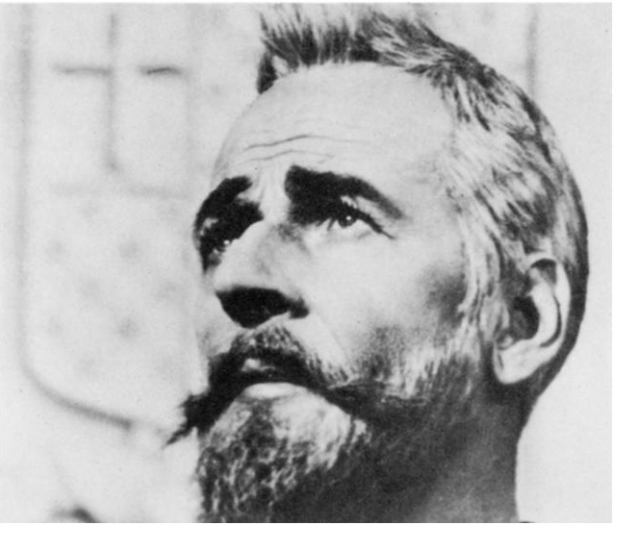
DON QUIXOTE

Director and producer: Grigory Kozintsev. Screenplay: E. Schwartz, based on the novel by Miguel de Cervantes. With Nikolai Cherkassov, Yuri Tolubeyev. Lenfilm; released by MGM.

There are so many different ways of looking at Cervantes' masterwork that there is probably a sense in which the film Kozintsev has arranged from it can be said to be a valid shadow of at least one of them. But to say even that much is to take his *Don Quixote* more seriously than it deserves, for its complete refusal to develop any semblance of an imaginative cinematic style makes respecting it as difficult as watching it is dull. It was one of the early wide-screen films, and Kozintsev never cuts if he can help it: the camera sits in awe before so much painstakingly framed theatrical splendor, and the actors expect it to admire them. It is possible, of course, to justify anything, and in his dreary manifesto in the Summer-Autumn 1959 *Sight & Sound* we found Kozintsev writing: "The *Potemkin* technique is obsolete. . . . Quick-changing *montage* effects [are] an imitation of something that could never return. It is good to think back affectionately to one's youth, but not good to fall into the ways of second childhood." Well, maybe. As Quixote said before dying, never look for this year's birds in last year's nests. But one needn't even doubt that they *are* last year's nests to submit that at least second childhood would be more interesting than the lumpy proficiency with which this film, lacking both sunrise passion and twilight mellowness, must finally make do.

Rosinante sadly sloping along the screen to kneel by the Don after his final defeat; a window blowing open above Quixote's deathbed to reveal a branchful of blossoms — obligatory might-have-been images like these suggest the clean visual design one expected from a *Quixote* film, and, beyond that, the tensions between fact and dream it might have created, conceding jesting Pilate's dead-serious question its proper place at the center of Cervantes's world. But much of the plasticity of that world has vanished in Kozintsev's earthbound film, whose few penny-dreadful excursions into Quixotic fancy number a shoddy series of ghostly voices and ghastly double-exposures, as well as dancing wine-skins to taunt Quixote at the inn: though why we see them dance while we see the windmills as windmills, Kozintsev alone may be presumed to know. Movingly enough, his Quixote is a man who attempts Good Deeds and, the world being what it is, is crushed in the process. But *were* they Good Deeds, and if they were, was that the point? Don't look here, either, for those clear glimpses of con-

Nikolai Cherkasov's DON QUIXOTE.



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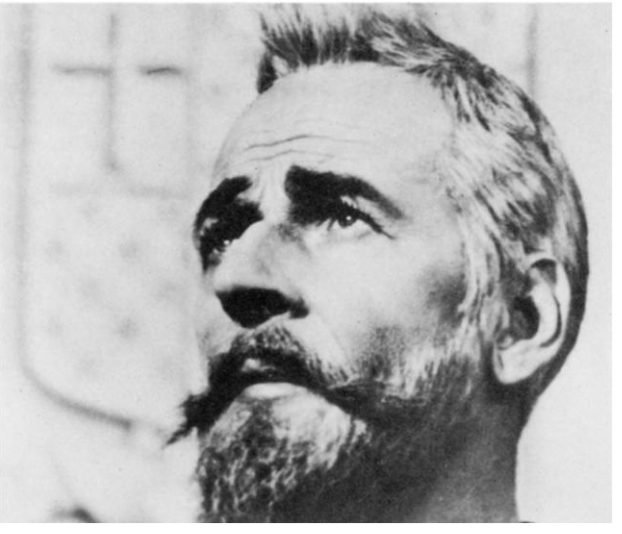

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But the inflections of the original Russian dialogue might have choked part of that complaint, for MGM, no doubt encouraged by its favorite biographer, has dubbed the film into technically and stylistically unfelicitous English, which weakens even that one attraction the film was otherwise guaranteed at all events to have: Cherkassov's Quixote. One had awaited that authoritative synthesis of voice and manner his best work recalls, and as far as one can appraise a performance that has been thus slashed down the center, it indeed seems very subtle, very skilled, at points very sublime—even if there are other points where he seems not to have gotten over the experience of *Ivan the Terrible.* Unlike Chaliapin, who made so annoying a fuddy-duddy of the Don throughout most of Pabst's curiously addled (if almost lovably eccentric) 1933 version, Cherkassov conveys the deep civility of the man. If his performance seems somewhat less than fluid, consider that Kozintsev's stagy style has partly betrayed his star, and that the dubbing often betrays him further by reducing his Quixote to the kind of babbling nuisance, less ridiculous than mealy-mouthed, who can't even seem to make the right words roll off his tongue. This is a special pity: Mark Van Doren was surely right in noting that "no other hero ever talked as richly or as well," that "the final memory [of Quixote] may be of a voice." Not *this* voice, alas. Sancho's warm arrogance doesn't entirely survive the inevitable quasi-Cockney trauma, either. But maybe there is more justice in the film world than there was in the Spain of Cervantes, and this one got what it deserved.—JAMES STOLLER

THE REST IS SILENCE

(Der Rest Ist Schweigen) Freie Film Produktion (West Germany). Produced, directed, and written by Helmut Käutner. Photography: Igor Oberberg. Music: Bernard Eichhorn. With Hardy Krueger, Ingrid Andree, Peter van Eyck, Adelheid Seeck, Rudolf Forster.

After an unfortunate and not too successful visit to Hollywood (where he made a feature for Universal), Käutner has returned to Germany and in *The Rest Is Silence* has produced his best film.

During the war leader-writers in the nations outside the Axis often wondered if Germany would ever come to its senses and account for its conduct. After the war there was a curious impatience with German writers, artists, and film-makers when they made public their attempts at expiation. Very often this was little more than embarrassment in the face of self-indulgent confessions. It is a comparatively recent development to find German writers who manage to frame their admissions and make them palatable. It was the ingenuity of Kurt Hoffmann's *Aren't We Wonderful (Wir Wunderkinder)* as much as its point of view which delighted us when we saw it. And now we have another example of this in Käutner's film, for he has skillfully adapted the situation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to permit a thoroughgoing examination of an individual German's sense of guilt and responsibility.

Young John Claudius (Hamlet) was not even in Germany during the war. He was sent to the United States by his father, an industrialist, during the 'thirties. When we meet him, some time after the war, he is an instructor in philosophy at Harvard, and has come to Germany to see his family. His father died during the war, sup-

sciousness amid absurdity which Cervantes frequently vouchsafed us; Kozintsev does not offer that Don who knew so well what he was doing that he was even able to jest, "Really, Sancho, you are no saner than I am." This, in short, is a popular conception of *Don Quixote,* in which the humiliations are always a little more severe, the vindications more lugubrious than Cervantes wrote them: the Duchess's monumental deception which the film invents concludes with a great neurotic clapping of hands whose mirthless triumph is worlds apart from Cervantes's rampant gaiety. Above all, and perhaps this is its cardinal sin, the film as a whole is rather heavy, rather humorless.

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(Der Rest Ist Schweigen) Freie Film Produktion (West Germany). Produced, directed, and written by Helmut Käutner. Photography: Igor Oberberg. Music: Bernard Eichhorn. With Hardy Krueger, Ingrid Andree, Peter van Eyck, Adelheid Seeck, Rudolf Forster.

After an unfortunate and not too successful visit to Hollywood (where he made a feature for Universal), Käutner has returned to Germany and in *The Rest Is Silence* has produced his best film.

During the war leader-writers in the nations outside the Axis often wondered if Germany would ever come to its senses and account for its conduct. After the war there was a curious impatience with German writers, artists, and film-makers when they made public their attempts at expiation. Very often this was little more than embarrassment in the face of self-indulgent confessions. It is a comparatively recent development to find German writers who manage to frame their admissions and make them palatable. It was the ingenuity of Kurt Hoffmann's *Aren't We Wonderful (Wir Wunderkinder)* as much as its point of view which delighted us when we saw it. And now we have another example of this in Käutner's film, for he has skillfully adapted the situation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to permit a thoroughgoing examination of an individual German's sense of guilt and responsibility.

Young John Claudius (Hamlet) was not even in Germany during the war. He was sent to the United States by his father, an industrialist, during the 'thirties. When we meet him, some time after the war, he is an instructor in philosophy at Harvard, and has come to Germany to see his family. His father died during the war, sup-

posedly the victim of an air raid. His mother married again, becoming mate to the dead man's brother. The old family doctor keeps the strands of family together, and anxiously protects the sanity of his daughter. When Claudius arrives, he studiously avoids his family and shuts himself up with an English friend, poring over the records of his father's death. He is convinced that his father did not succumb in the air raid but was murdered. His suspicions settle on his uncle, and the remainder of the film works out this obsession. It makes a fascinating thriller and, with its own bizarre inner logic, not entirely dependent on Shakespeare's characters or progressions, it is a character drama of considerable flair and perception. We are, as in all such cases, helped by familiarity with Shakespeare's version. As with Marcel Camus' *Black Orpheus* there is the fun of recognition. But Käutner's film makes a considerably more original statement, and is infinitely more stylish. He has a control of image and of audience which permits him to let us *see* his style, as a part of his story, not something disconnected from it. We notice his method at the same time as we understand him. His camera at times pushes rapidly in and out of a room, framing just those characters who are of importance at the moment, using the movement of a character to lead the camera, and relating the character to others directly in the frame as they are needed. At other times his camera catches and holds a frame, and we are made to discover the elements and details within it—as when Fée (Ophelia) is being led into the clinic's black limousine, we suddenly are aware of Claudius' white face, helpless, caught in the car-window's reflection. Oberberg's photography is often harsh and grainy, but in the scenes in Fée's private room, his effects are softened.

Hardy Krueger gives a highly mannered performance as Claudius, but the nervous edge he maintains successfully establishes the uncertain balance of insight and madness which, in many generations of Hamlets, has been lost beneath a flurry of strutting and bellowing. Käutner uses this story of private revenge to uncover a latter-day intrigue—the ambition of "Uncle Paul" to rule the industrial empire (steel-works, munitions, and so on) in name as well as in fact. This ambition leads him to fratricide, after forcing his brother (the titular head of the factories) into uncharacteristic contracts and alliances with the Nazis. The character of Uncle Paul (chillingly played by van Eyck), is wicked and menacing, entirely corrupt and beyond moral restraint, and very contemporary.

We do not see completely how this family was before the war, or even just before the son's return. But we see the fear and uncertainty which his arrival causes, and we are lead to supply, to a large degree, our own explanation of their crimes and deceptions. Thus Käutner, while laying bare the carcass, allows the audience to perform its own autopsy. This method is a tribute to the audience's intelligence, and it is likely to be successful both inside and outside Germany. Käutner is free with time, but is always in control of his transitions—starting a flashback with the similarity of an image, or using the key of a diary, a tape recorder, or a film projector. The play within a play becomes a dance-drama within the film. And this sequence, as well as any other, reveals Käutner as a master of staging, economical yet precise. At another place, in a simple one-angle shot, Käutner (or his sound effects editor) turns a commonplace piece of exposition into a frightening moment—as Claudius recounts his strange experience of hearing his father's voice on the telephone some years after his death.

Clearly Käutner is a film-maker who deserves the most careful attention.—COLIN YOUNG

SECRETS OF WOMEN

(Kvinnors Väntan) Scenario and direction: Ingmar Bergman. Photography: Gunnar Fischer. Music: Erik Nordgren. Svensk Filmindustri. With Anita Björk, Maj-Britt Nilsson, Eva Dahlbeck, Gunnar Björnstrand.

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Ingmar Bergman's *Secrets of Women* (released in England under the more accurate and modest

title of *Waiting Women)* is concerned with what to Bergman is the never-ending combat between the sexes. Its tone is comic, which may come as a surprise to viewers who prefer to notice only the somber side of Bergman—what James Baldwin calls his "weird, mad Northern Protestantism." But as Vernon Young pointed out, Bergman "has essentially a comic intelligence—in the sense that with the glaring exception of *Hets (Torment,* 1944) he strives always to *reconcile* contradictions—[which] is not usually stressed in criticism." [*Film Quarterly,* Fall, 1959.]

Dating back to 1952, *Secrets of Women* is not one of Bergman's best films. Although it can be appreciated for its own merits, I think that in the perspective of Bergman's recent films it can best be seen as a kind of notebook whose "entries" suggest and define some of the themes and images which will later receive major expression. The setting is a country house. Four vacationing sisters-in-law are awaiting the weekend arrival of their husbands. To pass the time they sit around the kitchen table and, rather than the usual gossip, they relate in turn their deepest "secrets" from the past—which, after wordy introductions, are told through flashbacks. The film, then, is a collection of three loosely connected stories. (The fourth woman never gets to reveal her past.)

The device of gathering the women together is arbitrary and forced: it's highly unlikely that *even* Swedish women would reveal their "secrets" quite so readily—except for Ingmar Bergman! The exposition is dramatic rather than cinematic, reminding one of Bergman's stage roots—but, surprisingly, in terms of Scribe rather than Strindberg. The conservative, "well-made" first scene does define a major element of Bergman's film style—the importance of camera placement instead of camera movement. The faces of the women are seen in close-ups; the same shot is held for what seems like minutes. There are few cuts. What make the scene static —even boring—is the sameness of the lighting and the absence of any sense of atmosphere, or of the chiaroscuro lighting which makes similar indoor groupings in other Bergman films more interesting (such as the kitchen scenes in *The Magician).*

In the first flashback, Rakel (Anita Björk), no longer in love with her husband Eugen, has a fleeting encounter at their summer home with Kaj, a childhood friend who is also married. The selfish, narcissistic nature of their affair is symbolized by Bergman's characteristic use of mirrors: when Kaj enters her bedroom, Rakel is looking in the mirror and the first stages of their love-making are photographed in the mirror.* Those who complain about obscurity and ambiguity in Bergman will find some solace in this film: the symbolism is nothing if not obvious. In the next scene Kaj picks up a naked and headless baby doll, which was stuck grotesquely—feet up and apart—in the shallow water by the boat house, where their adultery is culminated. He empties the water from the broken doll, symbolizing the "emptiness" and meaninglessness of their imminent sexual union. In the boat house Kaj looks down into a pool, and as if his narcissism was not yet explicit, Bergman shows him tenderly kissing his own hand!

Later Rakel confesses to Eugen. Greatly upset, he locks himself in a cabin and threatens suicide. Here the film's comic tone becomes apparent. Eugen's "suicide attempt" is ineffectual. His melodramatics are made comic by his older brother, who disarms him and then tries to throw the rifle in the nearby water, only to miss the mark, the rifle falling ridiculously into the bushes. *His* comic ineptness underlines that of his brother. Rakel and Eugen are re-united, contradictions are resolved, and the older brother provides the story with a comic

* The mirror is a recurrent image in Bergman's films. In *Smiles of A Summer Night,* the mirror into which Anne looks is seen as sensuous and romantic, while the bathroom mirror in *Three Strange Loves* complements the neurotic intensity of the young wife. In *Naked Night* a seduction is seen in a mirror and when the circus owner attempts suicide, he shoots his reflection. A closer study would show how Bergman's use of the mirror lifts it from the category of cliché.

"moral": "It is better to have an unfaithful wife than no wife at all."

The second story is perhaps the least successful. Bergman here seems mainly concerned with experimenting with and developing his technique. The story of Marta's (Maj-Britt Nilsson) love affair with a painter in Paris, her resulting pregnancy and eventual marriage, has a certain academic interest for Bergman admirers, for Marta's flashback recalls the last hours of her pregnancy, which are filled with the basic ingredients of later Bergman—forebodings of doom, dark interiors, ominous bells, the inevitable face of death (behind a frosted-glass front door), the girl walking from bright sunlight into and through massive shadows, and empty city streets infused with the sense of surrealistic isolation which looks forward to Borg's dream in *Wild Strawberries*—all in contrast with the over-all comic tone of the film. She arrives at a Kafkaesque hospital, and Bergman's rendering of her delivery seems like a rehearsal of *Brink of Life*. Bergman tries a bit of broken-field running, inserting a flashback-within-a-flashback: her delivery-room delirium takes her back to a nightmarish can-can danced at a Paris club before her pregnancy; a hocus-pocus seduction by the artist (his hand of Eros reaching out for her from the darkness), and finally, at the end of the scene, a cumbersome crescendo of all the motifs from the sequence—a sort of film lab final exam for Advanced Montage 121. (Bergman's use of flashback is clumsy and in some places confusing; its use in this sequence almost makes one long for the flashback technique of a slick, commercial film such as Joseph Mankiewicz's *Letter to Three Wives*—so artless, so straightforward, so comprehensible.)

If in the latter story Bergman falls victim to his devices, then the third vignette is the most successful because it attempts the *least*, technically. It offers the viewer no labored symbolism and utilizes one of Bergman's most expressive kinds of settings—a cramped, prison-like elevator. "Hell is other people," says one of Sartre's characters in *No Exit*, and it is in this spirit that Bergman utilizes a room with "no exit." Some of Bergman's most powerful scenes are enacted in crowded, claustrophobic enclosures which are metamorphic for the tensions, hostilities, and anguish of the characters within them—such as the fight between the husband and wife in Borg's car in *Wild Strawberries* and the attic scene in *The Magician*. In *Secrets of Women*, an elevator serves this purpose, but comically. Karin (Eva Dahlbeck) and her husband Frederik (Gunnar Björnstrand), a rich businessman, have been deceiving one another. They get stuck and spend the night in their elevator ("I hate being locked up," says Frederik). Forced together, they cannot hide nor avert the truth about each other—significantly, the elevator is lined with mirrors. Björnstrand, who suffered at such length as Borg's son in *Wild Strawberries* and as Egerman in *The Magician*, is here a comic delight: on the way home earlier in the evening, sitting pompously in the back seat while his wife drives; conveying all of his self-satisfaction with one boorish yawn; and later, sitting bolt upright in the elevator, trying to preserve his dignity, his top hat collapsed on one side, all the while maintaining an icy deadpan expression—like a sort of Scandinavian Buster Keaton. The couple reconcile their differences and convert the elevator into a conjugal bed.

The film comes to too abrupt an ending. The fourth woman doesn't tell her story and Marta's younger sister, who has listened to the "secrets," suddenly decides to elope with her boyfriend. No one stops them. "Let them have summer," says the eldest brother, "time enough for wisdom." Their boat goes off on the shimmering water for one summer of happiness. Perhaps the idyll of *Monika* is in some ways a sequel to this tag ending.

The film may be second-drawer Bergman, but then, there is "time enough for wisdom"—or *The Seventh Seal, Wild Strawberries, The Magician*, and so on. As the minor work of a major film artist, *Secrets of Women* does manage to shed some light on Bergman's subsequent development.—ALFRED APPEL, JR.

NOT YET IN RELEASE

LUCI DEL VARIETA

(Lights of Variety) Direction: Federico Fellini and Alberto Lattuada. Production and script: Fellini and Lattuada. Music: Fellice Lattuada. Camera: Otello Martelli. With Carla Del Poggio, Giulietta Masina, Peppino Da Filippo, Folco Lulli, John Kitzmiller. Distributor: Mario de Vecchi Films.

Federico Fellini's road to *La Dolce Vita* is a complex one, but it can be logically followed through his earlier films. Unfortunately, not all of these earlier works have been seen in the United States, but an important gap is soon to be filled with the American release of *Luci del Varieta* (1949).

Lights of Variety was Fellini's first major work; on it he shared directorial credit with Alberto Lattuada. The story itself, or what little there is of it, concerns the rise to stardom of a rather unsympathetic young music-hall performer, Liliana (Carla Del Poggio), and her relations with her provincial impresario, Checco Dalmonte (Peppino Da Filippo). Checco, in turn, has his problems with his faithful mistress Melina (Giulietta Masina), who patiently waits for the day when she and Checco will retire and open a store in the country. The three major characters are presented against an almost documentary-style background of the typical small-town music hall, and several times the story comes to a complete halt in order to present representative acts.

Giulietta Masina and Checco Dalmonte in LUCI DEL VARIETA.

While hardly a finished masterpiece, the film cannot be dismissed merely as a promising effort. Most of the Fellini trademarks are already in evidence. The individual is solitary and must realize the fundamental ridiculousness of his existence. The woman is the eternal agent of conscience, patient but vigilant. Checco in many ways is a sketch of Franco in *Vitelloni*, and the bored delinquents of that film can be clearly seen in the provincial youths who give rousing Bronx cheers to the weary performers. Yet there is more hope and less cynicism in *Lights of Variety* than in most of Fellini's later works. At the end of the film, Liliana goes on to Milan on a luxury train; on the next track Checco and his new company return to their hard life in the back country. If events repeat themselves, which is almost certain, there will be forgiveness from the injured, for this is the way that life is meant to be.

The film abounds in marvelous touches, particularly in the music-hall scenes, first seen through the star-struck eyes of the future starlet. The final apotheosis of Liliana, in a production of incredible vulgarity, has the same excitement that makes the backstage scenes of Pabst's *Pandora's Box* so electrifying. And in another episode of a luxurious party held by a generous rural nobleman at his palace, Fellini delineates each character in a series of lightning vignettes that reveal the touch of genius. The acting is on a high level throughout, particularly that of Da Filippo, who has the best role. Giulietta Masina is almost physically unrecognizable to those familiar only with her work in *Cabiria* and *La Strada*, but the personality comes across just as clearly.

Perhaps the success of *La Dolce Vita* will prompt an American distributor to release into general circulation the one major remaining missing piece in the Fellini output, *Il Bidone*. One can only hope it won't take eleven years for that film to take its rightful place among the most interesting of modern Italian films.

—DAVID STEWART HULL

THE KITCHEN

Director: James Hill. Producer: Sidney Cole. Photography: Reg Byer. Music: David Lee. Script: Sidney Cole, from the play by Arnold Wesker. With Carl Mohner, Mary Yeomans, Brian Phelan, Tom Bell, Scot Finch, Eric Pohlmann, Gertan Klauber. Lion International Films.

As fiction film, *The Kitchen* has almost everything wrong with it, yet for about fifteen minutes it is completely fascinating. Its dramatic false starts (*none* of them lead anywhere) permit the viewer to enjoy this documentation of the hectic operation of a big restaurant kitchen without the distractions of plot or character. Once you've seen a man frying fish twenty to the dozen, however, you've seen about all this film has to offer. After the prolonged teaser which now invariably precedes the credits of a film which wishes to be taken seriously (in this case a furious knife-fight between two cooks, another false start), the film settles down to observe one day in the kitchen of a London restaurant which serves 2,000 meals a day, from the waking of the scullion who sleeps on the floor beside the stoves to the moment when the kitchen's aimless frenzy is halted by a cook who, desperately unhappy in love, severs the gas lines with a cleaver. This cook is played by Carl Mohner and is the only character who comes to life. The rest are played by what appear to be stage actors, for their diction and movement are just as stagey as the dialogue and the direction.

Insofar as the film has a line of action, it is provided by the story of the cook whose married mistress (the dining-room hostess) will not divorce her husband. Yet this cook, whose fury brings the film's climax and conclusion, is the very one who, for most of the picture, keeps his head when all about him are coming unglued, and his frenzy does not derive at all from the maddening pressure of the kitchen schedule, which is the villain of the piece and which, we are rather broadly given to know, stands for the world of purposeless drudgery and tension which our civilization has become. Not only does the dialogue harp relentlessly upon the symbolic nature of the kitchen, but, as is customary in microcosms, the staff of the kitchen is MAN, for it includes an Italian, a Greek, a German, a Jew, an Irishman, a Cockney, and so forth. I kept expecting a Brooklynite and a hill-billy to pop out of the cold-room. This is the kind of "*art engagé*" which fails, almost willfully, by being naive just where it should be most sophisticated, as if you could make a radical play out of Wilde's *Salome* by having the Centurion remark sadly that Salome is like capitalism and John is like the working class and Herod is like a parliamentary government. It is close cousin to the tendency of Britain's recent "angry" films to make their points by holding up the action while Jemmy Porter or Arthur Seaton tells somebody (none too subtly) that he represents a whole class and that somebody had better do something.

Music and photography are just as broad as theme, direction, and acting. As the kitchen's work speeds up, it runs wild; when it slacks, the contrast of absolute silence and immobility is worked for all it's worth. Every effect in the film is on this same level.

—JACKSON BURGESS

THE UNDELIVERED LETTER

(Nyeotpravlyenniye Pismo) Director: Mikhail Kalatozov. Photography: Sergei Uresovsky. Script: Victor Rozov, Grigori Koltunov, and Valery Ossipov. With Tatiana Samoilova, Vasili Livanov, and Yevgeny Urbansky. Mosfilm.

The new style of Soviet films, crossing neorealism with wholesome fantasy, has produced a remarkable dud. In two senses, *The Undelivered Letter*, as viewed in Moscow, proved an unusual experience that was even more interesting at second viewing of it a few days later. First, although the story is billed as a "real-life drama," there is not much substance to it. What little there is, the director, Mikhail Kalatozov *(The Cranes Are Flying)*, chose to treat more as fantasy than realism. Second, the cameraman, Sergei Uresovsky *(The Cranes Are Flying* and *The Forty-First)*, has put his free-moving

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camera through such a brilliant series of experiments that his successes merely distract us from the progress of the story. Yet, although the film is a failure as entertainment (especially "socialist realist" entertainment), the quality of individual sections, for anyone interested in the art of film-making, adds up to far more than was ever possible for the whole.

A small party of geologists are sent to explore for diamond deposits in the vast Yakut taiga. After many months and hardships, they accomplish their mission only to have their return frustrated by a forest fire and the onset of winter. One by one they die, until only the expedition's leader, Konstantin (Innokenty Smoktunovsky), remains. Miraculously, he is rescued.

Besides the fascination with the camerawork for its own sake, one could hardly avoid taking note of the audience reaction. Through both of the showings I attended, there were worse catcalls and jeering than in any audience I can remember. It must be granted that the Gor'ky Park Summer Theater is cold in the autumn and attracts younger people than do the downtown film houses. Yet it was precisely this audience that one might expect to be most impressed by a true story of sacrifice and adventure. In both the scenes where Tanya (Tatiana Samoilova) and Andrei (Vasili Livanov) celebrate their discovery of the diamonds, and where, dying, she recites the Young Pioneer motto to renew her strength, the audience was particularly disrespectful.

Quite often, however, it seemed that the audience was caught up in the artistry of Kalatozov and Uresovsky. Once they had their hands on legitimate conflict, their teamwork produced an endless chain of stunning moments. There is a marvelous fight between Andrei and Sergei (Yevgeny Urbansky), for example, in which the former chides the latter for his callous treatment of Tanya and his own sweetheart, and is knocked brutally into the stream only to rise cavalierly with a shrug of his wet shoulders. Shot from Sergei's point of view, the camera swaggers drunkenly as the rebuke increases and suddenly rocks sharply as Sergei delivers his punch. Then it seems to shiver as Sergei comes to his senses and Andrei strides off trumphantly.

There is a memorable montage sequence, spoiled only by its length, in which the geologists cover several hills and months with their campsights and explorations. In the montage we see campfires burning simultaneously in five or six places over one black hill. And, again, while one geologist drives his pick rhythmically into the ground, the reciprocal motion of another geologist's hands rising with a mound of clay is intercut to achieve a stabbing effect.

Another fine moment is effected just before Tanya makes her discovery. Down in a ditch Sergei is tamping the ground whileTanya stands at the other end examining mounds of clay which she holds in each hand. Although the camera stays with her during most of the scene, we are overcome with a feeling of Sergei's growing lust. While she naïvely keeps talking, the thumping takes on sensual meaning. Then as it slows and finally stops, Tanya collapses in terror, and he stumbles towards her. Only the appearance of another of the geologists saves her, and she lies trembling with her face against the wall of the ditch.

After the deaths of Sergei and Andrei, the death of Tanya and Konstantin's realization of his isolation are told powerfully by a slow dissolve from a close shot of her blank eye and frozen lashes to a long shot of the desolate taiga with only a few naked trees piercing the snow-covered swamps.

The awesome camera tracking at the beginning and end of the film is not always integral with the story and regrettably forces our attention to the prowess of the camera. But what a camera! Perhaps the problem of making such evocative power integral with a story the likes of this is insurmountable. The film's faults do not lie with Kalatozov nor Uresovsky. Nor do they belong especially to the trio of writers, Victor Rozov, Grigori Koltunov, and Valery Ossipov (although Ossipov is the journalist who first brought the story to the public's attention).

These men were assigned to write the screenplay by their superiors, and they undoubtedly did their best.

The search for dramatic "contemporaneity" in the arts of the Soviet Union is pressed forward almost desperately in their press and journals. It is not surprising then that *The Undelivered Letter* received a far smaller burden of official criticism than was heaped upon *The Cranes Are Flying*, regardless of what might seem to be "formalistic" errors in its composition. The fact that the same *Cranes* team, Kalatozov, Uresovsky, Rozov, Urbansky, and Samoilova, was involved in this current miscarriage is at least a sign that their collaboration has been mutually rewarding and that it will continue into future films. Now if Mosfilm would only give them something they could really get their teeth into!—EDWARD DEW, JR.

SEVEN POLISH SHORTS

New York has now heard of Wajda; but who are Skorzewski, Jedryko, and Karabasz? It is the misfortune of these men to make films of shorter than feature length: but thanks to a recent airing by Cinema 16 some of their works have now been seen, the sample chosen ranging from straight documentary, through avant-garde idiosyncrasy, to playful puppet fantasies enacted by toys, gadgets, and wooden mutes.

One of the last, a children's toy-town tale, may seem a frail foundation on which to argue the relative claims of style and meaning, but *The Little Giraffe* (*Zyrafiatko:* Teresa Badzian) is instructive, nonetheless. The giraffe in question, made of stuffed felt, is a notably inanimate animal. In one episode it is flung into the air from a merry-go-round, and lands squarely astride a hedgehog; it bears its bellyful of spines uncomplainingly until Mother plucks them out. This is meant to show motherly care, and the very stiffness and inexpressiveness of the toy is here a gain. By contrast, the virtually unlimited expressive possibilities of "cel" animation encourage a stylistic extremism in which meaning, situation, and character become swept away in storms of elastic contortions. *The Little Giraffe* is a trifle, but a thing of balanced parts, with a comic inventiveness and a lack of sentimentality rare among children's films.

In *The Family Jewel* (*Klejnot rodzinnig:* Edward Sturlis) the puppets are strictly Edwardian, both in period and milieu. Sturlis gently parodies a Conan Doyle mystery, replete with Holmes, deerstalker, mutliple disguises, and smoke rings, thoughtfully puffed. Imaginative and technically adroit, the film's main interest lies in the picture it gives of Polish attitudes toward the classical, upper-class Anglo-Saxon culture which it displays in a series of quaint vignettes: the stiff, prudish mama and her blinkered daughter; the family portrait gallery, where saints join felons in equal dignity; the castle where they have lived since time began; and their protectors, a squad of grave, wooden, imperturbable London police. Parody though it is, the amiability of its attitude seems to reflect a curious Polish Anglophilia of which Conrad, among others, was once a responsive heir. As in *The Little Giraffe*, no narration or dialogue; just mime, music, and effects.

Though speechless, the three puppet figures of *Or a Fish* (*Albo Rybka:* Halina Bielska, Wlodzimierz Haupe) are not mute. Vaguely organic clusters of bright, colored, mechanical disjecta membra—bent iron, a bird-cage, chair-legs, a signal arm—able joyously to disintegrate and reform themselves at will, they inhabit a palette-shaped platform in space, and talk in a language of growls, blips, and royal burps, orchestrally augmented. Two of these gadgets, indeterminately male, are fishing. A third, female perhaps, is a counter-attractive force. If there is allegory here, it escapes me. As with some other launchings, it remains to be seen whether these oddities on their space platform have been sent into an orbit as useful as it is spectacular: though its mad metamorphoses

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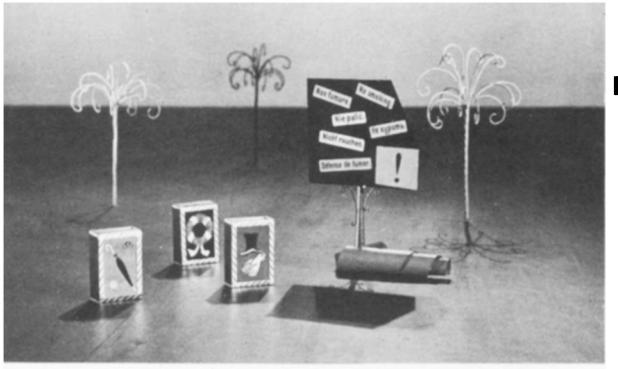

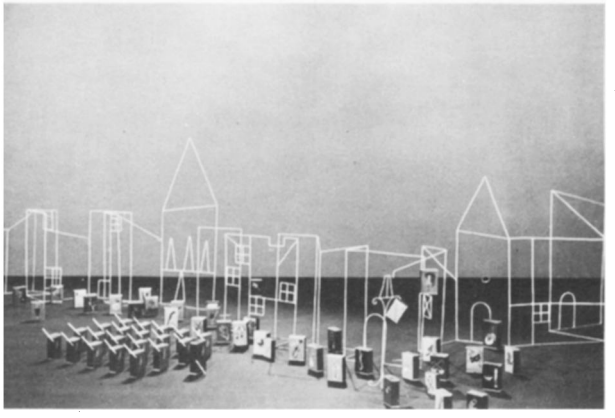

Two shots from CHANGEMENT DE GARDE, *a Polish animated short. (No stills are available for the group of films discussed in the accompanying article, unfortunately.)*

are fitfully comic, and even mildly disquieting, *Or a Fish* depends heavily on transient bizarrerie to hold the mind.

Of these three puppet films, one was in toyland, another in Edwardian England, a third in space. At first glance these things might not appear important; one suspects, however, that these fantasy realms attract because they allow artists a freedom denied in dramas of real life.

A sardonic eye—and great tactical subtlety—marks Jan Lenica's *Johnny the Musician (Janko muzykant).* Lenica is a prize-winning graphic artist, famous in Europe for his posters and book-jacket designs; in 1958, working jointly with Walerian Borowczyk, he won widespread attention for the avant-garde *Dom.* His latest film, making use of crude animation and clipped illustrative material, is a free adaptation of a story by Henryk Sienkiewicz about the trials of an aspiring, penniless musician. In Lenica's version Johnny's troubles arise mainly from the defects of the ideal society, and may be taken to reveal much, albeit tangentially, about Lenica's view of the present regime and its goals.

Mechanization is mocked directly enough—an amiable legless cow is borne along on a four-wheeled chassis—but elsewhere the satire is pointedly ambiguous. When peasants appeal to God, he rains down gold—but the coins turn to bones at a touch. This invites the interpretation that God may represent the government, and gold, the benefits of organized utopia. A pervasive Polish attitude toward novelty and change is also revealed by Johnny's dream, in a scene of profound cultural nostalgia. Framed on a wall we find a number of traditional Polish icons, among them a portrait of a saber-flashing cavalry officer, and a grand piano. As David Stewart Hull recently intimated, the heroic tradition of the old Polish military caste, in whose Valhalla the thunder of suicidal cavalry charges blends with the music of Chopin, dies hard.

The daring with which the Poles express their sympathy for this tradition is admirable, yet *Kanal,* for all its tide of realistic sewage, is only weakened by the incongruous gestures of this romantic heritage.

In *The Stadium* (*Stadion:* Stanislaw Jedryko) live actors appear, and we find a teen-age girl sitting alone in the vast, sunlit bowl of an empty sports arena. She hears, distantly, a boy whistling, and between this moment and their final meeting, slips into episodic reverie. "Abtract" describes both *The Stadium's* static pictorial style and the girl's state of mind: within her fantasies of deserted passages and ominous closed doors—somewhere behind them her beau ideal stands waiting—we find a world painted in solid panels of black and white and red, an interior decor as austerely formal as the paintings of Georges Vandongerloo. Reinforced by a subtle score, the atmosphere is intense, hal-

Making of ABSTRACT EXHIBIT, *a puppet film directed by Jerzy Kotowski at the puppet film studio in Tuszyn, near Lodz.*

lucinatory, schizoid; and the girl's imaginings, innocuously maidenly and bourgeois, end harshly with a taste of ash on the tongue.

A defiantly personal work, projecting an almost narcissistic self-pity, *The Stadium* shares

with *Hiroshima, Mon Amour* a symptomatic concern with the sad, private world of the alienated and alone, a world whose experiences reduce those of the symbolic, empty stadium, where loneliness sits dreaming, to mere "inexplicable dumb shows and noise."

In contrast to *The Stadium's* somber implicit view of mass entertainment stand two documentaries: *People on the Road,* and *Tips for Today* (*Typy na dzis:* Jerzy Hoffman, Edward Skorzewski).

The second, shot at the Warsaw race track, plunges us into a swift flood of racing animal legs and hooves, and also into the restless human crowd, whose faces of joy and anxiety and despair rise up like waves from the sea. We survey one day's events: the pace is hectic, the method and attitude that of the best kind of impressionistic journalism. The meager commentary avoids any overt point of view; but in some of the faces, and especially in a sequence showing the betting windows—of grasping hands, and thick, groping avaricious fingers—a discreet satire bares its edge. Slightly marred by editorial lenience (too many successive close-ups, which add without building), and by several conspicuously phony shots, *Tips for Today* nevertheless stands higher than most comparable shorts in the west—with the possible exception of Leacock's recent work, and the best productions of the National Film Board of Canada. However, compared with *People on the Road,* its structure and style are adroit, but quite orthodox.

Directed by Kazimierz Karabasz, *People on the Road (Ludzie na drodzie)* is poetic documentary of a very high order. It begins as a small, wandering circus takes to the road to travel through the night. Sleeping faces, shaken, and fitfully lit, flicker on and off the screen. Under a lightening dawn sky the wagons draw into a fairground, tents are pitched, the performers rehearse, and the film draws to an end just as their afternoon show is ready to start.

There is no narration: murmured talk blurs into the background noises—the troupe at work, bear grunts, children's squeals. The photography is harsh with contrast; the camerawork has the jaggedness of action caught on the run; the atmosphere is tense with preparation. Throughout, Karabasz communicates a feeling of profound and sensitive engagement, yet he projects this experience with control and objectivity. These qualities are fused in a vivid, dramatic, poetic style; and it is this style which marks *People on the Road* as the work of a major postwar documentary artist—neither nakedly calculating, like Resnais; nor artificial, like Sucksdorff; nor immersed in an amiably indulgent philo-proletarianism, like Reisz. In the lyrical documentation of man at work it is in a class with the masterly Canadian miniature by Colin Low, *Corral;* but while it lacks *Corral's* intensity of mood, *People on the Road,* is more various and complex.

Another film by Karabasz, *The Musicians* (not among those shown by Cinema 16), has won honors in Warsaw, Leipzig, Tours, Venice, and Oberhausen, and will soon be seen in American theaters. If he contributes a third, of equal merit, to the 339 short features the Poles plan for the current year, the cinema will have been notably enriched.—ROGER SANDALL

Entertainments

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Fanny is a bit dull, but its being no duller than that, is a pleasant surprise for a film of such conspicuous consumption. The screenplay, an exceptionally literate fantasy in which every character is supposed to be wonderfully likable, is an adaptation by Julius Epstein of Pagnol's trilogy, by way of the Behrman-Logan musical-comedy adaptation, without the songs. The necessary compression of material has resulted in a treatment that is well balanced but has too little time for each of its stars (Charles Boyer, Horst Buchholz, Leslie Caron, and Maurice Chevalier). The second half of the film seems to consist entirely of obligatory scenes, the time of each one of them ill-defined and the time between nonexistent. Joshua Logan's direction has not helped the excess of action and scarcity of character; he spends much of the time stressing the obvious. Most of the acting is of a stagey sort that would be more effective from a greater distance, except for the performances of Buchholz at times and of Miss Caron most of the time, as the lovers separated by his love of the sea (at her suggestion) and by her marriage to an older man—a revenge rationalized as social and economic necessity (unless, of course, it was the other way round). On the other hand, *Fanny* is Logan's least sticky effort, emotionally and technically; there is enough humor to check the sentimentality and a pace is established and controlled. Jack Cardiff's technicolor photography is excellent; the Marseilles exteriors are sometimes pretty as postcards, but the interiors designed by Rino Mondellini are often beautiful.

Francis of Assisi. Objectionable, in part, for all.

The Guns of Navarone. The guns are vast, spectacular mechanisms that never hit anything, and thus prove to be appropriate central images of this vast film, a "legend" of World War II about an impossible mission that takes over two and a half hours to perform. Gregory Peck, David Niven, and Anthony Quinn face the treachery of nature and of Gia Scala with some difficulty, but the Germans are pushovers. You can kill Germans in a variety of ways, of course, but it soon grows tiresome. Director J. Lee Thompson's work is often striking, despite the tendency of the color and wide screen to dissipate energy, but he cannot save producer Carl Foreman's lengthy, repetitious script. Foreman has included a prologue to warn you that you are about to see something big, and after the long-deferred special-effects scene of the destruction of the German guns, he has added a painfully prolonged conclusion (*"Whose* job is finished?").

Hoodlum Priest is a well-directed, well-intentioned film that attempts to cover too much ground. Based upon the efforts of a Jesuit (Don Murray) to rehabilitate ex-convicts, the story touches upon his fund-raising and difficulties with the secular arm, and concentrates on one of his spectacular failures (Kier Dullea), who ends up in the gas chamber, assured of heaven. The film argues against capital punishment by implication, if not by statement (unless one counts the single, suave demonstrator with a poster reading "We are all . . . murderers"). This time the audience has seen the crime in detail, and therefore knows that the sentence is unjust (on terms presented elsewhere in the film). The execution scene, with the priest's unbearable consolations, may be considered a powerful argument in itself, but the total effect is ambiguous. Afterwards the dead youth's partner in crime, inexplicably free, turns up at the priest's new rehabilitation center and takes out his grief on the furniture; but, as the fade-out legend has it, "A new hope was born. . . ." No doubt; but by dividing attention among its several concerns the film makes such considerations seem superfluous. Irvin Kershner's direction achieves conviction and sustains interest not only in the big scenes (notably the priest's speech of self-justification and his scenes with the principal hood), but through the irrelevant moments and the transitions between.

The Last Sunset. The criminal hero of the old West (Kirk Douglas), dressed all in black, joins forces with his pursuer (Rock Hudson) to bring some cattle to market. The hero's real purpose is to win back the love of a girl he knew sixteen years before (Dorothy Malone), but on the way he loses her to the lawman and falls fervently in love with her sixteen-year-old daughter (Carol Lynley) instead. The fact that this perfect image of a lost love is also a product of that love seals the hero's doom. There was a time when audiences would have been surprised. Dalton Trumbo's script seems a careful, academic exercise, and the same may be observed of Robert Aldrich's direction, with all its neat tracking and quasi-point-of-view.

Look in Any Window is a look at decadent suburbia, a film which seems neither attempted comment nor straight exploitation. The main character is a teen-ager who runs about town peering in windows; his father is an alcoholic; his mother commits adultery with the man next door, whose wife commits adultery with the man across the way; and the police are dangerous. National implications are stated, and the concluding scene is a July Fourth "swim party" of exceptional cinematic ugliness. William Alland directed.

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Posse from Hell. Pretension is so common in the Western that even unpretentious ones go to great lengths to point out that they are not pointless. The concern with implication nearly ruins *Posse from Hell.* Obvious points are so stressed by discussion that one begins to doubt them after all. The dude becomes a hero, the hero is humanized, the villains are killed, and the conclusion is tediously overdrawn. Much of the dialogue has confounded director Herbert Coleman, but his staging of the action makes up for it, and he has used the landscape (and some of the sets) to good effect. Audie Murphy's performance may be familiar, but it is still excellent; John Saxon's is less familiar, well calculated, and equally persuasive.

A Raisin in the Sun is a well-photographed play by Lorraine Hansberry, who has adapted her own work for the screen with reverence. Her reverence may be justifiable, but one wonders why she bothered to make any minor cuts, lesser additions, and brief excursions at all. (One alteration seems calculated to offend atheists; one, to offend anti-assimilationists; but two shots of Sidney Poitier drinking do replace one long, less eloquent speech.) On the whole, this project works very well in its quieter moments. Unfortunately, it does not work at all in its comic relief or its strong Second Act curtain, where the swindled son cries out to Willy Harris and the disappointed mother cries out to the Lord, both of whom are absent and unresponsive. Director Daniel Petrie has filmed these crucial moments with a limited point of view that emphasizes their propriety for the stage, and he has let the original cast overplay them. As for the play itself, it is persuasive and moving, and it is always pleasant to see something about both money and dignity.

Two Rode Together. An overcomplicated Western directed by John Ford. A lot of folks are disappointed when Richard Widmark and James Stewart, sent to recover whites held captive for years by the Indians, bring back one savage boy and one young lady. Nobody but a madwoman will take the boy, and nobody but Stewart has much respect for the lady. The problem is interesting, but too much happens, too little of it is dramatized, there is a frequent impression of interruption and delay in the action, and the only element Ford develops fully is the rather tacky humor.

Underworld, USA. Writer-producer-director Samuel Fuller tells a brisk tale about a young man who might have lived a happy life of petty crime had he not witnessed the murder of his father. Years later, he catches up with the one killer whose identity he knows, and extracts from him the names of the other three. It happens that they have become men of great, sinister prominence, and Fuller adds another villain, their chief. (In living up to his title, he has ruined his plot.) The hero sets the murderers up, and down they go; in disposing of the additional villain, however, he meets an unlikely end. He leaves behind an adopted mother (Beatrice Kay) and a prostitute reformed by love (Dolores Dorn). Overstatement characterizes the direction as well as the writing, but the direction is compelling because the overstatement rarely seems false. Fuller's last scene, however, strains for significance through its last, echoing shot. It may be appropriate, but it is unnecessary; tragic melodrama is often more meaningful when it pretends to be meaningless. Cliff Robertson is excellent as the vengeful hero, except when he is called upon to pretend he is stupid.

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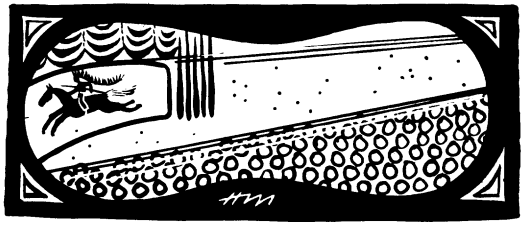
Books

MR. LAUREL AND MR. HARDY

By John McCabe. New York: Doubleday, 1961.

A few years ago an article in *Sight & Sound* rescued Laurel and Hardy from the critical limbo where they had quietly reposed through years of celebrity and oblivion. Since then, two comedians who were always regarded as the sole property of the lowbrow have been the subject of a fierce vindication. This is due more to a change in critical attitude than in public taste.

The Laurel and Hardy brand of popular entertainment failed to attract the majority of the critics and with the exception of Pare Lorentz writing in *Vanity Fair*, we find precious little about them in the film literature of the 'thirties and 'forties. Even Agee seems a little shy about including their names in the company of Chaplin, Keaton, Lloyd, and Langdon; he does so only to illustrate the perfect gag situation, that overly quoted sequence in which the boys run into a gorilla while trooping a grand piano across a Swiss hanging bridge.



Aside from the general public, L&H enthusiasts were to be found then outside regular film writing: Henry Miller in one of his forays into cinema criticism, mentions *The Battle of the Century* alongside *L'Age d'Or* as the peak of surrealistic, maniacal destructive frenzy. And Dylan Thomas, at pains to define poetry, found the perfect illustration in the Laurel and Hardy film.

Along comes *Mr. Laurel and Mr. Hardy*, the logical follow-up to all the articles in *Cahiers du Cinéma* and *Films and Filming*, though not a definitive treatise. The author, John McCabe, has gathered the facts and the minutiae, with the help of Hardy's widow and of Stan Laurel himself, so that *factual* errors are kept to a minimum. What's more important, he is a Laurel and Hardy fan, though not of the most rabid variety, and L&H cultists can relax in the knowledge that the book is no intellectual's slumming. However, writing on film comedy is the least gratifying side of film criticism; the writer must be something of a poet himself or else the reader is left with nothing more than a dry catalogue of gags. Even Agee poetry is no match for Keaton poetry or Langdon poetry. Mr. McCabe is capable of some *con amore* writing, especially when he settles down on the films themselves, but that is all.

Unfortunately, half the book is over before producer Hal Roach brings the boys together, quite unsuspectingly, for a Priscilla Dean opus of 1926, *Slipping Wives*. After all, isn't this a book about Laurel *and* Hardy? Surely less space could have been granted to a recounting of their individual careers; there is far too much of the "little man waiting on the wings" type of biofiction in the Laurel chapter, just as there are too many details of Hardy's courtship of his second wife (no mention is made, however, of Hardy's first wife); there are too many letters, too much switching of viewpoints, too little critical analysis. Also, if we admit that no film comedian works by himself, creating style, gags, and routines in a vacuum, we must give more than passing credit to Leo McCarey, under whose supervision the boys reached heights they never surpassed and film comedy attained an ultimate silent flowering.

At other times, their robustness becomes a source of embarrassment in this era of deodor-

ized, germ-free film-making. Like other latter-day apologists, Mr. McCabe works hard excusing the more sadistic displays of savagery; or reassuring us that Laurel's version of a raped maiden (in *Putting Pants on Philip)* is never "vulgar."

The most astonishing thing about L&H may be that their comedy technique was so quickly developed and brought to perfection in so few films: by the time *Criminals at Large* (1927) was finished, they had settled on their own style, redolent of English music halls and American vaudeville, limited yet never rigid, allowing for infinite variations and nuances: the formal ritualistic violence tempered with periods of contemplation; the exquisite sense of timing, lacking in all but the best of silent film comedy, which openly broke with Sennett's exhilarating frenzies; the substitution of the unexpected with the eagerly awaited reactions and mannerisms. Most of all, the unique combination of two separate comic identities transcending the commedian-straight man relationship that has been the bane of subsequent teams from Wheeler and Wolsey to Abbott and Costello and all the way down to Martin and Lewis. In the public's eye, Laurel and Hardy were one, perfect and indivisible; Hardy's three film appearances on his own are justly forgotten. "Who is the Fat One? Laurel or Hardy?"

The book does fairly well by Oliver Hardy, a genial, gentle man whose screen image is that of moth-eaten, prepossessing Southern aristocrat. In their films, Hardy is born under the Sign of Logic, so it's a little as if Don Quixote and Sancho had changed roles. But Stan Laurel is more difficult to pin down. Part child, part genius he brings something otherworldly to his playing. His screen image haunts to this day the work of Marceau, Tati, Alec Guinness at his best, Beckett, Ionesco, and Saroyan. He may very well be the last of the Elizabethan fools and one of the screen's greatest funnymen.

Of the usual criticisms leveled at L&H, the one about their lack of social intent does not, I'm afraid, hold water. If we are to see an attack on Society, Church, and Institution in every one of Chaplin's wriggles, twitches, and shrugs, what then to think of L&H at war with Family (in *Twice Two,* for instance), Children (in *Brats),* the Law (who else but Edgar Kennedy?), the Next Door Neighbor (it had to be James Finlayson), and the Army (in *The Flying Deuces)*? The L&H detractors are closer to the mark when they pick on their limitations. McCabe explains that the arrival of the cartoon forced them to go into features after the coming of sound. Other comedians successfully traveled the path from two-reeler to eight-reeler. Laurel and Hardy did it once, in *Babes in Toyland.* Their other long films remain a series of disconnected two-reelers padded with musical sequences. Here was a case of a fatal dose of modesty. From there on, they went their not-so-merry way, through MGM and Fox, unsupervised and unappreciated, to their last effort in France, in which the boys, grown old, sick, and discouraged, made one of the most pathetic films of all time.

It's a pity that Laurel and Hardy will never profit from all this attention, in the way that Keaton did a few years ago. Hardy is dead, Laurel retired, and most of the critical writing about them sadly reminds us that this is little more than an obituary for a unique, lost form of comedy.—CARLOS CLARENS

LES GRANDS CINEASTES

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In the past decade world attention has been attracted by the new French school of film criticism, often radical, sometimes irresponsible, but always fresh and exciting. French criticism is centered around the famous *Cahiers du ciné-*

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ized, germ-free film-making. Like other latter-day apologists, Mr. McCabe works hard excusing the more sadistic displays of savagery; or reassuring us that Laurel's version of a raped maiden (in *Putting Pants on Philip)* is never "vulgar."

The most astonishing thing about L&H may be that their comedy technique was so quickly developed and brought to perfection in so few films: by the time *Criminals at Large* (1927) was finished, they had settled on their own style, redolent of English music halls and American vaudeville, limited yet never rigid, allowing for infinite variations and nuances: the formal ritualistic violence tempered with periods of contemplation; the exquisite sense of timing, lacking in all but the best of silent film comedy, which openly broke with Sennett's exhilarating frenzies; the substitution of the unexpected with the eagerly awaited reactions and mannerisms. Most of all, the unique combination of two separate comic identities transcending the commedian-straight man relationship that has been the bane of subsequent teams from Wheeler and Wolsey to Abbott and Costello and all the way down to Martin and Lewis. In the public's eye, Laurel and Hardy were one, perfect and indivisible; Hardy's three film appearances on his own are justly forgotten. "Who is the Fat One? Laurel or Hardy?"

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ma (1951–) and other journals like *Cinéma* (1955–), and is also represented by publishing ventures like "Editions universitaires" with its *Classiques du cinéma* (1954–), a series of book-length analyses of individual film-makers (Ford, DeSica, Eisenstein, Chaplin, Hitchcock, Bresson, and Bergman have been covered to date), and the Belgian "Club du livre" (1957–) with its series of brochures on individual directors, national cinemas, and genres.

The most fascinating aspect of French criticism, to this reviewer, is the total stress on the *director* as the be-all and end-all of film-making. An illustration is last September's issue of *Cahiers* (No. 111), which devoted 45 of 64 pages to Joseph Losey, printed his complete filmography (including films made under pseudonyms by this little-known American exile now operating out of England), and even put Losey's portrait on the cover!

At last this director-orientation is manifest in book form: Henri Agel's *Les grands cinéastes* in 306 engrossing pages presents a survey of the careers of 60 international film-makers, each in a separate complete chapter of three to six pages accompanied by a brief filmography and an illustration from one of the subject's pictures. The longest articles are on Ophüls, Chaplin, Hitchcock, Dreyer, Von Sternberg, Pabst, and McLaren, although Agel's revaluation also treats in detail and sometimes with perhaps unaccountable fondness the work of many lesser-known figures, from Lumière through Wellman, Grémillon, and Donskoy to Ivens, Mizoguchi, Cukor, and Visconti.

Perhaps the greatest interest of the book is precisely this attention paid to the neglected talents of the past who are now being rediscovered in France. Men like Louis Feuillade (famous for thrillers like the *Fantômas* serials and *Les vampires* before 1920), whom Agel credits with introducing mystery and surrealism into daily life; or America's Frank Borzage, whom he calls "one of the greatest poets of love on the screen."

At the same time, the author attacks with gusto some of the highly rated giants and knocks them off their pedestals. Disney is sharply criticized and comes off second best to UPA's Steve Bosustow, René Clair's work is written off as "too limited and predictable to earn him a good place among the great creators of the seventh art," in comparison with Jean Renoir, "one of the four or five greatest authors of films in the entire history of the cinema."

The choice of the 60 directors of Agel's book was based on a series of polls conducted among French critics, ciné-clubs, and the IDHEC, and we can thank this for the considerable emphasis alloted to the more contemporary film-makers (e.g., Bergman, Resnais, Tati, Nicholas Ray, and Antonioni). Thus there is good chronological balance—a rarity among serious studies of film history. There are debatable inclusions or omissions, of course: Max Linder and Otto Preminger are included (the latter showered with fulsome praise!), but E. S. Porter, Feyder, Lubitsch, Duvivier, Wyler, Capra, Stevens, Clouzot, Becker, Käutner, Kazan, Minnelli, Preston Sturges, Wilder, Zinnemann, and S. Ray are not—except for lists of some of their films in chapter-end notes.

Moreover, incredible as it may seem, Korda, Powell, Reed, and Lean are not mentioned at all! British cinema doesn't exist for the French, who are otherwise quite international in their outlook (being especially attracted to American films). The only men who could be called British film-makers alloted chapters in "The Great Film-Makers" are the exile Hitchcock and the Scots-Canadian McLaren, as compared with 21 from the United States and 17 from France. Italy is represented by five directors, Russia and Scandinavia by four each.

A welcome feature of this book is the ability to see beyond content significance to real formal artistry and style of the film-makers. As was recently pointed out to the reviewer, the new French critics have recognized that there is no such thing as an inferior genre. And Agel gives us very interesting discussions of the work of great directors, admittedly not "content men," like Feuillade, Vigo, Von Sternberg, and Howard Hawks ("one of the rare patricians of the screen; his ethic is that of human nobility"). The author also attempts to pick out and trace

characteristic styles and themes running through film-makers' careers: Von Sternberg's obsession with desire, Lang's motif of guilt and Fate, Donskoy's concentration on the daily life of simple Russian country people. Occasionally Agel gets carried away into metaphysics, as when he theorizes on Christianity, moral issues, sin and grace, Evil and Redemption in *Notorious, The Wrong Man, The Lodger,* and *Under Capricorn* (the latter is "Hitchcock's masterpiece, one of the very rare works of the screen which merit the qualification of sublime").

This book is somewhat weakened (as are most books on film history) by occasional inaccuracies and omissions in factual data, such as the premature announcement of Wellman's death (p. 129), calling Borzage's 1933 *Man's Castle* a silent picture (p. 75), and by such peculiarities as listing DeMille in the generation of the first talkies (Chap. 5, rather than Chap. 3, where he belongs: the generation of 1915). The filmography accompanying each director article is confined to a list of the titles (usually the French version) of most or all of his important features, and should not be taken as authoritative. Some of the filmographies are quite complete, although at least one (p. 81), intended to be complete, comes out an unholy mess: Lang made *Ministry of Fear* in '43 (not '39 or '48—Agel gives it under both its English and its French title, *Espions sur la Tamise,* and both times in the wrong year!); *Return of Frank James* is listed twice (should be only '40, not '48); and *Western Union* and *Man Hunt* belong in 1941 (not '48 and '49 respectively).

Les grands cinéastes is attractively printed on slick paper, with well reproduced illustrations from films. It is widely documented, as Agel quotes (with acknowledgment) and compares opinions of various French critics without presenting too many of his own; thus the book represents a valuable compendium of current French cinema thought on the leading film-makers of the world, and would seem to merit an English translation. It is about time a book explicitly dedicated to directors is available in our language.—STEVEN P. HILL

BIANCO E NERO

Bianco e Nero is the Italian counterpart of _Film Quarterly_, published under the auspices of the Italian film school (the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia) and the University of Rome. The following survey, a parallel to that on Soviet film criticism written by Steven P. Hill in a recent issue, will acquaint American readers with something of the concerns and flavor of serious Italian criticism.

Italy, smaller than the state of Montana but with 44,000,000 people of whom more than half are faithful and enthusiastic movie-goers, prints innumerable film journals and magazines. Most of these are multicolored and gross, and appeal to the ordinary fan. A few monthly magazines, however, are competently put together and seriously conceived; of these, the most reliable, if not the most readable, is *Bianco e Nero.* Like *Sight & Sound, Cahiers du Cinéma, Film Quarterly,* and their counterparts elsewhere, it is a journal of specialized film criticism, containing studies and observations on current and past films. However, as often happens in Italy, what is meant to be serious also risks being boring, and *Bianco e Nero* only rarely avoids this danger.

Bianco e Nero, now 21 years old, is a monthly magazine which, however, often combines two issues in one; it has a 7″ x 9″ format, an average of 140 pages (2 months) to 100 pages (one month) per issue, and a stylish white cover with sober lettering; it is printed on mediocre white paper, with an average of 10 pages of good photographs assembled in the middle of the issue and printed on glossy paper; its price is 350 Lire (55¢) per month. It is published by the University of Rome Press (like practically all Italian universities, a state university). The chief editor, Floris L. Ammannati, is also president of the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Rome; the assistant editor, Leonardo Fioravanti, is also director of the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia; and many of the other editors are closely related to national and international juries, committees, and boards for the selection and evaluation of films, actors, and directors. The design is pleasant, the indexing efficient, but *Bianco e Nero*'s proofreaders are not the best: often one is obliged to read a sentence twice or three times due to misspellings,

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poor punctuation, and other distractions.

Bianco e Nero covers a vast range of topics approached from many different points of departure—from a long, faithfully taped interview with Federico Fellini on his ideas about acting, to a thorough survey of Argentinian cinema, to a dry, factual report on financial aspects of European film production. It is no novelty that Italians have become seriously interested in their domestic film industry only since the end of the war and the triumph of the neorealistic works of Rossellini, De Sica, Visconti, Lattuada, and De Santis. From the early 'fifties on, however, Italian audiences have been passionately following the development and discoveries of their own film art. This has been due partly to the sudden introduction onto the Italian screen of bust-beauties who could also act charmingly and knowingly—Lollobrigida, Loren, Mangano—but also to the well-diffused notion that the cinema is more than entertainment, and that as such it merits all the attention and study that other artistic forms do. It is not as well known that film distribution in Italy permits audiences to see good "art films" even in the remotest provinces. Aside from Far Eastern movies, any small town inhabitant can count on seeing practically every picture of significance right in his neighborhood theater. This can be partly explained by the fact that all films projected in Italy are dubbed, except for the first showings of a few in their original languages—generally American, English, or French films—given in three or four high-class cinemas in the largest cities.

The degree of seriousness with which Italian audiences consider films is also shown by the fact that the name of the director of a film is always advertised with the same fanfare as the names of stars, and that consequently the progress of motion picture directors, Italian and foreign, is closely followed by the average or slightly above-average movie-goer. It may be added that the film, and indeed the theater itself, is still in Italy (for a number of social, economic, and emotional reasons) very prominent among the sources of pleasure and interest.

An average issue of *Bianco e Nero* includes a news report on the Italian and international film scene. For example, in the issue for August–September, 1960, we note a day-by-day journal by Claudio Bertieri on the Venice Film Festival; reprints of 10 different reviews from Italian dailies of the two most controversial films of the Venice Festival, *Le passage du Rhin* by Cayatte and *Rocco e i suoi fratelli* by Visconti; an article on "Censorship and Magistrates" concerned with the recent restrictions and prohibitions prompted by the projection of *Rocco* and Antonioni's *L'Avventura*. In previous issues, this section has contained such items as the minutes of the first assembly of the International Council for Cinema and TV, held in Rome about a year ago; a report of the results of two national competitions for a film script sponsored by *Bianco e Nero* and *Prima Prova*; and so on.

The section which follows is the most substantial, serious part of the review, and is devoted to essays and studies on personalities and events of the film world. These are often of historical orientation and always well documented. Occasionally these articles are concerned with subjects of broader, more general interest: "The Actor in the British Cinema" by Mario Verdone, "Style and Acting in the Silent Films" by Roberto Paolella, "Brief History of the Animated Cartoon in Czechoslovakia" by Marie Benesova, and many others. Ordinarily the authors of this type of research article are rather well known men (women seldom appear on the scene, except for two or three foreign ones in a period of two years) who are also active critics in various papers and journals, or who work in the film indusry as directors, editors, or film writers. The length of such articles varies from 7,000 to 20,000 words. Frequently the value of their information is not matched by their style of exposition, principally because of the Italian mode of writing critical essays in any field, which is prolix, intricate, and redundant. The superabundance of adjectives, adverbs, incidental phrases and the like often makes these pieces undigestible, baroque lasagne. However, some issues are blessed with

highly original and well-written essays.

One of these is an 8,500-word article by Fernaldo Di Giammatteo entitled *"M," a Satire Not Understood,* in which he sharply delineates the errors of easy criticism of which *M* has been the object since 1931. The fact that the majority of reviewers and film scholars have seen in this work only a magnificent display of insight into a psychopath, and a memorable usage of sound (the famous *leitmotiv* whistled by the sex maniac, and the dialect spoken by many of the characters) and symbols (the balloon to represent the dead girl, etc.) is examined here as an example of contemporary limitation of the reviewers. Di Giammatteo does not underestimate the importance of the technical and formal achievements of the first sound film of Fritz Lang, or the brilliance of the acting, but insists on the necessity of seeing in *M* a work of larger dimensions with overt satirical intentions. The satire, of course, was directed against the social organization of Germany in 1930, and in general against the efficiency and shallowness that characterized the official "German soul."

Di Giammatteo's study is valuable not only for its close examination of the film, but also for its wealth of quotations from histories of the German cinema and reviews, its anecdotes connected with the making of the film, and its parallels to the *Dreigroschenoper* by Brecht. Di Giammatteo provides the reader with a precise synopsis of the film and, to make some specific points clearer, gives an exact transcript of some significant dialogue passages and of the ten early shots that helped make *M* so famous. (Oddly enough, when reviewers described the sequence of those shots, a unique introduction to a unique drama, they never remembered the order correctly.)

Other regular departments of *Bianco e Nero* include complete accounts of film festivals large and small, conferences and discussions, and reviews of films and film books. *Bianco e Nero* presents very thorough coverage, including scientific, artistic, and didactic documentaries, cartoons, and other shorts. Often, however, one would like to read the opinions of a broader selection of writers than that offered by this magazine, whose reviewing is often by one or two hands: for example, in the issue of August–September, 1960, Leonardo Autera wrote all the film reviews, and Giulio Castello wrote seven book reviews plus a long article on film in the issue of May–June, 1960.

Also included is an absolutely impeccable complete list of all the films shown in Rome during each month. This list, arranged in alphabetical order according to the titles in their original language, provides accurate credit information in an abbreviated form. The list comprises about 70 films per month, and in certain cases if a review of a film has not been offered before and it is a work of special interest, a brief commentary and evaluation is offered at the bottom of the listing.

Bianco e Nero as a rule does not publish scripts; on one or two occasions, however, it has reprinted brief "subjects" by young writers which had won prizes in national competitions. (The lack of original, intelligent scripts is as acute in Italy as elsewhere; one of the judging committees for the national competition *Prima Prova,* of which Michelangelo Antonioni was a member, was unable to assign any prize at all in its last session.)

American movies and film-makers still receive the most attentive observation by Italian writers on film, who devote their time and ability not only to long studies of King Vidor's *The Big Parade* and such classics, but to close, knowledgable reports on such phenomena as the Actor's Studio of New York as well.

It is interesting to note, in conclusion, that an examination of *Bianco e Nero* during the past two years shows one figure emerging above all: Federico Fellini. This was accentuated after the polemics aroused by his last work. A taped discussion between Fellini, Mastroianni, and others was held at the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Rome after the first projection of *La Dolce Vita*; it is of the greatest interest, and I hope it can soon be published in English.

—Letizia Ciotti Miller

CARL'Z SPENSER CAPLIN

(Charles Spenser Chaplin) By G. A. Avenarius. (Moscow: USSR Academy of Science Press, 1959. 266 pages. 18.50 rubles.)

This large, extensively documented volume stands as a monument to the film scholarship of the late George Avenarius, probably the leading Soviet expert on western cinema. (Among his accomplishments in this field are VGIK courses, numerous articles—mostly prewar—on Griffith, Dieterle, musicals, etc., a book on Renoir, TV lectures, and the Gosfilmofond's fine collection of foreign films.) Avenarius was a factual historian in the Theodore Huff tradition, and in this, the fourth Soviet book on Chaplin (others appeared in '25, '38, and '45), he analyzes in enormous detail *all* 77 of Chaplin's silent pictures through *Woman of Paris*. The author's death in '58 prevented the completion of the work with a proposed second volume.

The book is well printed and illustrated, and includes an excellent bibliography (international in scope) and a meticulous filmography topping even Huff's in comprehensiveness: Avenarius includes *more* performers and the roles played by them, the distribution titles of each film in eight European countries (why don't all film historians do this?), and even a couple of items omitted in Huff's index (No. 48: the first, two-reel version of *Carmen*, and Nos. 75–77: Chaplin walk-ons in others' films—*The Nut, Souls for Sale, Hollywood*). The method Avenarius was forced to use to achieve this precision (also present in the textual analysis) is intriguing: he ran the films through and, starting from scratch, by a slow process of matching and elimination established what performer's name went with what face, then tabbed their appearances in each film!

True to the Huff tradition, the text itself (238 pages) consists of a long account of Chaplin's youth and a minute study of his film career, including considerable background on Chaplin's beginnings as a comedian, the movie trends of the time, etc., and a sequence-by-sequence transcription of several shorts. Although the book is primarily descriptive, some generalizations on broader themes of Chaplin's and contemporary film-making are also brought in.

This is a very valuable publication for the Russian film public, and for anyone else reading the language. Western cinema lost a great friend with the death of George Avenarius.

—Steven P. Hill

ISKUSSTVO MILLIONOV

(Sovietskoe kino 1917-1957) Edited by D. S. Pisarevsky. (Moscow: "Iskusstvo" Press, 1958. 624 pages. 58.80 rubles.) Available, like the volume described above, from Four Continents Bookshop in New York City and Cross World Bookshop in Chicago.

A recent and very encouraging Russian publishing venture is this mammoth pictorial history of the Soviet film through its first 40 years. Within approximately 75 pages of text and about 550 pages of illustrations (stills and frame enlargements, plus some directors and production designs) are included 351 Soviet films, from *Avicenna* to *Jacob Sverdlov* ("a" to "ya"), and from 1917 newsreels to 1957 features like *Quiet Flows the Don*. The major emphasis is on feature ("artistic") films, each of which is represented by one to six—or more—illustrations. There are also brief sections on documentaries and cartoons.

The pictorial material is tied together by 57 short articles, which include R. Yurenev's historical survey of the four periods of Soviet cinema; sketches of the work of eight directors, including Protazanov (comedies), Dovzhenko, Alexandrov (comedies), Gerasimov; and texts to accompany large photo-coverage of many individual classics like *Mother, Chapayev, Ivan the Terrible, Othello, The Cranes Are Flying*, etc. The volume closes with indexes in Russian, English, French, and German *to the articles*, and only a *Russian* index of film titles. Within the book, however, each set of stills is identified by a film title in the four languages.

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This large, extensively documented volume stands as a monument to the film scholarship of the late George Avenarius, probably the leading Soviet expert on western cinema. (Among his accomplishments in this field are VGIK courses, numerous articles—mostly prewar—on Griffith, Dieterle, musicals, etc., a book on Renoir, TV lectures, and the Gosfilmofond's fine collection of foreign films.) Avenarius was a factual historian in the Theodore Huff tradition, and in this, the fourth Soviet book on Chaplin (others appeared in '25, '38, and '45), he analyzes in enormous detail *all* 77 of Chaplin's silent pictures through *Woman of Paris*. The author's death in '58 prevented the completion of the work with a proposed second volume.

The book is well printed and illustrated, and includes an excellent bibliography (international in scope) and a meticulous filmography topping even Huff's in comprehensiveness: Avenarius includes *more* performers and the roles played by them, the distribution titles of each film in eight European countries (why don't all film historians do this?), and even a couple of items omitted in Huff's index (No. 48: the first, two-reel version of *Carmen*, and Nos. 75–77: Chaplin walk-ons in others' films—*The Nut, Souls for Sale, Hollywood*). The method Avenarius was forced to use to achieve this precision (also present in the textual analysis) is intriguing: he ran the films through and, starting from scratch, by a slow process of matching and elimination established what performer's name went with what face, then tabbed their appearances in each film!

True to the Huff tradition, the text itself (238 pages) consists of a long account of Chaplin's youth and a minute study of his film career, including considerable background on Chaplin's beginnings as a comedian, the movie trends of the time, etc., and a sequence-by-sequence transcription of several shorts. Although the book is primarily descriptive, some generalizations on broader themes of Chaplin's and contemporary film-making are also brought in.

This is a very valuable publication for the Russian film public, and for anyone else reading the language. Western cinema lost a great friend with the death of George Avenarius.

—Steven P. Hill

ISKUSSTVO MILLIONOV

(Sovietskoe kino 1917-1957) Edited by D. S. Pisarevsky. (Moscow: "Iskusstvo" Press, 1958. 624 pages. 58.80 rubles.) Available, like the volume described above, from Four Continents Bookshop in New York City and Cross World Bookshop in Chicago.

A recent and very encouraging Russian publishing venture is this mammoth pictorial history of the Soviet film through its first 40 years. Within approximately 75 pages of text and about 550 pages of illustrations (stills and frame enlargements, plus some directors and production designs) are included 351 Soviet films, from *Avicenna* to *Jacob Sverdlov* ("a" to "ya"), and from 1917 newsreels to 1957 features like *Quiet Flows the Don*. The major emphasis is on feature ("artistic") films, each of which is represented by one to six—or more—illustrations. There are also brief sections on documentaries and cartoons.

The pictorial material is tied together by 57 short articles, which include R. Yurenev's historical survey of the four periods of Soviet cinema; sketches of the work of eight directors, including Protazanov (comedies), Dovzhenko, Alexandrov (comedies), Gerasimov; and texts to accompany large photo-coverage of many individual classics like *Mother, Chapayev, Ivan the Terrible, Othello, The Cranes Are Flying*, etc. The volume closes with indexes in Russian, English, French, and German *to the articles*, and only a *Russian* index of film titles. Within the book, however, each set of stills is identified by a film title in the four languages.

Because this thick tome is almost entirely pictorial, it is of great value for any devotee of Soviet films. The 2,000 illustrations are good, although lacking in some of the sharpness and contrast of our photographic reproduction (you get the impression all Russian movies are shot in "soft focus"). The wonderful material could have been made a good deal more accessible by a multilingual index to film titles, and by caption identification of performers *shown* in the illustrations (although the regular credits are listed for each film). Needless to say, credits are not indexed at all, which is also unfortunate. One other minor stricture: each film title is translated literally into the other languages, to the occasional neglect of actual distribution titles. For instance, the easily recognizable *October* (Eisenstein) is given in four languages, but nowhere is *Ten Days That Shook the World* mentioned in the captions. Given these limitations to possible value as a reference work, *Iskusstvo millionov* nevertheless remains a fascinating treasure-house for browsing.

—STEVEN P. HILL

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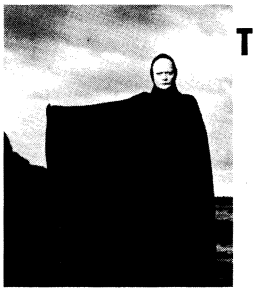

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