FILM
QUARTERLY

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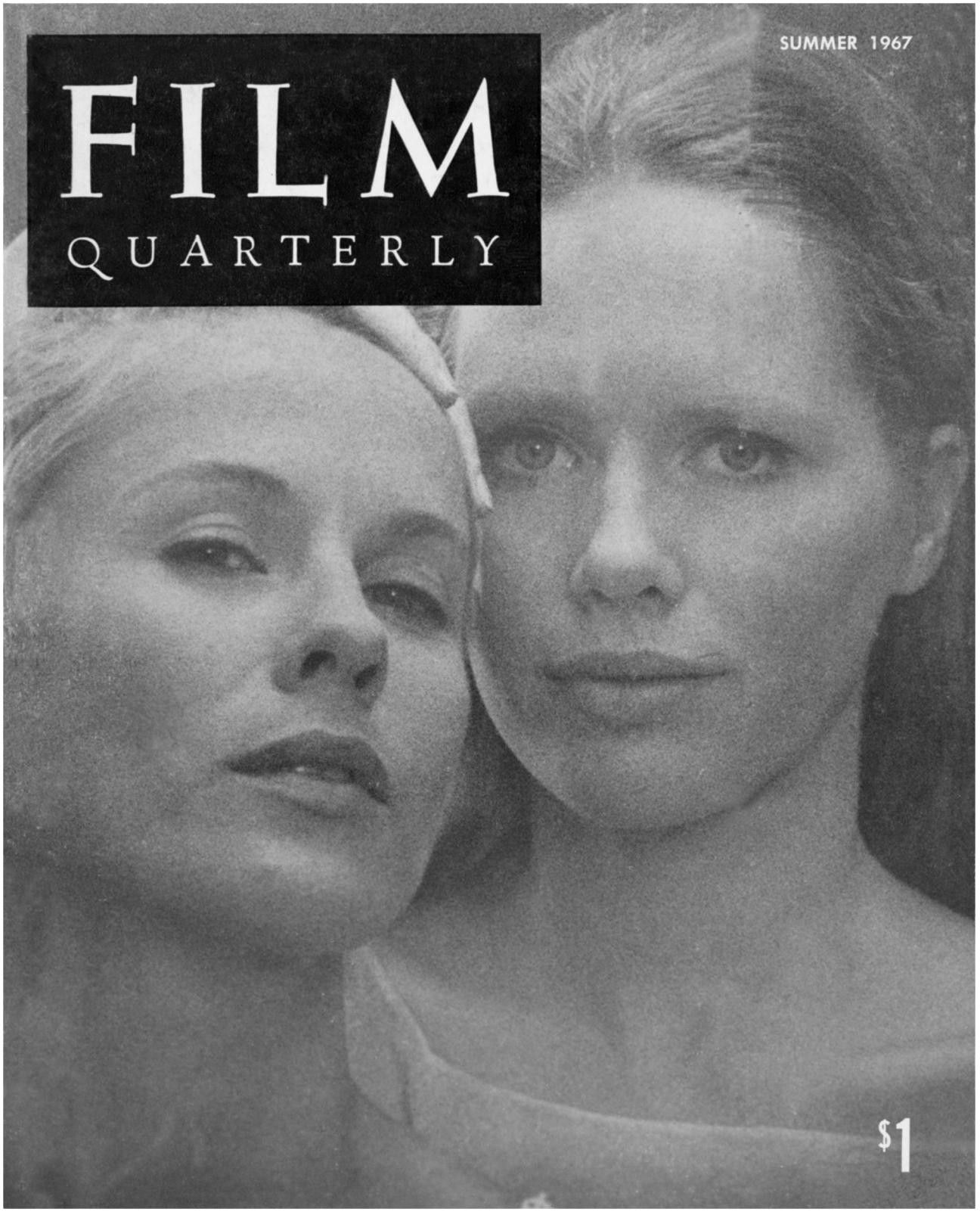
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COVER: Bibi Andersson and Liv Ullman in Ingmar Bergman's *Persona.*

Editor's Notebook

THE PLIGHT OF THE SHORT

Everybody talks about it, but nobody does anything about it—except an altogether remarkable organization called the Short Film Service, set up several years ago in London by critic and film-maker Derek Hill. Hill's energy and persuasiveness have galvanized many British distributors into taking on short films they would otherwise never have heard of, and the SFS has become a major renovating force in the short film world. It acts as agent (not a distributor itself) for films from the US, France, Italy, Germany, Japan, Yugoslavia, Denmark, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Cuba, Spain, Iran, etc., etc. Hill has managed to sell rights to a considerable number of British firms and TV chains, and to distributors on the continent as well. Although the sums involved are never tremendous in any one case, SFS deals over-all have brought in quite substantial new revenue to film-makers. Even these efforts do not make the ordinary short film produced on a "normal" budget economically viable, and an aggressive lobbying and publicity group, the Short Film Makers Campaign, is seeking to end the monopoly enjoyed in British theaters by the Rank company's *Look at Life* series, which would improve the situation a good deal further.

American film-makers desperately need an organization similar to the SFS, and it seems unlikely that the clogged distribution of shorts is going to receive attention from the coming American Film Institute—despite the crucial importance of a healthy short-film industry for the training of new talent. It seems probable, however, that an American firm could prosper in a modest way, like SFS, on commissions from distribution sales. What is needed is a person

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with Hill's energy, dedication, and broad good taste—who could bring together film-makers, critics, and distributors in a mutually helpful expansion of the American short-film market. Such an enterprise is far more likely to bring permanent benefits to American film-makers than spectacular short-film gambits such as the current attempt by Janus Films to package outstanding shorts (mostly foreign, and not as new as the high-pressure publicity implies) for the growing but still unsophisticated college circuits. The Janus campaign, however, seems to be proving that an intelligently selected batch of short films (including a number of masterpieces, notably Chris Marker's *La Jetée*) can reach substantial audiences. Occasional sporadic efforts are being made to bring shorts, even experimental shorts, to TV audiences. What is needed is a coordinating center of the kind SFS has provided—to promote sound publicity, to push for financial and other gains for the film-makers, and to focus public attention on the problems faced by the short film in this country.

FILM QUARTERLY REPRINTS

Back issues of FQ, and its predecessors the *Hollywood Quarterly* and *Quarterly of Film, Radio, & TV*, are almost all out of print, and arrangements have now been set up with a reprint house to make them available in an offset format. AMS Press, Inc., 56 East 13th Street, New York, offers a library-bound set of Vols. 1–17 (1945–1964) for $382.50, or $22.50 per volume. Bound in red paper covers, the price is $340.00, or $20.00 per volume. Interested libraries or individuals should communicate directly with AMS.

CONTRIBUTORS

GEORGE BLUESTONE, author of *Novels into Film*, is now in London preparing a feature which he will produce there. CONSTANCE A. BROWN teaches at Wilberforce University, and is working on a complete study of Olivier's films. ALAN CASTY teaches English at UCLA; an expanded version of his study of Robert Rossen (*FQ*, Winter 1966–67) will soon be published in France. RANDALL CONRAD is a critic and film-maker who lives in New York. RICHARD CORLISS is a graduate student at Columbia, and has written for *Commonweal, Film Society Review, Variety,* and *National Review*. STEPHEN FARBER is a graduate student at Berkeley. STEVEN P. HILL teaches Russian at the University of Illinois, Urbana. MARGOT S. KERNAN, after a year in the London film scene, is living in Washington, D.C. JAMES MICHAEL MARTIN studies film at UCLA.

GEORGE BLUESTONE

The Fire and the Future

"This is not really a science-fiction film," François Truffaut says of *Fahrenheit 451*. "If I wanted that I would make it about two robots. It would be completely sentimental. At the climax of the film these two giants would exchange their first kiss. It would be very moving."

A brave statement, but already loaded with dangers, reflecting as it does Truffaut's desire to bring authentic novelty to a formula tale. Truffaut was attracted to Ray Bradbury's novel not because he was a fan of science-fiction but because he loves books and was interested in speculating about the future. Having answered the question "Where have we been?" in *Jules and Jim,* and "Where are we?" in *Les Mistons, Les Quatre Cents Coups, Tirez sur le Pianiste* and *La Peau Douce,* he wanted to ask, "Where are we going?"

Why, then, the air of disappointment, even among Truffaut's most devoted admirers? Given his subject, his cast, his working conditions, are we forced to conclude that Truffaut, his first time out in color and English, was doomed to fail? To answer this, I think we need to separate disappointment from disturbance, to feel behind the flawed surface that beat of "sympathetic sadness" which I take to be Truffaut's most persistent quality.

To begin with the disappointments, the strategy of Truffaut's script (written with Jean-Louis Richard) was to make the future immediate, personal, and intimate, to create an atmosphere that is "strange rather than extravagant," to "construct a fable set in the electronic age." Truffaut wanted his fable to take place "in the world as we know it, but with a slight anticipation in time." The horror of that world was to settle on us, light and deadly as fallout. From the beginning, everything Truffaut did worked toward this immediacy.

Bradbury's tale has certain "extravagant" features like a mechanical hound with a poisonous proboscis which immobilizes fugitives who dare to violate the ban on books. Truffaut dropped this canine cop and invented instead a fine texture of detail to make the strange familiar. A dressing gown, says the script, "suggests a gymnasium outfit." The goggles which Montag's students wear are "something like a welder's." A futuristic folding staircase is "similar to the one used in Caravelle planes." In a night scene, firemen wear luminous belts "similar to those worn by German policemen who direct traffic." Passengers emerge from a monorail wearing gauze masks "as in Japan." None of these of course appear in the novel, and not all of them appear in the final film, but the intention is clear. Truffaut instructed designer Tony Walton to make his decor "instantly forgettable." If some woman sees this film five years from now, Truffaut said, and feels she must have a dress just like the one Julie Christie is wearing, "then we've failed." Montag's home is as once everywhere and nowhere, a study in neutral earth colors—sand, beige, biscuit, saffron, olive. It has the anonymity of tract housing, the safe coziness of the interior decorator—correct, comfortable, and totally undistinguished. Truffaut wanted it that way.

Linda, Montag's wife, lives among her objects, not in them, and her experience is literally skin-deep. Her frozen dinners and televised judo demonstrations (echoed later on when she seduces Montag using a judo move she learned on her program) represent the world of what Daniel Boorstin calls the "pseudo-event," which Truffaut carries to its absurd and sinister conclusion. Marshall McLuhan is fond of exhorting typographically conditioned egos to adjust to the realities of the electric age (pattern recognition, the extension of the central nervous sys-

tem) "with its return to inclusive experience." But he overlooks, as Truffaut does not, the incredible banality of that "inclusive experience." The programming that Truffaut invented for Linda ridicules this banality. "Come Play With Me" is devoted to the intricacies of a seating arrangement. In a cosmetics demonstration a new plastic make-up comes away like a layer of skin. Violence is vicarious. A young man with long hair is tracked down by the police. Finally Montag is treated to a fake staging of his own death, an event rippling with our own deep confusions over appearance and reality. We are after all the generation that saw Benny Paret and Lee Oswald die on television. Our world, our obsessions. The medium is *not* the message.

In contrast, anything old takes on the effulgence of memory. Bernard Herrmann's music is not hippy, electronic, it is quaint and conventional. In the scene where the old woman (Bee Duffel) prefers to be burned alive rather than leave her books, everything about the house seems *lived* in—the magenta wallpaper, the dark stained paneling, the old prints, above all the books themselves. The English prop men originally rounded up beautifully bound books that looked like collectors' items. Truffaut objected that they were too elegant. They were replaced, mostly by tacky paperbacks, the kind that grips and electricians picked off the prop cart to read between takes. The books look *used*.

The line was clear and deliberate. What went wrong? Pauline Kael, with typical acuity, says that *Fahrenheit 451* is the kind of movie that makes viewers want to revise it, that provokes discussion on how *we* would have done it. For me, Truffaut's mistake was making a film about books instead of a film about movies. Not only does no one read in Montag's world; no one goes to the movies. A big omission. McLuhan argues that just as the machine turned Nature into an art form, each new technology—and here I would go along—"creates an environment that is itself regarded as corrupt and degrading." Truffaut, like Godard, is unequivocal about the corrupt and degrading effect of television. What has not been sufficiently recognized is how television makes us nostalgic for film. How else explain the revivals of Batman and Bogart, the secret delight of W. C. Fields retrospectives at the National Film Theater? The hidden story of *Fahrenheit 451* is the movie buff's suspicion of television, exactly reminiscent of the deep hostility, among readers, to the spread of motion pictures. Already Truffaut's movie has entered that "antienvironment" which according to McLuhan trains us to "perceive" the electronic environment.

Isn't it strange then that *Fahrenheit 451* says nothing at all about movies? Especially since Truffaut, I submit, clearly loves movies *more* than he loves books? Imagine the texture of a film in which the underground men sneak into a *cinémathèque* basement for forbidden orgies of Carole Lombard. But in opting for books, Truffaut saddled himself with an insoluble problem: how to make books palpable to a movie audience? God knows, Truffaut did everything he could to convert his books into characters. In his script, books continually evoke medieval metaphors, and the keepers of the Word are likened to monks. In the film, the volumes writhe, they twist, they burn, more attentively shot than the actors. Quite apart from its contents, Truffaut says, "the book becomes a cherished object and with the passage of time, even the binding, the cover or the smell of leather . . . will acquire a very special meaning to the owner of the volume." But how could a film render those tactile and olfactory qualities which are the special province of readers? Although the book-burning scenes are among the best in the film, the trouble is that Truffaut's attitude toward books is finally sentimental. What could be accepted as a literary fable in Bradbury seems a little absurd on the screen. Trying to convert books into people was a losing battle from the start, a conceptual mistake that no amount of ingenuity could correct.

This conceptual mistake accounts, I think, for the unexpected failure of the ending. Most critics find the scene in the snow, where the exiles wander back and forth memorizing classics, haunting and beautiful. Ironically, it was

one of the few fortuitous touches in the shooting. Truffaut did not plan a snow scene, but when on the scheduled day snow fell in the woods outside Pinewood, Truffaut decided to make use of it. Still, the "book-men" move with a strange deadness I know Truffaut never intended. When Montag begins memorizing his Poe horror tale, "oral literature," says the script, "is beginning once again in the natural surroundings of the countryside." But oral literature evokes images of bardic poets around fires telling tales to spellbound listeners. Truffaut's book-men are totally without the story-teller's spontaneity or invention. They talk at, not to, each other. They do not embroider what they remember with their own style, their own performance. They recite by rote, as mechanical as computers. Truffaut must have sensed this, because he did try to introduce a few spare touches of humor. "Henri Brulard" points to a pair of twins who identify themselves as volumes one and two of *Pride and Prejudice.* A man in rags, *The Prince,* by Machiavelli, ruefully says, "You can't judge a book by its cover." The jokes don't work. It's all too sad.

While Truffaut could not hope to turn books into people, he could, unfortunately, turn people into things. Even if the exiles along the railroad tracks did emerge with unintended deadness, the film might have been saved if Montag and Clarisse came pungently alive. The artistic conflict between Truffaut and Oskar Werner is already well known through Truffaut's diary published in *Les Cahiers du Cinéma.* Werner felt that something sexual, romantic should develop between Montag and Clarisse, that the contrast between Linda's banality and Clarisse's vitality should be heightened, otherwise what was the advantage of Julie Christie's playing a dual role? Truffaut was adamant about toning down the love story. He wanted Clarisse to be just another girl on the run whom Montag meets casually. Even a fine detail in the script—a buttercup rubbed on Clarisse's chin, signifying love—was suppressed in the final editing. Why Truffaut was so insistent is still a mystery. But it does seem on reflection that Werner was right.

As long as Montag is sexually dead with Linda, he feels no particular tension about being a fireman. But when he falls in love with Clarisse (as Oskar Werner saw it), he no longer needs or enjoys the pyromaniac's perversion. Although his love for Clarisse is gently chaste, the pre-carnal love of courtship, it releases in him a desire for health. Now possibly Truffaut did not want to go beyond pre-sexual love because of science-fiction's traditional resistance to love stories and because of what films like Godard's *Une Femme Mariée* and his own *La Peau Douce* show about affairs of the skin. In his Christian Gauss lectures a few years back, Kingsley Amis could blandly declare, "What will certainly not do is any notion of turning out a science-fiction love story." Amis argued that a love story would blot out the science-fiction aspect, reduce it to irritating background noise by devices like "a dozen Venusian swamp-lilies being delivered to the heroine's apartment." Maybe that is why Bradbury spirited Clarisse off the scene after the first fifty pages.

It may also be that, as we must admit after Agnès Varda's *Le Bonheur* and Claude Lelouch's *Un Homme et Une Femme,* it is almost impossible these days to render sexual love convincingly. *Une Femme Marieé* and *La Peau Douce* tell familiar contemporary stories: sex is easy, love is hard. An affair of the skin can be as much of a *huis clos* as a loveless marriage. In these films hell is other people, and their stories are paradigms of Sartre's "dreadful freedom." Martha Wolfenstein and Nathan Leites, in their psychological study of the movies, say that the French cannot depict sexual fulfillment without at the same time showing old age (time) or society (repression) betraying the lovers. It is an iron law of French sensibility that sexual love must be caught on the wing, clandestinely, in clutching transient moments, before its swift and inevitable doom.

My guess is that Truffaut did not want Montag and Clarisse to love each other sexually because he could not depict that love without destroying it. Whatever the reasons, Linda and Clarisse remained for Truffaut two aspects of

The talking books in FAHRENHEIT 451

the same woman, or two girls "from the same mint, like the two heads one sees on some kinds of money, one in profile and the other full face." Linda was to be the creature of the present; Clarisse the creature of past and future. In other words, Clarisse was to be the free-spirited druid Linda must banish in order to become a mindless tree. Existing together in the same woman, they might have held out the promise of wholeness and integration, but as things stand they are hopelessly split into hunter and hunted, insider and exile. Truffaut wanted Clarisse to be Ariel, leading Montag to renounce the destructive fire and so bring him to redemption. Werner wanted his Juliet. Truffaut wanted a symbol, Werner wanted a woman. We can never know for certain if Werner was right. What we do know is that Truffaut was not. It would have been so easy to exploit the Julie Christie of *Billy Liar*. Instead, Montag's reunion with Clarisse among the exiled tramps is so rigorously underplayed that one scarcely feels anything between them. If the main enterprise of this community is books, not love, then surely the race isn't worth the candle.

This failure of the central characters may explain why everyone who sees the film goes around feeling depressed for days. It may explain, too, why the eclectic style of the film draws so much attention to itself. When the characters fail to hold us, we look at the scenery. Movies are too literal to allow us to accept "a world as we know it, but with a slight anticipation in time," a world that is "strange but not extravagant." A film that tries to be everywhere ends up being nowhere. In *Fahrenheit 451* we have a bit of council housing, a strip of French monorail, a futuristic fire truck—bits of mosaic without a commanding pattern. The TV antennae, the monorail full of self-adoring, narcissistic passengers—these were intended to be signs of deadness. Yet Truffaut lovingly bestowed on them his most imaginative shots. The opening zooms of the antennae, in rose and blue and gold, the sweeping shots of the monorail, are really more beautiful than anything else in the film. What are we to make of a strategy which makes those antennae look more beautiful than Clarisse?

Not only do we get a pastiche of setting, we get odd voices as well. The same failure to orchestrate the shots appears in Montag's unex-

plained accent, or the curiously flat reading of his lines. The word-play bit when Montag distinguishes between "informer" and "informant" is scarcely enough to redeem the rest. Surely Truffaut was profoundly at war with himself. Could it be that Truffaut has a secret fondness for technology (cameras? booms? dollies?) that his intelligence would vehemently deny? Is it significant that he takes such delight in swooping pan shots of the little fire truck—which was in fact a converted camera truck painted red?

So much for the disappointments. The disturbance *Fahrenheit 451* evokes—the gloom, that *solennel* quality Truffaut himself recognizes—is something else. If the film were a total disappointment, we would have more boredom and less depression. Leave aside the pastiche, and there remains a certain affective oddness, a strange residual power. Why? Because when all is said and done Truffaut still manages to touch on authentic fears, like the totalitarian nightmare which has always been an obsession of science-fiction. Just as Ray Bradbury was clearly satirizing the McCarthy period, Truffaut says he consciously played on memories of the Underground. "My film," he says, "is not unlike a story of the French Resistance—except that here the men on the run are book-lovers." There are anonymous wars going on in Truffaut's film, but that knowledge is kept from tranquilized Linda and her bevy of friends. Husbands do not die in these wars, they are reported dead from accidents or suicide. Apparently the Captain's authority is complete. But is it? Amis says that admonitory Futopias are "if not optimistic, at least strongly activist in their attitudes." They may show, and often do show, "human kind groaning in the chains of its own construction, but nearly always with the qualification that those chains can be broken if people try hard enough."

Among recent "earth-people" sci-fi films, Truffaut's is alone in showing an escape route from the "total" city. For him no authority can wholly kill the human. The boy with long hair *will* defy the barbershop. The old woman *will* defy the ban. Clarisse *will* resist the school authorities. Even for Linda, who may try to kill memory with Kelsol and suceed to the point of forgetting where she and Montag met, remembrance and feeling *will* keep breaking through. History may be cyclical or irreversible, but solitary battles are still going on.

Optimism may be a strange word to use in this context, but at least one major change from Bradbury's novel suggests that it might be accurate. Bradbury has a character named Faber, an old liberal humanist who understands what is happening but feels powerless to resist. Through a tiny transistor radio, planted in Montag's ear, he exhorts Montag to stand up to the Captain. Truffaut dropped Faber, explaining, "I don't think I have ever seen an old sage on the screen who hasn't dragged the whole thing to a halt." The effect of keeping Clarisse and excising Faber is to make Montag rebel not for wisdom but for love. Clearly in politics the reasons of the heart are for Truffaut more reliable than the reasons of the head. Montag does not argue very well when the Captain (Cyril Cusack) accuses writers of everything from arrogance to contradiction, but at the crucial moment Montag is capable of acting. He turns his flame-thrower on his oppressor.

If Truffaut, by leaving an escape hatch from the infernal city whereas Bradbury's Montag saw his city erupting in an atomic holocaust, is more optimistic than Godard in *Alphaville* or Elio Petri in *The Tenth Victim*, why are we so disturbed? I submit that our reaction has something to do with the one area of the film that critics have so far ignored or refused to discuss: the meaning of the fire itself. When Montag incinerates the Captain, his gesture is the last act in the most brilliant invention of both novel and film: institutionalized pyromania. Sandor Ferenczi, Wilhelm Stekel, and Hans Schneider, among others, are all agreed on the erotic meaning of fire. They have shown how pyromania is often practiced by "children who may be motivated by a desire for revenge against an adult for some real or fancied wrong," how it goes along with masturbation,

how often it is grounded in an enuretic complex. Ernest Simmel wrote that in cases of incendiarism he frequently found a desire both to set the fire and to put it out. Even on the level of the case history, what could be a better symbol of erotic displacement than the figure of a fireman who combines the vengeful and the enuretic with a flow of liquid fuel?

Even more than the case history, fiction helps us understand the sexual meaning of fire. In Yukio Mishima's *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion,* the Zen acolyte Mizoguchi speaks of the moment when he decides to raze the famous sanctuary in Kyoto: "I wonder whether I shall be believed when I say that during these days the vision of fire inspired me with nothing less than carnal lust. Yet was it not natural that, when my will to live depended entirely on fire, my lust, too, should have turned in that direction? My desire molded the supple figure of the fire; and the flames, conscious that they were being seen by me through the shining black pillar, adorned themselves gracefully for the occasion. They were fragile things—the hands, the limbs, the chest of that fire."

Truffaut's Captain is an ambiguous homo-erotic arsonist reminiscent of the sadist in Lawrence's "The Prussian Officer." To amplify the homo-erotic overtones, Truffaut invented a character named Fabian (Anton Diffring), a shadowy fireman who functions mainly as a foil to Montag, keeping stock of his weaknesses and vying with him for the Captain's affections and favors. This may account for the oppressive atmosphere of the fire station, gently prefigured in *Jules and Jim.* In Truffaut's earlier film, the title characters are involved in a classic homo-erotic triangle in which two men "get at" each other by sharing the same woman. When the Captain in *Fahrenheit 451* finds the rich cache of books in the old woman's house, he reacts with jubilation and glee, "like an overjoyed kid." He sees her books as something to be possessed, and shared in possession: "It's all ours, Montag!" Later, when Montag is forced to witness the burning of his own books, the Captain again experiences delight in the only way he can experience it. "Look," he says, "isn't that lovely? The pages . . . like petals of a flower . . . or butterflies . . . Luminous; or black . . . Who can explain the beauty of fire? . . ." In the end the Captain treats Montag's betrayal like a sexual rejection. When Montag begins losing "faith" in his mission, he can no longer slide *up* the brass rod. "Something wrong between you and the pole, Montag?" the Captain asks slyly. What Gaston Bachelard says of Prometheus and the gods, in his provocative study *The Psychoanalysis of Fire,* could easily apply to Montag and the Captain: "Prometheus is a vigorous lover rather than an intelligent philosopher, and the vengeance of the gods is the vengeance of a jealous husband."

Bachelard goes on to say that "alchemy is uniquely a science engaged in by men, by bachelors, by men without women, by initiates cut off from normal human relationships in favor of a strictly masculine society. Alchemy does not receive the influence of the feminine reverie directly. Its doctrine of fire is thus strongly polarized by unsatisfied desires." The firemen constitute very much the same kind of bachelor community. The Captain and Fabian are classic types of men without women.

It is surprising, under the circumstances, that we know so little about the psychology of institutionalized pyromania. The firemen in *Fahrenheit 451* are incarnations of the men who burn witches (Carl Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc, Day of Wrath),* crosses (the KKK), books (the newsreel scenes in *Jules and Jim*), Jews (Alain Resnais's *Night and Fog*), to say nothing of the men with napalm and flame-throwers in Korea and Vietnam. What do these *ritual* fires mean?

Bachelard's is one of the few attempts to trace those profound symbolic attachments to fire which prevent us from seeing it "objectively." He is very good at showing the mythic affections for fire deeply buried in our racial unconscious. What he calls the Prometheus Complex is our hypnotic respect for fire; the Empedocles Complex our hypnotic reverie; the

FAHRENHEIT 451

Novalis Complex our longing for the unfallen fire-world of pre-creation, and so on through Idealized Fire and the Fire of Purity. But these are accounts of *reverential* fire, recalling the funeral pyres of Hercules and Shastri, rather than Nero's pyromania. In the course of his analysis, Bachelard strikes off many suggestive sparks about collective pyromania, for example this comment on the fire in alchemical acids: "Psychoanalytically, the will to destroy is a coefficient of the destructive property . . . In fact, to think of a power means not only to use it, but above all to abuse it. Were it not for this desire to misuse it, the consciousness of power would not be clearly felt." But because he is interested in reverential fire, Bachelard makes no connection between this and the sexual basis of collective pyromania.

It seems to me there is a crucial difference between the solitary act and collectively sanctioned burning. The solitary arsonist wants a vengeful erotic thrill. Institutionalized pyromania has a dual intent: to purify and exorcise.

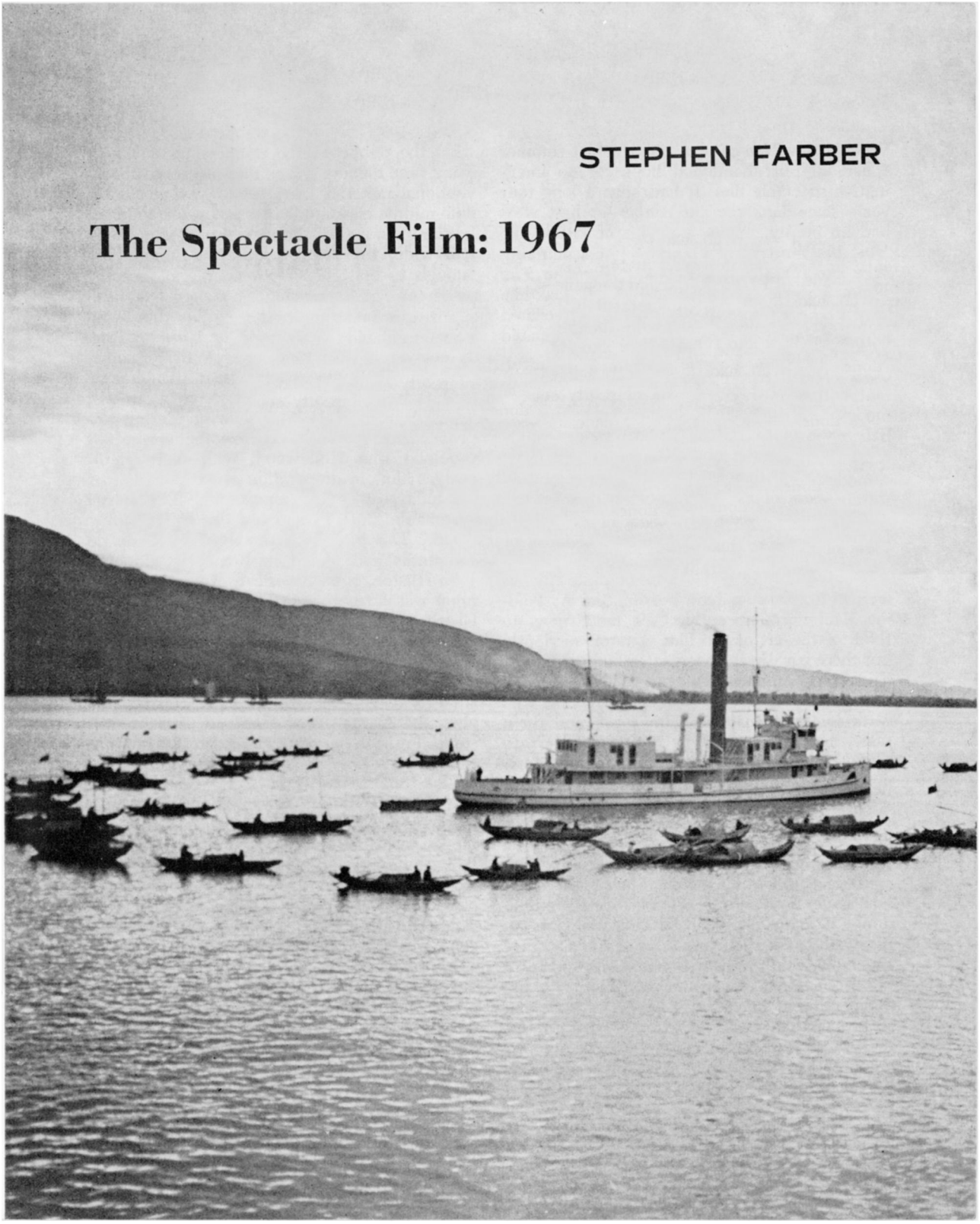
Collective pyromania does not treat its objects of destruction as enemies to be fought but as infections to be cauterized. Heretics, Jews, non-Aryans, books are always burned in the name of purifying the race, the Church, or the nation. The victims are seen as the Others whom the incendiarists fear they may become. A character in Arthur Miller's *Incident at Vichy* says of the Germans in World War II, "They do what they do not because they are Germans but because they are nothing." The more the collective pyromaniac fears his own nullity, the more he craves annihilation of the Others. Because the Others represent a maddening choice, an alternative to be renounced, ritual pyromania exorcises temptations in the Self.

Truffaut's Captain, in addition to the perverted eroticism we have already seen, reveals exactly these tensions. First of all, he is literate. He remembers the books he destroys, and remembering, is driven ruthlessly to exterminate that stain in himself. The Captain takes books *personally* (as we take the film): "This gibberish is enough to drive a man mad." Secondly, he is perfectly aware that what drives men mad are literature's contradictions. He knows that purity can never stand human contradiction. Novels, he complains, "tempt people to live in other ways." Therefore, *all* novels must be burned, even those we agree with. What the Captain burns is the lure of his own intelligence. He is another Ethan Brand who, wanting to destroy in order to purify, leaves among his ashes an alabaster heart. For any Western audience this god-like presumption is bound to be the film's most painful discovery. "In a good film," Truffaut says, "people must be made to see something that they don't want to see . . . they must be forced to look where they refused to look."

Because it *is* painful, we balk. *Fahrenheit 451* is a flawed vision, but out of respect for the body of his work, let us at least understand what Truffaut was trying to say: for the bourgeois technocrat the future is Now; for the rebel exile the future is, as it has always been, staying alive to the Possible.

STEPHEN FARBER

The Spectacle Film: 1967



When I saw *Hawaii* at a preview last summer I had all but abandoned hope for an imaginative spectacle film. It had been a long four years since *Lawrence of Arabia*—at best we'd had an empty, entertaining bit of kitsch like *How the West Was Won,* at worst a numbing bore like *It's A Mad Mad . . . World* or *The Agony and the Ecstasy,* a pretentious hoax like *Becket.* With *Doctor Zhivago* the genre seemed to have croaked its last; Robert Bolt and David Lean, who had done so many shrewd and beautiful things for *Lawrence,* were now content with 3½ hours of pretty snowscapes and moony sentimentalities set to the twitter of the balalaika. *Zhivago* might have been moderately enjoyable if I hadn't had any expectations, but there wasn't an interesting character in Bolt's script and only occasionally an image that transcended picture-book Russia. If Bolt and Lean could no longer bring imagination or concern the spectacle form, who could?

It seemed a shame, because film has epic, as well as dramatic or lyric possibilities. As Pauline Kael wrote recently, "We tend, now, to think of the art of the film in terms of depth, but there has always been something about the eclectic medium of movies that, like opera, attracts artists of Promethean temperament who want to use the medium for scale, and for a scale that will appeal to multitudes." *Crazy Quilt, Shakespeare Wallah, Knife in the Water* may be admirable films in many ways, but what drew many of us to the movies was the grandeur of the medium at its most ambitious or at its flashiest—the dazzle of the exotic, the monumental, the romantic that no other medium could quite match. Maybe our interests have become more sophisticated, but I doubt if many people have outgrown the capacity to catch their breath at sensuous movie spectacle. The problem is not the form, but a failure of talent. Given the economics of a big movie spectacular today, it is little wonder that so few of them turn out to have artistic interest. Most of the decisions—understandably, when $10 or $40 million is at stake—are made by executives who have a pretty clear idea of what the public wants: *The Sound of Music.* They aren't going to take chances on unconventional material, on protesting what a satisfied middle-class audience takes for granted. So the scale is shriveled; the screen may be 40 feet wide, the scenery lush, the sound loud enough to blast you from your seat, but the vision of the spectacle film-maker has been bleared by the 21-inch screen in the living room. Nothing in *The Sound of Music* or *Doctor Zhivago* really fills those big, empty spaces.

But the spectacle films this year, though none of them could really be considered a success, surprised me with unusual, even daring appeal. These movies crystallize the unresolved problems that Hollywood, with more giant-budget films in preparation every year, is facing today. (In some respects it probably isn't reasonable any more to use the term "Hollywood." *The Bible* was produced by Dino de Laurentiis and filmed in Rome; its director, John Huston, is an American expatriate. *Khartoum* was financed mostly by MGM and stars Charlton Heston, but its writer and director are both British, and so are the rest of its actors. *Hawaii* and *Grand Prix* are more thoroughly American ventures, but most of their stars—Max von Sydow, Richard Harris, Jocelyne La Garde, Yves Montand, Toshiro Mifune, Françoise Hardy, Antonio Sabato—are from everywhere but Hollywood.)

The Bible is the worst of these recent films, most nearly conforming to what educated audiences have come to expect of movie epics. Pauline Kael's elaborate defense of the movie really boils down to a sigh of relief that it wasn't any worse—it is at least free of the heavenly choirs of *King of Kings* and *The Greatest Story Ever Told.* It's not a tasteless movie, but it's not a good one either. Everything is so terribly bland —illustrations of the Bible stories that any Sunday school might grab up for its audiovisual program. The film shouldn't bother anyone, for most of it has no point of view at all; it simply turns the narratives into the most literal kinds of moving pictures.

Here is Miss Kael, who is very thorough in

◀ *Overleaf:* THE SAND PEBBLES

enumerating the movie's flaws, trying to make a case for its strength: "When you respond to the beauty of scenes in *The Bible,* it is not merely the beauty of photography but the beauty of conception." Miss Kael says that the movie presents Jehovah as a primitive God of wrath, which sounds promising, but where and when? I found hardly any scene in *The Bible* of real interest, visual *or* conceptual. Maybe I'm wrong, but I won't be convinced of it until Miss Kael can cite some specific instances of that "beauty" she's talking about. Or when she says that the Tower of Babel sequence, which I couldn't make anything of, "is one of the most brilliant conceptions in the work," I wish she had explained just where the brilliance lies. Otherwise we don't have film criticism, but incantation more appropriate to an initiation rite.

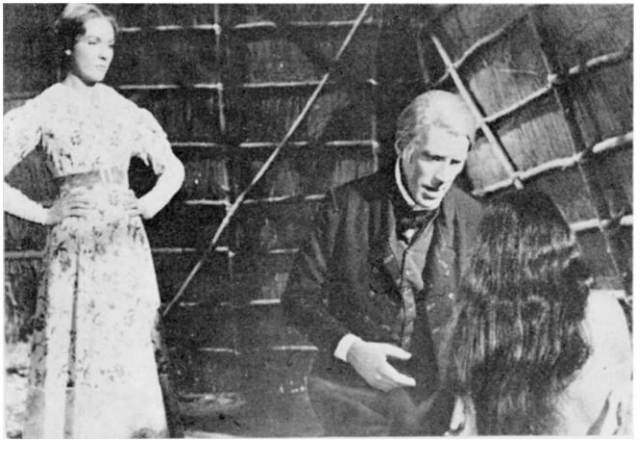
There are occasional attractive touches, but only in the last fifteen minutes, the Abraham and Isaac sequence, does *The Bible* come alive. Here Huston boldly selects images and details that clearly cut against the Biblical grain, to question the validity of a God who plays this monstrous trick on Abraham and calls it a test of faith. Huston's Abraham, unlike the Bible's, rages against God when asked to sacrifice his son, and, imposingly played by George C. Scott, he has our full sympathy. The camera lingers over the tender parting from Sarah in order to make God's teasing of their affection seem barbarous. The journey through the ruins of Sodom is striking—skeletons are distorted far beyond realistic size—and when Abraham tells Isaac that the entire city was destroyed, Isaac asks, "The children too? Were the children wicked?" At that moment a snake slithers out through one of the holes in a giant skull, as if verifying the harshness of God's satisfied retribution. The sacrifice scene itself is excruciating; Huston dwells insistently on the binding of Isaac, the lighting of the fire, the glint of the knife. Even knowing the outcome, I think any viewer is likely to wince at the cruelty of the story he was once told to accept as a high-minded lesson. Huston uses vast panoramas most effectively in this sequence to suggest the loneliness and precariousness of men against the power of an indifferent natural world and its "benevolent" God. And the final image, after the substitution of the ram for the boy, of father and son embracing and dancing, tiny figures against the landscape dominated by God's voice, provides a tentative, poignant hope for human life oblivious to divine decrees. This superb sequence cannot save *The Bible,* but it does remind us that the spectacle film need not be limited to soothing assurances of conventional pieties. Indeed the form would seem to have tremendous potential—only a film of almost insane breadth and intensity, whose characters and settings are statuesque, can effectively criticize the traditional myths of our origins.

Abraham takes Isaac to the sacrifice: THE BIBLE

The most remarkable thing about these spectacle films is their fitful courage. *Hawaii's* subject is the destruction of the Hawaiian culture by the American missionaries and speculators who settled there in the early nineteenth century, and its compelling anti-hero, the Reverend Abner Hale (brilliantly played by Max von Sydow), is a pitiless Calvinist minister who tries to extinguish the natives' gentleness for his own stark God of hellfire and damnation. It may be objected that it's pretty easy to criticize American culture heroes and American imperialism of 150 years ago, and I admit that this removal in time is a tricky problem—one that I'll return

to with reference to *The Sand Pebbles.* But I don't think the historical distancing in *Hawaii* blurs the anger or the relevance of the movie's attack on self-serving religion and the American eagerness to absorb and destroy primitive cultures. The film is surprisingly sympathetic in its treatment of Hawaiian paganism and incest, and it comes down very hard on its hero's spiritual outrage—which turns out to be only a form of bigotry—at the natives' promiscuity. In an affecting moment Hale rudely tears apart a Hawaiian girl and a sailor who have been attracted to each other, as they are about to head for the woods. The girl is frightened and bewildered by his severity and asks, in tears, "What have I done wrong?" It is a clear, pungent reminder that guilt for spontaneous sexual responsiveness is a Puritan invention and a crippling human intrusion. The movie is, in fact, quite psychologically canny in suggesting a connection between imperialism and sexual frustration. The script does not make the connection explicit enough, but von Sydow's angular, pallid physical presence persistently implies that his resentment of the natives and his zeal to "reform" them has its roots in his own suppressed sexual yearnings. The potency that Hale fears and hates is aptly symbolized in the figure of the island's behemoth queen mother (beautifully played by a nonprofessional, Jocelyne La Garde), who would like the advantages of a Western education, including Christianity, but who loves her brother too much to stop sleeping with him on the sly.

HAWAII



Hawaii does soften the bluntness of its criticisms by providing a little relief in the sappily written part of Hale's wife, who is as impossibly saintly, patient, and gentle as he is convincingly flawed. Clearly once Julie Andrews—fresh from her successes as a singing nanny and a singing nun—was signed for the part, all traces of humanity were struck out. I don't think Miss Andrews should be exactly grateful to the producer or the scriptwriters for the halo they supply her, especially because she gives evidence of being a more capable actress than they have admitted. At several moments she succeeds, against all odds, in making Jerusha touching, and her childbirth scene is harrowingly persuasive. But I won't be convinced that Miss Andrews can act until she plays a bitch or a nymphomaniac.

There are other mushy spots in the movie. After portraying the minister with unremitting bitterness for almost three hours, the last reel allows him a transformation of sorts, presumably induced by a knock on the head from an impulsive sailor. It seems a pointless strategy even on crass commercial terms; anyone who would really be cheered by such a comfortably happy ending would have dozed off on *Hawaii* hours before.

The most amusing failure of the film relates to its use of spectacle. To throw in a little of what the mass audience is expected to want in such extravaganzas, the central, biting drama of the film is often slighted in favor of noisy and irrelevant action—a storm at sea, a fight between natives and sailors, a Hawaiian wedding ceremony with expensive choreography. But the director, George Roy Hill, shows no talent at all for handling big scenes of this sort. In a way it's a sign of the film's quality that we're so irritated by these attempts at galumphing spectacle; it's really too interesting a movie to waste its time on empty effects.

In fact, *Hawaii* concentrates much too narrowly on two or three characters to be called an epic at all. It is not nearly sweeping enough to illuminate an entire era or the clash of two cultures. Then why wasn't the film two hours long, padding deleted, screen shrunk? Prob-

ably a more modest *Hawaii* would have been better, but the movie does gain one extra dimension by its attempted scale. Its hero is elevated to mythical stature. He becomes not simply one eccentric American missionary, but a frightening, larger-than-life representative of a crucial, enduring strain in our culture: the archetypal Puritan, courageous and unswerving in his ideas, yet brutal and life-denying when called upon for sympathy or understanding. The mythical characterization of Hale provides a trenchant comment on the irreconcilability of the American and the tribal culture—even our heroes become monsters, their virtues self-travesties, in confrontation with people whose values are alien to their own.

Too little else in *Hawaii* is matched to its gigantic frame. There are colorful shots, but the photography is usually only decoration; it in no way contributes to the enrichment of the film's themes. In *Lawrence of Arabia,* by contrast—and the contrast is important for underscoring a failure of most spectacle films—David Lean's stunning desert vistas work as more than mere frosting; they are an essential part of the film's brilliant, complex drama. The magnificent landscape tantalizes with the promise of grand and heroic action, a promise that Lawrence himself is unable to realize. Everything he does must be seen as infected by vanity, masochism, cruelty bred of insecurity. It is a very modern film, for it reveals the psychological perversities that inhere in what the easily deceived may call courage or nobility. But there is a real tension in the film—a tension that no other medium, I think, could render so evocatively—made palpable by the desert itself. We constantly feel that there is something for the psychological irony to be tested against, something truly awesome that can ennoble Lawrence's ambition even while mocking it.

In *Hawaii* the visual effects never tease the characters, expand or qualify the meaning of their actions in such sophisticated ways. Hill *is* a director of some talent when not straining at epic (his *The World of Henry Orient* is one of the few pleasant American comedies of the sixties), and there are inventive moments in the film—for example, the indirect verification of Hale's repression through a close-up of his gaunt, lonely mother silently watching him leave home. But *Hawaii* suffers rather badly from the disparity between the insights that it contains and the lumbering form into which it has been stuffed.

Basil Dearden, the director of *Khartoum,* is a better director of spectacle than George Roy Hill, but he has a more confused script, and this film too is weakened by hesitant, fuzzy relationships between characters and background. The prologue puts the film's concerns in large terms; against gorgeous shots of ruined monuments along the Nile, a narrator talks about the "vanity and visions" that belong to the great river and to the heroes of its story, British General "Chinese" Gordon, sent during the 1880's to rescue the Egyptians and Europeans in Khartoum from siege by the Moslem leader who had proclaimed himself the Mahdi, "The Expected One"—the new Mohammed "chosen" by Allah to unify, or if necessary destroy the Arab world. But after this weighty talk, the film moves into a gratuitously spectacular battle scene that goes on for five minutes and tells us nothing at all about vanity or visions of either of its antagonists.

The inconsistencies in these opening moments warn us of failures of the film as a whole. The battle scenes and the desert panoramas are impressive enough—especially a night battle sequence filmed in subtle shadings of light and dark, bizarrely original and breathtaking colors that make the transition from night to day as interesting as the fighting. But these spectacular effects, even when distinguished, have no inevitability in the film's drama.

As drama of character *Khartoum* is never very successful, but Robert Ardrey's script is certainly more literate than the usual historical fiction. The two conversations between Gordon and the Mahdi, though they are crudely contrived to raise issues that Ardrey couldn't dramatize more subtly, are quite interestingly written. They can't be said to reveal the characters, because both parts are too sketchy to be

In Gladstone's chambers: KHARTOUM

called characters at all, but the scenes do make some good points about the ambiguity of martyrdom in lucid, engaging dialogue. The script as a whole tells us interesting things without showing much that intrigues. We hear a good deal about Gordon's mysticism, for example, and we even see him on his knees once or twice, but nothing is made of it. In the same way, a couple of the other characters call him vain, but although he is self-confident, we don't see any extravagant gestures of vanity—no revealing, ambiguous images like Lawrence strutting on the top of the derailed train or leading the bewildered Arab boy into the British officers bar. We don't even see any convincing evidence of Gordon's heroism, though the epilogue uneasily underlines his greatness: "When the world has no room for the Gordons, it will surely sink into the sand." The man we've seen doesn't begin to deserve that kind of praise. Gordon must be rescued in one battle by his subordinate, and at the end he foolishly overlooks the possibility of attack by water. When he tries to make a noble surrender, an anonymous Arab stabs him brusquely.

The film is probably best considered as a melodrama of political intrigue, for the scenes with Gladstone—who is the same kind of ruthless pragmatist as Jack Hawkins's Allenby in *Lawrence (Khartoum* would, in fact, not exist if there had been no *Lawrence of Arabia)*—are written with a good deal of wit, and the political tensions, if superficial, are generally well handled. In fact, the movie is well-paced and absorbing from moment to moment; but the sum of the moments is small, and the main problem is the inability of Ardrey and Dearden to imagine, in filmic terms, the ideas that they want to grapple with. *Khartoum* has potentially provocative conceptions in its script, and pleasing spectacle, but the spectacle is irrelevant to the characters, and neither Gordon nor the Mahdi ever takes on full enough life to justify the epic environment. A word must be said about the actors—Laurence Olivier is virtually unrecognizable in his sly, perhaps slightly overexotic portrayal of the Mahdi, while Charlton Heston as Gordon gives the most restrained and appealing performance of his spectacle career.

All of these movies are unbalanced in one way or another. *Grand Prix* is the most satisfying of all as sheer spectacle, and one of the most ravishing of recent color films, but it has a very silly script. Even this movie, though, is not totally conventional in implication. In noting the apathetic, voracious sadism of the people who watch Grand Prix races in hope of an accident, the film takes a chance on offending its own audiences. Of course it also satisfies the sadists by showing them a lot of the gore they want to see, but it does not offer simple-minded, cozy heroics in the way auto-racing films used to. Moments of this movie indict blood-hungry audiences as harshly and coolly as the observations of the bullfight parasites in *The Moment of Truth. Grand Prix* lacks the proletarian emphasis and, indeed, the persistent bitterness of *The Moment of Truth,* but at its best it too can be called an epic poem of a sport that tries to forge a sense of masculine identity out of the desperation and anxiety of contemporary life.

John Simon compared the racing scenes in *Grand Prix* to those in *A Man and A Woman,* and made the predictable value judgment: "It suffices to compare what Lelouch has done for

car racing in *A Man and A Woman* with what John Frankenheimer does with very much greater resources in *Grand Prix:* The one is imaginative and artistic in its technique; the other merely an elaborate, cloying bit of craft." If that were true, movie criticism would be a lot easier. All of our aesthetic prejudices tell us that a movie shot for $150,000, in France, by a man who almost single-handedly controlled his material, must be better than a $10 million American superproduction filmed by a large crew of technicians under the bureaucratic management of MGM. So Simon, like most of our serious critics, takes the easy way out. But what makes movies exciting is that they come to life even when they shouldn't, when overrun by experts and capitalists. They cut through all of their advanced technology—because, after all, they depend on technology, unlike the traditional art forms—and can create art from machinery and from business. Panofsky, in his superb essay on films written more than 30 years ago, made the point with lasting cogency: movies, he says, unlike any of the other arts, "organize material things and persons, not a neutral medium, into a composition that receives its style, and may even become fantastic or pretervoluntarily symbolic, not so much by an interpretation in the artists' mind as by the actual manipulation of physical objects and recording machinery." Remembering those words, critical prejudices toward the Romantic, solitary film-maker seem less relevant.

The racing scenes in *Grand Prix* are more ambitious, more complex, and more varied than the comparable scenes in *A Man and A Woman,* which are merely zippy, gratuitous pictures of men whizzing along in cars. *Grand Prix* attempts to dramatize, through racing scenes at least as sensuously appealing as those in Lelouch's film, the range of emotions and possible responses to the race.

Two sequences in the film are remarkable in this regard. The first is a subjective, almost ecstatic record of a race as seen by the journalist (Eva Marie Saint) who, originally repelled by the drivers' callousness, at this moment finds herself absorbed, finally enchanted by the excitement. Slow motion, lingering dissolves, lyric distortion of the cars and backgrounds until both seem to be gliding, blurs of mellow colors—the orange of the sun-drenched buildings, the blue of the sea—all of this is striking cinematic rendition of the woman's growing, vicarious participation in the race. As one of the drivers says, in an effort to explain his compulsion to drive, "To be so close to death and then to survive makes you feel life and living more strongly." The words alone aren't impressive, but this poetic sequence captures the thrill of refreshed life that racing can inspire in the spectators as well as the drivers.

But there is an underside, caught brilliantly in a sequence coolly detailing the deaths of two boys who have crept close to the road and are killed by a car that goes out of control. Frank-

GRAND PRIX

enheimer cuts back and forth between soft-focus shots of James Garner, the winner, throwing roses to the crowd, and grim, colorless shots of the boys' bodies being covered with blankets and carried away, the father of one of them rushing blindly at the driver who killed them. It is not subtle, but it is an extremely powerful sequence, executed gracefully and effortlessly.

There are other moments which portray, in arresting cinematic terms, the violence, the horror, the absurdity of the sport—the chilling first race, in which James Garner and Brian Bedford fight mercilessly for the lead; the startling cut from noisy crowds mobbing the winner to the quiet of a hospital—from which color and sound have been drained—in which Jessica Walter waits to see her mutilated husband; the interview with Garner, after the death of Yves Montand, as, in the background, a cloud of black smoke rises above the stands. And in a gratifyingly downbeat conclusion, Garner walks alone in the now-empty stadium, among thousands of papers that are all that remain of the unfeeling mob. Finally the film has no coherent attitude toward its subject, but maybe the variety of perspectives tells us more than any single-minded tract could.

The characters will not bear much comment. Most of the psychological drama depends on terrible clichés—Bedford's determination to match the race record of his dead brother, Garner's wilfully losing races out of guilt for Bedford's accident, the refusal of Montand's wife to give him a divorce. The women certainly have the worst of it, and the romantic scenes are awfully boring. Then too, the film devotes a curious amount of time to the business relationships of the drivers and auto manufacturers. Is Frankenheimer saying that business promotion corrupts the purity of the race? It's never clear, so I had to conclude that this bewildering aspect of the film was only Ferrari advertising. Still, the script does have several lines that are intentionally funny. The actors are usually better than what they have to say, and Jessica Walter is best when she keeps her mouth shut altogether. She is rather striking-looking, but she hangs on to every wretched line with her life's blood.

Cinematically the film is very lively. Some of the nausea-inducing Cinerama goes on too long, and Frankenheimer occasionally over-splits the screen—24 or 36 tiny pictures of the same gearshift provide irrelevant, laughable multiple vision; but it is a pleasure to watch a movie with some visual surprises. Even when the tricky effects remain only effects, they are dazzling—cars and camera speeding around a banked curve, the juxtaposition of different times and places and moods with the split screen, an amazing double dissolve that, unlike more abstract superimpositions in Underground films, presents three moments in time simultaneously. If this film had been an hour shorter, I think everyone would have enjoyed it and appreciated its vigor. But the investors obviously decided that such an expensive movie could earn back its millions only if it were long enough to run at reserved seat prices. Thanks to Frankenheimer's talent and delight in making movies, this strategy does not destroy *Grand Prix*. It is not one of his personal films, but it is a pleasant, stylish holiday.

The Sand Pebbles, probably the best of these spectaculars, suggests most incisively the achievements and failures of the genre as Hollywood is practicing it today. The film has three strong virtues—an admirably complex, restrained script by Robert Anderson, some absolutely first-rate action sequences that Robert Wise handles with considerable bravura, and fine performances, especially by Steve McQueen and Richard Crenna. McQueen very movingly, very convincingly plays Jake Holman, the engineer on the *San Pablo,* a U.S. gunboat patrolling the rivers of China during the nationalist revolution of the 1920's. At the start of the film a missionary observes Holman as one of the unquestioning masses of men who reduce life to a single point—in Holman's case the conduct of the ship's engine room—and to obeying orders. And indeed, Holman's crude self-confidence and prejudice are pre-

sented to us early. But he is more sensitive than stereotype admits. He absorbs himself in the engine room not simply out of complacency but because it is the only way he knows of maintaining some individuality—"If you're good at something, they can't bust you down." He calls the Chinese "slopeheads" and insists that they are unteachable, but when he is ordered to teach a coolie how to work the engine, he responds to the boy with shy but growing warmth and affection.

That is, Holman, like Huckleberry Finn, clings to society's language and values even as his own dumb, half-understood feelings are denying the assumptions of that repressive society. Holman's society, the cowardly, small-minded crew of the *San Pablo,* passively encourage the coolies to fight for scraps of garbage and all of the hard labor aboard ship while they relax or drill for battles that the chauvinistic Captain dreams of fighting. The brutality of the crew mentality is vividly drawn, and their system of manipulating Chinese misery to serve their own luxury is a sharp image of the way in which American gunboat diplomacy has humiliated the less powerful nations of the world.

Only gradually is Holman able to formulate a protest. His friendship with the Chinese boy with whom he can communicate only through gestures, his observation of the love between a fellow sailor and a Chinese girl, his conversations with a young, idealistic American teacher, and, negatively, his increasing resentment of the Captain's militarism, convince him that a retreat to his engine is an impossible response to the hatred and exploitation to which his silence contributes.

Holman's growing revulsion from violence is effectively dramatized in two powerful sequences. The first details an appalling mercy killing. The boy Holman has trained has been ordered ashore by the ship's head coolie, who resents his friendship with a member of the crew, and he has been captured by a group of nationalists who regard his obsequiousness to the Americans as a betrayal of his country. In full sight of the *San Pablo* they begin to torture him. The Captain has just received new instructions not to fire on the Chinese, and all he can do is offer increasingly greater sums of money to the torturers, which they laughingly ignore. When the boy screams out for someone to shoot him, Holman defies the Captain's order and fires. The irony is complex and disturbing. At a moment when his aggressiveness might be constructive, the Captain is impotent. Holman is trapped by the system that has degraded the ship's coolies in the first place, which functions by rules that pay no attention to his personal needs; he can resist authority and act humanely only by killing the boy who has aroused his tenderness. In accepting the ship's discipline and American imperialist rationale, Holman's freedom has been crushed—aboard the *San Pablo* an act of compassion and valor becomes an act of destruction.

Much later in the film, after he has himself been humbled before his crew, the Captain decides that to recharge his wounded pride he must ignore official orders and make one last journey up-river to "rescue" a few American missionaries who do not want to be rescued. But a group of students has set up a barricade, and the Captain orders the men to crash it, slaughtering the resisting Chinese. The battle sequence is terribly bloody, and its intimacy reaches Holman. He hands his rifle to another sailor, backs away from the fighting, and sets to work cutting the rope of the barricade. A Chinese creeps up on him and is about to stab him when Holman turns around; instinctively he turns his axe on him and murders him. And then he recoils, sickened. The tool that he has been using constructively—and it is symbolic of all of his efforts to withdraw from the war's madness into the sanity of his engine room—has been converted in a moment into a brutal weapon. As he shudders, we sense his horror at the way in which the creative but pathetic effort of his life has been conclusively appropriated, in an instant, by the violence he has half-resisted. At that moment, barely breaking the silence, the rope that he has been working on tears apart, cruelly mocking him. This

incident understandably clarifies his decision to leave the Navy, renounce nationality, and become a teacher in the Chinese mission. When the Captain tells Holman he can be tried for deserting and for aiding the enemy, he replies simply, "I got no more enemies." But his recognition comes too late. He and the missionary are killed by the Chinese to revenge the Captain's massacre of their students; they die ironic victims of American intervention.

The part of the Captain is excellently written. First of all, I wasn't prepared for such witty parody of military language in a superspectacle. Anderson has done a clever job of providing the Captain with a persistently inflated, amusingly hypermasculine rhetoric. When he talks about the crew as "brass and steel," when he says of the Chinese desire to mock the ship, "They will gloat at every rust streak down our side," the language offers a shrewd insight into the relationship between the Captain's patriotism and his mechanized responses to men.

But in spite of his rally cry to "defend our flag with our life's blood," we begin to see that the Captain is more interested in saving his personal reputation than he is in his nation's honor. The film has some penetrating things to say about the hypocrisy of authority, for the Captain only appears to be an overpowering disciplinarian; when the ship is trapped for months in the harbor of one of the most volatile Chinese towns, he deliberately closes his eyes to the men's infractions of his rules so that he will not have the disgrace of a mutiny on his hands. As long as he pretends to know nothing, his authority is unchallenged and the record is clean. When he must finally admit that he has been shamed by an insubordinate crew, he clutches at a last chance to make himself a hero, even if a dead one, by making an unnecessary, brutal trip deep into foreign territory.

The portrait of the Captain is remarkably sharp, and his language repeatedly captures the freakish flavor of military bombast that we continue to hear. He congratulates the men for their senseless killings: "You men performed brilliantly today." (Men like the Captain indeed judge slaughter as they would a play or a ballet.) He scoffs at the "romantics" who take peace seriously and are disgusted by nationalism; he blandly accepts what he calls "the give and take of death"; his cold squelching of Holman's personality with a giant flag, "You only matter as a symbol of your country." What makes the Captain frightening is that he has, occasionally, a sort of dignity; he is no puny, laughable maniac. Certain things he does surprise us, as when he refuses to give Holman over to the Chinese on a trumped-up charge, even though the terrified crew unanimously rallies against Holman. And he is insanely brave—at the end he assumes the most perilous role without hesitating and is killed trying to save the lives of the people in the mission. So his hypocrisy does not extend to the battlefield; there he rushes into danger and takes the severest risks. But the film doesn't present this admiringly. In fact, his eagerness to take on the Chinese single-handed is appalling. Anderson is to be commended, however, for creating a villain who can't be easily dismissed. Like the missionary in *Hawaii*, the Captain in *The Sand Pebbles* represents the conventional American hero—the rugged individualist, committed to his country, uncompromising in his principles, willing to give his life for his obsessions. And in spite of this strength and courage, or perhaps because of them, he destroys everything he touches. One image in *The Sand Pebbles*—the Captain leading the men to battle, saber in one hand, pistol in the other—clearly emphasizes the absurd archaism of this hero, the lunacy of his immersion in trial by combat as a verification of masculinity. These films criticize not only American actions but American myths, and the criticism is a bold and significant one.

From what I've said, it should be obvious that *The Sand Pebbles* is relevant to the Vietnam war. *Time's* attack on the film as "a Panavision placard crammed with peacenik clichés" may seem rather paranoid, but it testifies that the film hits close to the nerve. The crucial connection between what we see in *The Sand Pebbles* and what is happening in Vietnam is

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that in both cases there is absolutely no reason for the United States to be involved, except the saving of face. As characters keep reminding us, it is a Chinese civil war that the Captain intrudes into without sensible reason, from a moralistic conviction of American manifest destiny. The real sadness of Holman's death is that he and the more docile members of the crew fight and are killed in a war that has no meaning for them, a war they do not even understand.

But if Anderson and Wise wanted to make a film attacking our Vietnam policy, why didn't they do it? Why the indirection? I'm not prepared to accept the explanation that they were stuck with Richard McKenna's historical novel. One of the main reasons they must have been interested in the novel is its relevance to Asia today, and Anderson is certainly a capable enough writer to have written a script of his own about Vietnam. Obviously commercial factors are involved; nobody in Hollywood would invest $12 million in a blatant attack on government policy. Yet if the movie were really about China in 1926, surely it would tell us much more about the details of gunboat diplomacy and the Chinese revolution. As it is, the fuzzy historical backdrop seems only a camouflage for an explosive subject.

This hurts the film at many points. Instead of a clear and concrete illustration of the invalid nature of our claims in the Far East, the film offers some vague talk about Brotherhood that Lyndon Johnson himself would gratefully endorse. The missionary does say to the Captain at one point, "Damn your flag!" But lest anyone get too upset about that (and people sitting near me actually gasped at the line), he continues, "Damn all flags" so that no American has to feel any special responsibility. It is hard not to see the hosing of Chinese, out of frustraation at not being able to shoot them, as an allusion to napalm. But it's hard to get terribly upset about Chinese getting soaked. Napalm burnings would not have been so easy to watch.

Perhaps Wise and Anderson would object that they were more concerned, in *The Sand Pebbles,* with people than with politics. And I am not saying that Wise should have made a piece of single-minded anti-Vietnam propaganda; I admire the movie to the extent that it sees around a difficult subject dispassionately. But Wise and Anderson *are* talking about lies and madness in American militarism, particularly with reference to foreign wars that are none of our business; and it is an ostrich-like and uncandid evasion to remove the situation so comfortably in time. In theory there's no reason why Wise can't work as directly or as indirectly as he pleases, but the film must make sense on its own terms. *The Sand Pebbles,* because it focuses on Holman, makes limited good sense on its own terms. But I believe that in certain crucial cases, although this is a matter that deserves extensive debate, life does have priority over aesthetic principles. And I

think we have the right to be disappointed in the movie because it gets so startlingly close to subversive drama and then backs away. It could have been an important, perhaps an influential film, as well as a skillful one.

There are other, less essential but still troublesome flaws in *The Sand Pebbles.* The romantic asides, both the interracial love affair and Holman's flirtation with the teacher, are banal. At least Richard Attenborough and Maryat Ariadne play their scenes delicately. But Candy Bergen as the missionary teacher is badly miscast. Her part, though it is filled with sweetness and light and platitude, might have been tolerable if it had been played by a plainer girl. But Candy Bergen is much too glamorous; really, what would Golden Girl be doing in a Chinese mission? To compensate for her discomfort in the role, she smiles a lot, some of the most quiveringly moist-lipped, downright goony smiles I ever expect to see in a serious movie. (In fact, judging from these films, one would be tempted to conclude that the spectacle genre does not treat women kindly).

Several sequences in *The Sand Pebbles* are stunningly executed. The last scene, for example, is extraordinarily suspenseful—Wise does not let us see the Chinese who are hiding on top of the mission, and we only hear their voices, occasionally, as if from a great distance, so that the dark, empty spaces we do see become quite eerie and threatening. The scene reminded me of those of the invisible but chilling ghosts in *The Haunting,* perhaps Wise's best film. He is not fully comfortable with spectaculars either (few directors would be) though he seems to have committed himself to filming them. As in *Hawaii,* the landscapes seem merely decorative travelogue. Besides, many of them have a yellowish tint, which may have been intended, but in any case looks unpleasantly artificial.

All of these movies compromise their unconventional aims with narcotic sentimentality, all of them bog down in conventional romantic relationships, conventional upbeats, over-explication at key dramatic moments. And why couldn't Wise have omitted the little printed introduction that reads something like "China of 1926 was a land ravaged by corrupt warlords from within and foreign powers from without. . . ." This is really laughable; even much stupider movies don't use this kind of exposition any more. Since much of the rest of the film is on a rather high level of subtlety, it seems especially incongruous. But it doesn't get things off to an auspicious start; what it does is remind us how these spectacle films are toned down and prettied up and underlined for theater parties.

But that kind of failure was expected, and I'm more interested in how much of these movies is *not* designed for 12-year-olds. I wish that more intelligent people would risk seeing them. When I have succeeded in drawing a foreign-film-committed friend to *Hawaii* or *The Sand Pebbles,* they've been surprised to find what interesting, absorbing movies they are. I must say that I am not really hopeful that a great film can be created within the confines of the Hollywood extravaganza. These movies do not shake the principle that when colossal investments are at stake, compromises are inevitable. But then I wouldn't have expected even such harsh criticism of American norms as we get in *Hawaii* and *The Sand Pebbles,* or such exciting use of the wide screen as in the best moments of *Grand Prix* and *The Bible.* None of the directors of these films seems to me to have a great future with epic movies, but they at least have shown that the spectacular can be revitalized by imaginative writing and willingness to experiment. In the movie that *The Sand Pebbles* might have been, I see fascinating possibilities. Films that make such an immediate, sensuous appeal may well be able to touch the consciousness of millions; a strong anti-Vietnam stand in a semi-commercial movie could conceivably explode popular apathy. And one of these days a film like that may accidentally get made. In the meantime, perhaps we shouldn't be paying all of our attention to tight little French existentialist dramas and Underground light and sex shows.

CONSTANCE A. BROWN

Olivier's *Richard III*— A Re-evaluation

At about the same time that Laurence Olivier was producing his first two films, John Mason Brown deliberately applied "that precious, dangerous final adjective 'great' " to Olivier's performance as Oedipus.[1] Since then Olivier has been the subject of two biographies (one in Italian), the occasion of numerous spreads in the popular magazines, a frequent interviewee—as an actor. And still no one has published a critical study of his films.

The omission seems odd for a man who has created acknowledged classics such as *Henry V, Hamlet,* and *Richard III.* Yet the only critical material available on the films is contemporary reviews and occasional passing references—although these provide a few clues as to why Olivier's work has attracted relatively little interest from film critics. Olivier's films have been dismissed as stagey in their restriction of space and use of sets, as actor's films, as adaptations (which Agee implied made them intrinsically inferior).[2] Still, none of these qualities, or all of them put together, necessarily diminishes a film's value, as anyone acquainted with film history must freely grant. Certainly there is no good reason why Olivier's films do not merit a close critical analysis—especially since they lend themselves to it so readily.

Richard III in particular offers as much as can reasonably be expected of a film. In Olivier's hands, one of Shakespeare's better plays (certainly not one of his best) is transformed into an intricate, subtle, coolly ironic plunge into one of those recesses of human nature that are generally avoided through the same fastidious impulses that make the manufacture of sewer covers a profitable business. In its rather stylized way, *Richard* is an extraordinarily honest film, and requires proportional honesty from anyone who hopes to assess it correctly—which may partly account for the fact that so far no one has bothered. It is a great deal of trouble to shuck off prejudices about what films should be like, and even more trouble to rinse the mind of conventional notions of what people are like; but perhaps it can be demonstrated that *Richard* is well worth the price of admission.

There is an advantage to beginning a discussion of Olivier's *Richard* with reference to his handling of the text, primarily because it provides some concrete and illuminating clues to his intention. Olivier's alterations of *Richard III* are so numerous that it would be virtually impossible (and pointless) to enumerate them all. It is in the major changes, in any case, that the interest lies, and they are fairly easily accounted for. The pattern of Olivier's major alterations suggests the operation of two basic principles which work together almost inextricably, the first being one of economy and cinematic expediency. He slashes out half-a-dozen of the lengthy cast of characters—most notably Queen Margaret—who clutter the stage when the play is performed in its entirety (which is almost never); and he consequently reduces the parts of many more. Every ounce of linguistic fat is removed, leaving a lean, swiftly moving plot (slightly rearranged to make it more comprehensive and effective as a film) with its central characters still intact.

The second principle is an interpretive one, involving judgment as to the relative importance of various parts of the play, and right at the heart of it is the removal of Queen Margaret. Margaret and her prophetic curses must necessarily seem a little quaint to modern audiences. A prophetic curse is a rather mechanical device for structuring a rambling history and height-

ening dramatic irony—the sort of effect an audience would appreciate fully only when superstition was a way of life. It is a device which a modern production of *Richard* can do without, especially since there are other possibilities in the play which can be more profitably developed—as Olivier apparently felt there were.

During an interview with Kenneth Tynan on the BBC in 1966, while discussing the stage performance of *Richard III* which preceded his film by ten years, Olivier remarked: "I had a lot of things on my side, now I come to think of it, from the point of view of timeliness. There was Hitler across the way, one was playing it definitely as a paranoiac; so that there was a core of something to which the audience would immediately respond."[3] There is no evidence that Olivier intended his audience to make a connection between Richard and Hitler when he performed the role on the stage in 1944. His film, however, seems to insist that some such connection be made. The removal of Margaret and the reduction of other parts forces particular attention on the psychology of Richard—who in any case dominates the play. Besides, the structure placed on the action of the play by Margaret's curses is replaced in Olivier's film by another structure, visual rather than linguistic, which forcibly suggests how his Richard is to be taken.

As in Olivier's earlier films, the form in *Richard* is achieved through a complex imagistic structure with one dominant parabolic formal device. In *Henry V*, the device is the Globe Theater, which begins and ends the film. In that case, the device came about more or less by accident. Olivier had been concerned with preserving the speeches of the chorus, which express eloquently Shakespeare's longing to escape from the limitations of the Elizabethan stage. He had toyed with the idea of a disembodied voice, until it occurred to him that he might begin on the stage, interspersing the chorus speeches as he gradually worked out into wider space and freer film technique, thereby simultaneously introducing stage and film audiences to the idea of film adaptation of Shakespeare. *Henry V* is often criticized for beginning on the stage, which is attributed to Olivier's fancied theatrical orientation—but actually it works, and works brilliantly. The device which began as a textual expedient provided the film with a framework for the kind of tight structure Olivier compulsively seeks, and turned what might have been only another stagey film into a dynamic essay on the power of the camera as an extension of the imagination.

Similarly, the visual structure of *Hamlet* is provided by the labyrinthine Elsinore, into which the camera descends at the beginning of the film and from which it does not fully emerge until the end. In the case of *Richard III*, the central device of coherence is the crown.

The crown imagery is built around three coronations, a structure facilitated by the incorporation of the coronation of Edward IV from *Henry VI, Part 3* (the play immediately preceding *Richard* in Shakespeare's history cycle) into Olivier's film script. Olivier added the coronation partly to elucidate for modern audiences Shakespeare's version of the political situation existing in England before Richard achieved the crown, but its formal function is also evident. The first coronation is that of Edward, certainly not an outstanding king but more or less a legitimate one. The coronation of Edward is followed by the coronation of Richard, the "Red King," the tyrant, the king of misrule. The third coronation is that of Richmond, representing the restoration of order and the return of authority to its proper place.

The parabolic curve from legitimate king to tyrant to legitimate king is clearly defined through the use of crown images. The crown motif is hurled at the audience immediately. As the last words of the creeper title, "the Crown of England," fade from the screen, the first object which appears is an ornamental crown hanging in the air, suspended from slender wires. The scene is the coronation of Edward IV, and the crown, the symbol of divinely sanctioned authority, dominates the coronation sequence.

Richard's coronation is closely paralleled to that of Edward, with the suspended crown once more beginning the sequence, while the third coronation, an implied coronation, takes place on Bosworth Field after Richard's body has been carted off on the back of a horse. Stanley, walking to join Richmond, discovers the crown, which has fallen from Richard's head earlier in the battle, lying, symbolically, in a bramble bush. He retrieves it, brushes it off reverently, then lifts the crown as he walks as if to place it on Richmond's head. The camera isolates the crown, which dominates the screen as the ornamental crown dominated it at the previous coronations. The crown then dissolves to a painted red crown over which the closing credits are superimposed.

The film is concerned, then, with the nature of kingship and tyranny, which sets Olivier's *Richard* at some distance from the play. Although Shakespeare's play, to a degree, shares this concern, the primary focus is on plot and character per se. It is only necessary to evoke *Hamlet* to see to what extent *Richard III* is plot-oriented. Both plays deal with sensationalistic material, murder and court intrigue, but *Hamlet* is by far the greater play because the plot is eclipsed by the concern with meaning. Had Olivier tried to adapt *Richard III* simply by snipping out some of its less inspired passages, he would have accomplished little. Instead, by giving predominance to a theme obscured in the play, he has given his film a significance that the play does not have. Olivier's film, like the play, is a portrait of an individual tyrant. Unlike the play, Olivier's film surpasses melodrama to become a portrait of tyranny.

That Olivier's film is concerned with tyranny is obvious; exactly what it has to say about tyranny is more difficult to define. There are elements of *Richard* (besides the crown motif) which suggest that the film takes the orthodox libertarian line on tyranny—that tyranny is an immoral infraction of human freedom, and that, inevitably, human dignity will assert itself and the tyrant will be overthrown. One of these is the consistent use of Richard's shadow, and

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those of his conspirators, to trace and comment on the development of Richard's plot. The shadow is one of the most overworked cinematic devices, but Olivier's employment of it is fresh and sophisticated—symbolic and metaphorical rather than horrific. Richard's shadow plays freely through the film like a familiar demon, assuming different aspects as the action progresses.

After the initial scene with Anne, in the abbey, Richard declares: "Clarence beware! Thou keepest me from the light./ But I will plan a pitchy day for thee." As he speaks, the camera wanders away from him to his shadow stretched over the stone steps of the abbey. He starts to move down the steps as he speaks, and the shadow occupies more and more of the screen until, on his last words, it swallows up the screen completely—just as Richard's tyranny will swallow up England; just as every tyrant swallows up the country he rules.

From this point on, the shadow reappears intermittently. After Richard has finally succeeded with Anne, his new influence over her is symbolized through his shadow. He kicks open the door of the room she has just entered, and the train of Anne's white dress becomes visible in the upper part of the screen. Richard's shadow stretches across the floor as he steps into the doorway, overlapping her train.

When Buckingham begins to incline toward Richard, shadows are used to symbolize their

union. To Buckingham's suggestion that he and Richard go with Rivers and Grey to Ludlow to fetch the prince, Richard replies, with an air of discovery, "My other self." As they walk out of the room, the camera lingers on their shadows which, side by side, are stretched out across the floor.

Reinforcing Olivier's use of shadows is his persistent weaving of religious references into the fabric of his film. Generally, religious episodes and symbols are placed in ironic juxtaposition to Richard's acts—thus, by implication, condemning Richard's conduct as immoral. In Olivier's film script, the text of the play is augmented with religious chants which serve as an ironic comment on the action. As Richard maneuvers Edward into suspecting Clarence, two monks in the background recite Psalm 51 in church Latin: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned . . . and thou mayst be clear when thou judgest; behold, I was shapen in iniquity."

Conventional religious symbols, like the chants, are employed by Olivier to suggest Richard's satanic aspect. Clarence and Hastings are both sacrificed to Richard's ambition, so both are associated with saintly images. While Clarence tells Brackenbury of his nightmares, he wanders to the recessed window of his cell. A crucifix hangs on the right side of the window, and Clarence leans against the wall to the left of the window, facing the crucifix, as he speaks. As he delivers the line "Seize on him, Furies, take him to your torments!" Clarence flings his arms back and up against the wall. The parallel of Clarence's position to that of the crucified Christ on the facing wall is unmistakable.

Hastings is likewise associated with religious images. When he is betrayed at the tower, he sits alone at the end of a long table, the rest of the coronation committee having removed themselves to a safe distance at the far end. The camera shoots down the table at him. Above him is a wall painting of winged angels. The camera moves in close enough to include only Hastings and the painting, so that the angels seem to hover over him.

Olivier employs the same technique to make another kind of comment on tyranny. Richard is not only placed in opposition to religion, but his subordination of religion, his exploitation of religion to achieve his own ends, is made clear in the film through the interaction of Richard and religious trappings. Richard's most notable misuses of religion occur when he and Buckingham taunt the Archbishop into violating sanctuary, and when Richard extracts a mandate from a group of citizens at Baynard's Castle, appearing with a pair of clergymen in order to create a favorable impression.

The film places heavy emphasis on the scene at the castle. As in the play, the entire sequence is built around the basic discrepancy between the reluctance of the assembled citizens to accept Richard and the favorable attitude which Richard's henchmen try to instill by pretending that it already exists. Richard, feigning reluctance, accepts the crown. As one of the monks takes a bell-rope hanging by the balcony where he and Richard are standing and starts to ring the bell, presumably to sound an entrance into meditation, Richard snatches the rope away and spins down it to the street. Richard walks up to Buckingham and thrusts out his hand for Buckingham to kiss while the bell, still spinning, clatters deafeningly. When Buckingham starts to kiss the hand, Richard lowers it, forcing Buckingham to his knee. At the point when the action reaches its climax, the film reaches an imagistic climax. Richard throws back his head, savoring his power. The camera cuts to the madly swinging bell, then dissolves to the bells of Richards' coronation.

Certainly Richard's descent of the bell rope is a concrete representation of his intense lust to put his new power into immediate force, but it is much more than that. The essence of Richard's tyranny, and the tyranny of every man who ever mobilized religion to gain his own ends or had an insane lust to see someone on his knee, are packed into a single visual image.

Still another aspect of Olivier's interpretation of *Richard III* which tends to support the

notion that the film is an anti-tyranny apologue is the way Olivier has chosen to represent Richard's psychological make-up. He does indeed, as he has said, play Richard as a paranoiac—an interpretation which the play invites. Some of Richard's waspish diatribes take on a new significance when they are viewed as being partly inspired by self-indulgent delusions of persecution. Part of Richard's long soliloquy from *Henry VI, Part 3*, incorporated by Olivier into the "winter of our discontent" speech, is particularly suggestive of Richard's paranoiac conviction that he is the victim of a conspiracy so cosmic that all nature is a party to it:

> Why love forswore me in my mother's womb:
> And, for I should not deal in her soft laws,
> She did corrupt frail nature with some bribe,
> . . . To disproportion me in every part,
> Like to a chaos . . . .[4]

But Richard is portrayed as a special kind of paranoiac—one whose resentment finds its supreme expression (and its chief compensatory device) in sadistic aggression and a lust for power that is quite literal and physical as well as figurative and psychological.

The progress of Richard's logic in his first speech suggests that his quest for power is a substitute for normal sexual activity:

> But I, that am not shap'd for sportive tricks,
> Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;
> I that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty
> To strut before a wanton, ambling nymph;
> . . . Have no delight to pass away the time
> . . . And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,
> . . . I am determined to prove a villain.

The particular form which Richard's quest for power takes is suggested in a few lines from Henry VI, Part 3:

> And I, like one lost in a thorny wood,
> That rends the thorns and is rent with the thorns,
> Seeking a way and yet straying from the way;
> . . . Torment myself to catch the English crown,
> And from that torment I will free myself,
> Or hew my way out with a bloody axe.

The passage certainly exhibits a curious selectivity. Thorns are a common symbol of sterility. They were used as such by Christ in the parable of the sower, and the next line, "Seeking a way and yet straying from the way," seems to be an ironic reinforcement of the Biblical echo. The entire figure used in the passage has strong sado-masochistic implications, and the last lines do somewhat more than imply. That Olivier went out of his way to incorporate these lines into both his stage and screen performances, along with the passage referring to bribery of nature, on the ground that they "helped to explain Gloucester's character" should come as no surprise.[5]

Olivier seems to have been thoroughly aware of this implicit aspect of Richard's character, and he has incorporated ample suggestions of sadism and power as a sexual object into his film. Richard's relationship to his throne is one way Olivier chooses to represent Richard's concept of power. After his coronation, Richard snatches Anne's hand and swoops into the throne room, followed by a train of nobles. He stands in front of the throne and stares up at it for a moment, then snaps, "Stand all apart." The nobles give him space. Richard releases Anne's hand and slowly and deliberately mounts the steps, one at a time. As he reaches the top, he turns around and sinks slowly, inch by inch, into the seat, staring fixedly into space. At length he seems to relax, and his eyelids droop slightly. Anne falls to the floor. When her attendants have helped her to her feet, she looks up at Richard and puts her fingers to her lips, perhaps apprehensively, perhaps as if to blow him a kiss. Then her hand drops limply and she walks slowly away. She is not seen in the film again. When Richard possesses the throne he possesses it in the fullest sense of the word—and the throne admits of no rivals.

Richard's sadism is more readily apparent. From the beginning he has a marked penchant for kicking doors (Brackenbury's and Anne's), human beings (a guard in the Abbey), and,

presumably, whatever else may lie within range. Once Richard sits on the throne, his indulgence in violence is intensified. "What's o'clock?" Richard asks, in an attempt to discourage Buckingham's petitioning. "Upon the stroke of ten," Buckingham replies. "Well let it strike," Richard shrieks, smashing the scepter down fiercely on the arm of the throne. The camera cuts back of the throne just in time to catch the scepter as it strikes the arm. The closeness of the camera to the throne and the suddenness of the cut contribute to a subjective impression of violence and emphasize the narrowness with which the scepter misses smashing Buckingham's hand, which he pulls off the throne just in time.

The violent use of the scepter, with its implication of abuse of power, is repeated when Buckingham persists in his petitioning. "Thou troublest me. I am not in the vein," Richard snaps, planting the scepter in Buckingham's chest and shoving him away from the throne, none too gently. Shortly afterward, instead of merely telling Tyrell to smother Edward's children, Richard chooses to demonstrate by clapping a red cushion from his throne over Tyrell's face for a few seconds, then releasing it and whispering, "There is no more but so."

Olivier evidently considered this aspect of Richard's character of some importance, for he chose to suggest it again in Richard's death scene. Olivier has become noted for sensational and violent death scenes in Shakespeare, and he is sometimes inclined to recall an element of his interpretation which he wants to stress at this point in his performance as a device of emphasis. In *Richard III,* several of the film's major motifs recur in the death scene. The soldiers cluster around Richard to kill him, pull off his armor and stab him. Suddenly their faces assume an expression of horror, and they back away. Richard lies still for an instant and then begins to thrash and twitch convulsively. The motion accelerates, and finally he extends his left arm, with his sword in his deformed hand, upward, stares for a moment at the cross formed by the hilt of the sword, and dies.

The hilt of the sword, of course, provides the last ironic contrast of religion and Richard. The physical horror of his death, which is historically accurate, following More's version rather than Shakespeare's, forms a powerful comment on the fate of tyrants.[6] The difficulty of killing him also bears implications about the nature of tyranny. Yet there is something distinctly sensual about the way he dies. The convulsive twitching, which may pass for technical accuracy at first, has none of the irregularity associated with spasms. It is movement that is distinctly structured and rhythmed, a kind of grotesque ballet. In fact, it is rather overtly suggestive—an orgastic consummation to a life characterized by the identification of love and violence. The fact that, this time, Richard is on the receiving end only intensifies the raw power of the effect, introducing an element of poetic justice and implying, as does the play, that a portion of Richard's destructive impulse is self-directed.

All of these elements of Olivier's interpretation—the crown imagery, the shadow, the use of religious reference, the portrayal of Richard's psychology—constitute a strong temptation to conclude that Olivier's film is an anti-tyranny moral fable. But *Richard* is designed to squeeze somewhat more meaning than this out of the concept of a tyrant, an undertaking which necessarily involves, in the interest of telling the truth, a certain amount of willful failure to assume any moral position whatsoever.

If *Richard III* were a moral fable, it would be

The death of Richard III.

natural to expect that some attractive alternative to Richard's tyranny would be presented in the film. However, this is clearly not the case. Often Richard is described as having disrupted an idyllic situation in order to jack himself into a position of command. Actually, King Edward's court is far removed from any semblance of established virtue. The nobles are all factious, and the dissension is not even remotely superficial. Moreover, it is clear that Edward is a weak king, and that his wife and brothers-in-law, who have engineered the imprisonment of Hastings, take advantage of his weakness.

The corruption in the court is by no means restricted to Richard. Buckingham's description of Edward "lolling on a lewd love-bed" is not inaccurate, and Richard's many contemptuous references to Mistress Shore are completely justified. Moreover, there is an aura of guilt still hanging over the throne, a guilt acquired during the Wars of the Roses. Only Clarence, whose nightmares reveal his sense of guilt, seems to feel pangs of conscience. The king, who is old and sick as well as weak, is provided with an heir, but the heir is only a child. The court in *Richard III* is clearly in the state of political instability which invites a Hitler to move in, and, as seems often to be the case, a Hitler is available.

Olivier's film reflects the play's inherent absence of any satisfactory alternative to Richard in Edward's court. To visualize the corruption of the court Olivier added Mistress Shore, who is only alluded to in the play, to the cast of his film. She is always present in the court, ministering to the king or hovering in the background, and on the whole she is mute. Olivier has provided her with only a "Good morrow, my lord," for she needs no dialogue. Her presence speaks for itself. Edward's fondness for her is established almost at once. As he leaves the place of his coronation, he passes Mistress Shore, who is leaning in a doorway. As he passes through the doorway, Edward pauses to chuck her on the chin with the scepter. This shot sets up one misuse of the scepter which can later be contrasted to Richard's violence, and conveys a vivid impression of Edward's lasciviousness. Later, as Edward leaves for a triumphal procession through the city, he exits speaking of pastimes which "befit the pleasure of the court." The camera moves back to reveal Mistress Shore in the foreground of the screen, the recipient of an ironic glance from Richard.

Edward's inadequacy as a king, like Richard's tyranny, is elucidated through religious reference. After Edward has signed Clarence's death warrant, he exits leaning on the arm of Mistress Shore. The camera cuts back to the two monks (a permanent fixture of Edward's throne room) who gaze after them, still chanting, exchange mildly scandalized glances, and finally close their prayer book and fold their arms. In addition to religious chants, religious symbols are used to stress Edward's corruption. During the scene in which Edward tries to reconcile the factious nobles, he lies in bed clutching a rosary. At a moment when the queen's back is turned, he kisses the hand of Mistress Shore, still clutching the rosary tightly in his hand.

Olivier also visualizes the inadequacy of the child, Prince Edward. When the prince arrives in London, Richard and Buckingham escort him into the throne room. The doors swing open and he runs in. He pauses abruptly, his back to the camera, looking up at the empty throne. The camera moves back and up until Edward, a small, solitary red smear against soft grey, is dwarfed by the room.

The established Church, which serves in Olivier's film partly as a contrast to Richard's villainy, fares no better as an alternative to Richard than Edward and his partisans (the second brother, Clarence, is not particularly promising as royal timber either, for he lacks the restrained unscrupulousness that characterizes Shakespeare's successful kings). In fact, the Church is subjected to a certain amount of oblique satire. Instead of serving as a moral bulwark, the Church joins the conspiracy of compliance that ultimately places Richard on the throne.

In Olivier's film, the conduct of the clergy is

clearly presented as conforming to the general moral laxity which characterizes Edward's court. The two monks in the throne room may exchange scandalized glances, but they shrug and fold their arms. The Archbishop, similarly, not only allows Richard to bring the prince's brother, York, out of sanctuary, but also is portrayed as being an active advocate (probably out of fear) of Richard's decision to behead Hastings. When Richard accuses Mistress Shore of having caused his innate deformity and Hastings of treason for protecting her, the Archbishop remarks, "I never looked for better at his hands,/ After he once fell in with Mistress Shore." These lines are spoken by the Lord Mayor a scene later in the play (and repeated in the film), not by the Archbishop. By presenting them to the Archbishop, Olivier contributes to the impression that the Church is hardly fulfilling its function as a moral force.

Perhaps it is possible to contend that Richmond is the alternative to Richard, but the film does not particularly support this hypothesis. There is even less of Richmond in the film than in the play, and what there is of him is not overwhelmingly appealing. He has a certain forthright manliness which is attractive enough—but it is hard to be persuaded on the basis of forthright manliness that there is anything appealing about him. He is too perfect a heroic figure to be believably human. He is, as Richard calls him, "shallow Richmond," an utterly humorless being who bears no scars of psychological conflict, who apparently never engaged in a battle with his conscience. In Olivier's film he is endowed with a conventional square jaw, a melodious Welsh accent, and a head of blonde hair with not a curl out of place. He cannot even be credited for defeating Richard. It takes Richard to do that. Richmond has all the compelling properties of a vacuum.

It is in Richard alone that the power of the play, and, even more so, of Olivier's film lies. Buckingham is the craftsman, the technician, the super-subtle instrument, Richard the master designer and driving force. He is utterly unscrupulous (which in itself is attractive enough —for the human fascination with powerful men can hardly be denied), but there is a great deal more to him than that. He has the attributes tyrants often possess—a sharp intellect, an enviable way with words, and sufficient sex appeal, in spite of his deformity, to woo successfully a woman whose husband and father-in-law he has murdered.

The essential ambivalence of Olivier's film is most evident in his portrayal of Richard. There are, as might be expected, two extreme ways to play Richard. At one pole he can be underplayed, so that he resembles Iago—sinister and clever, but about as amusing as a vial of undiluted sulphuric acid. At the other pole, he can be overplayed to the point where he becomes a lovable buffoon with an unfortunate tendency towards homicide. Olivier's interpretation lies somewhere between the two extremes, leaning slightly towards the latter in the first part of the film, and then taking a significant swing towards the former during the scene at Baynard's Castle.

The Richard of the first part of the film limps up to the camera as soon as he is left alone with it, gazes into it with a pair of sharp, incessantly blinking eyes, smiles, wags his head, and tells the audience all about the murders he has planned. His manner is smooth, professional, beguiling. "We'll do it together, you and I," he seems to suggest, making sleepy eyes at the camera, looking it up and down as some men contemplate a prospective lover. It was the first time a cinematic character addressed himself to the audience so directly and personally, much less invited them to participate in a conspiracy. It is a delightfully brazen sort of behavior, characteristic of the audacity people admire in powerful men.

As the phases of his plot, one after another, are successfully completed, Richard pauses to comment on his own villainy with obvious relish, and the audience is encouraged to rejoice with him. It seems a harmless enough sort of indulgence, for Richard lends to the proceedings the aspect of an amusing game. He is, himself, amusing enough, inclined to droll self-denunciation:

And if King Edward be as true and just
As I am subtle, false, and treacherous,
This day should Clarence closely be mew'd up.

Richard's confidential communications regarding his sentiments and motivation, combined with a can-do briskness of diction which Olivier exploits to the utmost, is frequently comic:

He cannot live, I hope, and must not die
Till George be pack'd with post-horse up to heaven.
Which done, God take King Edward to his mercy,
And leave the world for me to bustle in.

He is a master of irony, the pregnant pause, the afterthought. "A sweeter and a lovelier gentleman/This spacious world cannot again afford," he remarks parenthetically of Edward Lancaster, rolling his eyes in mock piety. Of the King he observes that "he hath kept an evil diet long/And overmuch consumed his royal—person," taking advantage of the pause to cast a long, speculative glance at Mistress Shore. Olivier's Richard has a scalpel for a tongue, and he handles it masterfully.

In addition to his comic bent for self-congratulation and his rhetorical dexterity, Olivier's Richard has certain idiosyncracies of behavior which are innocuous and rather charming. He tackles his projects with a hand-rubbing enthusiasm which almost belies their sinister nature. At times he is disarmingly absent-minded. He stops on the brink of confusing the king's revocation of Clarence's death warrant with the warrant itself, and as he enters the balcony at Baynard's Castle he almost forgets about pretending to read his prayer book. He is a Duke of Very Little Elegance. The kisses he bestows are sometimes conspicuously audible. His voice has a way of cracking at strategic moments, as when, after successfully wooing Anne, he croaks, "Shine out, fair sun."

It is difficult to believe that this funny fellow has just joked Clarence into a butt of malmsey wine. Of course, Olivier's Richard is unmistakably deadly. The impression is reinforced from the beginning by his high-pitched, brittle precision of speech and his curious, reptilian appearance—hard, thin lips and an incessant, lizard-like blink. Also, there are times when the clown forgets to wear his mask. As Clarence enters the tower, Richard's face assumes an expression of cold hatred; at another point he turns on his nephew, York, with a pulverizing glare. Yet the audience can hardly avoid being taken in to a degree (anyone who laughs is taken in), as it was meant to be. After all, enough people are taken in that Richard becomes king.

The shift in Olivier's characterization occurs during the scene at Baynard's Castle. After accepting the kingship, Richard holds out his black-gloved hand for Buckingham to kiss. He thrusts it forcibly toward the camera, and holds it extended in the air like a huge, black claw. The hand is extended toward the audience as much as toward Buckingham. For the first time, the audience is advised that what it has approved by laughter and condoned in the earlier part of the film is its own destruction. From this point on, Richard's tyranny is no longer so purely amusing.

Once Richard is exposed as a threat to the audience, he might be expected to lose his appeal entirely. Instead, after the scene at Baynard's Castle, he begins to take on some of the stature of a tragic hero, so that the basis for sympathy shifts markedly but is nevertheless retained. Richard's triumph is succeeded immediately by the paranoiac conviction that he cannot continue to reign unless he destroys his nephews and disposes of his wife in order to marry their older sister, and it is precisely at this point that his character begins to work against him like an over-corrected skid. When he has Buckingham most firmly in hand, he alienates him over the issue of murdering Edward's children, and, at the same time, loses all hope of winning the support of Stanley, whom he further antagonizes by threatening his son's life. It is the familiar pattern of the tragic hero committing a decisive act which sets him irrevocably on a path of self-destruction.

Richard retains his ferocity and personal force, even when the consequences of his acts

begin to close in on him. After he learns that Buckingham has joined forces with Richmond, he towers on the platform near his throne and roars, as the messengers cringe in terror, "Out on you, owls!/Nothing but songs of death!" Olivier has omitted from his film the patently tragic "recognition" scene in which Richard, after being visited by the ghosts of his victims, reviews his past actions and is afflicted by an attack of conscience and moral revision, teetering precariously between self-love and self-loathing. Richard's horror is conveyed effectively enough, however, for the speech is replaced in the film by a grisly howl that brings Richard's attendant running.

Richard also shares the tragic hero's ultimate comprehension and acceptance of his fate. The lines which convey Richard's attempts to maintain a semblence of confidence once he reaches the battlefield are delivered with a forced jauntiness that betrays his underlying despair. When he learns that Stanley has withheld his forces, and consequently that he is beaten, Richard first surrenders to an irrational impulse ("Off with his son George's head!"), then turns back towards Richmond's forces and utters a lie that is at once a manifestation of dogged pride and genuine bravery: "A thousand hearts are great within my bosum/ . . . Upon them! Victory sits on our helms." After he has been unhorsed and is virtually defenseless, his only response to Catesby's offer of assistance is monumental contempt: "Slave, I have set my life upon a cast/And I will stand the hazard of the die." And die he does.

Thus Richard remains the powerful figure of Olivier's film. A delicate ironic balance is maintained between condemning Richard as a tyrant and loving him for it, which reflects the ambivalence of the human attitude toward tyrants and, by extension, the intrinsic ambivalence of tyrants themselves. Perhaps Olivier's surest asset as a director is this ironic poise, this wry detachment, this "curious, amoral strength," as Kenneth Tynan puts it.[7] The only ideal Olivier seems committed to is telling the truth, and telling it as excellently as possible, but as long as sensationalism, pseudo-artistic jive, sermonizing, schmalz, and pure inanity are so prevalent, that is no mean commitment. Films must be judged, ultimately, by how close they come to realizing this ideal, and few of them have come closer than *Richard III*.

NOTES

1. Felix Barker, *The Oliviers* (London, 1953), p. 242.
2. James Agee, review of *Henry V* in *Time* XLVII (April 8, 1946), 58. Reprinted in *Agee on Film*.
3. *The New York Times*, Sunday, August 21, 1966, Sec. 2, p. 6.
4. All quotations are reproduced as they appear in Olivier's film script, except the one beginning "But I." In this case, Richard's logic exhibits a similar pattern in an earlier speech from *3 Henry VI*, and Olivier's text omits the last three lines of the passage as it appears in *Richard III*, substituting those representing the logical turn in *3 Henry VI*. I chose to use the speech from *Richard III* here, in order to avoid the appearance of misrepresenting the play. I have not provided references to the lines in the plays to which the passages in the film script correspond, because sometimes there is no exact correspondence due to Olivier's rearrangement of lines and coining of connectives.
5. Barker, p. 235.
6. "King Richard himself . . . slain in the field, hacked and hewn at his enemies' hands, harried on horseback dead, his hair in despite torn and tugged like a cur dog. . . ." *The History of Richard III* from *The Complete Works of Sir Thomas More*, I, ed. W. E. Campbell (New York, 1931), p. 451.
7. *The Observer Magazine*, December 12, 1965, p. 8.

STEVEN P. HILL

The Soviet Film Today

This article is based on close reading of the Russian film press during the past two years, plus a 50-day visit to the USSR and the Moscow Film Festival in the summer of 1965 — during which Mr. Hill visited film organizations, interviewed film-makers and critics, and saw 84 Soviet feature films in their domestic versions. As Mr. Hill reports, modern Soviet cinema has a new interest for the world film audience, offering a growing variety and more outspoken treatment of subject-matter; Soviet film-makers are paying greater attention to technique and form, and the state is recognizing the film-makers' right to individual expression. Increased production, a tremendous influx of young people, and important economic and organizational reforms in the film industry make it likely that the Soviet film will again come to figure prominently in the world film scene.

The real beginning of the Soviet artistic renaissance dates from the death of Stalin in 1953. The last two decades of his rule ("the period of the cult") had been marked by an extreme *distrust* of artists as citizens and even party members. Many film and theater people were arrested, such as writer Kapler; or executed, such as directors Meyerhold and Eggert, writers Tretiakov, Kurs, Kirshon, and Novokshonov, cameraman Nilsen, boy-actor Kyrlia from *Road to Life*, producer Piotrovsky, bureaucrat Shumiatsky. The cult period was also marked by distrust of artists as such: between 1935 and 1953 no fictional features (with one exception in 1947 by Schweitzer) were entrusted to beginning directors. All other big films were done by the officially sanctioned veterans working in the one officially sanctioned style of "socialist realism"—impersonal, large-scale, expensive, heavy-weight, didactic, glossy, cleaned-up historical and literary biographies and modern propaganda vehicles.

After Stalin's death, and particularly after the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956, which officially began the policy of de-Stalinization, a great many changes began to occur. Most of the purge victims were gradually "rehabilitated"—even if posthumously—and their film credits were restored; moreover, policy statements now place great emphasis on "*trust* and belief in people." On the artistic level, production got rolling again, rising from six fiction features in 1951 and 18 in 1952, to 38 in 1954, 85 in 1956, 103 in 1958, 116 in 1964, 125 in 1965, and the same number scheduled for 1966 and for 1967,

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Citations from the Russian film press are abbreviated as follows: *IK*=Iskusstvo kino (thick monthly); *SE*= Sovetsky ekran (illustrated bi-monthly); *SK*=Sovetskoe kino (weekly newssheet); *SF*=Sovetsky film (illustrated export monthly).

including about 10 in "wide-format" (70mm), 45–50 in widescreen, and 40 in color, per year. To handle this big increase in production, a whole new wave of young (and not so young) Film Institute graduates rolled on to the scene, making less pretentious, sharper, and often rather outspoken films about real people, many of them (for a change) in modern Soviet settings, and including a number of comedies.

Among the front-runners who started in the "thaw" of 1954–58 were, chronologically, Vladimir Basov (a fast worker lacking artistic inspiration), Michael Schweitzer (specialist in ambitious literary adaptations like *Resurrection* and *Time Forward!*), Alov and Naumov (a team which likes tense, dynamic dramas in emotional style), Samson Samsonov (careful Chekhov adaptations like *The Grasshopper* and *Three Sisters*), Basil Ordynsky (war dramas), Eldar Riazanov (comedies and musicals, from *Carnival Night* to *Uncommon Thief*), Marlen Hutsiyev (an actor's director dedicated to modern "problem" dramas like *I Am 20* and *July Rain*), Siegel and Kulijanov (who have now split up and gone into fanciful comedy and historical drama, respectively), Tengiz Abuladzeh and Revaz Chkheyidzeh (two Georgians who like neorealistic stories of "little people"), Stanislav Rostotsky (who makes big pictures of various styles, like *Hero of Our Time*, prominently featuring beautiful actresses), Leonid Gaidai and Yuri Chuliukin (students of Alexandrov who inherited his knack for comedy, Gaidai in slapstick and Chuliukin in lyric comedy). All of these directors of the Soviet new wave, and several other lesser figures, were born in the 1920's, and all (except Schweitzer) made their first features between 1954 and 1958. Some of them began working in teams, as is the normal way for beginning Soviet directors; those who prove their ability are soon promoted to solo assignments.

The sixties have seen a continuation of this new wave, occasionally rising and falling according to zigs and zags in the party line—such as Khrushchev's attack on Hutsiyev's *I Am Twenty* in 1962–63, and the 1964 Central Committee admonition to Mosfilm studio. But in general the trend has been definitely upward, in quantity and variety of production, in continued infusion of new blood at various creative levels, in artistic freedom, in economic reform of the industry; in construction of new studios, studio and research facilities, and theaters; in the rise of important production centers in the union republics (Georgia, Lithuania, and so on), and in increasing western contacts (co-productions and purchase of more western films).

Coinciding with the rise in quantity and variety of production—and to a considerable extent responsible for it—is a second youth movement which has given 108 director-graduates of the Film Institute their chance to make their first films in the last four years; there were 18 such debuts in 1964, and in 1965 26 more seniors in the directing class began shooting their degree films at various regular commercial studios around the country, especially in the union republics with less developed film industries. (This practice is being changed, with the construction of a new studio at the Film Institute where degree candidates will shoot their senior projects.) Plans for 1967 call for 30% of films to be directed by "debutants."

Indeed, a number of first films have gained prizes at various festivals: Michael Bogin's *Ballad of Love*, Andrew Konchalovsky-Mihalkov's *First Teacher*, Elem Klimov's *Welcome Kostia—or No Trespassing*, Michael Kobahidzeh's *The Wedding*, Paul Liubimov's *Aunty with the Violets*, Victor Lisakovich's documentaries *He Was Called Theodore* and *Katiusha*, writer-actor Basil Shukshin's *A Fellow Like That*, Peter Todorovsky's *Loyalty*, Larisa Shepitko's *Heat Wave*, and many lesser efforts, not to speak of Tarkovsky's still extremely powerful *My Name is Ivan* of a few years ago. In 1965 at the Lenfilm studio alone (second in the country after Mosfilm) there were eight directorial debuts. This tidal wave of young talent was celebrated by a special section of *Iskusstvo kino* (June 1965), which devoted 42 pages to verbal and photo portraits of some two dozen beginning film-makers and their initial works. This wave of the sixties is really the *second* Soviet new wave, consisting of young men and women in their middle and late twenties, who were small children during the war and only teen-agers when the Stalin era and the worst Cold War tensions ended. They can see the modern world with a fresh, unjaundiced eye, and have an interest in new means of expressing new themes, without the political and moral dogmatism of previous generations.

The Soviet youth movement is not restricted to directors: many young performers are also gaining attention, of whom the most in demand seem to be snub-nosed blonde Galina Polskikh *(Meet Me in Moscow, Once there Lived an Old Couple);* brunette Tamara Semina *(Resurrection, Day of Happiness);* Larisa Luzhina (just back from a dual role in an East German production); stage-trained Margaret Terekhova, who may become the Soviet Bette

Davis *(Hello, It's Me!);* folksy Leonid Kuravlev *(A Fellow Like That, Your Son and Brother);* Stanislav Liubshin *(I am Twenty, Ballad of the Alps);* and *Ballad of a Soldier* hero Vladimir Ivashov and his piquant green-eyed wife Svetlana Svetlichnaya (now co-starred in the Lermontov classic *Hero of Our Time).*

There are a considerable number of second-generation film people among the youngsters, including the Vertinsky sisters, 21-year-old Anastasia *(Hamlet, War and Peace)* and Marianne *(I am Twenty),* daughters of the late cabaret singer Alexander; Victoria Fedorova *(Ballad of Love),* teenage daughter of veteran comedy actress Zoya; satirist Serge Mihalkov's handsome younger son Nikita *(Meet Me in Moscow, The Rolecall)* and his older son Andrew Konchalovsky-Mihalkov (who started as Tarkovsky's co-writer, assistant, and bit-player in *My Name is Ivan* and *Andrew Rublev,* and has now won independent recognition with *First Teacher);* Michael Kalatozov's son George, a Georgian cameraman of course *(White Caravan; I See the Sun);* two other Georgians, Eldar and George Shengelaya, director sons of old-time director Nicholas Shengelaya and actress Nata Vachnadzeh; Leningrad director Julius Fait, son of Kuleshov's old villain-player Andrew *(A Boy and A Girl*—the Soviet equivalent of *Blue Denim);* Arina Aleinikov, daughter of actor Peter *(Welcome Kostia)* and Sofiko Chiaureli, daughter of the old-time Stalinist director Michael Chiaureli and actress Veriko Anjaparidzeh (star of her father's new costume comedy-drama *Times are Different Now*—whose title may be more eloquent than intended). Other well-known names are borne by newcomers like Nicholas Dovzhenko from the Ukraine and the Georgian classic beauty Ariadne Shengelaya *(Garnet Bracelet).*

The directors of the newest generation of the middle 1960's are not to be confused with the first Soviet new wave—now actually the "middle generation": Chukhrai, Hutsiyev, Siegel, Schweitzer, Gaidai, Samsonov, Alov and Naumov, Riazanov, Rostotsky, Kulijanov, Chuliukin, Igor Talankin, Vitautas Zhalakiavichus, Serge Parajanov. Born in the 1920's, the latter generation lost the whole decade of the forties fighting the war and the Stalinist artistic standstill which followed, broke into direction in the middle 1950's, and now, in their early or middle forties, are established producer-directors who are already assuming supervisory, administrative, and teaching duties: Kulijanov is head ("first secretary of the board") of the increasingly powerful and independent Film Workers Union, Chukhrai heads the new Experimental Studio, Samsonov supervises production in the "Ekran" (actors') subdivision of the huge Mosfilm studio, Talankin and Siegel teach directing courses at the Film Institute, Chuliukin despite bad health which limits his active work provides scripts and consultation to young directors like Bogin.

I Am Cuba

One might even speculate whether these additional responsibilities have not come on rather soon in life, when these men are still at the peak of their powers and are perhaps less inclined to work behind a desk than a camera (they do keep their hand in with a film about every three years). In any event, this situation was necessitated by the unusual circumstance that there was *no* generation of the 1940's, which would now be in line to assume a large share of executive, supervisory, and teaching duties. Thus there was a break in the continuity of artistic generations, a gap of almost twenty years (after Romm's debut in 1935, no young blood came into the film-directing ranks until after 1953), and the "middle generation" of the 1950's is now stepping in to fill this gap.

The older Soviet generations have been reduced by the deaths of writer Alexander Rzheshevsky (1967); writer Boris Chirskov, Nicholas Cherkasov, and Vladimir Petrov (1966); Boris Barnet, Amo-Bek-Nazarov, documentarist Samuel Bubrik, and Eisenstein's and Pudovkin's widows (1965). Leonid Lukov (1963) Anatole Rybakov (1962), and Serge Vasiliev and Zachary Agranenko (1960), have now all passed sixty—at which birthday they are customarily congratulated in the press and named "People's Artist" (the top title) or "Meritorious Worker of the Arts." It is true that several

venerable greats of the late 1920's and early 1930's, like Kalatozov, Heifitz, Yutkevich, Raizman, Kozintsev, Solntseva, Ermler, Alexandrov, Roshal, Gerasimov, Donskoy, Pyriev, Karmen, Romm, Stroyeva, even the septagenarians Room and Chiaureli, are still relatively active, creating occasional major new features. Not all of these meet with critical success, however: the traditionalists Roshal, his wife Stroyeva, and Pyriev, plus Alexandrov, have all recently suffered at the hands of the press which did not care for their latest works—the Karl Marx biography *A Year Like Life,* the super-patriotic *We are the Russian People, Light of a Distant Star,* and *Lenin in Switzerland,* respectively. And in any case these senior citizens cannot be counted on for more than a few more years of active service. By 1975 the artistic reins of the Soviet film industry will be held entirely by the upcoming, liberal-minded middle generation of the 1950's.

With all this upsurge of production and personnel in the last dozen years, it is not surprising to find the new Soviet film industry has felt its share of growing pains. And in the freer atmosphere of the post-Stalin (and post-Khrushchev) period, defects are being discussed with plenty of plain speaking both at conferences and in the film press. The following pages will be devoted to a summary of these problem areas, after which it is fitting to look at the positive steps which are being undertaken.

The younger generation is not finding openings in at least one field: writing. There are constant complaints that graduates of the Film Institute's scenario department cannot get their screenplays accepted for production by the commercial studios —which prefer the work of tried-and-true writers. When there was one recent exception to this rule, Mosfilm's acceptance of the comedy *Children of Don Quixote* by Institute student Nina Fomina, a big to-do was made about it in the press; unfortunately, the completed film flopped. One critical article on the writing problem (*SK* 1/15/66) observed that script writers are the only graduates of the Institute who automatically become free lance and do not receive a regular position at one or another studio; the authors suggest creation of a "scenario workshop" with a team of staff writers at each studio. There has been discussion regarding the desirability of the old Hollywood assembly-line writing methods, with each script being the joint effort of a group of specialists (dialogue, plot construction, adaptation, etc.), but as yet this idea does not seem to have won many adherents. Present practice finds veteran scenarists like Eugene Gabrilovich doing their scripts alone, while less experienced writers usually work in tandem; another very common occurrence is for the script to be credited jointly to the director and one or two writers. Another equally critical article (*SK* 11/20/65) mentioned by name several young script graduates who had gone into journalism, criticism, and TV, abandoning screen writing altogether after finding no outlet for their talents; it also pointed out the paradox that many directors at the Lenfilm studio are scenario graduates from Moscow who couldn't get work in their specialty and wound up directing in Leningrad. (See also *SK* 2/19/66.)

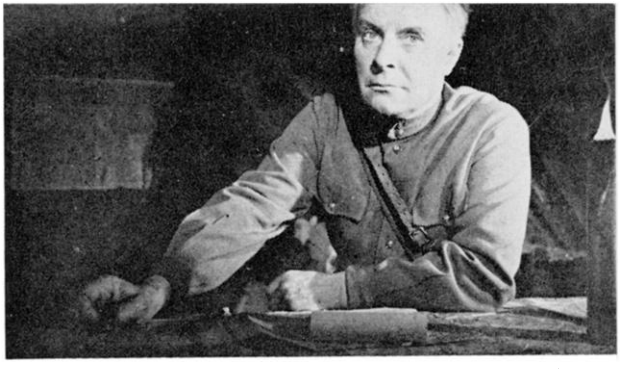
And Lenfilm is having its problems on the directing level too. Of the eight directorial debuts in 1965, none was a real success, and some were raked over the coals, such as Tregubovich's *Hot July* and Birman's *The Wreck,* two modern dramas dwelling heavily on the characters' confused love lives and sex problems. There was also considerable criticism of Kvinihidzeh's *First Visitor* and Olshvanger's *On One Planet,* two Lenin pictures entrusted to novices who evidently were not up to such an assignment. (So many Lenin and other big "historical-revolutionary" pictures are being prepared for the fiftieth anniversary of the Communist Revolution that the supply of directors to handle them has run thin; what a turnabout from 15 years ago, when all big prestige pictures had to be done by the established "masters," and no novice was even allowed to direct minor features!) At a recent Leningrad conference the complaint was also raised by veterans Kozintsev and Vengerov that the young film-makers are wrapped up only in their own films and are uninterested in community and studio matters ("inadequately manifest themselves in social and creative life"—*SE* '66.5:2). In Moscow, the second-largest studio (Gorky Studio of Children's and Young People's Films, formerly "Detfilm") was recently attacked by the press for letting through some very weak pictures, the worst of which, Sytina's ballet script *Everything is for You,* suffered from the fact that the star, Barabanova, was allowed to direct it herself. The head of the studio indicated in print that a "lesson had been learned" from this unsuccessful experiment.

Another area in which the youth movement is causing problems is in front of the camera: in fact, the so-called "actor problem" is getting considerable play in the press and at conferences. According to Mosfilm boss Surin, "much time is lost on

the set because of actors' lateness. Woe to the director who has asked several theatrical actors to appear simultaneously for shooting. Getting them together exactly at the appointed time for shooting (not to speak of rehearsals) is almost impossible." (*IK*, '65.7:16). Another complaint is that youthful performers are being rushed into films without adequate training just because they have a fresh new face, and then are being type-cast in picture after picture. Following *Resurrection* Tamara Semina was offered a whole series of fallen-woman roles; Nina Menshikova has had eight parts, all of them weepy, pathetic women; Alexis Batalov gets no roles that offer him a new challenge except when he works for Heifitz.

Another complaint is that older performers, crowd favorites, are idle too much between parts. Alexandrov's wife, the aging musical-comedy star Liubov Orlova who had not been in much demand lately (her spouse's stock has also tumbled), recently wrote a plaintive little note in *Sovetskoe kino* (4/30/66) expressing a hope that she would find some interesting new role. The result of this two-pronged "actor problem" is that audiences keep asking when such-and-such an old favorite is going to be seen again, while some younger actors are feeling the lack of Institute training, and as they go along year after year playing the same parts, with little opportunity for development, in some cases are dropping out of sight (Serge Gurzo, V. Ivanov) or leaving films for the stage (Tatiana Piletskaya, Nina Doroshina).

These difficulties are to some extent inevitable anywhere in a director's medium like the cinema, but also are in part a peculiar Soviet inheritance from the "typage" and "model" theories of Russian silent films, when stars were replaced by director-controlled non-actors (Kuleshov recruited boxers and wrestlers to play cowboys and spies, Eisenstein workers and officers to play themselves). A very serious attempt is now being made in the USSR to give more attention and creative scope to the actor; many editorials and interviews with outspoken veteran players like Boris Andreyev dissect the actor problem while laudatory articles and increasingly glamorous cover photos attempt to build up actors as creative collaborators and to a degree even as star personalities. At a conference, Union head Leo Kulijanov and actor Michael Zharov pointed out that studio contracts are filled with clauses obligating the actor but there is practically nothing which obligates the studio; Kulijanov went on to suggest that perhaps performers should have the right to view rushes and to collaborate in the selection of the best take of each scene, etc. Whether this will transpire remains to be seen.



THE ENCHANTED RIVER DESNA

Color remains a headache, and some Soviet studio bosses, like Surin (see *IK* '65.7:20-1) find themselves caught in a curious squeeze play between the demands of the very powerful Federal Cinema Committee (Goskomitet), which "plans" more color films, and the reluctance of directors and cameramen, who prefer the artistic advantages of good black-and-white over bad color. Abraham Room's 1964 *Garnet Bracelet* (a big box office hit, in color) shows the aesthetic difficulties: among other odd tints, the faces often come out greenish, which is particularly unbecoming to a beautiful star like Ariadne Shengelaya in the lead role. In general the film-makers seem to be holding out against administrative pressure to use color, as statistics indicate the annual number of color features dropped from 52 (1963) and 55 (1964) to only 40 (1965) and 41 (1966). Evidently artistic progress in using color is being made, however, especially in some of the union republics, such as the Ukraine studio's *Shadows of Our Forgotten Ancestors* and the White-Russian studio's *City of Master Craftsmen.* (Another sore spot about color, which is also felt in America, is that 16mm reduction prints from color negatives are made in the USSR with a process that inadequately reproduces the sound track. The result is that 16mm prints of *The Forty-First,* for example, have bad sound in the USA.)

A more basic difficulty which has always plagued the Soviet film industry, and all of Russia's other industries, as well as agriculture, is a tendency to slow, poorly organized, expensive production methods. This was one of the reasons that the Central Committee issued its decree in May, 1964,

admonishing Mosfilm, among other things, to improve its "productive and financial discipline." As Surin himself admitted, "almost all the big studios of the world have higher productivity of labor in their film crews than we do" (*IK* '65.7:17). The same thing was also admitted by Union head Kulijanov: "We lack production knowledge, the know-how to organize work, to value our own and others' time, to watch the people's money. Some of our film crews, if you were to time their work, could serve as a model of sloppiness. I assure you not one capitalist producer would stand for what you and I sometimes allow ourselves. Why, we have made clichés out of expressions like 'who are we waiting for now?' and 'in pictures nobody ought to be late'." (Report to the Constituent Assembly of the Film Workers Union, Nov. '65, p. xxi).

Gregory Chukhrai, the leader of the economic reform movement (more on this below), is one of the harshest critics of the existing system. "When I first came to Mosfilm as a young man, I was struck by a poster reading 'Disgrace and shame on Dovzhenko's production, which is 2130 usable feet behind schedule.' But never did I see—either at Mosfilm or at other studios of the country—a poster reading 'Disgrace and shame on such-and-such a production. Its film didn't run more than two days on the screen.' Meanwhile such films have come out and continue to do so. Very many of them don't pay the cost of producing, printing, and distributing them. The public refuses to watch them. They are a failure, economically and ideologically. The fact is that today studio economics is completely separated from distribution economics. It's important for the studio to meet the schedule [lit., 'fill the plan'], to release a certain number of items, but the subsequent fate of its films doesn't concern it. . . . Let's say a film is brought in ahead of schedule and has a saving. But in distribution it sometimes doesn't even cover the expenses invested in it. The country suffers huge losses. . . . An analysis of existing economic interrelations shows that releasing bad, lackluster pictures under the present system is not only not dangerous, but sometimes even profitable. Profitable for the studio and for the authors of the film." (*SK* 3/19/66).

In another interview Chukhrai tells another revealing story about the existing system: "Once, when I was working on a shooting script, the producer asked me to write in some extra process shots. So as to get additional money, film, and, mainly, to prolong the shooting schedule. 'But I don't need a process shot here. Who would I be fooling? Myself? The Country?' I refused. Nonetheless, they of course cut my budget with the usual distrustful notation: 'You always overestimate. . . .' My honesty turned against me and, mainly, against the production. Meditating about that, I began to notice that our film production system now and then pushes people into lying. Otherwise you'll lose out." (*SE* '66.3:1). Plenty of concrete figures to back up these complaints are given in the article "Great Changes are Needed" (*IK* '65.7:13-22) by Mosfilm boss Surin, who mentions by name many specific examples of films which ran far over schedule (and budget); which overestimated their footage; which had to do retakes or make synchronizing changes after the sets were taken down or the actors departed, due to the insistence of the studio's artistic council or the government watchdog committee. Surin also complains that associate producers currently lack authority to set ceilings on budgets, conclude contracts with writers and actors beyond a certain maximum, and so on.

One gets the impression that Soviet film-makers and studios wouldn't mind a bit less control from the watchdog Committee, even though that control has been tremendously relaxed since the complete tyranny of the Stalin years, when, "as we all know very well, we had one critic for the whole country, who gave the final rating to every new film" (Kulijanov, *IK* '65.7:9). Compared to Stalin and his henchmen, the Khrushchev administration (1955–64) was a great blessing—although sometimes a mixed one, as Khrushchev's erratic policies towards the arts fluctuated from hot to cold as quickly as the winds of internal politics, international relations, and his own peasant background, suspicion of intellectuals, and subjective whims carried him from a "liberalizing" to a "reactionary" position and back again. (These shifts of policy from encouragement to condemnation were highly publicized in the case of poet Eugene Evtushenko.) In the opening line of Film Union secretary Alexander Karaganov's description of the 1966 Party Congress—"the delegates' *calm, business-like, scientific,* and *analytic* approach to the discussion and solution of problems. . . ." (*SE* '66.12:2; italics mine)—there is an unmistakeable reference to the uncertainties of the arts under Khrushchev, whose methods were often anything but businesslike or scientific.

In Khrushchev's last years the most publicized case of blatant interference in films from upstairs was Hutsiyev's Antonioniesque *I am Twenty,* whose original script was published in *IK* back in 1961 under the title *Ilyich's Gate.* The completed film was previewed and slammed by Khrushchev at the time of his attacks on abstract painters, Evtushenko, and others, from December 1962 to April 1963. The film was then held up and Hutsiyev had to spend another year and a half or more making changes. It finally came out shortly after Khrushchev's downfall, in January 1965; ironically, the "ghost" scene at which Khrushchev was particularly miffed stayed in the film after all! Another much publicized case was the 1963 Moscow Film Festival, where the USSR entered the mediocre, stereotyped *Meet Baluyev* from Lenfilm. *Baluyev* was far outclassed by foreign competition like Fellini's 8½, to which the jury was able to vote the Grand Prize only after the Soviet jury members evidently did some fast backroom wheeling and dealing to overrule a veto of the Fellini film from upstairs. The whole affair was a serious embarrassment to Soviet film-makers, among whom Kulijanov admits "the very name *Meet Baluyev* has already become odious."

The most recent case of evident political bungling in cinema circles coming to my attention involves the Ukrainian documentary *Beautiful Flights of Soul,* about an art gallery organized by amateurs in a Ukrainian village. Harsh press criticism of the released film led to the disclosure that this was the fourth version, after successive re-editing and -narrating of three earlier ones had taken out the "rough spots"—which included an argument with the head of the village club who "doesn't care much for art." Some schoolgirls' uneasy discussion around a nude Venus, and off-hand remarks by gallery assistants about their summer work on a pig farm. The film in its original form had reality and freshness, and was okayed by the studio, but then was vetoed by the Ukraine Film Ministry's censorship board [redkollegia]—"and at its insistence the long process of 'improving' took place" (*SE* '66.8:14; '66.20:19).

Among the first goals formulated by the Union of Film Workers in November 1965 was the "further development of participation from below in the practice of reviewing scripts and finished films, the inclusion in script censorship boards of representatives of the creative professions—script-writers, critics, directors . . . freeing the studios of excessive, petty supervision, and granting them greater independence in solving artistic and production problems" (*IK* '66.1:2-3). These are praiseworthy goals —let us hope they can be achieved.

The USSR is experiencing some growing pains in film exhibition as well as production. The increasing number of films "in two parts" [v dvukh

Begin's BALLAD OF LOVE

seriakh] makes headaches for exhibitors and viewers; these films usually run a total of three to four hours, with a five-minute intermission in the middle, and with separate tickets for the two "parts" each costing the normal amount for a regular feature (about half a ruble or fifty cents officially). Even though there are separate tickets, you have to buy both at the beginning, and if you don't like the part one, you are still stuck for the cost of part two. There is even a tendency among exhibitors to cut out the intermission, which makes showings run rather long. Exhibitors complain that the public has trouble finding four hours free in a block, so that attendance "is less even for a good two-part than for an average one-part film" (*SK* 6/25/66).

There is a suspicion that some film-makers and studios may like two-part films for fiscal reasons: a 100-minute film, for instance, will run in one part and pay the normal compensation, but stretching it to 150-160 minutes will make possible its division into two parts with a resulting increase in budget and hopefully twice the box-office take. Whatever the reasons in the case of Chukhrai's disappointing *Once There Lived an Old Couple,* it was unanimously agreed that the film was far too long and drawn-out for its subject matter—a criticism of new films appearing rather frequently in the Soviet press nowadays. Samson Samsonov is one director, however, who refuses to make two-part films and even did his monumental *Optimistic Tragedy* in one.

Another problem for exhibitors is the lack of films made specifically for children—a contrast with Stalin's worst years, when the opposite complaint could have been made. The Gorky Studio in Moscow has been split into two halves, one making pictures for teen-agers and adults, the other, so-called children's half "making pictures which children under 16 shouldn't always see" (*SK* 5/7/66).

Some of the blame for difficulties with children's films can also be laid elsewhere, according to Kulijanov: "Can we play [children's films] as we should with the existing system of distribution? Unfortunately, no. For here the financial plan comes into its own—as you know, you can't meet it with audiences of children. Nominally there exist some children's theaters in Moscow, but they are both limited in number and poor" (report to the Constituent Assembly, p. xxiv).

Serious questions about distribution and exhibition have been raised in the last two years, partly provoked by the weak box-office records of "modern," "difficult," critically praised films like *I am Twenty* and Konchalovsky's *First Teacher,* and even modern satiric comedies like Danelia's *33* and Klimov's *Adventures of a Dentist*—which the Film Union charged were unenthusiastically exploited in some parts of the USSR. A collaborative inquiry in *IK* ('65.2:89-91) revealed that bookings are determined in various districts at strictly secret meetings of local theater managers with regional distribution representatives, "whose personal tastes are not always irreproachable." The contributors to the inquiry call into question the box-office results of such a system: *Mysteries of Paris* with Jean Marais, for example, was booked over Kulijanov's Lenin film *Blue Notebook* by a three-to-one margin in Vladimir ("hence the disparity in attendance figures"), and *Three Musketeers* set a new attendance record there, according to a critic, only because "it was forced on the spectators by the distribution office . . . and it does not characterize the artistic demands of Vladimir viewers. They watched what they were shown most."

The general conclusion of the inquiry is that the personal tastes of distributors and exhibitors currently play almost a life-and-death role in determining the fate of new films. Beyond its intrinsic interest, this inquiry is also very significant in revealing a growing concern of film-makers about the commercial fate of their own films; traditionally film production and its compensation has been completely separated from these areas. Even at the present time a director of highly lucrative comedies like Leonid Gaidai in an interview with the present writer seemed to know very little about the box-office take on his own pictures. Kulijanov says that "the question of a film's fate in distribution is so important that it is expedient to create a special commission of creative workers and distributors, which would study this question and provide smart, businesslike assistance to film distribution" (report to the Constituent Assembly, p. XXIV).

All of the foregoing production, distribution, and exhibition difficulties need to be seen in the light of major changes and improvements which are being made, especially through the efforts of the increasingly important Film Workers Union (SRK). Formed in June 1957 and now headed by 43-year-old director Leo Kulijanov and critic-editor Alexander Karaganov, their organization encompasses all film workers in the USSR, and was formed on their initiative, with much of its impetus coming from below. The Organizing Committee of the Union held around a dozen plenary sessions between 1957 and November 23-26, 1965, when it

summoned the First Constituent Assembly of the Union.* This very significant meeting, whose opening speech was given, in the presence of Brezhnev and Kosygin, by Kuleshov (a nice tribute to a much-neglected film pioneer, now 68 and in poor health) was chaired by Kulijanov, held four days of sessions, and discussed and accepted a Charter.

It also elected a board of governors and a secretariat, which will carry on the Union's activities between plenary sessions and actually make most of the important policy decisions. Plenty of big names, many "liberals" among them, were elected to the secretariat, including Hutsiyev, Chukhrai, and Kalatozov; and some conservatives too, like Gerasimov. But there were some more conservative figures who *didn't* make the secretariat: Ermler, Donskoy, administrators Novogrudsky and Groshev (for the full membership of the governing board and the secretariat, see *SK* '65.151:2).

This Union is important in the structure of Soviet cinema not only because it was formed on the initiative of the film-makers themselves, but also because it seems to be more than a paper organization. It has a regularly functioning board, housed in the newly enlarged Central House of Cinema on Vasilievskaya Street, and is a force to be reckoned with in the subsequent development of Soviet films—a force which now seems in a position to do some good old-fashioned lobbying when it feels its efforts are being interfered with by overzealous administrators and censors, poorly presented by careless exhibitors, or unjustly reviewed by biased critics.

The Constituent Assembly at the end of its deliberations passed a resolution outlining the Union's goals, which include "creating favorable conditions for the artist to manifest his creative *individuality;* . . . further development of cinema in all the union republics; . . . stimulating in every way gifted writers to come into cinema; . . . improving and simplifying the system of reviewing and approving scripts [and] including representatives of the creative professions on censorship boards; . . . organizing scenario workshops at the studios and creating an all-union [national] scenario studio, which will be a creative laboratory for creating new scripts, a school for new staffs of screen writers; . . . reviewing the form of actors' contracts in the direction of expanding actors' rights. . . . The economic structure of our film production and the organization of the creative process are outdated in many respects and await immediate revision . . . Totally insufficient schedules are set up for creative preparations for making a film [i.e., script and rehearsals] and for its editing and synchronizing completion . . . while the most expensive part, the shooting schedule, is extremely drawn-out; . . . organizing an all-union film research center and a movie museum; . . . creation of a special newspaper [along the lines of the American 'trades']; . . . creation of specialized theaters; . . . development of research on spectators' perceptions of films and their wants . . ." (*IK* '66.1:1-4).

The resolution also devotes two full paragraphs to ways of improving the documentary, newsreel, and TV news fields, which currently leave extremely much to be desired. The text of this resolution is not merely "wishful thinking" (an expression used critically by many speakers at the Assembly, in obvious reference to Krushchev's fanciful economic and agricultural schemes), but presents concrete steps which the Union is working to accomplish. Some already have been: one of the Union's next plenary sessions (January 1967) was devoted entirely to film production in the union republics, which have recently been sent a number of bright new Institute graduates who used their facilities to come up with very fine films like Bogin's *Ballad of Love* (Latvia) and Konchalovsky's *First Teacher* (Kirghiz). The highest-rated young playwright of recent years, Alexander Volodin, has recently switched to film writing; the government has approved the construction of a National Film Center containing a movie museum, research departments, a section for audience research, film library, and publications library, thus affording film critics and researchers a central place to work, with viewing halls, editing rooms with viewing apparatus, and so on.

*Soviet hobby groups like the stamp collectors and the film societies are also in the process of forming loose nationwide federations. The film societies, which held their first national get-acquainted and planning meeting in the fall of 1965, are borrowing freely from the experience of their Polish and Czech colleagues, who got a ten-year head start over the Russians in the film-society movement. Significantly, much of the initiative in all these new, post-Khrushchev organizing movements in the USSR is coming *from below,* from individual hobbyists and local groups who want to meet and exchange information and advice with fellow-thinkers, and to make their wants known on a national level. Such a development would hardly have been conceivable under Stalin, who distrusted any manifestations of individual initiative or creativity, and preferred to bestow any such organizations (which existed mostly on paper) from the top.

The point about film-makers being encouraged to "manifest their creative individualities" may seem less tangible, but the statement is very meaningful in principle, and there is plenty of verbal support for the idea, "for creative experiments and innovations, personal initiative, the individual inclinations of the artist, a multitude of forms, styles, and genres" (*SE* '65.24:2). The old Stalinist ideal of regimented artists producing standardized, conformist, impersonal works in a single officially sanctioned prosaic style ("socialist realism"), with no room for any formal experiments or any criticism or skepticism, is now becoming a thing of the past, and is giving way to the ideal of the author's cinema *(cinéma d'auteur),* with each creator making pictures expressing his own outlook and in his own stylistic manner.

With this recognition of the film-maker's individuality, and of the desirability of a variety of styles and themes, comes a corresponding recognition of the variety of audiences which are taking shape, audiences for different genres of pictures. Considerable work is being started in the field of audience research (often referred to as "sociology" by Soviet liberals)—to determine objectively and for the first time what spectators' tastes and preferences really are. (Under Stalin and even until the beginning of the 1960's, the powers-that-be decided what was good for people, without bothering to check their opinions—"bourgeois sociology" was taboo.)

Russian film scholars interested in this field are beginning to discover and play with statistical methods like a new, still rather unfamiliar gadget, but they are already coming up with very interesting results. In this connection it was fascinating to see the publication in *IK* (1966.8), perhaps for the first time, of some concrete attendance statistics on features shown in the USSR in the first quarter of 1966. (By far the most-attended film was Stanley Kramer's *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad World).*

One of the most interesting and ambitious projects is the annual best-film poll ("readers' contest") conducted by *Sovetsky ekran,* which is edited by one of the leading liberals, Dmitry S. Pisarevsky. The 1965 year-end issue of *SE* included an elaborate three-page fold-and-mail questionnaire. Questions included "how old are you," "how many 1965 films did you see (and how many on TV)," "which sections do you like in our magazine," "name your five best and five worst films of the year," "the last time you went to the movies, what made you decide to go," "in *I am Twenty,* were you interested in the characters' meditations about the meaning of life," and so on. Over 40,000 replies were received, and the basic categories (best and worst films, most popular performers) were tabulated later in the year (*SE* '66.10:1). But it appears that much of the secondary data never did get processed—perhaps because punchcards and IBM machines are not yet as widely used in the USSR as here. At any rate, the new questionnaire appearing in the last 1966 issue was considerably simplified and organized for better tabulating (an added question: "your favorite film of all time"), and dropped all questions about the readers' attitude to the journal itself.

In addition to *SE,* the Bureau for the popularization of Soviet Film Art has a new audience-research section, headed by F. Volkov, which conducted a poll during the 1966 All-Union Film Festival in Kiev (equivalent to the American "Oscar" competition), having viewers rate films on a five-point scale (numerical averages were published in *SK,* 6/11/66, for comparison with the official festival award winners). The degree of agreement between the official awards and the audience poll was striking, but it should be kept in mind that the competition was limited to two dozen features submitted by the studios themselves.

These various audience-research projects have important implications for film exhibition and production, for once the data from some of these polls establish that there are different audiences for different kinds of pictures, it is not a far step to using the data to help determine the production schedules of studios and the bookings of theaters, in response to spectators' tastes and wants. The old idea of a monolithic audience (for Stalin, everything in the USSR was "monolithic"), a single, undifferentiated mass-viewer, a kind of lowest common denominator, at which every film was aimed according to a standard recipe developed at the top, is now being seriously questioned. For instance, Kulijanov writes, "Our film industry works without really reacting to a composite picture of the audience and statistical data about its demands, wants inclinations, and enthusiasms. Among us the legend of the average viewer, abstract and impersonal, has proved very long-lived, and has given birth to conclusions such as "the people won't get it," "the public doesn't like it," (report to the Constituent Assembly, p. xxiv).

A very progressive distribution executive, G. Tomilov, deputy regional director of distribution in Sverdlovsk, comes to a similar conclusion, based

on results of his audience research (conducted since 1963): "Isn't it time to grasp that the demand that *each film be shown to each spectator* definitely ought to be revised, because [our] polls prove that *each film has its own audience,* and it would be more sensible to proceed from that proposition. In fact, is it even realistic that each active moviegoer would see all 120 domestic films in the year? Why, that would necessitate going to the movies a minimum of twice a week! And how many foreign pictures are released on top of that [exactly 100 in 1966]! On the other hand, even if such a miracle would happen, our theater chains would not be able to accommodate such a large number of spectators. But something else is realistic: the 120 Soviet pictures can be broken down into groups by figuring how each of the groups would serve the *highest possible* number of spectators for it. And in order to determine where to send what film, what audience is anxiously awaiting it, a serious and profound study of the interests and tastes of spectators is precisely what is needed. . . . It only remains to regret that a considerable number of our films are made for some kind of 'average' spectator, who doesn't exist in nature." (*SK* 6/25/66:2; italics Tomilov's).

This new concept of differentiated audiences is beginning to be reflected in the creation of some specialized theaters in the major cities. For years the USSR has had a number of specialized children's theaters—although they are not too numerous. In addition, Moscow has for some time had the "Revival Theater" [Teatr povtornogo fil'ma], which specializes in older pictures of the 1930's and 1940's, even an occasional silent; and in 1962-63 at the suggestion of Kalatozov, Evtushenko, and critic Weisfeld a special art theater "Screen" [Ekran] was established to show foreign and other fare of interest to a more limited audience. The "Metropole" in Moscow and the Moscow University Student Union, both downtown, show many foreign films, the majority from the Soviet bloc, although almost all are dubbed into Russian. And in 1966 three new specialized theaters were opened, the Theater of Good Films (Leningrad's first art house, established at the suggestion of one of the city's leading film clubs), and two in Moscow, "The Wick" (specialty: comedies) and "The Illusion" (regular showings of treasures from Gosfilmofond's previously little-seen archives).

This recognition of the audience as a consumer is also supported by Victor Orlov, a critic—and not always one of the most liberal ones, at that—in a chatty article entitled "Different Kinds of Art are Needed!": ". . . the whole point is, evidently, what does a person today expect from a picture? And he, by the way has the right to expect what he wants. We should not forget about a simple truth: he is a consumer. Yes, yes, a consumer—or, if you wish, a customer—and there's nothing shameful or offensive about that for honorable film maestros. The spectator goes to the movies, pays for the movies, and it is his countless 50-cent [kopeck] pieces which add up to millions of film income. And a customer has the right TO DEMAND . . . . The spectator expects DIFFERENT THINGS from art. Have you ever wondered why great people of the past loved, for instance, to read detective stories? . . . Why did Alexander Blok [pre-revolutionary highbrow poet] adore going to cheap movies and clipping pictures from magazines? . . . Why, even melodramas are good. Who would ever, for example, say anything against the noble American film melodrama *Camille* or against *Waterloo Bridge?* Or against the Soviet *Flesh and Blood* [1964, a real tearjerker by Yershov]? And comedies, even the 'funniest,' as it happens, aren't lacking in some deeper meaning —let's say, the recent [Soviet release: 1965] British [sic] movie *To Be or Not to Be,* the American *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad World.* Or the Soviet *Operation Laughter and Other Adventures of Shurick* . . . We can ask the masters: do you think that all the wealth of forms and genres can be laid in two Procrustean beds—'social drama' and 'lyric comedy'? What's the matter, are you ashamed of other genres? Why didn't you learn how 'to make movies'—the most diverse, varicolored, and enjoyable?" (*SE* '66.8:19).

As the above indicates, there is a growing acceptance of a variety of genres. According to one review of a bad Russian science-fiction film *(Engineer Garin's Death Ray),* "People are starved for film spectacles, . . . they want to see fantasy films and adventure films on the screen. . . . *There is no second-class art.* Let us recall that Nekrasov and Chekhov [nineteenth-century "serious" writers] wrote skits, that Wells's fantasy novels are great literature, and that Jules Verne's books are classics. So why aren't film masters really attracted by those genres of art in which boldness, resourcefulness, and courage are glorified—why do they refuse adventure and fantasy films?" (*SE* '66.2:5; italics mine). Some leading critics like Vartanov came out with a similar defense of the genre of slapstick or wacky comedy [eccentriada] after Gaidai's *Operation Laughter* (by all odds the greatest

OPERATION LAUGHTER: *Gaidai on the set with Alexis Smirnov*

Soviet visual comedy in thirty years) was misunderstood and even called "uncultured" or "silly" by many spectators—who probably hadn't seen much real slapstick since Alexandrov's work in the 1930's.

The past neglect of these genres is rapidly being remedied, although as yet the directors who are venturing into previously unexplored territory are mostly beginners who are experiencing rather mixed success. The proven masters, other than younger ones like Gaidai and Riazanov (comedy) and Tarkovsky (who has lined up the science-fiction story *Solaris)* have not as yet shown too much inclination to depart from the psychological genres traditionally associated with Russian literature and drama. Probably one of the major reasons for the big names' past neglect of adventure, farce, and sci-fi is the current system of compensating directors according to "artistic-ideological ratings" given from above; the "serious" genres automatically rate higher with the powers that be, and so a good "light" movie has little chance of equalling a good "heavy" film in the system of ratings and bonuses, so long as this system is divorced from box-office results. And this is one of the aims of the economic reforms now being advocated: to tie compensation to the box office in such a way that the major directors will be encouraged to go into comedy, adventure, sci-fi, espionage.

This brings up the hottest topic of discussion in the whole proposed economic reform of Soviet cinema—how to incorporate into film production the principle of "material stimulation" or "material interest," as officially recommended by the September 1965 Plenary Session of the Party Central Committee. The new Brezhnev-Kosygin government has moved slowly and carefully to replace Krushchev's "wishful thinking" and his "spur-of-the moment" schemes with a "rational," objective," "scientific" solution to the nation's economic woes, and is now encouraging various branches of the economy to experiment with the idea recommended a few years ago (in the USSR, that is) by Prof. Yevsei Lieberman—namely, the profit motive—or, as it is known in current Soviet economic parlance, "material interest" [material 'naya zainteresovannost].

The proposed reform is now being seriously discussed in film circles, cautiously considered by some, such as Surin of Mosfilm, most enthusiastically championed by others—such as I. Bitz, a Mosfilm associate producer, who says "I have been in pictures fifteen years. In that time more than once we have made attempts to improve the system of production. They all began with the words 'for the purpose of a further upsurge . . .' But no upsurge happened. The main thing was lacking—a scientific, economic stimulation of production. The attempts proceeded from subjective conceptions, rather than from economically-based facts. The main problem is not to fire a bad producer and replace him with a good one, but to create conditions such as would cause the whole enormous staff of the studio and each person individually to put all his efforts into the work. And this is the wisdom of the September [1965] Plenary Session's decisions. Then it will be apparent at once who is a good worker and who isn't. This new system will influence the quality of films. We get rid of subjective evaluations of pictures by various commissions and we give the artist and the studio this alternative: make a good picture—you'll get paid; don't make one—and you won't." *(SE* '66.6:3).

These potentially far-reaching changes are not only being discussed, but are also being given a practical test through the operation of the new Experimental Studio ("ETK"—Eksperimental 'naya tvorcheskaya kinostudia), which was set up in the last half of 1965 through the efforts of Gregory Chukhrai, the new studio's artistic supervisor, and Vladimir Pozner, its executive producer and a former Hollywood screen writer. The new studio, which is experimental only in the economic sense, existed mostly on paper until the September Plenary Session gave it the full go-ahead. It is operating under the Federal Cinema Committee, which along with the Ministry of Finance and the Government Committee on Labor and Wages is closely following its operations and accomplishments, so that "everything positive, accumulated through the experience

of the Experimental Studio, will be extended to the entire film industry" (*SE* '66.6:3). No wonder there is so much discussion and interest among all film workers in the reforms under consideration and trial.

The Experimental Studio differs from other Soviet studios in a number of ways. Like United Artists (with which Pozner was doubtless acquainted while in the USA), it has no studio facilities and will rent sets, hire workshops, labs, and so on, as the need arises, thus cutting overhead and "saving creative workers from excessive technical work, freeing them from unproductive waste of effort and time . . .' (Chukhrai, *SK* 3/19/66). It has no permanent staff except for production executives, economists, and script editors. All directors, cameramen, art directors, and actors will be hired on one-picture contracts pegged to the box-office record of the pictures. This is a real change from the current Soviet system, whereby directors, cameramen, actors, and others are more or less "on tenure" [v shtate] at a given studio, and are paid every month whether working or not (roughly the equivalent of the old Hollywood "contract directors" or "contract players," but who also get "bonuses" for highly rated films. Chukhrai says that "as a result of this [change], a director will go to work making a film not because he is on tenure and mustn't be idle, but because he has something to say to people in his new production. All this allows us to fight against the overstaffing which takes place under the existing system" (*SK* 3/19/66).

Another innovation involves bringing in efficiency experts to conduct operations analysis on all aspects of film production. Along the same lines, the studio will experiment with the method of having scenarios written directly in script form rather than in the current "literary form," like a short story—which the director then has to rewrite to make the shooting script. The existing method of budgeting and scheduling production will be changed: "The studio intends to cut down on shooting schedules. At the same time we will lengthen the time for preparation for filming and for working out the shooting script. Also the number of shooting days in the month will be increased, and the time set aside for editing. Let the editing of a film last three months, and not 35 days, as it does now" (Pozner). "Our shooting schedules [in elapsed time] will be reasonably restricted, because each day of shooting is connected with enormous expense, with the use of productive studio space, services, and apparatus. On the other hand, the length of the editing and re-recording period will be practically unlimited. A day in the editing and re-recording period costs very little, but the effect in artistic terms can be very big" (Chukhrai).

The methods of compensation at the Experimental Studio will be quite different too. In Chukhrai's words, "our studio has given up every type of artistic and efficiency bonus. . . . Our studio's profit will be formed from a percentage of [the film's] distribution, which will correspond not to the film's commercial success, but to its use [i.e., commercial success corrected by an "ideological-artistic" factor]. However, this percentage from distribution will not begin to come to the studio until the film proves profitable for the government. In the same way, the enterprise's profitability will be regulated. If a film is unprofitable for the government, it is unprofitable for the studio too, and for every studio worker. But if the film brings in a profit, then the studio gets a profit too, which goes for expanding the volume of production as well as for compensating all the studio's workers without exception" (Chukhrai, *SE* 3/19/66).

The new system of payment, as stated in *Izvestia,* will be based on three factors: ideological-artistic level (a carry-over from the current system of bonuses), the number of spectators seeing the film, and the number of countries buying it. One would expect that cost of production would also be included in some form. The first factor is determined by a government commission which gives the film a rating; according to Chukhrai, "we consider that the Commission should first answer the question, is the given film from the aesthetic and political standpoints 'very necessary,' 'necessary,' or 'permissible'? And then this will automatically be subject to a correction for the opinion of spectators, the community, and the press, let's say, during the first three months the film is in distribution. In a year you can determine the level of its effect 'per capita.' If a film rated excellent by the Commission plays in half-empty halls, that means its level of effect is not great, and the pay for this film should be likewise." Pozner goes on to say that the new system "materially affects the quality of production. No 'indicators' will save us if the studio treasury is out of money and there is nothing to shoot future films on. The studio Charter has the following note: if it turns out that the cause of the studio's going bankrupt is a bad executive, the government cannot give it an additional loan until the studio administration has been replaced" (*SE* '66.3:1).

According to Chukhrai, the Experimental Studio will not specialize in any one type of film, but will encourage all genres: "In making diverse types of films, we will try to see that all of them interest the public without regard for genre" (*SE* '66.3:1). Some have expressed a fear about the new system of compensation: it is possible that light-weight, crowd-pleasing pictures whether good or bad will rake in all the chips for their authors, simply because audiences will go to any comedy, any adventure film, etc., due to the extreme shortage of them in the past. Proof that this sort of thing can happen even in enlightened, "non-bourgeois" countries is the fact that the biggest Soviet domestic attraction in recent years has not been *Ballad of a Soldier,* nor *Nine Days of One Year,* nor *Hamlet,* nor *Kolkhoz Chairman,* nor any other big prize-winner, but rather an artistically insignificant sci-fi movie starring Anastasia Vertinsky, *The Amphibian Man* (*SE* '65.22:7). So the thinking is that the general formula of paying films according to their box-office return, the number of countries buying them, and their preliminary "ideological-artistic" rating, may also need to be corrected by a factor of the popularity of the given genre, so that a film would need to exceed the average attendance *in its own genre* in order to rate well for financial return.

The opposite problem is also conceivable: a "difficult" film, one that is innovating and artistically experimental, may make a weaker showing at the box office, particularly when it first goes into release. The specific instances of *Ballad of a Soldier* and *Cranes are Flying* were cited in one discussion: both started very slowly (in the USSR), but after a half-year or so began to come into their own, and were still going strong in the second year. In the long run they drew extremely well. The thinking here is that "if it is an experiment for experiment's sake and the public doesn't accept and understand it, small compensation is proper. [But] if an experimental and innovating production enriches the language of the cinema, improves its form, if these are experiments in the interests of the public and [this is a very big "and"] are accepted by it, the new system will especially stimulate such experiments. . . . It not rarely happens that an innovating film does not immediately find wide approval and understanding. On the other hand, such films as a rule live longer. . . . For such films the period for determining their success with the public can be extended." (Yegorov and Semenov, *SE* '66.6:3; the peculiar logic and rosy optimism of some of the above quotations is not necessarily shared by me.—S.H.) Evidently an experimental film will still need to find its audience sooner or later, or its makers will feel the pinch; but this is the way things have always been in the past—and, it should be emphasized, not only in the homeland of Lenin—so no condolences are in order.

KOLKHOZ CHAIRMAN

It is obvious that there are still plenty of bugs to be worked out of the new system, but given the enthusiasm, dedication, and hard work of Chukhrai and his associates at the Experimental Studio, one feels they have good chances for success. The Experimental Studio's first production is *Neither Adding nor Omitting . . .*, with Basil Ordynsky directing Simonov's script about the Battle of Moscow in late 1941. The authors emphasize that they are attempting an exact, factual reconstruction of that terrible fall and winter, when the Soviets were losing on all fronts and made a desperate attempt to save their capital from the previously unstoppable invaders. Both Ordynsky, with *At Your Threshhold,* and Simonov, with *Living and the Dead,* have recently done important war films in a realistic manner emphasizing Soviet weaknesses and mistakes. Much different will be the Studio's second effort, Alexander Volodin's original script *The Enigmatic Hindu,* an eccentric story about a nonconformist vaudeville magician, to be directed by Peter Todorovsky (winner of a minor Venice prize in 1965 for *Loyalty*).

Another addition to the Soviet lineup of studios is the newly organized studio at the Film Institute (VGIK), where all Institute students will be able to do their diploma films. Given the number of interesting young film-makers in the USSR who are coming along with something new to say in new ways, we can expect to see many artistically worthy pictures coming from the Institute, probably most of them in the anthology ("almanac") format of three short films packaged to run the length of a feature. Further specialization of pro-

duction is being undertaken by a subdivision of Mosfilm, "Ekran," headed by Samsonov, which will work with the Film Actor's Studio-Theater in making films as vehicles for specific actors.

Less obvious but nonetheless real progress is also taking place in government control and censorship, where there is much more tolerance than heretofore. Plenty of themes that were completely absent from Soviet screens a decade ago, from Stalinist concentration camps and anti-heroes to sex and nudity, are now coming into their own, sometimes even where their connection with the basic plot might seem a bit tenuous. Suffice it here to cite one example of the new administrative tolerance. When one comedy director submitted his new slapstick picture to the Federal Cinema Committee, he received a reply with some polite phrases to the effect that the film was a bit long, and in order to make it more viewable it would be a good idea to cut it down a bit, especially removing two "unnecessary" scenes, one showing college students trying to bamboozle their professor on a final exam, the other a slapstick chase with the bully made up like an African savage. Both scenes stayed in the released film, and both provoked great hilarity among audiences.

Another indication of a broader outlook is the growing number of foreign films released in the USSR (108 in 1965, 100 in 1966), including *Umbrellas of Cherbourg, Seduced and Abandoned, That Girl Rosemary, Some Like It Hot,* three by Soviet favorite Stanley Kramer *(Defiant Ones; Judgment at Nuremberg; It's a Mad, Mad, Mad World),* even such older works as *The Outcry (Il grido), Umberto D,* and *Rashomon*—whose Soviet premières were in 1965–66. Better late than never. To be sure, a large part of foreign films on Soviet screens are still from the "people's democracies," but even in the new Polish and especially Czech and Hungarian films there is some eye-opening innovation and forthrightness, which is beginning to have its effect. A number of them are drawing the box-office warning "Children under 16 not admitted." Examples are the Bulgarian *One Night of Love,* the Polish *How to Be Loved,* and the spicy Czech boudoir comedy *Story of a Door Key* —which aroused something of a controversy last year when an irate parent and teacher was "so shocked and embarrassed" by it that he wrote *Sovetskoe kino* complaining that "such pictures contradict our moral standards." (A number of replies were later printed, pooh-poohing the old-fashioned ideas of the complainant.)

The increased exhibition of western films has not altered the traditional practice of dubbing them into Russian. Some gripes have been voiced on this score, however, and when *Umbrellas of Cherbourg* opened in Moscow with a Russian narration over the French singing (which as a consequence was toned down to virtual inaudibility), one composer wrote a sharp letter of protest inquiring why subtitles had not been used instead, and why the opening had been cut out (*SK* 6/18/66).

Things are happening in construction as well as organization. Approval has been given for the construction of a House for Film Veterans (i.e., those who are retired), and for the above-mentioned All-Union Film Center, to be a headquarters for all film research. A considerable number of new theaters are going up every year, which hopefully will permit the eventual retirement of some surviving relics from Tsarist days (like the "Metropole") which are still in operation. One very large one is going up in Moscow on Kalinin Avenue not too far from the "Artistic," and another huge one in the new Russia Hotel; the latter will be the first new theater in the city center in many years. At the end of 1965 Moscow had 101 theater buildings, 71 of them built since 1945; in 1966 seven more were slated to open, with a seating capacity of 5500. In the nation as a whole, the total number of film-showing facilities practically doubled between 1959 and the end of 1965, from 78,000 to 145,300. Included in the latter figure are 10,400 wide-screen and 87 "wide-format" (70mm or Cinerama) theaters.

A serious problem has always been the relatively limited film exhibition in rural areas of the USSR where, unlike the USA, private cars are practically nonexistent. Attendance statistics indicate that the average city-dweller sees 20.6 films per year, the average country-dweller 15.7 (1964 data). This inequity may be partially eliminated by a new invention, the filmobile, which is being given a tryout in White Russia. These are busses with 35–60 seats, which make a circuit of villages within a radius of six to ten miles picking up customers until the bus is full: then they stop to show the film program, and finally drive the customers back to their homes. As a reflection of all these measures to build more theaters, increase rural service, etc., plus the normal growth of population, attendance in Soviet film theaters has risen steadily in the 1960's, from 3,611,000,000 in 1960 to 3,877,000,000 in 1963 and 4,112,000,000 in 1964. The average number of visits to theaters per person

in 1964 was 18.3 (combining urban and rural data), which Soviet statisticians compare with a figure of 12 in the USA and 8 in England and France.

Soviet television has always been a poor relation of films, in terms of critical recognition, extent of operations, and size of audience. Within the past few years, however, *Iskusstvo kino* has begun carrying a regular television section, and important directors like Alexandrov and Alov-Naumov have done feature films for the small screen (called the "light-blue screen" in Russia). As in the film society movement, Poland and Czechoslovakia seem to have developed TV faster, and the USSR is seeing what useful experience can be gained from the Poles and Czechs. But the Soviets hope to take a big step forward with the planned opening on November 7, 1967 (fiftieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution) of the largest telecasting center in Europe, going up in the Ostankino district of northern Moscow. At first, four black-and-white channels will be in operation, with the center's total capacity of seven channels (including some color) to be reached around 1970.

This is a very encouraging development which should considerably expand the viewing possibilities of people in the USSR, but one which may be running toward a conflict with the construction of so many new theaters. In the large urban areas, such as the capital, most of the impressive new buildings are being put up in the suburbs, where the populations are rapidly expanding in newly built residential complexes of apartment houses, stores, and so on. But a rather familiar question faces these brand-new theaters: will they be able to recoup their construction costs before the citizenry of their neighborhoods gets enough free television at home that it will decide to watch the small screen instead? (While in the USSR, I talked to more than one taxi-driver who could say very little about current films because he "spent his spare time in the summer either outdoors or watching TV.") If the central government agency for film distribution has in the past pegged its plans to 90% of theater capacity, these might have to undergo some revision as Soviet television expands its operations. In any event, let us wish a policy of "peaceful coexistence" to Soviet cinema and television, and hope that the former will be able to avoid some of the temporary devastation wreaked on the American film industry by television some fifteen years ago.

To wind up this survey of the Soviet film industry, something must be said about the films themselves. There is considerable promise of interesting things completed and in progress, in a variety of genres and styles. In the recently rehabilitated "action" genres, we find rather mediocre pictures like the detective story *Black Business* (Hathaway-style semidocumentary based on a true crime story of the "knitted goods gang"), *Extraordinary Mission* (a cloak-and-dagger yarn set in the Russian civil war period, with feats of daring, narrow escapes, etc.), and *What are You Called Now* (Soviet agent, operating in disguise behind Nazi lines, faces brilliant German counterspy). Another of the "black" genres, horror, has been completely untapped until two novice directors recently began adapting Gogol's tale of terror and apparitions *The Viy*, with Leonid Kuravlev in the lead role. In science fiction little has been done either, with the recent *Garin's Death Ray* a total critical failure. Let us hope for more from Polish sci-fi writer Stanislaw Lem's *Solaris* (to be directed by Tarkovsky after finishing *Andrew Rublev*), and from fantasy-comedies like Siegel's *Gray Disease* (a professor isolates the bacillus which is discovered to be the cause of indifference, and injects himself as an experiment) and *Formula for the Rainbow* (inventor creates a robot to double for him at meetings, but the double begins to take over).

Much greater achievements have occurred in comedy, especially when satiric dialogue is mixed with visual slapstick, as in Riazanov's *Look Out for Cars* (also known as *An Unusual Thief*, with Shakespearian star Smoktunovsky as a Soviet Robin Hood stealing from the rich and giving to the poor), and in Gaidai's color slapstick grotesques like *Barbos the Dog and the Unusual Chase, The Moonshiners,* and the fabulous *Operation Laughter and Other Adventures of Shurik* (featuring Gaidai's three fumbling crooks, "the Old Master," "the Sissy," and "the Nitwit," patterned after the Lavender Hill Mob and the Three Stooges) filled with matchless sight gags inspired by Chaplin—whose films Gaidai runs off for himself before starting each of his productions. I saw *Operation Laughter* at a sneak preview and found it the funniest Russian visual comedy since Alexandrov's classic *Jolly Fellows* (1934)—an opinion confirmed later, after the film's general release, when it was voted one of the ten best Soviet films of the year. Particularly in the first episode where he stages a 15-minute pantomime fight-chase scene between a huge bully (Alexis Smirnov) and a clever, be-

spectacled little student (Alexander Demianenko), Gaidai reaches heights of visual inventiveness on a level with the best Chaplin-Eric Campbell duels. It will be a crime if Gaidai's virtually dialogueless color comedies do not find American distribution.

Another top young comedy director, Danelia, has done an interesting lyrical, plotless comedy, *Meet Me in Moscow*, with three very appealing young performers who are already stars—Galina Polskikh, Alexis Loktev, and particularly Nikita Mihalkov (reviewed in *FQ*, Fall '66); he followed this with a more biting satire in the style of Capra: *33*, with Eugene Leonov as a hapless little guy discovered to have 33 teeth, who is lionized by a gullible Soviet public in a whirlwind publicity campaign and victimized by publicity seekers, sharp operators, and demagogues. Another important young comedy director, Elem Klimov, made a brilliant first feature, *Welcome Kostia—or, No Trespassing*, a disguised, rather malicious satire on Stalin in the person of a stuffy youth-camp director who is run out by the kids' rebellion; he enjoyed much less success with his second, Volodin's script *Adventures of a Dentist*, a mixture of eccentric humor, songs, and character types. Another much-discussed comedy-fantasy was Mironer's *Lebedev vs. Lebedev*, in which a meek young man visualizes himself accomplishing big things, speaking up in public, saving ladies in distress, but his imagined successes evaporate when he faces the same situations in reality. The rapid development of Soviet comedy, which is taking an increasingly nothing-sacred attitude, is further signalled by the current production of *Zhenia, Zhenechka, and "Katiusha,"* written by the pop singer Bulat Okujava, a comedy about World War II—which has usually been a subject for ultraserious treatment.

It is interesting to note that more sympathy is being shown for nonconformists, outsiders, even jailbirds and anti-Soviet characters. Top actors like Boris Chirkov (as a police stool pigeon in *Extraordinary Mission*), Sergo Zakariadzeh (a grasping kulak in *Two Lives*), and Donatas Banionis (a nonpolitical slob in the prize-winning *Nobody Wanted to Die*) are giving considerable extra dimensions to "negative" roles by portraying them as strong, rounded, individual characters. A different type of casting against type produced a great success for Anatole Papanov in *The Living and the Dead* (Simonov's big anti-Stalin war novel) when this villain specialist for the first time played a heroic character, a general freed from a political prison to command an expendable front against the Germans. Two other films focussing on jailbirds which made a big mark were *Believe Me Folks* (written by novelist Yuri Herman), about an ex-con and repeat offender (theft) who can't go straight because no one will trust him, and the highly controversial *Your Son and Brother* (written and directed by Shukshin), *sympathetically* portraying a happy-go-lucky lad—played by the very popular Kuravlev—who breaks out of prison just to visit his folks in the country, and is caught and taken back again.

The other side of the coin in the new tendency toward "equalized characterization" is to tear down civil leaders and party members—who appear to be model citizens at the start, but whose pettiness of soul and lack of understanding and tolerance is gradually unmasked in the course of personal, romantic, and sex conflicts. An example is *Descent into the Taiga*, where the ostensibly upstanding Comsomol expedition leader comes out worse than the expedition's black sheep, a disreputable, scoffing cynic. This approach is even more striking when applied to female characters in two films by fast-rising sophomore directors: the lady school principal in Shepitko's *Wings*, the lady kolkhoz chairman in Liubimov's *The Women*—both of whom come into conflict with the younger generation, and whose moral rigidity and impersonal approach to their work greatly tarnishes their MOTHER image.

The much-discussed *Wings* ends with the school principal going up in a plane, with the possibility that she may crash it deliberately to end her fouled-up life. But Shepitko leaves us in doubt as to the outcome, and this allowing the audience to think along with the characters and to draw its own conclusions is another characteristic of the modernist style in Soviet cinema. Hutsiyev's *I am Twenty* and his forthcoming *July Rain* both closely resemble Antonioni in recounting apparently rambling, meaningless episodes from the lives of confused members of the generation of the 1960's—the first Soviet generation which can afford the luxury of doubt, of contradictions, of asking questions without being able to answer them. Michael Romm, in fact, characterizes his new productions as "reflective" or "meditative" films, where problems are only raised, but not solved.

Writer-director-actor Shukshin uses the same approach in his beloved rural settings in his first two features, *A Fellow Like That* and *Your Son and Brother* (both starring Kuravlev, a kind of rustic

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Soviet Belmondo), as does veteran Chekhov specialist Joseph Heifitz in his fascinating *Day of Happiness* (which is really his *Lady with the Dog* done in a modern Leningrad setting, starring Semina as the straying wife and Batalov again as the other man) and, presumably, also in Heifitz's forthcoming *In the Town of* S. (from Chekhov's *Ionych*, with Papanov as the idealist who goes to pot and Andrew Popov in an added role as Chekhov himself). Such devices, harking back to the type of "emotional scenario" which Rzheshevsky was trying to write for Pudovkin and Eisenstein in the early 1930's before "socialist realism" took over, can be carried too far, however; compare Sakharov and Bela Akhmadulina's poetic, chronologically disorganized *Clean Ponds*, which was harshly criticized for a lack of proportion and value: the characters' fragmented thoughts and reminiscences treat petty love affairs as no less important than World War II.

Film-makers like Heifitz and Hutsiyev dwell on a favorite Chekhov theme, the impossibility of communication between friends, lovers, spouses, parents, and children—the theme is not new, but the admission that it can happen in modern Soviet society is. A Chekhovian picture of this type is *Bridge Under Construction*, directed by the theatrical master Oleg Efremov, with his "Contemporary" troupe playing all the parts (one of the few times since Welles's *Kane* that a stage company was brought en masse to do a film). Along with noncommunication, some of the new pictures, like Vengerov's *Factory Town*, show considerable interest in the seamy side of life *(bytopisatel 'stvo*—cf. Italian neorealism, British kitchen-sink drama): trivial, unattractive aspects of the characters' private lives such as dirt and disrepair, drunkenness, nagging quarrels, broken homes, religious sects, etc.

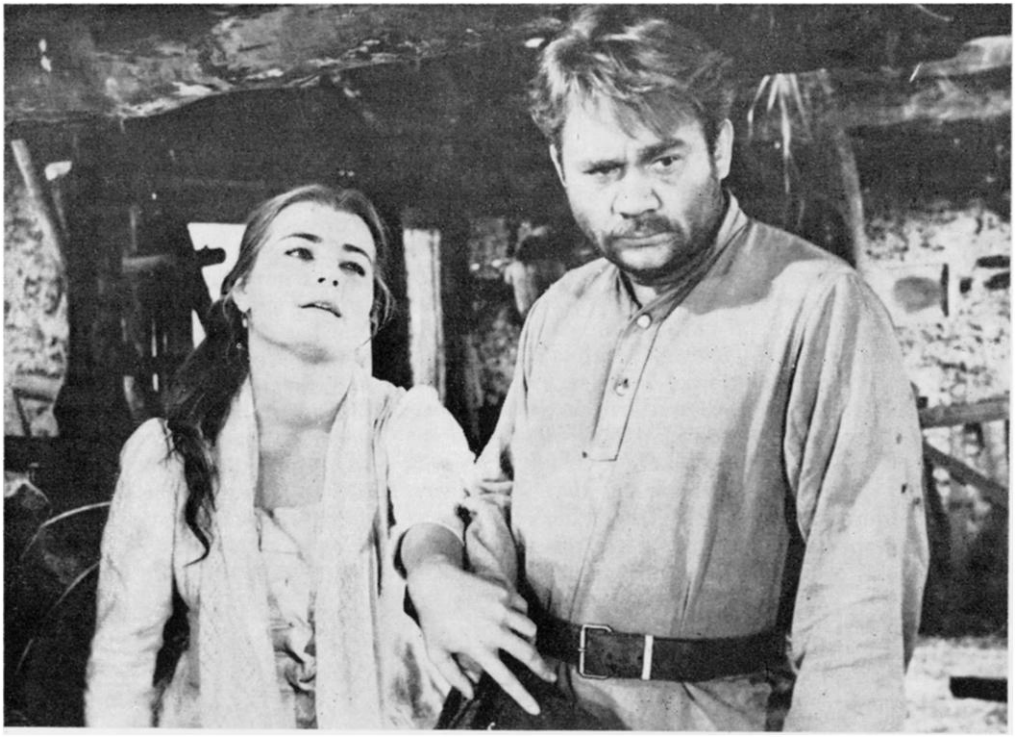
Carrying this a step further into naturalism (once a taboo style) are Zhalakiavichius in the Hemingway-like *Nobody Wanted to Die* (officially voted best Soviet film of 1966) and Konchalovsky in *First Teacher*, raw treatments of unrefined, crude heroes involved in considerable blood and suffering—beatings, rapes, killings of people and animals. Back in 1964 Vladimir Fetin set something of a precedent for this style with his second Sholokhov adaptation about the raw Russian Civil War days, *Tale of the Don*, which was a critical and popular success for its combination of fine acting (Leonov, Liudmila Chursina), brutality and killing, plus plenty of sex and not a little nudity. Sex seems definitely to be on its way in, judging from *Tale of the Don* and modern problem dramas like *A Boy and a Girl* (written by Panova) and *The Women*, whose heroines are teen-age girls abandoned by their boy friends when they become pregnant. *The Women* was criticized, like Godard's *The Married Woman*, because its title implies too much generality for the particular sex drama it depicts; but it was a box-office smash, playing to sold-out houses for a full week in places. And a little nudity is used to good advantage not only in modern dramas like the Georgian *Hello It's Me* (the striking debut of Margaret Terekhova), but even in historical pictures like *The First Russians* (written by Olga Bergholtz), Tarkovsky's long-awaited *Andrew Rublev*, and Serge Parajanov's sensational *Shadows of Our Forgotten Ancestors*.

Much has already been written about the latter film, whose pictorial compositions, imaginative color, visual and musical ethnic background detail, and romanticized story (properly spiced with Tatiana Bestayeva's nude scene) have won it attention at numerous festivals, after Parajanov (born 1924) had spent an entire decade directing at the Ukrainian studio without showing any of the talent finally revealed in *Ancestors*. For this reason let us hope that we can expect even more from *Andrew Rubley*, Tarkovsky's forthcoming second feature, considering that Tarkovsky began with the unforgettable *My Name is Ivan*—which is much closer to Polanski and the psychological *film noir* than to a standard Soviet war movie, despite the critics. Tarkovsky picked a provincial actor named Solonitsyn to play Rublev, the medieval monk who created some of the world's most beautiful religious art, and also has in his cast the now teen-aged Kolia Burliayev (from *My Name is Ivan*). Tarkovsky has

been quoted that he wants his two-part *Rublev* (co-written by Konchalovsky) to be a psychological study of the process of creation, and of purification through suffering; if this young master continues to develop the psychological penetration and camera brilliance of *My Name is Ivan*, his *Rublev* could be the most artistic Soviet film in years.

But it will not be easy to surpass what strikes me as the most brilliant Soviet film since the 1920's: Michael Kalatozov's artistically incredible, thematically controversial, financially disastrous *I am Cuba*, a 1964 co-production made in Cuba, co-written by Evtushenko, photographed by Urusevsky. In this picture Kalatozov and Urusevsky have far surpassed their epoch-making camera innovations of *Cranes are Flying* and *Unsent Letter*, and have realized Eisenstein's dream, which he was trying for in his abortive Mexican film—to give an extremely dynamic, emotional, epic picture of the revolutionary struggle of oppressed Latin American masses, using visual images and no dialogue (an occasional Spanish phrase here and there does not even need to be translated). A year before Yutkevich's more publicized experiment with narrated dialogue in *Lenin in Poland*, Kalatozov and Evtushenko made *I am Cuba* virtually silent, with dramatic music, natural sound, and bits of Evtushenko's impressionistic poetry introducing each episode and connecting them together. The film also harks back to Eisenstein's silent classics like *Potemkin* and *Strike* and to Kalatozov's own 1930 ethnographic masterpiece *Salt for Svanetia* (North American première at Montreal and New York archival screenings in spring 1966), in showing a generalized, impersonal *mass hero* consisting of nonactor *types* rather than individual characters, in the stylized sort of persuasive, emotional, epic melodrama once known as "agitprop"—before it was rejected by Stalin in favor of prosaic, sentimental, conformist "socialist realism" in the middle 1930's.

Kalatozov and Urusevsky have applied their technique of the "emotional camera" to an extent which has to be seen to be believed, with moving camera and handheld camera (Urusevsky ends one unforgettable scene swimming underwater), wide-angle (9.8mm) lenses, oddly tilted angles which distort the characters' images and give the whole picture a very distinctive form, and some elaborate crane shots—especially one travelling up inside a skyscraper across the roof and then flying out over the street below—which in engineering complexity probably equal anything done by the Germans in the 1920's. The film provoked so much technical admiration in the USSR that the taciturn



TALE OF THE DON

Urusevsky, who is probably the greatest active cameraman in the world, was even coaxed into giving a public lecture-discussion (*IK* '66.2:27–37) —although neither he nor Kalatozov ordinarily speaks up in discussions or writes theoretical articles, unlike most Soviet film-makers who are more eloquent behind a typewriter or a rostrum than behind a camera.

I am Cuba in two hours and a half tells four separate episodes from the life of pre-Castro Cuba: a Negro prostitute is preyed upon by Ugly American tourists, in an impressionistically sensual episode the likes of which has rarely been seen on the Soviet screen; an old tenant farmer is dispossessed and burns his crops and cabin in a suicidal fury—the inevitable Kalatozov conflagration sequence; a group of student rebels at Havana University are caught by the police and riot against them; and, artistically the weakest episode, a poor peasant family is driven by an accidental Batista aerial bombing into joining the Castro guerrillas, who only in the final minute are shown in an impressionistic montage of a victory procession.

From the standpoint of content, the film met a rather cold reception in Cuba and Eastern Europe (see a series of articles, some highly critical, in *IK* '65.3:24–37) because of an obvious emphasis on art for art's sake, and because it concentrates with barely concealed fascination on the miseries of poor Cubans under Batista. But, after all, such topics as crime, suffering, police brutality, perversions, student demonstrations, a burning field of sugar cane, and violent death under a bourgeois regime can be stimulating—and cinematic—for a film-maker, more so perhaps than the regimented society and dull life to be found under some other government systems. . . . Because of two anti-American elements, this film may not find American distribution, but if the first episode (which is, however, very flashy and very sexy) were omitted, along with one other short scene where a gang of American sailors on a binge try to attack a Cuban co-ed, perhaps this unforgettable masterpiece could be seen in America—even if it were in truncated form.

Film Reviews

PERSONA

Script and direction: Ingmar Bergman. Photography: Sven Nykvist. Editing: Ulla Ryghe. Music: Lars Johan Werle. Production: Svensk Filmindustri. Distribution: Lopert Films.

Ingmar Bergman's films are a perverse kind of Pearl White serial of the intellect. The characters and themes scrutinized and seemingly resolved in one episode are challenged in another. Thus, the performers of *The Naked Night* were reprieved, by an absurd deus-ex-machina device, in *The Magician.* The father's facile homily at the conclusion of *Through a Glass Darkly,* that God is love and love proves God's existence, was mocked in *Winter Light.* And the vibrant young wife of *The Seventh Seal,* who escaped death by believing that "it's always better when one is two," finds her cozy philosophy tested beyond its, or her, endurance when she is placed in the terrifying position of being alone in the presence of another person, and the two become one, in *Persona.*

The other person is an actress, Elizabeth Vogler, who stopped playing her role in mid-performance one evening, and has been silent since. She can be humanly moved—but not by acting. When she hears another actress sincerely intoning the words "Forgive me!" she breaks into silent laughter. For her, all acting is lying and, by extension, every action is a lie. She has decided that there is little difference between existentially performing an "action" and theatrically "performing" an action. It's difficult to tell the truth—and it's so easy, so generous, so human to lie. Truth wounds; lies soothe. People love to be complimented, to be lied to. Granting this, we imagine the actress asking herself, how can I stop lying? The answer: stop speaking. And what act is not a lie? The act of suicide, and the sight of a monk's

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self-immolation is the only pin to prick her mask and make her cry.

In *Persona* the girl of *The Seventh Seal* has become Alma, a twenty-five-year-old nurse, smiling and engaged, a shining example of *mens sana in corpore sano*. When Alma, on first meeting her mute patient, hears the "Forgive me!" on the radio, she makes a little speech on the importance of the actor-artist to society, "especially to people with problems. Of course, I don't know much about acting." Elizabeth smiles. She has spent enough time putting on a look of agony, shamming convulsion, simulating a throe, to see that Alma's level-headed Miss Sweden is nothing but a well-performed if unconscious role, and that she has problems of her own anxious to be expressed. In fact, Alma feels guilty about a wild beach orgy that led to pregnancy and abortion.

Realizing this, Elizabeth begins to study the nurse, taking advantage of Alma's genuine girlish infatuation with her patient (whom she laughs and flirts with, pets and tells secrets to), drawing Alma out of her persona, draining her of all experience, so that she can "be" the nurse in some future role. But gradually, Alma becomes more than one of the actress's parts—she becomes part of the actress, and learns how to play the role of "Elizabeth Vogler, performer." When Elizabeth's blind husband visits, he mistakes Alma for his wife; they make love and she tells him, "You're a marvelous lover"—a double lie that does not make a truth.

Through all this, the actress remains silent, so Alma plays tricks to get Elizabeth to talk: first she tries ingenuous charm, then pleading, then broken glass in a vulnerable spot, and finally threats. The glass elicits an "Ow!" and the threat of scalding water an inadvertent "No, don't!" But even these are only hysterical reactions, and the actress is still in control. When the nurse begs forgiveness and says, "You don't need me any more," Elizabeth smiles, remembering the radio program. "Oh, yes," Alma taunts, "I know how false it all sounds"—a true sentiment which, uttered by a person in a state of crisis, so often comes out a cliché.

Slowly Alma comes to understand that she is just another of Elizabeth's "props." The actress had borne a child to help her "live the part" of a mother, but was disgusted by the boy's determination to stay alive after the role was completed. Now she wants to toss Alma away like an old prompt-book. In the end, Alma has been used so much that she is nearly used up; her persona has been peeled off like summer-skin; she is no longer herself and may not be anyone at all. Thus completely self-less, she lets Elizabeth commit the final act of vampirism. And in response to Alma's cessation of acting, in any sense of the word, the actress finally speaks. Carefully coached by Alma, Elizabeth, whose "every movement and inflection has been a lie, and every smile a grimace," says one word: "Nothing."

There are enough parallels between *Persona* and other Bergman films to fill a Master's thesis, but here are three:

In the *Persona* prologue, we see the boy from *The Silence*, three years later, picking up a book his possessive aunt had translated as a testament for him; he leafs through it, and *Persona* begins—a story she had wanted to tell him. In the earlier film God's silence turned two women into auto-erotic animals; in *Persona* the silence of the actress-priestess turns the nurse into an incoherent nothing.

Elizabeth Vogler shares surnames with the performer-priest in *The Magician*, whose original title, *The Face*, referred to the phony whiskers and wig he wore to conceal his identity—in other words, his persona. Albert Vogler shocked a skeptical scientist into momentary belief by pretending to be dead and then alive again; Elizabeth Vogler shocks Alma into self-revelation by pretending to be mute. Both Voglers are at once actors and priests: Albert is giving the scientist an almost mystical experience through his performance; Elizabeth is hearing Alma's confession by gathering human material for her performance.

The Seventh Seal's ever-questioning knight confesses, unknowingly, to Death: "I want God to stretch out his hand toward me, reveal Him-

self and speak to me." Death, his confessor, replies: "But he is silent." A later encounter shows the knight demanding Death to tell what he knows, and Death answers: "Nothing." In *Persona* Alma, infuriated by Elizabeth's silence, screams: "Say something, even if it's a lie!" And at the film's end, Elizabeth says something: "Nothing."

It is worth noting that both *Persona* and Antonioni's *Blow-Up* examine the artist's use of false, cruel stimulants (the photographer's camera and car horn, the actress's silence) to provoke an honest human response which can be caught and used in art. And as *Blow-Up* told the photographer's story in an album of beautiful photographs, *Persona* offers us a portrait of the actor by dazzling actors. Liv Ullmann, who looks quite like Hayley Mills, could have played the actress's role as "just another pretty face," but her face implies every nuance of feeling that her silence stifles; as for Bibi Andersson, whose first important film role was that of the young wife in *The Seventh Seal,* her performance as the nurse is perhaps the best Bergman has ever coaxed from an actress.

Bergman's camera and editing techniques have always been at the service of his script. This has earned him the prejorative epithet "theatrical," although it's never been made clear why critics praise Steinbeck for the "filmic" dialogue in his novels and Brecht for his use of movie effects on stage, yet damn Bergman because his scripts are literate and complex and because he allows his camera to linger on the faces of his magnificently trained actors. These critics seem to prefer simple-minded stories and obtrusive camera-work that they can call "plastic" to Bergman's taut, terse scenarios and characters with life and depth, which they call "theatrical."

Unfortunately, the criticism seems to have troubled Bergman; and so *Persona* includes parentheses to show us that it's only a movie, that we should keep our distance and not be fooled by those actors—those liars—up on the screen. The prologue shows us certain images which automatically elicit certain responses (a nail driven through a hand gives us vicarious pain, for example); the epilogue reminds us that the characters with whom we have become involved were simply images. Throughout the film the suggestion of aloofness is continued by the use of a narrator (Jarl Kulle), a motion-picture camera reflected in Alma's glasses, a reproduction of film burning when Alma gets her first reaction from Elizabeth ("Ow!"), and a shot of a tracking camera at the end. Alma's early jest to her patient, "I could change myself into you if I tried hard. I mean, inside me," comes to pass, and the symbolic act of metempsychosis is shown by fusing the right side of Alma's face with the left side of Elizabeth's; thereafter only one side of each actress's face is shown. But it is Ingmar Bergman's faith in the eloquence of the human face—a faith held since the opening shot of *Torment* and one that has rewarded him immensely—that keeps us involved with his characters despite the visual obstacles which fashion has placed in our path, and it is Bergman's own continuing concern for his people, and thus all people, that make him a great artist and *Persona* a truthful, burning, and brilliant film.—RICHARD CORLISS.

MARAT/SADE

(The Persecution and Assassination of Jean-Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade.) Director: Peter Brook. Screenplay by Adrian Mitchell from the play by Peter Weiss. Photography: David Watkin. Music: Richard Peaslee. United Artists.

With *Marat/Sade* we have another confirmation of the fact that theatricality is not per se anathema to film; and perhaps we can now trace back to Olivier's *Henry V* a line of films which have surmounted the usual undeniable ill-effects of filming stage material. Evidently a film may, under certain special circumstances, nourish itself from the theatricality of the work it is adapting. But this is an exceedingly delicate

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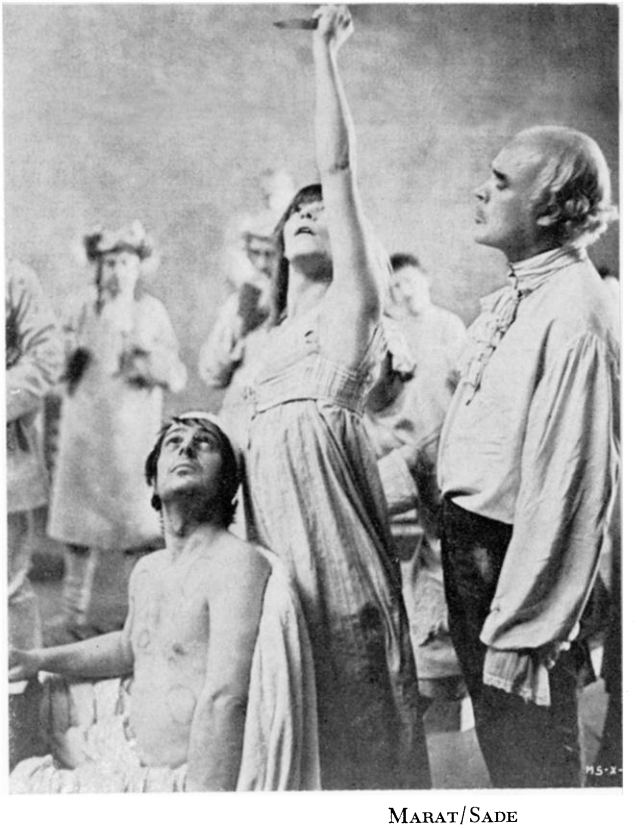
matter, dependent upon the film-maker finding a convention which will enable him to use and excuse the staginess of the dialogue and action, rather than trying to fight, minimize, or "transform" it. We are not concerned, in such cases (as was André Bazin in his discussion of *Les Parents terribles*, though that is a magnificently filmed play), with films where a naturalistic theatrical style, superb in itself, can simply be assumed to be convincing, and filmed in a straightforward way.

Thus *Virginia Woolf* works as film because its incessant, stagy dialogue nevertheless suits its academic characters, and more importantly because the camera, by undercutting the theatricality of the games they play, gives us a harrowing sense of the emotional pressure and drain upon the characters; because of the artificiality of the games, the question of "reality" can never be posed straightforwardly within the information the dialogue gives us; hence there is none of the usual struggle between camera and lines. *The Brig*, to judge by reports, works in a different way: it becomes a frankly documentary, almost newsreel *record* of a particular stage event; and if looked at in that way, rather than as an attempt to convey a film kind of reality, a skillfully filmed performance by an actor is precisely as interesting as a skillfully filmed performance by a musician. In *Marat/Sade*, still another strategy is used, and it works quite well, despite certain inconsistencies and bothersome details.

Fundamentally, Brook has restored the theater's invisible fourth wall—in the form of heavy iron bars which separate the "audience" that is supposedly watching a performance at the asylum from the "inmates" who are acting the play. Now acting arose, theater historians tell us, out of religious rituals; actors in Greek drama sometimes represented gods; certain ritual acting is regarded as a kind of possession by spirits; and the actor "becoming" his character is not unlike a schizophrenic. A situation in which "actors" are possessed by manias may thus strike ancient resonances. At any rate, in practice the situation of actors-playing-madmen-acting somehow becomes not a potentially ludicrous artificiality but a quite viable and convincing convention. This is not only due to the conclusion one draws from asylums (that they would drive anybody crazy who happened to get put away there—and that hence the "madness" is humanly almost irrelevant) but stems from the film's formal qualities: it gives us no alternative, whereas the usual filmed play, by adopting a naturalistic acting style and inserting "filmic" scenes and touches, gives us a perspective from which we inevitably find the play material itself to be unsatisfactory. There is evidently some kind of Gresham's Law operating here, where a greater degree of naturalism drives out (or "exposes") a lesser.



MARAT/SADE

But *Marat/Sade*, though it contains troublesome variable levels of theatricality, is theatrical through and through. The most important figures wear normal make-up: de Sade, Marat, and Charlotte Corday are thus distinguished from the chorus, the crowd of madmen, the

ultraleftist, Marat's Simone, and so on. Also on stage are the asylum director, his two ladies, and several nurses and orderlies, the latter in ordinary make-up; the director looks (for reasons I cannot fathom) rather waxy. Marat, we are told, is being played by a paranoiac burning with brain fever; Corday is played by a girl with catatonia; de Sade is what they nowadays label a sociopath—he is locked up because society dislikes his ideas, and he dislikes society's. The characters are indefatigably articulate. The chorus sings intricate political and bawdy songs. The mass of madmen sit or loll about except when stirred to excitement, at which the asylum director quiets them. There is no question of "realism" here. No attempt is made to provide sound clinical case-studies, nor to suggest anything about the asylum. Yet the camera throws itself so intently into the situation that we have no time or inclination to cavil. We are there among the madmen, and what point would there be to quibbling about theatricality? We are there, after all, to see a play.

The play is a battle of ideas, waged between de Sade and the revolutionist Marat—and what makes it so gripping is that it is an *equal* contest. Sometimes Sade's despairing stoic logic seems in the ascendant; sometimes Marat's doomed, thwarted humanity. As Sade puts it at the end, the object of his play has been

> . . . To take to bits
> Great propositions and their opposites;
> The end, some light upon our doubt.

But the struggle is carried out under the double shadow of madness and of Marat's impending assassination by Corday—who thrice approaches his door, giving a three-part structure of a ritualistic kind. And it is commented upon sardonically by the chorus and crowd, in a number of songs—and perhaps also in the bestial riot with which the proceedings conclude.

Now the basic camera strategy is to take us onto the stage (through a locked grillwork gate) and keep us there; and this is part of the key to the film's power of creating very emotional responses in viewers, who feel the madness is really getting to them. Brook also allows us several looks at the stage from the back of the audience, and once we hear them applaud a royalist point; but I think Brook was mistaken in this; and on one occasion (when some of the supposedly bourgeois audience leave in disgust) he does it to make a cheap point. The equivalence of asylum and stage-playing-area should have been kept as strong as possible: this is surely one case where the proscenium as the invisible fourth wall should never have been crossed by the camera—unless conceivably at the end, where the existence of a visible audience not previously seen would have induced a very shocking switch in perspective on the whole work.

The camera stays close to the actors, whether on the physical and spiritual anguish of Marat, the terrible effort of the girl playing Corday (who reads her lines in a tiresomely mechanical, halting way which is the only unacceptably "theatrical" element in the film), or the grim stage-managing of Sade. Often a wide-angle lens is used, in order to include the entire "bathhouse" stage, with its tiled baths and cover gratings. One wall of this area is not brick but a glowing light surface, evidently a window, though we cannot see through it; this lends a washed-out quality to characters photographed in front of it, which produces some exceedingly strange and beautiful, if gratuitous, visual effects. The imagery of the film is filled with distorted shadows, figures out of focus or weaving in and out—which for once contribute to the effect of a hallucinatory situation, rather than simply making one wince for the cameraman. Also, although the decor is extremely simple, the set's possibilities are used to the utmost—steam rising in clouds, hoses turned on, an attempted rape in one of the baths.

The play conception is itself a bold and varied one—incorporating long and subtle discourse, musical interludes, asides and interruptions, all handled in a frankly theatrical mode.

The film captures all this without attempting to transform it. It even includes visual jokes, like the pouring of "blood" which has different colors depending on whose neck has been un-

der the guillotine. (Marat's seems to be black-and-white; not all the jokes are good ones.)

What is curious and remarkable is that this highly abstract work retains its power on film; its ideas are compelling, the doubts and anguish of its characters are moving, and its vision of the human condition is a large and tragic one. Richard Brook used a naturalistic surface in *Lord of the Flies* to convey Golding's thin allegory; here he has been content to give his theatrical imagination a free rein with Weiss's play, and capture the very rich and affecting results on film. In such extraordinary scenes as that in which the girl whips Sade with her hair, we are reminded that acting *as* acting can be as cinematic a subject as an express train; in the long, exhausting combat of Marat and Sade we are forced to recognize that talk can also be action, and photographable. Brook's experiment is not a great film, but it is a film which contains some important surprises.

—Ernest Callenbach

MASCULINE-FEMININE

Director: Jean-Luc Godard. Script: Godard. Photography: Raoul Coutard.

Masculine-Feminine is a virtuoso display of technique, the epitome of Godard's style, of the new style; but that makes it no less fun, no less touching, no less emotionally engaging, both immediately and in retrospect.

In fifteen separate, discontinuous vignettes, he maintains the living incompleteness of a subtle, complex, simple love relationship, yet leaves us with an understanding that goes beyond defined classifications, a sympathy that is enlarging. Not that this is surprising, of course. No one—either on the current stage or in the film—has presented us with as varied and revealing a canon of love relationships as has Godard, and always with the distancing and jarring, the subversive playfulness of his style, his presence. (Compare, for example, the unexplored matchstick figures, swamped by their surrounding scenery, in Lelouch's *A Man and a Woman.)*

This, however, seems to me Godard's most effective treatment of the difficult quest for love—for a number of reasons. For one thing, here the complexity of conception and means is kept within the situation, not superimposed on it. We see the two young people, Paul and Madeleine, directly, not as refracted through the juxtaposition of the conventions of old gangster movies (as in *Breathless* and *Band of Outsiders)* or of movies about making movies or the artistic process (as in *Contempt*) or of science-fiction, secret-agent movies (as in *Alphaville*). Witty and meaningful as those patterns usually are, they are a game beyond the raw material itself, not exactly distracting, but sapping, clever. In *Contempt*, for example, the lasting, telling moments are achieved, not by playing against the Ulysses myth and its art or against the Hollywood movie-maker myth, but by directly and audaciously following the ambiguously estranged man and wife as they wander and fuss about their apartment trying to know and say what is bothering them.

The Married Woman, it is true, had this same directness of focus, but not the depth or, most importantly, the variety of emotions, not the sympathy in the doing that is the key to *Masculine-Feminine. A Woman Is a Woman* had the directness and exuberance, but was slight—even basically empty, false. The most similar of his previous works was *Vivre Sa Vie*, with its discontinuous vignettes—each with its combination of visual imagery and verbal disquisitions—and with its equally honest and imaginative revelation of the ambiguities of character. Yet in comparison, its talk, although in perfect counterpoint to its situations and imagery, were nonetheless stagey, too obviously philosophical. And it was narrower in scope: it focused on the girl alone (who was not as interesting a person as Paul or Madeleine, more the personification of a conception). It maintained a monochromatic solemnity of tone, did not place the personal situation (as does *Masculine-Feminine*) in a meaningful context, a time and

der the guillotine. (Marat's seems to be black-and-white; not all the jokes are good ones.)

What is curious and remarkable is that this highly abstract work retains its power on film; its ideas are compelling, the doubts and anguish of its characters are moving, and its vision of the human condition is a large and tragic one. Richard Brook used a naturalistic surface in *Lord of the Flies* to convey Golding's thin allegory; here he has been content to give his theatrical imagination a free rein with Weiss's play, and capture the very rich and affecting results on film. In such extraordinary scenes as that in which the girl whips Sade with her hair, we are reminded that acting *as* acting can be as cinematic a subject as an express train; in the long, exhausting combat of Marat and Sade we are forced to recognize that talk can also be action, and photographable. Brook's experiment is not a great film, but it is a film which contains some important surprises.

—Ernest Callenbach

MASCULINE-FEMININE

Director: Jean-Luc Godard. Script: Godard. Photography: Raoul Coutard.

Masculine-Feminine is a virtuoso display of technique, the epitome of Godard's style, of the new style; but that makes it no less fun, no less touching, no less emotionally engaging, both immediately and in retrospect.

In fifteen separate, discontinuous vignettes, he maintains the living incompleteness of a subtle, complex, simple love relationship, yet leaves us with an understanding that goes beyond defined classifications, a sympathy that is enlarging. Not that this is surprising, of course. No one—either on the current stage or in the film—has presented us with as varied and revealing a canon of love relationships as has Godard, and always with the distancing and jarring, the subversive playfulness of his style, his presence. (Compare, for example, the unexplored matchstick figures, swamped by their surrounding scenery, in Lelouch's *A Man and a Woman.)*

This, however, seems to me Godard's most effective treatment of the difficult quest for love—for a number of reasons. For one thing, here the complexity of conception and means is kept within the situation, not superimposed on it. We see the two young people, Paul and Madeleine, directly, not as refracted through the juxtaposition of the conventions of old gangster movies (as in *Breathless* and *Band of Outsiders)* or of movies about making movies or the artistic process (as in *Contempt*) or of science-fiction, secret-agent movies (as in *Alphaville*). Witty and meaningful as those patterns usually are, they are a game beyond the raw material itself, not exactly distracting, but sapping, clever. In *Contempt*, for example, the lasting, telling moments are achieved, not by playing against the Ulysses myth and its art or against the Hollywood movie-maker myth, but by directly and audaciously following the ambiguously estranged man and wife as they wander and fuss about their apartment trying to know and say what is bothering them.

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place and mood, that have, at least in part, shaped it.

The importance of the social situation in *Masculine-Feminine* leads me to one last juxtaposition of my own. Godard here captures the current youthful scene—its energies and wonders, confusions and dead ends—that Antonioni much more ostentatiously and, for all his intelligence, much more obviously tried to come to terms with in *Blow-Up*. But Godard works at it from within, and from sympathy, not from the arch, impersonal and, I think, uncertain distance of Antonioni. For all of its thematic complexity, *Blow-Up* is a neat, tightly patterned, quick trip along the surface; *Masculine-Feminine* is a loose, impulsive, ragged immersion, full of the flow and flux of things, the way it is now for Paul and Madeleine.

Godard immerses us, and yet he keeps pushing us way, spinning us around, breaking the spell. This breaking up of the conventional patterns of narration, this breaking into the conventional illusions of film realism, this breaking away from the conventional sense of the film as a self-enclosed, autonomous package, finished and bounded—all of this is his trademark and already the new convention of the film. In Godard's work this new convention has had two major aspects. There is the attempt to suggest a more ambiguous, unbounded reality by shattering the consistency of the realism of motion picture photography, by producing a Brechtian alienation that emphasizes the theatricality, the artificiality of the collection of surface images as a parallel to the limitations of the surface appearances of "real life." But many of these same devices of alienation, when joined to his abrupt shifting and mixing of moods, tones, and emotions, also contribute to Godard's attempt to create with his films a worldly romanticism—a tangible liberation of consciousness and imagination for its own sake.

These two approaches to the film are particularly appropriate in dealing with the materials of *Masculine-Feminine*. These are young people who experience their lives as discontinuous, elliptical, as somehow only suggesting the full consciousness of themselves that lurks beyond each tangible act, thing, situation. And yet they are young people with a great potential of consciousness, of imagination, of feeling, that is never realized and released. Their lives bear the very kind of discrepancy between inner and outer experience that Godard's techniques both grapple with and portray; they are revealed more by the dislocations of his structure and the mixing of his moods than they would be by any naturalistic sequence of cause and effect, action and reaction.

The dislocations of structure involve several interrelated techniques. The individual vignettes do not follow in clear causal or even temporal sequence; they are further interrupted by visual and verbal "intermissions" of the director. They often rise from omitted materials: exactly what Paul and Madeleine are angry over in the amusement-arcade sequence is never explained and doesn't matter. They often wander from and avoid central problems: Madeleine's pregnancy is mentioned but never the subject of a major confrontation or scene. They often appear to be digressive and irrelevant: Paul and his friend each brushing in turn the breasts of the girl in the bistro, Paul teasing the American Negro soldier. They involve static, undynamic interchanges rather than full dramatic confrontations: the constant question-and-answer sessions of all types. Or when they do conclude with a definite turn of plot, it rises suddenly and surprisingly from what precedes it: Madeleine's first sexual response occurs in the bed that she is sharing with both Paul and her roommate and follows her avoidance of him throughout the preceding scene.

From this welter of seemingly disparate elements emerges a feeling for, and the feeling of this boy and girl (both as representatives and as individuals) and their strangely troubled joys, their oblique, halting attempt at love. Their basic contrast is obvious, but the texture of its development is complex. Paul is the young intellectual, the idealist, the seeker; yet he cannot go beyond words, is not even sure what else there is; finally he gets lost in them. At his first meeting with Madeleine he reads her the polemic on the symbolic injustice of the

Army that he has been writing, yet he goes to work for a popular magazine and when tired of that, goes on to public-opinion surveying. This job turns his intimate, truly seeking questioning of Madeleine (especially in an amusing scene in the washroom that captures their awkwardness, isolation, and possibilities of openness with each other) into the cold, empty words of mass culture (as seen in the interview with the beauty-contest winner). His political concerns lead only to humorous but futile pranks: while he ironically questions the American soldier about the massacres in Vietnam, his friends paints PEACE IN VIETNAM on the side of the Army car; he begins to paint something about de Gaulle on the wall of a theater but stops when some workmen approach.

Madeleine is the eternally feminine, but also the temporally feminine, the plastic product of her times and culture. She is skimming a fashion and show-business magazine while Paul reads his polemic; she is constantly fixing her hair that perfectly surrounds her face like a protective helmet; she hopes to be a record star. Yet the beginning of her success as a singer gives her no full pleasure, leaves her still uncertain and unemotional. For all of her music and beauty and freedom she is uncertain of her emotionality, afraid of it, blocked from it, even more than Paul. In her woman's world Paul can hang around, but never fully enter. And if he could, he would only find that Madeleine, uninvolved and uninvolvable, is not really there, after all.

The groping, uncertain, finally hopeless ambience of their emotions is conveyed both by the contents and the mixed and shifting moods of the scenes. The scene in the bistro that marks the tentative overture to their relationship is suddenly interrupted by a violent argument between a man and wife, his sudden exit and her shooting of him, humorous in its bizarre surprise. The brutality, violence, and death that have become commonplace, banal in the life that surrounds the young people, but through which they glide unconnected, intrudes again and again. Each time the scene involves this kind of shocking black humor. While riding on the Paris Métro, Paul and his friend witness a strange encounter between two Negroes and a white girl (a parody of Le Roi Jones's *Dutchman*) that ends in a shooting. At the amusement arcade Paul is suddenly confronted by a man with a knife who threatens him, then stabs himself. While Paul and Madeleine walk in the street, at odds over some vague tension between them, they are interrupted by a man with a can of gas who asks for a match. When he goes off with Paul's whole book of matches, Paul, on principle, goes after him to get it back, returns to tell Madeleine that the man has poured the gasoline over himself and lit it in protest against the war in Vietnam. Paul, the young idealist, is next seen conducting public-opinion surveys. Earlier, at the movies, while Paul and the roommate jockey for Madeleine's attention, they have watched a comically brutal erotic scene (a parody of Ingmar Bergman's *The Silence*), a scene that is a grotesque exaggeration of the inner silence, the cold physical limits of their own relationship. The girls have stared, repulsed but transfixed; Paul, the young man of principle, has rushed out to the projection booth to complain that the film is being shown at the wrong screen ratio.

The vignette in the amusement arcade can serve as a good example of the shifting moods and modes of narrative through the course of a scene. Paul and Madeleine are first seen dancing dispiritedly, then move to a coke bar. Paul tries to ask what is wrong, but Madeleine leaves, urged on by her roommate, who is a

MASCULINE-FEMININE

subtly subversive force in their relationship throughout, ambiguously fluctuating between feminine clannishness and lesbianism. "We've had enough of him for one day," the girls say. A caricature of a mod young couple come up to the coke bar, the homosexual-looking boy throws some coins on the bar and leaves. The baby-faced girl asks Paul if he wants to take some pictures. They go into a quarter picture booth and pull the curtain; we hear the girl offer to show her breasts for a fee, but she won't let him touch. Paul then goes into the next booth and makes a record for Madeleine. His imagination flows into a playful dream of their going away together and he describes the romantic scene at the airport, "Caravelle calling control tower, Caravelle calling control tower." Their futile yearning for connection, tenderness, communication is then given its poignant climax as he adds, "Paul calling Madeleine, Paul calling Madeleine." But the mood is abruptly broken as he wanders into the bowling machine arcade and watches a man bowling, only to have him threaten him with a knife and then kill himself.

The impasse of their relationship is itself abruptly shattered when the gratuitous horror of their surrounding world intrudes and Paul (as is described but not shown) falls to his death (suicide, accident?) from a balcony. Although thematically consistent, this seems, however, more of an intrusion of the director (with his taste for sudden climactic deaths) than an intrusion of life. The device is retrieved, however, by the perfect mood of the last scene as Madeleine, her face still enigmatically impassive, though now vaguely, uncomprehendingly touched by pain, is once more questioned. In response to the policeman's questions about what she will do now, she answers with the inconclusive mixture of seeking and hiding that has been hers throughout, "I don't know, I don't know." She has changed and not changed. We have come full circle and yet we are certainly not back where we started. Two lives (and our times) have been exposed on film, completely, incompletely. —ALAN CASTY

ACCIDENT

Director: Joseph Losey. Produced by Joseph Losey and Norman Priggen. Photography: Gerry Fisher. Art Direction: Carmen Dillon. Screenplay: Harold Pinter, from the novel by Nicholas Mosley. Editing: Reginald Beck. Music: John Dankworth.

"All aristocrats are made to be killed," says the Oxford philosophy don in the first few minutes of Joseph Losey's new movie, and his aristocratic pupil replies, "Of course, they're immortal." On one level, *Accident* is concerned with exploring certain myths of immortality, and with the durability of the romantic sensibility. The characters in the film feed on their own self-deceptions—each inhabits a walled enclave out of which he will occasionally timidly peek. It takes the accident of the title to smash the walls and spill these people out into the open air, where they gasp for breath, pathetically ill-equipped to deal with their own responses.

The film opens with a car crashing into the silence of an Oxford summer night. A student is dead in the wreckage, and a girl is helped out of the wrecked car by the Oxford don the couple had been coming to see. The accident is investigated, the girl vanishes into a bedroom of the house before the police arrive, and Stephen, the don, is left to cover for her. He elects to conceal her role in the accident. Most of the film is a flashback: Stephen's memories of his relationships with William and Anna, the two students in the car—and with his friend, Charlie, who becomes Anna's lover; with Stephen's pregnant wife, and with his former mistress. The film ends with Anna's departure from Oxford the morning after the accident.

English reviewers have called *Accident* Losey's simplest film, a fact they find praiseworthy. Actually, the film is extremely complex, but the absence of Losey's usual baroque surfaces leaves the impression of simplicity. The cool visual style may stem partly from Losey's choice of Carmen Dillon as art director instead of Richard MacDonald, who has worked on the more ornately detailed Losey films *(The Servant, Eve, Modesty Blaise).* The film is photographed in beautifully muted Eastmancolor. The mood is pastoral, Georgian, elegiac.

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Here, Oxford is an enchanted dream city, caught in eternal summer. The long golden light slants over the river, bells chime in the quiet air. Anna and William inhabit the Oxford of the romantic imagination—a city of leaf-shadow and water-dazzle, where white-clad cricketers make what Nicholas Mosley calls "Boer war patterns" on the bright green playing fields.

This pastoral, elegiac mood is maintained throughout by the visual imagery, the subtle sound editing, and by John Dankworth's splendidly laconic score. This mood, established by image and sound, is furiously at odds with the sexual combat raging under the quiet narrative surface. The contrast between a quiet style and the turbulent subterranean relationships provides the dramatic tension which builds and builds as the film progresses. After the accident, nothing "happens." We simply watch the circlings of a group of civilized, middle-aged intellectuals as they attempt to deal with sexual panic. They don't talk about it, or if they do, only in hints and allusions. They embroil themselves before our eyes, glance helplessly outside their walls, and do nothing.

The film could perhaps lapse into self-parody if it weren't for its lucid style and elliptical script. No one in the film comes right out and talks about what is happening. The characters keep reinforcing their responses in front of our eyes, in absolute denial of the evidence. Only their trapped expressions, or a brief flicker of feeling behind the eyes, gives them away.

Pinter has tightened and simplified the Mosley novel. The most important changes were made in the character of the TV super-don, Charlie, who seems more clearly defined in the film. This is partly the result of Stanley Baker's wiresharp performance. Never an appealing actor to my mind, here his flat, vulnerable-seeming face, bulky body, and furtive, nervous gestures perfectly suit a pop intellectual ill at ease among his tweedy betters in the Common Room. As Stephen says, with perfectly natural arrogance, "He suits the medium."

At Charlie's first appearance in the film (in the Common Room scene), he reads a newspaper report on the incidence of sexual intercourse among students in Wisconsin. (Here Pinter and Losey allow themselves a small joke at the expense of expatriate Losey's home state.) The next time we see Charlie, he arrives uninvited, carrying bottles of liquor, at the Sunday lunch party at Stephen's house. Here his role as a sexual catalyst becomes clearer. He "analyzes" the people sitting around in a post-Sunday-lunch stupor on the lawn—projecting his own sexual fantasies on Stephen—and sees the buzzing flies on the lawn as "Sicilian horseflies, from Corsica." Drunk at the table, he accepts and even cherishes his self-made role as sexual gadfly. But later, when Stephen finds him and Anna alone in his empty house, it is Stephen who gives Charlie the key for further sexual exploration. In the book, Charlie, as Anna's lover, is an accomplice to Stephen's efforts to conceal Anna's part in the accident. In the film, Stephen handles this alone without telling Charlie. This provides the motivation for the final important scene between Stephen and Anna, which defines her role for Stephen and for us. When Anna permits Stephen to make love to her, submitting limply like a rubber sex doll, the mysterious Austrian princess is finally defined as simply a passive sexual object.

The performances in the film are all fascinating to watch. The actors seem to respond to each other at a nonverbal, supersensitive level, picking up the nuances that lie just below the surface. Dirk Bogarde as Stephen is extraordinarily successful at conveying the feelings of a person who is hung up with being both subtle and honest. In the scenes where he mistakes his wife for Anna, or when he makes love to Anna after the accident, his face reveals a particularly sharp and painful awareness of the implications of what is happening. In the early scenes with William also, he suggests the frustrations of male rivalry without ever spelling them out. Jacqueline Sassard irritated me the first time I saw the film; she seemed too wooden as Anna. On second viewing, however, she seemed more persuasive. Nonsensual, mysterious, alluring, the role demands that she

become the receptacle for the fantasies and projections of the three men around her. In a way, her character suggests the mythical queen Semiramis, who, fearing marriage because it would lessen her power, took to bed the strongest of her followers and destroyed them.

The conflict between the scholar, Stephen, and the aristocrat, William, is also a struggle between two areas of temporal power. Stephen, the philosophy don, is described by William as the "protector" as well as the tutor of the princess. In his protector role, Stephen tells William "jokingly" that he will not countenance male lust toward one of his female students. This prompts William's taunt that Stephen is "past it now." William's suggestions that Stephen take up squash to keep in shape, and his mock ingenuous remark, "I thought forty was the prime of life," are also challenges to Stephen's authority, which stems from his control of a body of knowledge and his power over its would-be initiates. Stephen's numen also includes a beautiful pregnant wife, Rosalind, who lives in a gold and green world of ripening wheat fields and grassy orchards.

The structure of the film establishes the parallel pattern of sexual combat between William and Stephen. From the close-up shot of William's dead face in the automobile, as remembered by Stephen, the film cuts to a close-up of William's face alive, and laughing in Stephen's study. In the flashback which forms the central part of the film, William dies and revives three times in Stephen's memories. The second time, Stephen "kills" William in the wall game scrum, photographed at Syon House. We see William and Stephen struggling, then a shot of William's bruised face sinking out of the frame. This shot cuts quickly to a close-up of William in a cricket cap, playing in a match on a green field. This dying/reviving pattern of Stephen's memories of William ends with a shot of William and Anna running across the cricket field, and this shot cuts to the third and last close-up of William's dead face inside the automobile.

There is probably scant likelihood that Losey consciously chose visual allusions to the Cambridge anthropologists to line out the patterns of conflict here. Given this particular academic culture, Losey seems to be implying that the only way the inhabitants of this culture can justify disturbing emotional claims is by seeing them in their archetypal nature. However, the consolations of philosophy seem ineffective here against the powers of nature. When Rosalind calls the affair between Charlie and Anna "stupid and banal," she reveals the determination of the intellectual response: distancing an unpleasant situation by labeling it banal and stupid is one way to deal with the persistent power of the irrational event.

The acting in small parts is also flawless—Losey lets his characters take shape before our eyes. Even Pinter and Nicholas Mosley do brief, successful turns in front of the camera. Pinter has fun with a bit part as a bright-eyed and bushy-tailed BBC producer, and Mosley catches a nice characterization of a horizontal don at the cricket match. And there is the beautiful short sequence between Bogarde and Ann Firbank, as Charlie's cast-off wife, wandering distractedly through her garden, watering flowers in the pouring rain.

The flat, undernourished Pinter style seems to bloom and flourish under Losey's direction. The *longueurs* of a Pinter play are dissipated by the intelligence of Losey's visual imagination. The suspension and compression of time in this particular film also seems unforced. These particular elements seem to combine well to make Pinter's idiom work in film terms. On one hand is Losey's particular fondness for event and place, for the one particular moment isolated and revealed. When he shows us red wine in a decanter on a green lawn on a summer Sunday afternoon, the shot seems at first incidental. As the sequence builds, we realize its importance. Red wine on a green summer lawn—this shot, without self-consciousness, focuses our attention on what is happening then and there: it is a hot golden summer day, people are drinking too much, the talk buzzes on, and we are compelled to look at the physical elements of the scene, the hard-edge definitions of the space that we and the

characters are inhabiting, and the invisible connections between the characters.

There is also Losey's skill at suspending time. This is particularly noticeable in the scene where Stephen visits his wife, and tells her about Charlie and Anna's affair, prompting her "banal, stupid, puerile" remark. He tells her that he is planning to visit Charlie's wife. The scene cuts then to their future meeting in the garden, and back again to the scene between Stephen and Rosalind. This kind of time shift is handled very naturally. Involved as we are with what is happening one jump ahead of the characters, manipulation of time seems utterly "realistic." Seeing the film twice helps in spotting just how beautifully fast and loose Losey is playing in this quiet, deceptively simple movie.

Perhaps the ultimate persuasiveness of the film stems from its lyrical evocation of physical reality—fields and trees, arms, hands, sun-dappled skin—while involving us with people who are trying as hard as they can to deny this reality. The characters of Losey's film (and Mosley's novel) are locked in time, and at the same time they are sure that they have found a way to avoid its difficult passages. "You haven't changed at all," Stephen's well-preserved, middle-aged mistress chatters on, a voice attempting to breathe life back into a dead relationship. The accident of the title is a random event, which reveals the vulnerability of all the characters involved. And after the film ends, we find it hard to dismiss these faces, voices, and summer fields of Losey's film.

—MARGOT S. KERNAN

MODESTY BLAISE

Directed by Joseph Losey. Screenplay by Evan Jones, based on the comic strip and novel by Peter O'Donnell. Photography: Jack Hildyard. Editor: Reginald Beck. Produced by Joseph Janni. 20th Century-Fox.

After *The Servant* and *King and Country*, a film-maker as dedicated to the observation of decaying morality as Joe Losey would seem the man least likely to concoct such pleasant madness as *Modesty Blaise*. Nevertheless, the picture bears all the unfortunate earmarks of his weaknesses: it is overlong and frequently tedious, it suffers from his habitual indulgence in campy in-jokes, and it has some rather jarring lapses of taste. My first impression was of a sort of wide screen, color cornucopia of sixties pop culture: a comic strip orchestrated for the movies and made swift and exciting by the kind of dazzling, kaleidoscopic style for which many of the films of this era—like it or not—will most probably be remembered. But on closer examination, *Modesty* seems less a departure from the kind of thing Losey has done than a refreshing extension of it. Still a sensitive moralist, Losey has chosen to examine certain of society's ills in purely comic rather than tragic terms; with scenarist Evan Hunter, he's fashioned from what was a frightfully silly novel something of a mock epic in which everything from solar astrology to the Establishment falls victim to a keen satirical vision.

Only in plot does *Modesty Blaise* sound like a Bond, Flint, or Matt Helm spy picture: an almost superhuman adventuress and her cockney sidekick (Monica Vitti and Terence Stamp) set out to prevent a shipment of diamonds—a gift from the British government to the sheikh of an obscure Middle Eastern country in return for an important oil concession—from falling into the hands of a mysterious underworld figure (Dirk Bogarde). Resemblances to other spy films stop right there. Losey's arch-criminal, Gabriel, wears silver wigs, carries pastel parasols, and is followed everywhere by an entourage that includes stud hustlers, a Scots book-keeper named McWhirter, and a karate-trained lesbian executioner. And one soon discovers no less motley a crew on the side of law and order: the minister in charge of the secret service is an inept bureaucrat who must constantly be corrected on names, places, and dates. The sheikh parks his auto in the lobby of the Ritz and wants to test-fire his miniature cannon on Buckingham Palace.

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Directed by Joseph Losey. Screenplay by Evan Jones, based on the comic strip and novel by Peter O'Donnell. Photography: Jack Hildyard. Editor: Reginald Beck. Produced by Joseph Janni. 20th Century-Fox.

After *The Servant* and *King and Country*, a film-maker as dedicated to the observation of decaying morality as Joe Losey would seem the man least likely to concoct such pleasant madness as *Modesty Blaise*. Nevertheless, the picture bears all the unfortunate earmarks of his weaknesses: it is overlong and frequently tedious, it suffers from his habitual indulgence in campy in-jokes, and it has some rather jarring lapses of taste. My first impression was of a sort of wide screen, color cornucopia of sixties pop culture: a comic strip orchestrated for the movies and made swift and exciting by the kind of dazzling, kaleidoscopic style for which many of the films of this era—like it or not—will most probably be remembered. But on closer examination, *Modesty* seems less a departure from the kind of thing Losey has done than a refreshing extension of it. Still a sensitive moralist, Losey has chosen to examine certain of society's ills in purely comic rather than tragic terms; with scenarist Evan Hunter, he's fashioned from what was a frightfully silly novel something of a mock epic in which everything from solar astrology to the Establishment falls victim to a keen satirical vision.

Only in plot does *Modesty Blaise* sound like a Bond, Flint, or Matt Helm spy picture: an almost superhuman adventuress and her cockney sidekick (Monica Vitti and Terence Stamp) set out to prevent a shipment of diamonds—a gift from the British government to the sheikh of an obscure Middle Eastern country in return for an important oil concession—from falling into the hands of a mysterious underworld figure (Dirk Bogarde). Resemblances to other spy films stop right there. Losey's arch-criminal, Gabriel, wears silver wigs, carries pastel parasols, and is followed everywhere by an entourage that includes stud hustlers, a Scots book-keeper named McWhirter, and a karate-trained lesbian executioner. And one soon discovers no less motley a crew on the side of law and order: the minister in charge of the secret service is an inept bureaucrat who must constantly be corrected on names, places, and dates. The sheikh parks his auto in the lobby of the Ritz and wants to test-fire his miniature cannon on Buckingham Palace.

If earlier Losey films (and particularly *The Servant*) were damaged by the director's pref-

erence for the baroque, *Modesty Blaise* is totally dependent on it. The characters are intentionally grotesque; they are larger-than-life, overdrawn distortions of normalcy—whatever that is, nowadays. They are frightful beings whose lives seem completely misdirected both occupationally and sexually. Losey once said that in contemporary society "there seems to be a great deal of confusion about sex," and that there is an "overlapping something of both sexes in everyone." While he took great pains to prevent *The Servant* from appearing as though its concern was homosexuality alone, no such precautions were necessary in *Modesty's* case, as nobody in the latter is altogether straight. Gabriel's effeminate affectations emerge as no more and no less repulsive than the convoluted Scorpio tattoos on the legs of Modesty ("there's a stinger in my tail") and her lover, Paul Hagan (Michael Craig). This lady spy always mixes business with pleasure; she seems altogether incapable of falling in love with a man, but is content with using him to get whatever she wants, be it information, trade secrets, or just plain kicks. The depraved relationship between Gabriel and Mrs. Fothergill, his executioner, seems to me one of the more important departures from O'Donnell's book. Losey and Hunter have made them husband and wife (when McWhirter asks Gabriel if he has ever wondered about "Mr. Fothergill," the employer blankly answers "I *am* Mr. Fothergill."). Losey here reduces the theory that modern marriage inevitably deteriorates to sadomasochistic gameplaying (as in Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*) to a satirical extreme: while Mrs. Fothergill (Rossella Falk, in one of her best performances) strangles a white-faced mime between her muscular legs, the angel Gabriel watches with vicarious glee, almost to the point of having an orgasm while he forces McWhirter to keep his eyes on the ledgers. There is even the hint that something is not quite right with the heteros: Willy Garvin sticks daggers into a female mannequin after sexual intercourse, and he is given to wearing rather questionable Carnaby Street fashions (including one gaudy fuchsia and pansy violet coat) and, like Gabriel, even shows up once or twice in a silver wig.

As in most Losey films, there is a very deliberate and formal design—the British have called it a dramatic scheme—in *Modesty:* the film is structured so that our attention is directed alternately between the seemingly antithetical worlds of Gabriel and his island (villainy, disorder, and evil) and of Tarrant, the Establishment, and its agents (patriotism, order, and good). Losey does not shuffle back and forth merely for the sake of moving the plot along, but more precisely for the purpose of proving a point. For the corruption and perversion of Gabriel's world are not an iota more immoral than Tarrant's devices. In an age when excesses of behavior are viewed as "normal," the gulf between so-called traditional "right and wrong" is diminished; morality becomes subordinate to the demands of political expediency. One may justify all manner of behavior on the grounds that it is necessary to the defense of that which one believes. On a more specific level, this means of course that even the most immoral of aggressive acts—the war in Vietnam?—can be justified with remarkable aplomb by those responsible. When a British jet is destroyed by an interceptor missile sent by Gabriel, Tarrant and Hagan show a marked and surprising lack of concern; the crew, of course, died in the line of duty and will be given posthumous recognition for their valor; they were expendable. Gabriel, on the other hand, shows mixed emotions over the matter. He is at once delighted because he has succeeded in tricking the British government into thinking their decoy has worked, and upset that the pilots were family men. There are times when Losey's satire hits closer to home:* when Modesty and Garvin kill some of Gabriel's henchmen, Losey shows the criminal composing a letter of condolence to their families via Paco, his agent in Amsterdam. His words, in both tone and tenor, have

* Or to what once was home. Losey left the United States after being involved in the Hollywood Communist scare of the fifties.

the same pious, mechanical sound of those insipid telegrams our War Department sends to the parents and families of troops who have "died for their country." His exact words, in one draft of the message, have the flavor too of a Presidential speech: "When a great general sends his troops into action . . . ." Of the critics who thought *Modesty Blaise* a pointless and trifling film, how many, I wonder, noticed in this scene Dirk Bogarde's remarkable imitation of Lyndon Johnson's dull Texas drawl?

Other aspects of twentieth-century excesses —social as well as artistic—are examined by the film. Losey's camera comes to rest on a "Jesus Saves" slogan amidst the graffiti on a wall during a scene in which a girl is chased by Gabriel's Amsterdam ruffians; Hollywood spectacles are satirized when Abu Tahir (shades of *Lawrence of Arabia* and Anthony Quinn!) attacks Gabriel's island to save Modesty; the impersonal nature of op art is probably the point of a scene in which Gabriel puts Modesty in a prison cell gaudily decorated with maddening geometrical patterns that are made even more dizzying by use of extreme wide-angle lenses on a moving camera. There are numerous allusions to the sexlessness of pop fashions and to the mindless pragmatism of spy-film gadgetry.

Losey's film seems marred only by the very stylistic quality that makes it go—its excessiveness. Richard MacDonald, Losey's production designer, has made everything so dazzling and colorful that one is likely to miss things that would stick out like sore thumbs in less ostentatious pictures—like the pretty pink and blue smoke from the mortars launched by the sheikh's boats, or the goldfish swimming in the bottom of Gabriel's yard-high pilsener glass. Some sequences and even shots seem extended for an interminable length—such as the arrival of the sheikh's troops at Gabriel's island and the business of McWhirter's ledgers. Still other gags—like the kick-the-bucket joke when Mrs. Fothergill is killed and the call of Gabriel (as Abu Tahir's prisoner, staked out on the desert) for champagne instead of water; or Gabriel's shock on encountering McWhirter, whereupon

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he exclaims "Oh, I thought you were mother"—seem to work only because they are so terribly absurd. And Hunter's script is full of wonderful puns and campy *double entendres,* such as Gabriel's answer to Garvin's question concerning their whereabouts at one point: "You are on board a freighter . . . with a cargo of fruit and nuts . . . ." What is missing from the film is a sense of restraint. And in this day and time, perhaps we have no right to expect it.

—JAMES MICHAEL MARTIN

THE PRIVATE RIGHT

Director: Michael Papas. Script: Papas. Photography: Ian Wilson. Music: Nicos Mamangakis. Editing: Phil Mattram and Papas.

In Britain, *The Private Right,* which had its first showing at the London Film Festival, has become a minor *cause célèbre.* The film, which *Sight and Sound* called "the most striking and accomplished first film made in this country since *It Happened Here,*" was directed by Michael Papas, a 27-year-old Greek Cypriot who grew up on Cyprus during the war for independence. Papas is reluctant to talk much about whether or not he actually fought with the EOKA guerrillas in Cyprus, saying only

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that he was involved "very very closely" with the events of 1955 to 1960, leading up to the island's independence from British rule. But this reluctance may stem from the fact that to some people in Britain, the war is still a sensitive subject. It's as though, ten years from now, a student from Hanoi came to America, studied film-making at UCLA, and used UCLA technicians and some government money to make a cool film about a Viet Cong vendetta in the slums of Chicago.

This is an extreme analogy, but it might help to put the film in context for American audiences. Perhaps what really disturbs the debaters in the House of Commons is not that *The Private Right* indirectly received some government funds (through the National Film Finance Corporation), but that it is such a good film. Though the film opens with a harrowing and exciting sequence of guerrilla warfare in Cyprus, it is much more than a movie about colonial self-determination. The scene soon changes from Cyprus to London, and we slowly discover that the film is actually a beautifully modulated, almost surreal, visualization of the patterns of obsessive behavior. *The Private Right* uses war as a social paradigm for private rites. Papas may be saying that if governments teach us to play these games in public, what then can stop us from continuing them in private?

The questions raised in Britain about the way Papas uses a brutal war and torture sequence to open the film actually affirm the film's effectiveness. *The Private Right* is not anti-British, nor is Papas. In an interview, he spoke of his youth in Cyprus during the war with admirable restraint and fair-mindedness. Living through this war, however, left him with what he calls a "personal interest in violence."

Perhaps the sense of personal involvement which Papas brings to *The Private Right* is the most important aspect which distinguishes it from *The Battle of Algiers,* another film at the London Festival which deals with a nation's war for independence. Pontecorvo's film, which won the Golden Lion at Venice and was also greeted with enthusiasm here, had, for all of its dramatic movement and passion, an air of manipulation. Pontecorvo stacks the cards, just as Griffith (whom he much admires) did in *The Birth of a Nation.* Though Pontecorvo is scrupulously careful to show the balance of atrocities on both sides, in conversation he admitted that the film was hardly impartial. Perhaps it's just that I prefer Papas's more elliptical, fantastic visualizations of sociopolitical behavior to Pontecorvo's broad canvas and huge brushstrokes.

So much for politics—the film's style is really more interesting. *The Private Right* is not essentially a political film, or a war film either, but a profoundly disturbing, elegiac study of a revenge ritual. As a first film made by a young director with a student crew (from the London School of Film Technique where Papas also studied), the film has a high professional gloss. Much of this is due to the elegant camera work of Ian Wilson, a faculty member at the School. But as well as good camera work, there is a sureness about Papas's staging of actors (especially in the early battle sequences), and an acute ear for evocative sound that makes this an unusually distinguished first film.

Papas also has an eye for movement within the frame, and uses wide-angle lenses very effectively to give a fantastic dimension to his imagery. Use of these lenses in overhead tracking shots gives an eerie sinuousity to the camera movement. In long shots, the extreme depth of field offered by wide-angle lenses provides strange juxtapositions between foreground bulk and distant detail. This is noticeably effective in the early war sequences, where Papas builds up a kind of nightmare-newsreel imagery. In close-ups, the lenses bend the space within the frame to alter the human face into a strange kind of mannerist portraiture.

In the second half of the film, however, some of these mannerist distortions seem obtrusive. Too many faces are bent into cruel masks, too many long arms reach out of the night. Along with these optical distortions, Papas has one sequence which uses grotesque hallucinatory images reminiscent of the early German expressionist cinema. The phantoms that visit the

Cypriot traitor in London seem a bit stagey. It might have been better if Papas had kept to optical mannerism, and left the shots of the Frankenstein faces, dangling corpses, and open coffins on the cutting room floor.

However, this particular procession of staged images does lead up to a brief flashback, which evokes horror with the most economical means. The last phantom to visit Phantis, the Cypriot traitor, is a man whose face is swathed in black bandages. The next shot returns to Cyprus and the nightmare-realist style of the early war sequences. The traitor, hooded in black, parades before a line-up of potential victims. As he singles out those to be shot, the bells of independence ring out, and the hands of the patriots reach up to snatch off his mask. This particular sequence was overexposed in the camera to give a dazzling burnt-out whiteness to the scene, and the movement within the frame was paced very slowly to create a sense of dream motion. This white night vision is all the more terrifying because it shows reality just faintly distorted, but nevertheless solid and "real."

In the interview, Papas described how he used a series of wide-angle lenses to create the nightmare mood in another sequence; the one where Minos, the guerrilla leader, receives a phone call in London telling him where the traitor Phantis is hiding. The first shot, where Minos answers the informer's telephone call, uses a 70mm lens. It changes to a 50mm when he goes out into the street. When he reaches the house, the shot widens with a 32mm lens to show the woman answering the door. The composition within the frame becomes distorted with the subsequent 18mm and 14mm shots of the figures in the hallway. Finally, a 9mm lens is used to curve the dark passageway into a fearful Stygian labyrinth.

This lensmanship would be meaningless, even irritating, if it did nothing more than bend the space around. But to implement this stylized imagery, Papas has used some chillingly effective bits of action and sound. Minos has found the wrong man, and this innocent victim is watching television—an on-the-spot news report of a disaster. The man turns in time to avoid being killed, but as Minos raises the gun to the man's head, we hear the bland voice of the television announcer describing how many victims have been killed or rescued. And suddenly, we too find ourselves watching a disaster about to happen—to a man watching another disaster.

The way that Papas uses street locations in London's Greek and Cypriot colony gives a gritty verisimilitude to his chase sequences. Even though he trots out many old familiar devices (the mysterious drive in a dark automobile, the sudden ghastly encounter in the alley, the photograph of a victim that no one recognizes, the gun at the door, the face at the window) these all become fresh because of the director's involvement in the milieu. The Kentish Town district of London, where much of the film was photographed, is a very foreign section of a very Anglo-Saxon city. Papas's camera lingers in abandoned doorways, Greek barbershops, market squares, taverns, and he stages the film's stunning dénouement in the echoing abandoned roundhouse at Chalk Farm. Treating jolly old London as a sinister foreign city is a very effective horror device.

At best, Papas's involvement in his milieu is fresh and exciting. Sometimes, however, it leads to self-conscious camera set-ups. Several times he lingers just a bit too long on picturesque Greek types. The Greek music becomes obtrusive during some of the chase sequences and in the café scene when Phantis forces the drink down the girl's throat. However, countering this sometimes excessive use of music is

The water-torture sequence: THE PRIVATE RIGHT

Papas's very skillful use of sound to suggest what we do not see, as in the opening war sequence, when Minos grenades the British jeep. During this shot, the camera lingers on Minos's face, but on the soundtrack we hear the distant agonized groaning of a British soldier, and over it, a clipped voice calmly sending out a radio call for help. This sound montage conveys a picture to our mind's eye that is much more terrible than anything re-enacted for the camera.

The program notes on *The Private Right* at the London Film Festival compared the film to *Paris Nous Appartient,* saying that it "creates exactly the same hallucinating sense of dislocation and intangible fear." Jacques Rivette's film, however, was remarkable because it went beyond narrative to interweave and define a whole constellation of cultural responses. The mood of the mid-fifties, the era which produced both McCarthyism and the New Wave cinema, is defined in Rivette's film by characters who act out the process of cultural transformation. The obsessions of Minos and Phantis in *The Private Right,* however, go deeper than culture. *Paris Nous Appartient,* like "The Wasteland," defines the emergence of a new sensibility. *The Private Right* shows us something much older—a stylized ritual of power and death. It is very much to the credit of Michael Papas that he has used raw material from a turbulent childhood to create a work as ordered and as chillingly persuasive as this film.—MARGOT S. KERNAN

LA GUERRE EST FINIE

Director: Alain Resnais. Script: Jorge Semprun. Photography: Sacha Vierny. Music: Giovanni Fusco.

Although a general cinematic style can be followed through his four previous feature-films, it can be said that, with the showing of *La Guerre Est Finie* at the Cannes Festival, Alain Resnais turned a new leaf in his work—and also that he brought something new into the art of film. A new leaf in his work because I think it is the first time in a Resnais film where reality prevails over dreams, and also where the content prevails over the technique. True, we have here, short rapid flashes, with a different, glittering light, when the revolutionary hero Carlos/Diego (Yves Montand) imagines things that may be happening, that may have happened, or that will happen.

Jorge Semprun, who wrote the screenplay and dialogue, is a Spanish refugee; he has been living in France since his boyhood, and knows very well the life he depicts in the film. Semprun has made some statements about his work with Resnais which are quite revealing. According to Semprun, Resnais never writes a single word of the script he is about to shoot. Still, there is not one word in the script which does not bear the mark of his work, of his demands, of his general view of the film he plans. One day he arrives with a sequence which is absolutely perfect; perhaps one adjective, here, troubles him. After an hour's detailed analysis, this adjective has been removed, dragging along the whole scene. It is not the adjective which has been replaced, it is the whole scene which had to be rewritten, as many times as necessary to meet his requirements.

The part played by Resnais in the writing is therefore an enormous one; he does not write, but the scenarist finds himself writing just what Resnais has decided he should write. This explains why Resnais always works with writers whose works he respects and admires, whose personalities have something in common with his, although he resents the term "literary cinema" applied to his work.

La Guerre Est Finie introduces us to an exiled Spanish revolutionary known as Diego (although his real name is Carlos) who has been working for the overthrow of the present Spanish regime, while living in Paris for over twenty years. He makes repeated trips to Spain to organize demonstrations, strikes, etc., and most of these plans usually end up by being thwarted, cancelled at the final moment or prove to be only limited in any meaningful, effect upon Franco's government. He has been

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living with Marianne (Ingrid Thulin), a Swedish girl whose work as editor of art books allows them a comfortable way of life. During a routine trip to Spain, Diego learns that one of the leaders of his organization, Juan (Francois Remi), is threatened by discovery and arrest. Despite his instructions, he decides to return to France to warn Juan of the danger. His search for him, his desperate try to save his life, come into opposition with his friends' opinion that what counts is the cause. At this moment comes back vividly to Diego the feeling that "the war is over," a feeling that has long been latent in him. He has grown morally and emotionally fatigued by the self-sacrifice of those whose lives are somehow less important than the ideals for which they strive. The makers of revolution and the drab, grey monotony of their routines, their portentous conversations and concern about time-schedules, Metro stations, suburban byways near Paris—the paraphernalia of conspiracy all have become tiring to Diego, and the film describes his brief effort to decide what to do, whether to continue what has been his life for so long or . . . what?

Diego meets Nadine (Genevieve Bujold) the young daughter of a man who had loaned him his passport, and, attracted by her beauty, her unabashed idolatry of himself as a revolutionary hero, he has a fleeting affair with her. However, this leads to his meeting her friends, a group of adolescent anarchists who believe that dynamite is the answer to all their problems regarding terrorist activity. They are convinced that if a few of the 14 million tourists who enter Spain every year were blown to bits at theaters, cafés, bullfights, and so on, the Franco regime would soon crumble. Faced with these young tigers, Diego finds himself defending the theories and methods with which he has been living, and in which he is no longer certain that he still believes. Finally, he chooses to return to Spain once more for revolutionist activity as a last-minute substitute, not knowing that the Spanish authorities are waiting to arrest him. When Marianne discovers Diego's peril, she follows, in her turn hoping to intercept his journey and warn him.

None of his previous appearances in the cinema, in either French or American films, could have led us to believe (regardless of his talent as a singer) that Yves Montand could be a great actor. However, in this film, he *is* Diego. He was selected by Resnais because he corresponds exactly to what the director had in mind: a man of action in his forties, a man full of patience who sometimes bursts with the impatience accumulated by years of tedious work. *La Guerre Est Finie* is not a film with a message. It deals with politics because, as Resnais declares, "Politics are the tragedy of our time." This is a film which is like a low-voiced cry, one of intelligence, honesty and beauty, uttered by one of the masters of the modern cinema. Diego's tragedy is that his "war" will never be over, but will continue, even after he has fallen; but for him, these clandestine, seemingly futile actions represent his entire life, defining his dignity and the value of his existence. It is Resnais' understated illumination of such matters that makes his latest work beautiful, moving and sad.—GINETTE BILLARD

SONS AND DAUGHTERS

Sons and Daughters (Days of Protest). Written and directed by Jerry Stoll. Photographed by Stephen Lighthill, with additional photography by various cameramen. Score by Virgil Gonsalves. Narration written by David Castro, spoken by Janet Pugh. Produced by American Documentary Films.

Sons and Daughters is a feature-length film about the teach-in and student anti-war demonstration at Berkeley on October 15–16, 1965. The film recounts the events of those days: preparation for the "Days of Protest" march, the first Vietnam teach-in, the march from Berkeley to the Oakland border the night of the 15th, and the second march and continuation of the teach-in the following day. The urgency of the protest is reinforced by intercut sequences of

living with Marianne (Ingrid Thulin), a Swedish girl whose work as editor of art books allows them a comfortable way of life. During a routine trip to Spain, Diego learns that one of the leaders of his organization, Juan (Francois Remi), is threatened by discovery and arrest. Despite his instructions, he decides to return to France to warn Juan of the danger. His search for him, his desperate try to save his life, come into opposition with his friends' opinion that what counts is the cause. At this moment comes back vividly to Diego the feeling that "the war is over," a feeling that has long been latent in him. He has grown morally and emotionally fatigued by the self-sacrifice of those whose lives are somehow less important than the ideals for which they strive. The makers of revolution and the drab, grey monotony of their routines, their portentous conversations and concern about time-schedules, Metro stations, suburban byways near Paris—the paraphernalia of conspiracy all have become tiring to Diego, and the film describes his brief effort to decide what to do, whether to continue what has been his life for so long or . . . what?

Diego meets Nadine (Genevieve Bujold) the young daughter of a man who had loaned him his passport, and, attracted by her beauty, her unabashed idolatry of himself as a revolutionary hero, he has a fleeting affair with her. However, this leads to his meeting her friends, a group of adolescent anarchists who believe that dynamite is the answer to all their problems regarding terrorist activity. They are convinced that if a few of the 14 million tourists who enter Spain every year were blown to bits at theaters, cafés, bullfights, and so on, the Franco regime would soon crumble. Faced with these young tigers, Diego finds himself defending the theories and methods with which he has been living, and in which he is no longer certain that he still believes. Finally, he chooses to return to Spain once more for revolutionist activity as a last-minute substitute, not knowing that the Spanish authorities are waiting to arrest him. When Marianne discovers Diego's peril, she follows, in her turn hoping to intercept his journey and warn him.

None of his previous appearances in the cinema, in either French or American films, could have led us to believe (regardless of his talent as a singer) that Yves Montand could be a great actor. However, in this film, he *is* Diego. He was selected by Resnais because he corresponds exactly to what the director had in mind: a man of action in his forties, a man full of patience who sometimes bursts with the impatience accumulated by years of tedious work. *La Guerre Est Finie* is not a film with a message. It deals with politics because, as Resnais declares, "Politics are the tragedy of our time." This is a film which is like a low-voiced cry, one of intelligence, honesty and beauty, uttered by one of the masters of the modern cinema. Diego's tragedy is that his "war" will never be over, but will continue, even after he has fallen; but for him, these clandestine, seemingly futile actions represent his entire life, defining his dignity and the value of his existence. It is Resnais' understated illumination of such matters that makes his latest work beautiful, moving and sad.—GINETTE BILLARD

SONS AND DAUGHTERS

Sons and Daughters (Days of Protest). Written and directed by Jerry Stoll. Photographed by Stephen Lighthill, with additional photography by various cameramen. Score by Virgil Gonsalves. Narration written by David Castro, spoken by Janet Pugh. Produced by American Documentary Films.

Sons and Daughters is a feature-length film about the teach-in and student anti-war demonstration at Berkeley on October 15–16, 1965. The film recounts the events of those days: preparation for the "Days of Protest" march, the first Vietnam teach-in, the march from Berkeley to the Oakland border the night of the 15th, and the second march and continuation of the teach-in the following day. The urgency of the protest is reinforced by intercut sequences of

war-supply shipments, troop trains, and Vietnam footage.

The subjects of direct documentation are the teach-in, the march, and attempts during the summer just preceding to stop troop trains bound for the Oakland Army Terminal and to appeal to the recruits to take positions of individual and joint refusal to serve in Vietnam. The students are concerned with providing a concrete basis for moral objection to the war by stressing its criminal nature. One speaker alludes to the violation of rights guaranteed by the Geneva Conventions, and others invoke the Nuremberg standards for war crimes.

Documentation of the teach-in centers exclusively on the speakers: the teach-in is addressed to us, rather than to the students, of whom we see little. As depicted, the series of speeches—illustrated and expanded by intercut war-footage and narration—are conceived as anchoring the relatively formless sense of urgency in fact and widening its perspective until both the war and the anti-war movement can be understood as the focus of a general crisis. Specialists like Franz Schurmann warn of specific risks run by the continuation of the war. Other speakers—Reginald Zelnik, Conor Cruise O'Brien, Hugh Hester, Robert Browne—stress aspects of the political significance of the demonstration. Paul Goodman is shown twice, defending the students' right to protest the domination of the "invisible government" the military and industrial interests which control decision-making.

The protesters learned that the police and the National Guard had been mobilized to block the march through Oakland. On the night of the 15th, the marchers decided to proceed to the Army Terminal anyway, to force a confrontation. When it became clear that the police had definitely cut off the Berkeley-Oakland border, the marchers returned to Berkeley to continue the teach-in. The next day, it was announced that, as there was no way of reaching the base, they planned to march as far as the police cordon at the Oakland border and continue the teach-in there.

At the border, they encountered not only the police line but a group of Hell's Angels gathered nearby. The Angels attacked the demonstrators, who seated themselves until the cops restored order. The resumption of the teach-in is represented by more speeches, one of which, by Staughton Lynd, is used as a text for intercut sequences depicting a hand-to-hand combat drill at an army base. Lynd, addressing himself to draft-age men, is (in the film) the only speaker—in 1965—to propose conscientious objection as an alternative to service.

The use of footage documenting the war to illustrate the speeches and bring home the causes of the protest must be evaluated. The film prepares us for its extensive use of war-footage in its opening sequences. First there are establishing night scenes of San Francisco Bay; Lighthill's photography creates fascinating images of the partially lit harbor and vessels loading their cargo. Close shots of signs inform us that they are in a restricted area, being loaded with army equipment. (Later, we see sailors and soldiers embarking at the same harbor.) Over the opening narration, footage from Vietnam is used to summarize the growth of US commitment, ending with the disembarkation of troops and their steady flow onto the beaches and through the jungle.

All the documentary material from Vietnam was obtained from UPI and, of course, edited by Stoll and Lighthill to relate to the content of each speech. Scenes of violence and death are developed into capsule sequences over Browne's denunciation of the brutality of countless executions and Robert Scheer's appeal to every individual's responsibility as he challenges the anonymity of mass annihilation. This, at the level of manipulative cinema, is very moving. But there is an effort in *Sons and Daughters* to transcend the value of facile shock-effect which is the usual limitation of recut documentary footage. Its dimension of urgency lies in the context created by the film's establishing sequence, which prepares it, and in the later training-camp sequences which summarize the inculcation of military brutality and relate it to the concrete issue connected with the protest: the possibility of opposing conscription.

Sons and Daughters uses a variety of techniques to achieve its committed presentation of the war and the protest. It is a documentary of the educative type, which today forms a decided contrast to the radically different direct cinema. While both documentary styles serve to create an ironic view of reality, in the sense that both seek to bring out its contradictions, they do so in quite different ways, and to different ends. A film about the anti-war movement, presumably intended to educate people directly affected by the war but still not actively opposed, must be evaluated in terms of this distinction, if only to estimate its chances of affecting such an audience.

Direct cinema works on a more intimate level than the conventional documentary. Its techniques—synchronous recording and close shooting, facilitated by telephoto and zoom lenses—allow implicit contradictions to reveal themselves in the development of an inherently ironic situation unreconstructed by the film-maker. Some scenes in *Sons and Daughters* approximate this style. The UPI battle footage which terminates the basic-training sequence concludes with a scene which is allowed to carry its own weight. Medals for heroism are ritually presented by an officer while another officer disinterestedly repeats a salute. The medals are being awarded to flag-draped coffins.

Generally, however, the direct material shot by the film-makers is not used in unreconstructed form, but is subordinated to narrative and limitation of perspective. The initial student planning meetings in a Berkeley auditorium were filmed more or less directly, but the debate is compressed to focus on those speeches which present key arguments and objections, and to construct one of the few sequences which actually begins to capture the enthusiasm and energy of the students. The Hell's Angels' attack on the marchers and the ensuing fights were shot direct, with several cameras. We see it broken down into rapid action, sustaining high tension, followed by slow-motion shots of an Angel and a cop (obtained by reprinting certain frames in succession), and more rapid cutting. For the most part, direct sequences insignificant in themselves—handbills being distributed, students walking to and from the rally in pairs and groups—substitute for specific documentation of actual student activities and discussions during the teach-in. The speakers are filmed directly, but once they have been seen and identified, their speeches most often become "sound over" accompanying outside footage. This frequently used technique creates the structural continuity of the film.

SONS AND DAUGHTERS: *basic training to kill.*

In contrast to direct cinema, the conventional documentary style, derived from the English films of the thirties, presents contradictions by reconstructing the material through editing and the use of asynchronous sound (including "newscaster" voices, etc.) and fictional conventions (distant shots, establishing and framing sequences, music). *Sons and Daughters* belongs to this class.

The whiny tone of Janet Pugh's opening narration is no doubt supposed to convey the innocent sense of deception that motivated the "Days of Protest": her rhetoric is no different from that of other well-intentioned appeals to sanity. This tone could have been effectively exploited if, for example, the film had later included more evidence of sharpened political awareness in the participants (other than some of the speakers), which would have contrasted with the naive petulance of the opening narration. As it is, it sounds forced; and when the narrator reproves the citizens whom we see going about their business in the streets, her

righteous tone adds neither conviction nor sympathy to her heavy reproach of indifference.

Elsewhere, a news broadcaster relates one of the official objections to the march: the demonstrators will have to proceed through "a racially mixed area" in Oakland to reach the Army Terminal. Over this sound the film takes us to the Oakland ghetto, where we discover in fact an all-black population—and another official lie.

The causes of the protesters and of the blacks are associated in many parts of the film, sometimes casually, sometimes more closely, to suggest to what extent the expense of America's war mobilization not only diverts poverty money but how unequivocally it depends on ignoring the expressed opinion of voters (as Goodman recalls), on denying the right of expression to blacks, and on keeping the anti-war protest and the civil rights movement separate.

The connection in the film is often superficial. A dissolve from a white protester's face to a black face, a freeze-frame and other associative cuts make the connection filmically but not realistically. At Oakland, the night of the final march, we are shown the line of police and hear the barking of dogs on the soundtrack, recalling the terror in Selma and Birmingham.

The association is more concrete in other sequences. One of them begins with scenes of the black ghetto (Oakland or Watts), using grainy night shots to create its mood of fear and restlessness: a frightened woman answering questions in her doorway, a few idle men standing around a lit store front, two cops questioning a suspect, glaring lights, and patrol cars in the empty streets. In the day scenes which follow, National Guard troops arrive and march down the streets to contain the blacks as the police have contained the protesters.

Another sequence begins on a school-day afternoon in the black neighborhood. Several youths are playing basketball, while, over cokes, a teen-age girl tells a boy about the children she would like to have (probably a specially acted bit). The film freezes a shot of the basketball players and on the soundtrack we hear an army cadence: these youths will soon be picked in disproportionate numbers and drafted to fight a war they know nothing about.

The induction-center scenes that follow summarize the systematic anonymization of the recruits. Street clothes are exchanged for uniforms. A black recruit sits silent while a barber relieves him of a carefully tended hair-do. Name tags, which we see mass-produced, then machine-sewn by Oriental seamstresses, will be necessary to distinguish one man from another. Later in the film, these recruits will be trained to kill. During the combat drill, the camera reveals a large sign on the training grounds: "The spirit of the bayonet is to kill."

It may be the function of the soldier to kill, but over these scenes Lynd's speech is heard, reminding his audience that it is the duty of every man to refuse to participate in a criminal war. On a technical level, a more ambiguous use of manipulative editing is the cut from Lynd, making his appeal to potential CO's, to a row of listening soldiers—an attempt to suggest that the message may or may not reach its intended audience.

The use of Gonsalves's music to reinforce the value of the images is obtrusive throughout the film, and in at least one scene even runs counter to the meaning of the related speech. Stanley Sheinbaum is recounting how US "pacification" has necessarily been from the beginning an operation of total destruction. He ironically urges the protesters "not to be shocked by napalm, defoliating chemicals, and gas—once we have decided on war, all these things fall into place" —making the crucial point that the use of these destructive weapons (and, we might now add, of anti-personnel bombs) is not an isolated abuse but a consequence of the *logic* of this war. Yet the music punctuates Sheinbaum's list of weapons as if each had been intended as an independent indictment.

Ultimately, the essential feature of *Sons and Daughters*—and the source of its pathos—is that its messages never reach their intended audiences. The protestors' signs and pamphlets never reach the troops. The 9-to-5 citizens re-

main indifferent. Lynd's final appeal is directed to the undergraduates. We do not see the students and faculty who listened to the speakers; and even if their reactions had been shown, the fact remains that they do not constitute the audience which must be reached most immediately today. The indifference of the middle-class citizens whom the film reproaches—is it powerlessness, apathy, or is it still the best expression of their real political interests? Would this film succeed in giving them a new perspective on the nature of those interests and the extent to which they are exploited by the "invisible government"? Similarly, although I hope this film will be shown to poor youths, especially black, who face the draft—now that organized resistance has become a possibility—I wonder if the connections made by the film are solid enough to carry conviction and lead to action.

All reserves made, *Sons and Daughters* nevertheless creates a compelling picture of a society whose police and whose soldiers are instruments of a state which can only maintain its political policies by suppression of minority rights at home and destruction of lives in its economic and strategic colonies. It is a powerful and moving film, whose very looseness of structure makes it possible for us today to understand movements of protest in America—which were still unconnected in 1965—as the focus of a general social crisis whose consequences are still very far from being played out.—RANDALL CONRAD.

Short Films

REPORT FROM NEW YORK

Two national news magazines have proclaimed it: short art films are "up from underground"—an overflow crowd of young enthusiastic film-buffs packed into Lincoln Center to see the 1966 National Student Film Awards; crowds were turned away at the month-long Finch College Projected Art show; weekly, the Gate, the Film-maker's Cinematheque, the Movie Subscription Group, are filled by responsive audiences willing to sit through some pretty terrible stuff to see one or two good films; more and more museums are adding film departments; film-makers in traveling units showed their work to capacity audiences at colleges and in lecture halls—the last season in New York was so active, a critic could hardly keep up. But the general impression I received was that there are more and more high quality films being produced independently and a huge audience is eager to welcome them. The future augurs well.

For instance, the National Student Association film awards indicated that many new young artists on campuses around the country are making sharp, carefully edited films full of special effects and full of determination to avoid clichés (which sometimes leads to self-consciousness, but nevertheless commendable). Two of the prizewinners, *Metanomen* by Scott Bartlett of San Francisco State College and *Riff 65* by Eric Camiel of New York University, illustrate both the technical proficiency of these new film-makers and their serious effort to speak out fresh and honest. *Metanomen* is an abstract film of superimposed negative and positive images—an op-art film that uses the geometry of the urban world, bridges, wires, freight yards, with the geometry of figures, such as the fleeting negative image of a girl running across the silhouette of a man's head, to change (meta), thereby re-name (nomen), what is

main indifferent. Lynd's final appeal is directed to the undergraduates. We do not see the students and faculty who listened to the speakers; and even if their reactions had been shown, the fact remains that they do not constitute the audience which must be reached most immediately today. The indifference of the middle-class citizens whom the film reproaches—is it powerlessness, apathy, or is it still the best expression of their real political interests? Would this film succeed in giving them a new perspective on the nature of those interests and the extent to which they are exploited by the "invisible government"? Similarly, although I hope this film will be shown to poor youths, especially black, who face the draft—now that organized resistance has become a possibility—I wonder if the connections made by the film are solid enough to carry conviction and lead to action.

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usually seen. It is a carefully composed film, paced to the rising intensity of raga music, very competent, pure and satisfying to watch. *Riff* follows an orphaned American Indian slum boy as he works out the brutality of his world by climbing, climbing swiftly up fire-escapes, across roofs, climbing like a monkey, with all the violent energy of a child who is being denied full human development. *Riff* is an impressive film that ignores the preachy pitfall of most documentaries made about the poor for middle-class audiences. Both *Metanomen* and *Riff* hold strong promise for future work; both film-makers are only 23.

On the other hand, the Finch College Projected Art show was historically comprehensive—from the early surrealist and abstract films to the most contemporary film environments. While the show was generally "safe"—nothing to upset faint hearts or weak stomachs—it did include films that are too often neglected and many good recent films. Particularly noteworthy are the USCO films from USCO's multi-media show at the Riverside Museum, summer 1966: *US, Down by the Riverside,* and *Turn Turn Turn,* a film of the eye-shattering, flashing, rotating light sculpture programmed by USCO to turn turn turn the popular song into a rich electronic fugue on the word Now: Let's take the Ow out of Now; Let's take the No out of Now. Also very current are the bright funny satires of Fred Mogubgub: *The Pop Show,* and *The Great Society,* in which the Battle Hymn of the Republic is the snappy music for a briskly edited march of packaged goods, the boxes and bottles of Joy Wink Fab Mi-t-Fine Comet in all their Technicolor totality—it's a witty focus on our high-achievement supermarket democracy.

Two particularly outstanding films at the Projected Art show, by western artists Bruce Baillie and Stan Brakhage, deserve special mention because they aren't seen as often as they should be: *Castro Street* (1966) and *Blue Moses* (1962).

Castro Street is Bruce Baillie's beautiful film using the Southern Pacific Railroad as pure horizontal and vertical color movement superimposed on the black and white negative passage of men and trains—yet Baillie never lets his technical virtuosity interfere with his presentation of the machine which builds slowly, through pastoral interludes, like an engine gaining speed and power. There isn't a weak moment or an extra frame, the integration of sound and image is excellent, and Baillie has an uncanny sense of timing: he seems to know just how much multiple-image footage to include—pushing just to the limit—so that a clear sequence comes as an exhilarating revelation of detail. Images of the railroad build, take over, are drawn out on a long thread of railroad sound, bells, whistles, and we go beyond the specific subject into Baillie's vision of the essence of the machine, into the impersonal heart of industry against which the figure of a man is an awkward surprise.

For a long time I've considered Stan Brakhage's *Window Water Baby Moving* (1959) the finest short I've seen because it's a total celebration of childbirth and love—nothing skittish there, nothing held back or deflected into wit or charm. Now I've had the opportunity to see *Blue Moses,* which is one of Brakhage's first explorations into the absurd film. In *Blue Moses,* Brakhage cuts through the immediate absurdities of our political and social situation, through the hypnotic irrelevance of data and intellectuality, and comes out with the needy lumbering agonized Body in search of salvation. Brakhage gives us the Body in its wilderness, outdoors, on a stage, indoors, mirroring himself, spotlighted, crying out, I am—I really am—listen to me: I'm an actor. I'm complex. I see tracks. I hear messages. I paint on a variety of faces. I fall down. I go in several directions at the same time. I'm on a screen looking at myself on a screen. I'm my own audience and everyone else's audience. I'm a fool. But I breathe. I sing. I howl. I am I am—listen to me—I am!

The search for salvation is also a search for an ontology—a personal vision of reality—and Brakhage seems to be continuing that search in other films using different techniques, for instance in his newest, *23rd Psalm*: a war-memory poem, recently shown at the Filmmaker's Cinematheque.

23rd Psalm is newsreel clips of war, death, destruction, flickering clusters of familiar images set in black leader—in Part 1, Brakhage makes two interesting explorations: he has avoided a dramatic, linear development of his theme—his war-memory poem builds a spatial form like a piece of sculpture; it is, really, a memory of horror which is encapsuled and curiously neutral because it is only a memory, not a re-creation of war reality; and he has used black leader so brutally this silent film gives the impression of roaring, booming sound. Part 2 of *23rd Psalm* is abstract and full of private symbols, difficult to absorb and to watch, but even where Brakhage misses he is interesting because he is a pioneer.

I want to call particular attention to the real innovation at the Finch College Projected Art show: viewing flexibility. Films were shown gallery-style—you could walk in, watch, leave, come back, watch, leave again, without feeling conspicuous and without that terrible solemn holy-ritual quality of sitting fixed in an auditorium seat. There was the added possibility of going into another gallery where Stan VanDerBeek's multiple-projections were continually shifting and advancing over all the walls so that the viewer was also a screen and thereby participant, or of going into a third gallery for a double view of Andy Warhol's static adventures, and back again to the continuing main show. This flexibility is ideal for viewing shorts because shorts are invariably intense, packed with images and sensations which keep the eye and the emotions hopping, and it doesn't take long for a viewer to go into a glassy stupor of fatigue in which everything looks and feels alike. Other museums ought to adopt the gallery screening method as they expand their presentation of film as art. Unfortunately, the Museum of Modern Art retains its old approach. The Museum's recent short Animated Film Show was more of the same old stuff—a comment on content as well as format.

Since the short art film seems to be in good condition and getting better, it would be nice to be able to report that similar technical excitement and content innovations have been carried into longer works, but the recent independent features I've seen don't have much to recommend them.

There is *Chafed Elbows,* Robert Downey's irreverent film about a fellow who fulfills the *real* All-American dream by marrying his mother and retiring on welfare, and while parts of *Chafed Elbows* are funny, parts just flop—particularly the attempt to satirize the "underground film scene." There is one truly witty sequence: a Negro and a white man walk down a beach away from camera; every time the Negro puts his arm around the white, the white man shoves him off. But otherwise *Chafed Elbows* is utterly dependent on its gag-line sound track and it isn't a film because, well, it doesn't move much—it's mostly footage of stills, which is a low low budget way to make a feature, but if it doesn't move . . . and if a lot of the irreverence fits *Time's* idea of What's happening hippy? . . .

And there is *Echoes of Silence* by Peter Emanuel Goldman, which has become as famous for its cost—$1500—as for the controversy about its value: either you think *Echoes of Silence* is great or you can't bear it. Certainly it makes no attempt to please, and even the most disparaging critic must admit that Goldman's portrait of inarticulate young people, hungry for sex, frightened of life in the ugly wilderness of New York, is accurate. Goldman doesn't preach; he shows. But what is shown never gets beyond its inherent narcissism. Goldman sits in it—we sit in it—wallowing around—looking at murky pictures of unhappy faces—and finally, I, at least, want air.

And there is *The Chelsea Girls,* Andy Warhol's deliberately mediocre film technique applied to twin-screen vignettes of "super-stars" in "unrehearsed" lurid revelations. This grueling under-view of life as a dike or a fag or a just plain victim of character neurosis has its poignant moments and a lot of the usual tittery shock of dirty words and sadomasochistic abuse, but for the most part *The Chelsea Girls* is a grinding bore.

As an antidote to *Echoes of Silence* and *The Chelsea Girls* I recommend whatever juicy Kuchar films are around town—especially George Kuchar's *Hold Me While I'm Naked,* which

has the funniest shower scene on film tucked into a spoofy saga of sex in the exotic apartments of the Bronx. Or see Ed Emshwiller's *Life Lines* (FQ, Spring 1967).

Also worth seeing is *Lenny Bruce,* a little over an hour of Bruce recorded at the end of his career—unexpurgated Bruce—but it isn't the machine-gun cussing wit which shocks; it's the unforgettable, painful portrait of a man pushed to the wall, persecuted, misinterpreted, and finally trapped in his obsession with that persecution. It's terrible to see Bruce shadow-boxing with his enemies during the first part of the film, but then the old free-wheeling, iconoclastic, bitterly hilarious Bruce comes through and we see, very simply recorded, that Bruce, the comedian, was simply great.

Perhaps in that sweetly promising future more of our finer short-film artists will go on to feature-length work. Surely with so much popularity, publicity, public approbation ready and waiting, there must be some, er, money?

—JUDITH SHATNOFF

Books

THE INNOCENT EYE

By Arthur Calder-Marshall. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966. $6.95.)

This biography, which is based on research and unfinished notes by Paul Rotha and Basil Wright, traces Flaherty's life in affectionate detail. Calder-Marshall, who is a novelist and biographer, stands outside the documentary clan, and thus in general brings a fresh eye to his narrative of the great man's life. To those familiar with the doctrine of non-preconception to which Flaherty's greatness is sometimes appended, some ironies result, as in his remark, "Flaherty found that Nanook and the rest weren't really dressed in Innuit clothes and he had to go to great trouble and expense to procure for them the clothes which they should be wearing if they were to appear on the screen as genuinely Innuit as they in fact were." An anthropologist would boggle at this kind of thing; but luckily Flaherty was no anthropologist and Calder-Marshall is under no illusions on the question himself. His picture of Flaherty as a romantic dramatist building his films from laboriously recreated materials may not jibe with the popular image of Flaherty, but it fits with the films. Flaherty emerges, I think, as a more complex and greater man because of it—though Calder-Marshall's description of the problems he caused his collaborators, notably editor Helen van Dongen, is harrowing. Calder-Marshall evolved a belief, in working on the Rotha-Wright materials and his own research, that Flaherty needed periods of idleness as a kind of artistic quiescence readying him for the next film. Rotha and Wright, who are more familiar with the trials of the profession, disagree; but the issue hardly affects the value of the book, which lies in its orderly and sympathetic presentation of a great filmmaker's life; it concentrates on facts (and anecdotes) rather than on ideas about the films he made. Illustrated; appendixes include a filmography, summaries of the films, and bibliographic information.—E.C.

TOWER OF BABEL

By Eric Rhode. (New York: Chilton, 1966. $5.95)

Although Rhode writes well, and is good at bolstering his arguments with instances from films, this is on balance a rather unpleasantly ill-humored book; Rhode is constantly finding that directors just haven't been doing what he thinks they should. Time after time he will tick off a director's supposed faults; but when you come to the end of the essay you realize that these are the essential elements of the man's style, on which no doubt he has lavished a lifetime of effort. Poor fellow. But sometimes the force of the films overcomes Rhode's objections, and he is compelled to acknowledge that even Resnais, even Fellini do have a certain undeniable power. This turns out to consist in strange metaphysical things: Antonioni's "sheer intensity of nervous energy," or Resnais's fascination with "the nature of art, qualities in art that the pure rationalist hesitates to find in himself—sensibility, imagination, feeling." But you can't get far with that; so Rhode will bring in some other chic weapon, like a quote from Valéry; and if it doesn't apply very well he will blame it on Resnais. ("The court analogy is applied laxly," he lays it down—but the court analogy was *his,* not Resnais's.) In sum, a vexing book, indeed sometimes perverse; but Rhode has interesting things to say about Lang, Vigo, Wajda—perhaps because these wilfully cultivated sensibilities somehow correspond better to his own.—E.C.

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This biography, which is based on research and unfinished notes by Paul Rotha and Basil Wright, traces Flaherty's life in affectionate detail. Calder-Marshall, who is a novelist and biographer, stands outside the documentary clan, and thus in general brings a fresh eye to his narrative of the great man's life. To those familiar with the doctrine of non-preconception to which Flaherty's greatness is sometimes appended, some ironies result, as in his remark, "Flaherty found that Nanook and the rest weren't really dressed in Innuit clothes and he had to go to great trouble and expense to procure for them the clothes which they should be wearing if they were to appear on the screen as genuinely Innuit as they in fact were." An anthropologist would boggle at this kind of thing; but luckily Flaherty was no anthropologist and Calder-Marshall is under no illusions on the question himself. His picture of Flaherty as a romantic dramatist building his films from laboriously recreated materials may not jibe with the popular image of Flaherty, but it fits with the films. Flaherty emerges, I think, as a more complex and greater man because of it—though Calder-Marshall's description of the problems he caused his collaborators, notably editor Helen van Dongen, is harrowing. Calder-Marshall evolved a belief, in working on the Rotha-Wright materials and his own research, that Flaherty needed periods of idleness as a kind of artistic quiescence readying him for the next film. Rotha and Wright, who are more familiar with the trials of the profession, disagree; but the issue hardly affects the value of the book, which lies in its orderly and sympathetic presentation of a great filmmaker's life; it concentrates on facts (and anecdotes) rather than on ideas about the films he made. Illustrated; appendixes include a filmography, summaries of the films, and bibliographic information.—E.C.

TOWER OF BABEL

By Eric Rhode. (New York: Chilton, 1966. $5.95)

Although Rhode writes well, and is good at bolstering his arguments with instances from films, this is on balance a rather unpleasantly ill-humored book; Rhode is constantly finding that directors just haven't been doing what he thinks they should. Time after time he will tick off a director's supposed faults; but when you come to the end of the essay you realize that these are the essential elements of the man's style, on which no doubt he has lavished a lifetime of effort. Poor fellow. But sometimes the force of the films overcomes Rhode's objections, and he is compelled to acknowledge that even Resnais, even Fellini do have a certain undeniable power. This turns out to consist in strange metaphysical things: Antonioni's "sheer intensity of nervous energy," or Resnais's fascination with "the nature of art, qualities in art that the pure rationalist hesitates to find in himself—sensibility, imagination, feeling." But you can't get far with that; so Rhode will bring in some other chic weapon, like a quote from Valéry; and if it doesn't apply very well he will blame it on Resnais. ("The court analogy is applied laxly," he lays it down—but the court analogy was *his,* not Resnais's.) In sum, a vexing book, indeed sometimes perverse; but Rhode has interesting things to say about Lang, Vigo, Wajda—perhaps because these wilfully cultivated sensibilities somehow correspond better to his own.—E.C.

has the funniest shower scene on film tucked into a spoofy saga of sex in the exotic apartments of the Bronx. Or see Ed Emshwiller's *Life Lines* (FQ, Spring 1967).

Also worth seeing is *Lenny Bruce,* a little over an hour of Bruce recorded at the end of his career—unexpurgated Bruce—but it isn't the machine-gun cussing wit which shocks; it's the unforgettable, painful portrait of a man pushed to the wall, persecuted, misinterpreted, and finally trapped in his obsession with that persecution. It's terrible to see Bruce shadow-boxing with his enemies during the first part of the film, but then the old free-wheeling, iconoclastic, bitterly hilarious Bruce comes through and we see, very simply recorded, that Bruce, the comedian, was simply great.

Perhaps in that sweetly promising future more of our finer short-film artists will go on to feature-length work. Surely with so much popularity, publicity, public approbation ready and waiting, there must be some, er, money?

—JUDITH SHATNOFF

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THE FIERY DEATH OF THE WOLF MAN

Clean and time-loved
with anxious beauty waiting for him
when the full moon outs from the cloud
he transmogrifies.
Hirsute and fanged, then, the lycanthrope
scales walls made ugly by moonlight.
The moon is a silver-bullet hole
in the heart of the sky,
and behind it, the yellow color
of a beast's yellow eye.

Why are the young sacrificed here?
Couldn't he be gnarled to begin?
And why do we sit in our limited dark
and imagine trembling beauty disemboweled?
Why is the theatron filled for this fake
too horrid to make a myth?

The Wolf Man snarls
between us and the cinema door;
we walk through his fuzzy here-and-now
like ether,
and we smile;
for outside, the moon
is a vague wound in a formless sky,
and behind it the yellow color
of the beast's vacant eye.

—GLENN R. SWETMAN

Entertainments

Casino Royale, the ads say, is too much for one James Bond; it should prove to be too much for almost everyone else as well. The movie might have looked amusing four years ago, but after dozens of spoofy thrillers, who could possibly be interested in a direct parody of the Bond films? The cars and weapons are ridiculous variations on Bond gimmicks, but the trouble is that it becomes impossible to distinguish the burlesque from its object. The film is a 2½-hour marathon of gags, gadgets, girls, elaborate sets—increasingly absurd, never related to anything remotely worth satirizing. Yes, the movie has its moments, but *any* movie with five directors and three writers would have to be

fitfully funny, so there seems little reason to praise this one. Even the performances have gone haywire—David Niven, Orson Welles, Peter Sellers, experienced actors all, are consistently dull; while Ursula Andress, of all people, is rather amusing. So is Woody Allen, but Deborah Kerr's surprisingly inspired caricature of a Scottish sex maniac easily outclasses everyone else. It all sinks under the weight of those millions and those eight collaborators. People who believe in team art will want to stay away.—STEPHEN FARBER.

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surprisingly ordinary-looking. His devotees will have a hard time demonstrating that the director of this film is a particularly inventive *auteur*. Every shot in the film could have been composed by almost any other director. The script is pedestrian in more disturbing ways—though it takes an apparently unequivocal stand on the race question, it does not have a new or interesting point to make on the plight of the Southern Negro, and its offensively sweet, industrious Negroes have nothing in common with today's Black Panthers, who might challenge a complacent audience. Art forces us to consider things we'd rather squirm away from, but *Hurry Sundown* congratulates us on the liberalism we picked up in the sixth grade, and never forces us to test that liberalism in any unsettling, radical ways. The script is also foolish in its characterizations—the white couple whose actions focus the plot are ludicrously unmotivated, confused, inconsistent. For example, we are asked to believe that the hero-villain, presented throughout as a thoroughly opportunistic businessman, could in the last reel risk his life rushing to save a boy to whom he's paid only slight, egotistical attention; or that his wife, who has bowed to his ruthlessness for years, will, after a short talk with an enlightened Negro schoolteacher, come to a dramatic recognition of his worthlessness and decide to amend her life. These outrageous reversals used to appear in every bad Hollywood melodrama, but I thought movies were getting more sophisticated. As always, Preminger does know how to manufacture suspense where it doesn't exist and add a little polish to the creakiest vehicle. The movie isn't dull, but then neither are a lot of afternoon soap operas. There are a couple of good performances—by Beah Richards as the heroine's mammy, who realizes on her deathbed that she has been a "white man's nigger," and by Burgess Meredith as a bigoted judge; the rest of the actors are defeated by the shallowness of their roles. There's also a scene in which Jane Fonda tries to arouse Michael Caine by sucking on his saxophone—surely the most blatant bit of sexual symbolism yet seen on film. Which isn't exactly a recommendation, just a point of interest.—STEPHEN FARBER.

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Two for the Road or Frederic Raphael on sex, love, marriage, and illusions in a translation by Stanley Donen. Raphael has written an impressive screenplay that is an elliptical illumination of a decaying marriage. His construction is hypnotic: he uses fragments that move through time and space to pinpoint crucial experiences, but he always returns to the thread that holds these fragments together—the couple's first encounter. His objective is to render an irrevocable sense of loss. Several influences could be cited for this manner of construction, among them, Resnais's *Last Year at Marienbad,* but Raphael has made the technique his own. Donen was not the man to direct it, though. He is at his best when he is lending dazzling

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