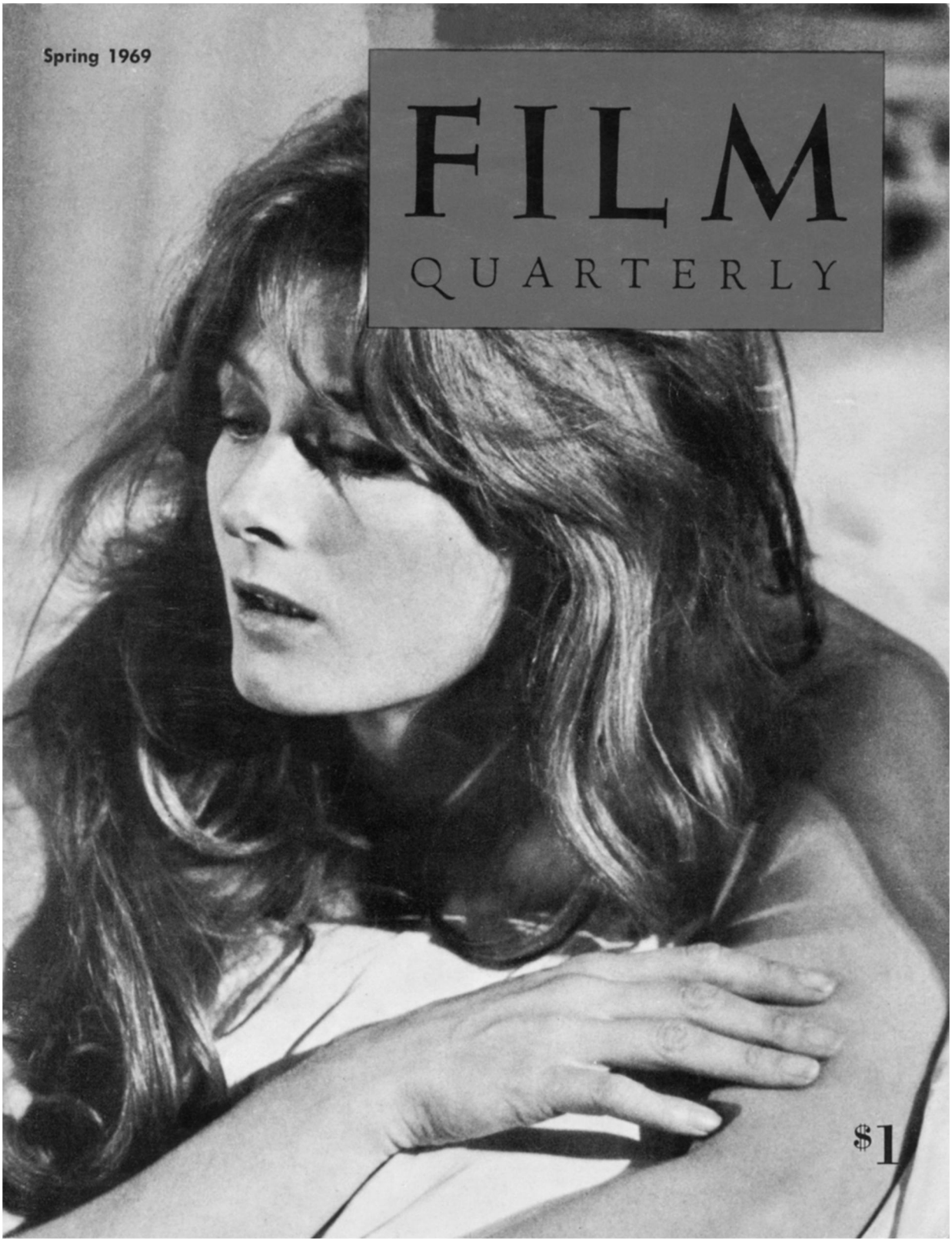
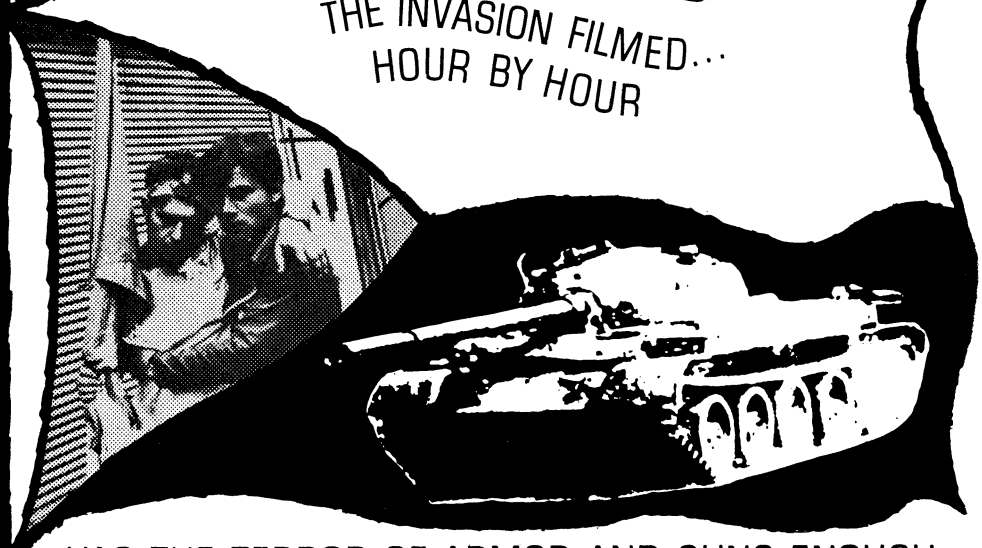

Spring 1969
FILM
QUARTERLY
$1

WHAT HAD BEEN A SPRINGTIME OF HOPE BECAME...

PRAGUE: THE SUMMER OF TANKS

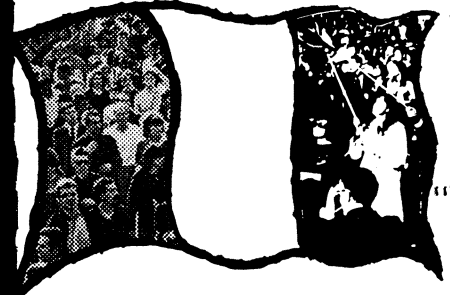
THE INVASION FILMED...
HOUR BY HOUR



WAS THE TERROR OF ARMOR AND GUNS ENOUGH TO KILL THE PEOPLE'S WILL TO FREEDOM?

Spring, 1968...for the first time in twenty years freedom blossomed in Czechoslovakia. Then the tanks came—Russian tanks sent to crush all hope. How successful were they? Here is a motion picture smuggled out of Europe to "tell it like it is!"

Filmed by photographers who must remain anonymous...banned in the countries where they were made.



TO BE SHOWN WITH...

THE PARIS STUDENT REVOLUTION

"THE RIGHT TO SPEAK"

Filmed by French cinema students

Available to **Art Centers, Museums, Colleges and Universities** for booking now in 16mm and 35mm from . . .

THE KINETIC ART
Universal Education and Visual Arts
221 Park Ave. South
New York, N.Y. 10003

VOL. XXII, No. 3 Spring 1969

ARTICLES

FILM REVIEWS

BOOKS

SHORT NOTICES

Cover: Vanessa Redgrave in Karel Reisz's *Isadora* (to be reviewed in next issue).

CONTRIBUTORS

DAN BATES lives in Dallas, and has written for *Yale Review*, and *motive*. ROBERT CHAPPETTA, a New Yorker, describes himself as an ordinary film-nut and ex-philosophy major. CLAIRE CLOUZOT also writes for *Sight & Sound*. RICHARD CORLISS is in the Film Department of the Museum of Modern Art. R. C. DALE teaches French at the University of Washington and is working on a study of René Clair. MICHAEL DEMPSEY is a film student at UCLA. DAVID DENBY is a film student at Stanford. NANCY ELLEN DOWD is a film student at UCLA. JUDITH GOLLUB teaches French at UCLA. BRUCE HENSTELL studies Chinese at Ann Arbor. DENNIS HUNT is a student at Berkeley. RICHARD T. JAMESON is an old film-society hand who now manages an art house in Seattle. IAN JARVIE teaches philosophy at York University in Toronto. HANS KONINGSBERGER is a novelist and journalist; his most recently published book is *Along the Roads of the New Russia*. C. CAMERON MACAULEY is with the Extension Media Center, Berkeley. JAMES ROY MACBEAN studies comparative literature at Berkeley. WILLIAM ROTH is writing a dissertation on film and politics at Berkeley, and making short films.

CLASSIFIED

STILLS from FOREIGN MOTION PICTURES: Godard, Bergman, Fellini, Antonioni, Truffaut, et al. (some American). 50¢ and 60¢ ea. (100 titles at 50¢). Director's stills 75¢ ea. Postfree over $4.00. Send for free lists. Normand F. Lareau, 227 East 81st St., Apt. 5R, New York 10028.

WRITER, film history, criticism, related topics, 31, single, BA journalism, honorable discharge, newspaper experience. Hip, but not hippie. Willing to relocate. Available for California interviews early August. Resumé available. DAN BATES, 627 Oak Forest Drive, Dallas, Texas 75232. 214-371-8888.

For SALE. COMPLETE sets and EXTRA copies of: *Cahiers du Cinéma in English, Film Comment, Film Culture, Film Journal, Film Quarterly, Films and Filming, Films in Review, Sequence, Sight and Sound* (since July 1944). Write: Box 344 Cathedral Station, New York, N.Y. 10025.

FILM QUARTERLY is published by the University of California Press, Berkeley, California 94720. $1.00 per copy, $4.00 per year in the U.S., Canada, and Pan-America. Special two-year subscription rate: $7.20. Elsewhere: $1.80 per copy, $7.20 per year. Editor: ERNEST CALLENBACH. Assistant to the Editor: MARICAY GRANA. New York Editors: ROBERT HUGHES and JUDITH SHATNOFF. Los Angeles Editor: STEPHEN FARBER. Paris Editor: GINETTE BILLARD. Rome Editor: GIDEON BACHMANN. London Editor: PETER COWIE. Advisory Editorial Board: ANDRIES DEINUM, AUGUST FRUGE, HUGH GRAY, ALBERT JOHNSON, NEAL OXENHANDLER, COLIN YOUNG. Copyright 1969 by The Regents of the University of California. Views expressed in signed articles are those of the authors. Indexed in *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*, *Art Index* and *Social Sciences and Humanities Index*. Published quarterly. Second-class postage paid at Berkeley, California. Printed in U.S.A.

HANS KONINGSBERGER

From Book to Film—via John Huston

Last October, in the oldest gothic abbey of Italy, Fossanova, John Huston completed filming *A Walk with Love and Death,* a novel of mine published in 1961. It took him seventy-six shooting days, thirteen six-day working weeks. There is now (Febuary 1969) still some scoring ahead, but the editing of the raw material, 80,000 feet of film, and the sound track have been completed, and the film delivered to the studio heads. I was present from the beginning and worked with the director, which is not standard practice; and Huston is not a standard director.

My first sensation while attending this transformation was one of embarrassment. I arrived in the early morning of the day shooting started, at the former monastery of Mauerbach near Vienna, and found in the pouring rain a group of people setting up the first shot. This was not a heavy team according to Hollywood standards; to me, it seemed a very large number of solemn people and machines, all out to concretize what had been a fantasy. That is where the embarrassment lay: one was tempted to say, —I didn't mean to cause you all this bother, there's no need for all this reconstruction, all that paint, all those props: I just happened to put that captain of the book behind an oak table in an old house, but a bench under a tree would do as well. The written word seemed pathetically vulnerable, ready to be buried and forgotten under the apparatus it had willy-nilly mobilized.

I think that at this early point the generality of my experience already ends: from here on, each serious director must have different methods and purposes. Library shelves have of course been filled with essays on image versus word: there is a cycle in the debate and men with hand cameras now daringly do again what was done once before in the early twenties. ("The industry," it seems to me, does not bother much about these goings-on, but looks for safety in the buying and selling of names rather than ideas.) After three months of watching him, I feel entitled to say that Huston would reject no experiment, no innovation, if—and it is an enormous IF—its reason, its need, could be *proven* to him.

Besides that, it was my good fortune as a writer that Huston is a man who believes in books. Real books are seldom seen circulating in the movie world; its dealings are with story *outlines,* as if what mattered in literature was really and only what the personages ended up doing to each other, and the rest just decoration—a parallel to saying, never mind whether this painting is a Vermeer or a Picasso or a Smith; just tell me its subject.

Huston, then, wanted to film (as he has always done) a *novel:* not the movements of the people in a story but the idea of the book. Here the confrontation with its writer began, for what is the idea of a book, and of each of its chapters, and how is this idea to be translated into images? Though some writers have the habit of seeing a scene in their mind as they write it, this does not make their books film scripts. The abyss remains between writing "He walked three days along dusty roads" and showing the three days; between writing "A hard light of passion had been lit" in a virginal girl and showing such a contradictory and almost intangible change.

Important to a writer were two qualities of Huston's (apart from the more personal ones of his boundless patience and gentleness, which ran contrary to all myths about movie directors). The first one is his bitter aversion to shortcuts, clichés, mixed metaphors. No matter, for instance, how difficult it was to convey a passage of time, he would sooner work on it for a week than resort to the trees-in-leaf-and-then-bare type of film trick. This aversion to triteness made him even refuse to adhere to a development in

the book—to me perfectly legitimate—of the heroine falling ill and having to interrupt a journey. Huston insisted on being provided with another reason for the interruption: "A sick heroine at this point is just too damn convenient," he said.

This utterance leads me to a second quality of his working ways. His artistry, I think, is under perpetual observation of his almost purely mathematical concept of film-reality, vastly different for him from book-reality and real-reality. Thus I had to *explain* every word and every action to him in precise terms in order to get away with them; no vagueness was admitted. And when some of the people around him, in terms so dear to show-business people, held forth about "love interest" or "the reaction of today's kids," Huston would listen patiently and then continue as if nothing had been said (which was indeed usually the case).

I've always answered questions about things happening in my books the only way I think they could be answered, i.e., that that was how it had come to me and that no explanation on the side could or should be able to add anything to it. With Huston that didn't work, and at times this made him rather than me the true defender of the book, the man who really understood its personages. My repeated argument that in life as in writing, people are not consistent, that their characters and their deeds are full of contradictions, did not help me. "Each scene in a film of mine is set under ONE moon," was a dictum of his, and he would not tolerate vagueness or inconsistency in such a scene, unless that inconsistency was the very *subject* and reason for the scene.

Thus his analytical way of investigating a scene was the precise opposite of the writer's synthetical way. I looked at my characters from the inside out, saw them in a synthesis which was clear and natural, but in which I might very well be mistaken about one particular utterance or action. His was the analysis: he accepted the whole, but weighed each part, and if I could not convince him, not only of its naturalness but indeed of its unavoidable necessity, he wanted it rewritten, or at times rewrote it himself.

An example, while not throwing any dramatic new light on film aesthetics, may illustrate this. The main characters of the novel are a young student and a girl wandering through France at war (the year is 1358, but that is not of the essence). Before the violent end of their journey, they live through an interregnum of some days of isolated peace in an abandoned manor house. During this time, the girl at one point brings the young man a text of Scripture she has bought from a gypsy woman and which supposedly bears on their future.

Huston wanted to use this, but he neither wanted the girl to simply *say* where the text came from, nor did he want to show a gypsy woman: another person on the screen would disrupt the sense of isolation and insulation of the episode. I rewrote the scene without the gypsy, but with the student and the girl reading each other's futures out of the palms of their hands; they say in essence the same thing the gypsy woman's Bible text said. That's how it went into the shooting script, but when Huston filmed it, he ended up by only showing the girl reading the boy's palm, in pantomine, smiling at him, putting a kiss in his hand, and closing his hand around it: a final visual simplification of what had begun as a word-idea.

On one particularly difficult day, I installed myself at my typewriter behind a tree and wrote a little "dialogue between a writer and a director." In it a writer, who happens to be Shakespeare, reads his freshly written Hamlet soliloquy to a stage director who then, proceeding according to the mathematical Huston method, investigates it, discards one unnecessary or illogical word after another, and ends up with no soliloquy at all, saying to the writer, "Let's just SHOW his despair, shall we?" I wrote "Dedicated to John Huston" over the page, but hesitated a while before giving it to him. There is something of the mood of a royal court on a film set, with the director the king; and criticism of a king doesn't seem quite the thing. But if Huston is a king, he is a Platonic philosopher-king, and when I did give him my scene, he did laugh. Not that reading it made him any less inexorably logical afterward.

Seeing the rushes was still more of a shock than seeing the first preparations for the shooting. Here was embarrassment of a different kind: the feeling of having engendered something so personal that its public exposure was at once a matter of pride and of genuine pain. For I cannot deny that, contrary to my belief in writing as a primary art or at least primary action, a more overwhelming reality had been created, which, however, had remained my reality too.

I've never been a best-selling writer and have thus rarely come upon someone in a train or plane who just happened to be reading a book of mine—but that has occurred. It was amusing but nothing more.

Now, sitting in the projection hall, hearing the actors speak my words while other people beside me watched and listened, was something else: a way of communicating of great intensity. I sat in the dark hall, and blushed.

RICHARD T. JAMESON

Manhandling the Movies

Film is securely *in* now, and to those of us who have always taken it seriously, the feeling is a little strange, even incongruous. Perfectly unremarkable acquaintances who used to shoot home movies now tell you "We made a film last weekend." It's the same home movie but the phrase has changed, and with it an attitude. We may smile behind our friend's back at the pretension, but there are other pretensions not so harmless.

Film-as-a-phenomenon has received infinitely more press than film-as-the-movies-that-are. Film is the art of our time, we are told; we are all children of the movies and instinctively understand them better than any generation that has gone before. And some people have been quickly convinced of this god-given expertise. Undergraduates who barely ever look at the late show and, when questioned, prove to know next to nothing of films and film-makers before 1960 (and some after) publish commissioned Sunday-supplement pieces on the new cinema, the new style, the new audiences ,and the revolution which they represent. On a campus where I run one film series and write programme notes for another, members of an experimental course in film criticism chose to meet at the same time one of the series ran; when their oversight was pointed out to them, they assured us they already knew about the series but hadn't been planning to attend anyway. Talking film beat seeing movies every way from Sunday.

The way some people do talk film, you wonder whether seeing movies would make any difference to them. Perhaps the most troublesome fault is the failure of many to remember what they saw—what scene led into which, and how; whether a film or sequence involved, even conspicuously, camera movement or lack of it, fast cutting or lack of it, a rhythmic pace or a direct line toward resolution; whether Benjamin maliciously punched Mr. Robinson in the stomach or rammed a defensive elbow into his groin. Cocktail conversationalists and lobby orators are one thing, but when such slovenly disregard for movies-as-movies is graduated to a higher order of permanence—the printed page—one must risk sounding a little shrill to raise a protest.

A plethora of film books is coming out now and it should be superfluous to say that none of them, good or bad, should be accorded prece-

Seeing the rushes was still more of a shock than seeing the first preparations for the shooting. Here was embarrassment of a different kind: the feeling of having engendered something so personal that its public exposure was at once a matter of pride and of genuine pain. For I cannot deny that, contrary to my belief in writing as a primary art or at least primary action, a more overwhelming reality had been created, which, however, had remained my reality too.

I've never been a best-selling writer and have thus rarely come upon someone in a train or plane who just happened to be reading a book of mine—but that has occurred. It was amusing but nothing more.

Now, sitting in the projection hall, hearing the actors speak my words while other people beside me watched and listened, was something else: a way of communicating of great intensity. I sat in the dark hall, and blushed.

RICHARD T. JAMESON

Manhandling the Movies

Film is securely *in* now, and to those of us who have always taken it seriously, the feeling is a little strange, even incongruous. Perfectly unremarkable acquaintances who used to shoot home movies now tell you "We made a film last weekend." It's the same home movie but the phrase has changed, and with it an attitude. We may smile behind our friend's back at the pretension, but there are other pretensions not so harmless.

Film-as-a-phenomenon has received infinitely more press than film-as-the-movies-that-are. Film is the art of our time, we are told; we are all children of the movies and instinctively understand them better than any generation that has gone before. And some people have been quickly convinced of this god-given expertise. Undergraduates who barely ever look at the late show and, when questioned, prove to know next to nothing of films and film-makers before 1960 (and some after) publish commissioned Sunday-supplement pieces on the new cinema, the new style, the new audiences ,and the revolution which they represent. On a campus where I run one film series and write programme notes for another, members of an experimental course in film criticism chose to meet at the same time one of the series ran; when their oversight was pointed out to them, they assured us they already knew about the series but hadn't been planning to attend anyway. Talking film beat seeing movies every way from Sunday.

The way some people do talk film, you wonder whether seeing movies would make any difference to them. Perhaps the most troublesome fault is the failure of many to remember what they saw—what scene led into which, and how; whether a film or sequence involved, even conspicuously, camera movement or lack of it, fast cutting or lack of it, a rhythmic pace or a direct line toward resolution; whether Benjamin maliciously punched Mr. Robinson in the stomach or rammed a defensive elbow into his groin. Cocktail conversationalists and lobby orators are one thing, but when such slovenly disregard for movies-as-movies is graduated to a higher order of permanence—the printed page—one must risk sounding a little shrill to raise a protest.

A plethora of film books is coming out now and it should be superfluous to say that none of them, good or bad, should be accorded prece-

dence over the movies they are about. Some are very good indeed; some are infuriatingly bad. Almost definitively the worst is *Man and the Movies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967; $7.95), a volume of twenty articles by twenty different writers, nearly every one of whom is an academician to some extent. There are three sections: "The Art and Its Forms," which touches bases as diverse as skin flicks, the Western, TV, and the adaptation of eighteenth-century novels; "The Artist and His Work," with bows to Hitchcock (with back occasionally turned), Griffith, Bergman, the Italian Big Three, and others; and "The Personal Encounter" of a poet, two failed screenwriters (one distinguished, one not), two professional critics, and one certified masturbator. Those which are just okay can be listed quickly: Martin C. Battestin's piece on adapting *Tom Jones;* the more-or-less quickies on Bergman, Antonioni, Visconti's *Sandra,* and the Griffith retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art (though the author mixes the endings of *The Birth of a Nation* and *Intolerance*—little things like that); "The New Mystique of *L'Actuelle*: A View of Cinema in Relation to Our Period-Style" (sort of a mini-*Movie Man* but no revelation to anyone who's being doing his homework); Richard Wilbur's footnote to a couple of his poems; Leslie Fiedler on Hollywood novels and the Hollywood image; and R. V. Cassill's "In the Central Blue," which assumes a form many of his colleagues might confess to have produced—fiction. Though these deserve, for their fidelity to their material and their modest regard for the English language and its grammar, to be set at safe quarantine distance from the rest, they are not worth looking up the book to read. However, John Blotner's invaluable account of "Faulkner in Hollywood" and David Slavitt's analysis of the ills of daily-weekly criticism (he wrote for *Newsweek*) certainly are.

As to the rest—well, so shoddy a job of writing and especially of editing does the book appear that one loses all sense of proportion among the myriad mistakes (that the word "mistake" must be used in regard to critical writing is damning enough). One could write a very paranoid article on spelling and typos alone (there are three variants of Rossellini), and never have so many gross generalizations been so misapplied ("never," "certainly," "clearly," "only," and "always" pop up at just the wrong moments). Unhappily, there are more than enough serious misjudgments and misrepresentations to get paranoid about.

Narrowness of vision cripples so many judgments, which come down more as dicta. The author of "Films, Television, and Tennis" complains, "It's not uncommon to find eight to ten minutes of plot preceding the credits on a wide-screen, certainly to the detriment of the film's structural integrity. Nothing can account for such a mannerism except its accepted presence on the TV tube and the possibility of a television-trained director's having learned his lessons too well." Richard Peck is so anxious to make his point about TV's influence on film that he overlooks the (to me, at least) obvious: if a film is conceived so that a pre-credit sequence will operate meaningfully and not merely as a "teaser," its structural integrity "certainly" will not be impaired since the pre-credit segment is part of that integrity. *The Ipcress File* opens with the kidnapping of the scientist and the murder of the agent that will bring Harry Palmer into the action as the man's replacement. The camera closes in on the dead agent's eye; cut to Palmer's eye, in extreme close-up, as he wakes to the alarm clock. He sits bolt upright; we see his room as he, near-sighted and without his glasses, sees it; he puts on the glasses and brings the world, his and ours, into focus; and as he begins to get up and dress, the credits begin. Palmer and his point-of-view will, with exceptions as significant as the pre-credit lapse, dominate the rest of the picture. The moment of abeyance as we await the *traditional* beginning, the credits, is not only in order but important to our *experience* of the movie; Peck's implicit dictum would deny us this experience. And what brand of pedagogy is required to set Peck straight when, on the same page, he digs up the mercifully mouldering bones of the photographed-play syndrome: whatever happens indoors and involves dialogue can't be cinema. "Only the

opening sequence of a football game saves *The Fortune Cookie* from deserving the same criticism," already leveled at *The Apartment* as indoor, filmed TV-drama (the new wrinkle). Personally, I found much more to look at in virtually any of Wilder's phone booths, hospital corridors, and apartments than at the stadium, which sequence was surprisingly stiff, considering the possibilities with Jack Lemmon as a TV cameraman. (I wonder whether Bergman's *The Silence* is similarly flawed but for the street scenes, or Bresson's *Trial of Jeanne d'Arc* but for the burning.)

The patent on narrowness, though, must go to Armando Favazza's article on "Fellini: Analyst without Portfolio." Favazza, a psychiatrist with portfolio, might contribute a provocative program note to a Fellini series if only he assured the series coordinator it was all tongue-in-cheek. Generally Fellini seems to know Favazza's rules, but he fluffs a key symbolic sequence in *Juliet of the Spirits*, "a technically poor scene because it is impossible to portray a psychotic episode accurately, although the camera is the best means available to describe *mobility of cathexis, displacement, and condensation*" (italics his, so help me).

Favazza has the right to speak with authority on mobility of cathexis, if not films; and Larry McMurtry had every right to produce a smashing piece on the Western. Instead of seizing his natural advantage, the author of the novel that became *Hud* pays lip service to Robert Warshow, then goes on to trade lamely on terms lifted from Northrop Frye—an understood context of literary criticism rather than an essentially filmic or even Western one. Yet another chance for some really vital Western criticism was unaccountably blown in the name of high-mimetic horse manure.

Not that the writers who do try to establish terms of their own offer encouragement. In what is presumably a key essay—in that it is the editor's and steps off with a declaration for seeking "pure" film theory—W. R. Robinson demonstrates he has no more business putting forth writing of his own than he has in collecting, screening, and adjudging as fit for publication the writing of others. "The Movies, Too, Will Make You Free" must be read to be believed, and it can't be read. In attempting to argue the greater immediacy of movies as compared to literature (known hereafter as the Light and the Word, respectively), he proves his point by means of the expressive fallacy: his words strangle him. Without plunging into the inky depths of his pure theory, we can get some idea of what he's up to from his third paragraph. He has been talking about Eisenstein's use of montage; then:

> In the same vein is Alfred Hitchcock's insistence on using a shot of a glass of champagne going flat as a metaphor for a finished love affair. Though more simple-minded than Eisenstein's theorizing, Hitchcock's attempt at defining something essential to films is actually an assertion of taste—a preference for wit, an intellectual delight in clever analogy instead of the thing directly seen. (This literary quality in Hitchcock's work is one reason why, despite the slightness of his films, he is a favorite among intellectuals.)

Champagne going flat is a metaphor; two people sitting in a hotel room with nothing to say is the real thing. So what! Lubitsch, I think it was, once shot a dialogue between adulterers from their point of view; while they chatted merrily, the camera stayed on an impish bedstead Cupidon. One shot, one scene, the real room, the real thing—and a metaphor. More to the point, one of the most celebrated sequences of the cinematic and un-simple-minded Eisenstein is the raising of the bridge in *October*, and it is a metaphor. It's an actual bridge actually separating two groups of people, but it's also a metaphor for the revolution beyond—or isn't Eisenstein to be allowed these literary overtones? Best ask Robinson, who has the rulebook. And ask which came first, Hitchcock's simple-mindedness or "the slightness of his films"; and also, why Hitchcock's "insistence" on using the champagne image, as if he knew better, knew what the rules say he should have done, and wilfully violated them. Can it be that the editor's deck is stacked?

Hitchcock becomes victim of the same stacking in O. B. Hardison's "The Rhetoric of Hitchcock's Thrillers." This I determined only near

the end of the piece, where Hardison begins to pile up some of what he considers Hitchcock data to support his case. At the first, as with so many of the writers collected in *Man and the Movies,* I just couldn't diagnose what was the article's particular ill—the author's hopeless ignorance about his subject and, for that matter, films and film production in general; his ineptitude as a writer; or just native stupidity. Here's Hardison's opening:

> We can start from the axiom that Alfred Hitchcock is one of the greatest professionals in the movie business—probably the greatest. I use the word professional in its most favorable sense: movies are entertainment, and no one entertains more and more consistently than Hitchcock. What the Lincoln Continental is to the Fairlane 500 the Hitchcock film is to the standard production-model Hollywood thriller. The public recognizes this. Hitchcock is one of a very few producers whose name is more important at the box office than the names of his stars. But professionalism has its limits, too. Nobody would seriously compare Hitchcock to a dozen directors and producers who have used the film medium as an art form. Eisenstein, Chaplin, Ford, Bergman, Olivier, Fellini—the list could be expanded—have qualities undreamed of in the word of cops and robbers and pseudo-Freudian melodrama, which is the world where Hitchcock reigns supreme.

Now really, where do we begin? Hitchcock *is* a producer—not that he ever sees fit to take screen credit for it—but who would start by calling him that? Well, Hardison maybe, since he clearly seems to be nosing in on the Hollywood film as a product (implying once more that neat, vision-splitting adage that "movies," being "entertainment," are surely distinct from "cinema," which is "art"); but this hardly justifies the usage when he glides into speaking of directors and producers with easy interchangeability. "Nobody would seriously compare Hitchcock to a dozen directors and producers who have used the film medium as an art form." It's a matter of fact, not opinion, that a vociferous contingent have done so; if Hardison is aware of that and meant to say, "I don't see how anyone could seriously compare . . ." then that is what he should have said. And while he's rewriting that line, let him name one among Hitchcock's fifty features that could remotely be described as a "cops and robbers" flick. Such an observation simply cannot reflect first-hand experience of Hitchcock's work, though it does smack of regurgitated *Liveliest Art* and re-regurgitation of glossy-magazine spreads and studio publicity. And as far as simple logic is concerned, Hardison would do well to note that the "axiom" he starts from isn't an axiom.

In the best tradition of literary criticism, the article immediately dodges into long-winded, general, irrelevantly theoretical categorizing. Hitchcock's films are only occasionally cited when they fortuitously coincide with the theory, although names like James Bond and Mickey Spillane are dropped freely, as if they had universal denotations, not connotations, that said it all. When Hardison is specific he is almost invariably wrong. "That the class theme has remained strong in Hitchcock's American films is evident from his stars. The *noblesse oblige* roles have consistently been given to actors whose upper-class identity is established by accent (modified British) as well as publicity. Ray Milland and Cary Grant are Hitchcock's favorite male stars, with Cary Grant clearly running first." Yes, clearly—four Hitchcock roles to Milland's one! Doesn't Jimmy Stewart, also with four appearances, qualify for equal billing? But then what happens to the class theory and *noblesse oblige?* Quick, shore up the Platonic ideal with some data on female casting! Here Hardison tries to do something with the modeling backgrounds of three Hitchcock leading ladies (high-fashion models project the upper-class image, etc.). Eva Marie Saint "came to Hitchcock via modeling"?—and via five years as a star, dating from an Oscar-winning, distinctly lower-class role in *On the Waterfront;* surely Kazan's Edie had more to do with her image than *Harper's Bazaar.*

Hardison tries to get Saint and his theory through by invoking former models Grace Kelly and, especially, "Tippi" Hedren. This is an invaluable device of lousy theorists and also a symptom of sloppy writing: pick a couple half-

decent examples as bookends for a highly questionable one. The book is full of it (the editor's own article includes a beaut, a reference to the "solemn movies of Antonioni, Visconti, Truffaut, and Resnais"—Truffaut "solemn"?!) and, looking back to the category-making section of Hardison's piece, we find the examples doubling back on one another, almost comically. Speaking of "the alien milieu in which the hero's adventures occur," he writes: "In *The Lodger* and *Psycho* it is daemonic, but, from the dominant point of view—that of the hero—it is still sane." *The Lodger*, made thirty-four years before the other film, is a fairly straight-on narrative in which a hero is falsely accused and nearly destroyed by an insane world, and for a time the audience may participate in the error; but there is nothing to compare with the point-of-view complexities of *Psycho*. Who *is* the hero in *Psycho*? For half an hour it is a question of a heroine, Janet Leigh; then there's Tony Perkins, and to say that the world is sane from his point of view is to stretch the phrase to the breaking point. Best refer Hardison to Robin Wood—or to Leo Braudy's recent Hitchcock article in this quarterly—for an examination of the subjective-objective, point-of-view complexities that make the audience the real hero, or at least protagonist, of *Psycho*. *The Lodger* and *Psycho* belong in the same canon, but not the same breath. Hardison may just vaguely be aware of the latter film's depth; he concedes that "*Rope* and *Psycho* carry the thriller world about as far as it can go without being taken seriously." Note that *Rope* is mentioned because the "cut-rate Nietzschean philosophy introduced a lump of serious material," largely verbal and didactic, the sort a literary critic might deal with—and note also the presupposition that Hitchcock's "formulas" won't assimilate anything serious, lumpen or not. "*Psycho*, on the other hand, is reasonably good fun if one can get over the murder scene, which, like Nietzschean philosophy, calls for a more serious follow-up than the movie wants to deliver." Bing! and he's gone on to something else, never bothering to wonder why that murder kinda got to him more than just any old movie murder. *The Lodger*, *Rope*, *Psycho:* an apprentice piece containing the germs of later masterpieces; a daring experiment in continuous photography with a few loaded speeches conspicuous; an inexhaustibly complex involvement-experience that taps the alien milieu around and within us all—and Hardison tosses them equally into the hopper. *Psycho's* technical complexity? To the extent that he's aware of it, he has implicitly written it off in dealing with "Hitchcock's thrillers" in general: art vs. rhetoric: the more accomplished the film, the more controlled the directorial hand we sense, the more we are lacquered off from involvement. And so we are, with a theory like Hardison's. The name of the game is presupposition, which not only precedes but precludes experience.

Alan S. Downer's "The Monitor Image," focussing on the early John Huston as a "natural-born film-maker," demonstrates the same thing even more pointedly. Paragraphs and pages are lavished on such matters as wondering whether *The Maltese Falcon* and *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* can be considered "chase" films, or whether *Treasure* is "a masterpiece," "a landmark in American film history," or just "a superior performance . . . each viewing [of which] enriches the spectator's experience." These meaningless categories call to mind an earlier aside: "D. W. Griffith had greatness thrust upon him by critics willing to ignore his abysmal sentimentality and his disconcerting propensity for turning up on the wrong side of any issue he chanced to deal with." The next paragraph begins, "Without making a value judgment at this point . . ." A freshman comp student would be laughed out of class for that, and this man chairs the English department at Princeton. Is a film *what it is*, the energy and personal creative splendor that shows through its structure as an unreeling phenomenon of performance, or is it a quasi-aesthetic accident held at bay by a safety-screen of qualifications and preconceptions? If you're going to turn off the moment a director shows signs of indulging an emotion that has been decreed in poor taste, or disagreeing with your and your friends' view of history, or going after an ambiguous permuta-

tion you don't think worth the bother, why bother with films at all? In the failure to ask that question at every stage of their criticism, men like Downer forfeit their right to be respected, perhaps even to be heard. After carefully tracing Huston's progress for a dozen pages and more, he quickly lops off *The Red Badge of Courage* as a failure and never alludes to Huston's later films except to say "he is quickly bored with projects." And what cardinal sin is committed in *The Red Badge*?

> Although Huston began with a firm idea, he allowed himself to be distracted. First the central idea was that courage was as unreasoning as cowardice. Later it became the pointlessness of the hero's courage in helping to capture a fragment of wall (the *Treasure* theme). Then it was that the youth was simply a victim of fate; he gets on a sort of roulette wheel for a few days and is finally flung off. As the patchwork picture emerged from the MGM factory, the audience was told, in solemn narration, that this was the story of how a youth became a man. Thus deprived of a monitor image, *The Red Badge of Courage* could have neither style nor unity and, questions of art aside, could not yield a satisfying dramatic experience to its audience.

"The monitor image" is a TV-era way of saying a director has an aim to accomplish and an approach about which to coordinate all the component aspects of the film and film-making. Huston violated Downer's figure. Stepping off with a comparatively simplistic goal, he began to feel the size of his subject, sense out its permutations and realize the need to come to terms with them, or at least try. Downer does not note that the themes he names in no way exclude one another —indeed, they imply each other—neither does he recall from his reading of *Picture* that the patchworkiness and the solemn narration were the doing of studio execs and cutters. Even in its present form Huston's film remains a rich and stirring effort. But Downer cannot bother to mention that, so busy is he pushing his neat (and essentially very old) conceit. He brings his paper to a suspiciously swift and complimentary rhetorical finish about the artists who have had to work for big sprawling vital popular audiences.

For scuttling a director's ship as soon as he gets off the course which theory has plotted, a critic deserves our opprobrium. What do we heap on one who adjusts the films to suit the schema? Arguably the most offensive article in the entire book is R. H. W. Dillard's "Even a Man Who Is Pure in Heart: Poetry and Danger in the Horror Film." It should be junked for eclecticism of styles alone, opening with a come-along-down-Memory-Lane introduction, careening from my-first-visit-to-a-horror-movie to academic balderdash about Bwili of Lol-narong (you remember—the old Shamanist myth), making a pit stop for a hurt-and-misunderstood apologia for a stinking horror flick he helped write (with the book's co-editor), and then—fully fourteen pages old—settling down for some specific treatment of actual movies. He establishes (quite thoroughly and convincingly, for those who need the convincing) a hierarchy of monster-heroes, building up from the werewolf through the mummy and the vampire to a genuinely tragic creation, the Frankenstein monster. Dillard is lavish with dates and the names of characters and bit players, all the material a hobbyist ought to command. But when he closes in on sequences—rarely—the patina begins to look flaky. "A good example" to prove one of his points about Browning's *Dracula* is "the scene where Van Helsing tricks Dracula into looking into a mirror which will not reflect his image, proving him to be a vampire; Lugosi's hiss as he whips the cloak before his eyes is the anguished sound of the primordial serpent exposed as Satan himself." Aside from Dillard's own throaty melodramatics, it's the right idea but the wrong scene—or, to be precise, two right scenes wrongly compressed into one. Lugosi isn't even wearing his cloak when Edward Van Sloan asks him to come look at something interesting, and he strikes the mirror to the floor without speaking *or* hissing, which is quite enough to freeze the room and the audience until he recovers himself and takes his leave. After about half an hour of running time, Lugosi does turn up in the same room to get the man who knows too much, and nearly manages it until Van Sloan thrusts a crucifix at him; and *that* is when the magnificent

hiss and the whipping of the cloak take place. Another hobbyist's peevish complaint over trivia? Perhaps the error in itself is slight, but Dillard himself calls it "a good example." And when such a mistake next occurs, its implications are somewhat more offensive than the dandruff of bad memory.

Dillard's development of the Frankenstein monster as tragic hero has reached something like a crescendo, with the films of James Whale being discussed in the same paragraph as *The Seventh Seal* and *The Virgin Spring* (which—don't get me wrong—is very good to see). Above all else Dillard prefers *The Bride of Frankenstein*, which he proceeds to describe in his (hopefully) inimitable way:

> The film begins, after a brief prologue featuring Elsa Lanchester as Mary Shelley, in a primordial darkness of place and spirit, lit only by the dying embers of the burning windmill. Two old peasants have remained after the mob has left, hoping to loot the structure of whatever they can find undamaged by the fire. Their greed leads them only to the monster, who rises from the watery depths of the mill with the old woman's help; he has killed her husband below, and he kills her. Sin breeds death, and the destroyer still lives after a baptism in human violence, fire, and water.

Absolutely false! The old couple are the parents of the little girl drowned in the first Frankenstein. The wife pleads with her husband to come away, but he vows not to leave till he has seen the blackened bones of the monster. He falls through what remains of the weakened structure, and the rest transpires as described. The hell of it is that Whale's film does involve "a baptism in human violence, fire, and water," a scathing look at a "humane" world that reenacts the crucifixion of something like a Christ. Dillard chooses to get at the Christ-parallel by way of generalizations and that peculiarly hellfire-and-brimstone kind of rhetoric that punctuates so many learned articles. He might have achieved this by specific reference to the film (e.g., Whale stages a crucifixion at a place of rocks and shoots the monster, bound and upraised on the pole, from three or four angles so everyone but English professors will get the point); he certainly needn't resort to a rewrite job.

"The best criticism is always an act of love," Alan Downer says in the middle of promises that he won't write the kind of criticism he then goes on to write. Robinson, in his introduction, avers, "These writers consistently bare an individual involvement with the movies . . ." And indeed, most of the learned gentlemen collected the covers of *Man and the Movies* pause somewhere or other to assure us they love the movies, they really do. They demurely confess to having had their innocence raped by the movies. Then there's that fellow lying on the chill linoleum floor masturbating over the fan magazine still of Jean Harlow. They flaunt this love and trade on it; a Davis or a Hepburn should be dispatched to tell them the movies aren't having any today, thank you. For surely the necessary concomitant of love is fidelity and responsibility, and where in *Man and the Movies* are these qualities honored?

In John Blotner's "Faulkner in Hollywood," for one. The finest entry in the book is the one that has perhaps least to say about specific films. Blotner knows and respects his subject. He gives us Faulkner the man and Faulkner the writer and shows how in Hollywood of the thirties and forties it was hard for the two to be one. Anecdotes, sketches, impressions of afternoons in the scripting offices, Faulkner superbly squelching Gable on a hunting trip with Hawks, then becoming great friends with him —of these Blotner writes with grace and respect. Small matter that Blotner tends to dismiss most of the pictures Faulkner worked on apart from Hawks, that there is no indication he has necessarily seen them, that a few (*Slave Ship, Flesh*) are not entirely negligible—Blotner only notes Faulkner's feelings toward them, when he can, and the popular and critical reception of the films in their day; he isn't out to fool anyone about his filmic expertise, least of all himself.

And why is it so important? Why is it worth getting this mad about? Because the writers in *Man and the Movies* obviously feel they're in

the vanguard of a new and literate movie generation, although many of their presuppositions are at least as old as the coming of talkies. They're all getting together in the book and they all love movies (let's hear it for movies!) and wasn't it easy to get into print? And that's just what's wrong. Words in print command too much power to be abused, especially while people remember what they read better than what they see on the screen. The printed page enjoys a permanence, an accessibility, that celluloid does not. For the reader, there's no rewinding *Dracula* or *The 39 Steps* to check a vague suspicion that something in the latest movie book is amiss. The reader can't be sure of facts—but the writer should be. If he isn't and if he gets caught, any reasonable reader must doubt the validity of his abstract theory and opinion since his concrete facts just ain't. I've no objection if this be taken as an *auteur* theory of critics, which is implicit in a statement of one of the few writers collected here I have expressed some admiration for. It is David Slavitt, and I am barely giving his remarks a context different from his own:

> I suppose another way of putting all this would be to say that the film critic cannot take his identity from the art form, because the movies don't offer any identity. He can't take it from the magazine [read "book"] because, except in very special circumstances, he will be either uncomfortable or impossibly restricted [or perhaps right at home]. And he can't take it from literary and intellectual fashion, because that way lies even surer madness than in the movies themselves. What he must do is what those few movie critics who have amounted to anything have done—and that is find it, somehow, somewhere, in himself.

Considering what most of the other writers in *Man and the Movies* found in themselves, I trust they didn't expect to be loved in return.

IAN JARVIE

Media and Manners

FILM AND SOCIETY IN SOME CURRENT BRITISH FILMS

I'll Never Forget What's 'Is Name, Poor Cow, Up the Junction, Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush, *and* Work Is a Four-Letter Word *are lively and enjoyable films. None is an original and powerful work of art deserving of close analysis in its own right—but taken together, they form a representative sample which sheds some interesting light on the current situation of the British cinema, and on the relation of such films to the society they portray, come from, and help create.*

Often enough, fims initially hailed as searchingly realistic and uncompromising (the Carné-Prévert films of the thirties, Italian neorealism, the *nouvelle vague*) seem, when viewed later, almost embarrassingly sentimental and romanticized. This curious reversal should lead us to reappraise the received idea that realism and romanticism are at opposite poles. Realism, like any other category of art, involves creation, selection, conventions; and

the vanguard of a new and literate movie generation, although many of their presuppositions are at least as old as the coming of talkies. They're all getting together in the book and they all love movies (let's hear it for movies!) and wasn't it easy to get into print? And that's just what's wrong. Words in print command too much power to be abused, especially while people remember what they read better than what they see on the screen. The printed page enjoys a permanence, an accessibility, that celluloid does not. For the reader, there's no rewinding *Dracula* or *The 39 Steps* to check a vague suspicion that something in the latest movie book is amiss. The reader can't be sure of facts—but the writer should be. If he isn't and if he gets caught, any reasonable reader must doubt the validity of his abstract theory and opinion since his concrete facts just ain't. I've no objection if this be taken as an *auteur* theory of critics, which is implicit in a statement of one of the few writers collected here I have expressed some admiration for. It is David Slavitt, and I am barely giving his remarks a context different from his own:

> I suppose another way of putting all this would be to say that the film critic cannot take his identity from the art form, because the movies don't offer any identity. He can't take it from the magazine [read "book"] because, except in very special circumstances, he will be either uncomfortable or impossibly restricted [or perhaps right at home]. And he can't take it from literary and intellectual fashion, because that way lies even surer madness than in the movies themselves. What he must do is what those few movie critics who have amounted to anything have done—and that is find it, somehow, somewhere, in himself.

Considering what most of the other writers in *Man and the Movies* found in themselves, I trust they didn't expect to be loved in return.

IAN JARVIE

Media and Manners

FILM AND SOCIETY IN SOME CURRENT BRITISH FILMS

I'll Never Forget What's 'Is Name, Poor Cow, Up the Junction, Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush, *and* Work Is a Four-Letter Word *are lively and enjoyable films. None is an original and powerful work of art deserving of close analysis in its own right—but taken together, they form a representative sample which sheds some interesting light on the current situation of the British cinema, and on the relation of such films to the society they portray, come from, and help create.*

Often enough, fims initially hailed as searchingly realistic and uncompromising (the Carné-Prévert films of the thirties, Italian neorealism, the *nouvelle vague*) seem, when viewed later, almost embarrassingly sentimental and romanticized. This curious reversal should lead us to reappraise the received idea that realism and romanticism are at opposite poles. Realism, like any other category of art, involves creation, selection, conventions; and

Joy mixing with the locals in Poor Cow

those conventions which acceptably represent "harsh reality" change from time to time. Once the vogue for a certain way of being realistic has passed, the constructed conventions become "visible" and are no longer confused with the "real thing." And perhaps what was once a fearless and poignant confrontation with "reality" is revealed as a creation governed more by sentiment than artistic shape and discipline—hence romantic rather than classic.

Be that as it may, the romanticism and sentimentality which underpin many attempts at realism are manifest in British films, from the overrated thirties documentaries, through the post-war Ealing films, (*Hue and Cry, Man in the White Suit, The Lady Killers, etc.*) even to the north-country working-class films which enjoyed a short vogue in the early sixties. In looking at this present group of what might be called "television wave" films, the general issues of the romance in realism, and of the connection between society as it is portrayed and society as it is, arise in interesting ways.

Recently *Time* led the world to believe that there was a place called "swinging London" which was nirvana for the trendy and switched on. This crop of British films somehow reflects, or embodies, all that instant folklore. *Blow-Up* was of course the model; *The Knack, Smashing Time, Tonight Let's Make Love in London,* etc., had let us in on what was still to come. The five new films suggest that something is going on in the British cinema. But what? This question is not new. A few years ago the Marxists of the French journal *Positif* asked: will there *ever* be a British cinema? One could only cite the characteristic, but anonymous, semidocumentary style developed during the war (e.g., Dickinson's *Next of Kin,* Lean's *In Which We Serve*). Afterwards this yielded to the Ealing school, whose products became more whimsical and impersonal as time went on. Apart from Ealing, eminent directors like Asquith, Reed, and Lean matched their personalities to their subjects, rather than *vice versa.* When in 1956 the success of *Look Back in Anger* on the stage jelled into a whole group of writers treating of working-class subjects, drawing around them a bunch of new directors from theater, television, and film criticism, it seemed as though a British cinema, comparable to Italian neorealism or France's *nouvelle vague,* was at hand. The immediate result was a flush of dramas of working-class life: *Look Back in Anger* and *The Entertainer* (Richardson), *Room at the Top* (Clayton), *Billy Liar* and *A Kind of Loving* (Schlesinger), *Saturday Night and*

Sunday Morning (Reisz), *The L-Shaped Room* (Forbes), *This Sporting Life* (Anderson). All these new directorial careers showed some uncertainty when the industrial north seam began to look worked out. A clue may be found in the background of the leaders of the group.

In their days as film critics, Richardson, Reisz, and Anderson had been vigorous exponents of "commitment" on the part of filmmakers. Anderson's hero was Ford, seen as humane poet. Richardson's was Buñuel, and he had drawn an important distinction between real *auteurs* and *metteurs en scène*. Reisz had exposed the phoney commitment of Hollywood's anti-Communist films. Their films seemed to indicate the possibility of a strong creative alliance with writers committed to working-class themes, and one could hope that at last the incurable bourgeois cast of the British cinema was being broken. In a way it has been. But what about "commitment"? Critics of commitment had always maintained that it was too vague as a critical canon, and that, if made more specific, it condemned any film whose values were not "liberal." This may explain the lack of consistency in the development of these directors, and the lack of clear commitment in their successors.

Richardson has been the most prolific; but after four proletarian dramas in a row his films ceased to have any center (what have *Anger, A Taste of Honey, Tom Jones* and *Mademoiselle* in common?). Forbes has become commercial and efficient (*The Wrong Box, King Rat*). Only Clayton, Schlesinger, and Reisz have succeeded in broadening and deepening their range.

None of these well-established names is represented in the new crop. Clive Donner (*Mulberry Bush*), after two beauties, *The Caretaker* and *Nothing But the Best,* became a commercial success with *What's New Pussycat,* and made *Luv* in America before *Mulberry Bush.* Michael Winner (*What's 'Is Name*) aspires to match the prolific Roger Corman, unless I am much mistaken. Ken Loach (*Poor Cow*) and Peter Collinson (*Up the Junction*) are from television, the latter having already scored with his sensational first movie *The Penthouse*—a Pinter-ish amalgam of *The Desperate Hours, Kitten With a Whip,* and *Wait Until Dark.* Peter Hall (*Work*), of course, is a leading stage director.

English film-makers (especially writers) are a small subgroup of an anyway small and centralized group of metropolitan intellectuals, which, with these films, becomes almost a kinship network. *Poor Cow's* director directed *Up the Junction* on television; *Poor Cow's* author, Nell Dunn, also wrote *Up the Junction;* the star of *Poor Cow* also has a key part in *What's 'Is Name*); etc., etc.

If the north-country films were an offshoot of stage drama, the current crop is also derivative —hence the term "television wave." We all remember how televisual *Marty, Twelve Angry Men, Bachelor Party* and early Frankenheimer were—they reflected the intimate, talkative, earnest and rather stagy flavor of good American television at that time. The marks of current British television are all over the films now under discussion—principal influences being Ken Russell's eye for decorative and evocative detail, and Peter Watkins's use of actuality techniques to heighten storytelling. Other mannerisms include hand-held action shots, artily photographed pop groups (Donovan, The Traffic, Manfred Mann, the Spencer Davis Group), heavy reliance on talk to carry exposition, and passages of improvisation. Only the telephoto shots, and universal use of color, including psychedelic effects, are not directly taken from British television production. Perhaps the acute centrality of television in current British drama —and especially social drama, where the semi-documentary has been perfected (ten years after Serling, Chayevsky, *et al.* had worked it to death in the United States)—accounts for these extensive surface resemblances between these five films. They have other things in common. All are set in or near London, and all are aggressively proletarian in orientation. The girls are all sub-Julie Christie, the boys all look like pop group players. Despite odd variations, the films are all of a trendy piece—the question is

whether that congruence is taken from the society they were made in and portray, or, as I am inclined to hazard, is due to a coincidence of sensibility and attitudes in the class of people who write and direct them which imposes itself, synthesizes on film a milieu which "in reality" exists nowhere.

But at least the films show that much has changed since Henry Raynor in "Nothing to Laugh At" (*Sight and Sound* 1950) indicted British films for assuming the lower classes were fit only for comic treatment. In 1962, however, the sociologist Herbert J. Gans, discussing the role Hollywood films play on British screens, suggested the subtlety that the British film industry was still to a very considerable extent middleclass and cut off from the mass of society, and thus unable to make the kind of films that could take that audience away from the Hollywood product. Whether Gans's thesis is exploded by these films (his research is now ten years old) will emerge later.

The television-wave films certainly exploit the working-class vein in a completely new way. Working-class accents and *mores* are taken for granted as charming camp. Their rapid-fire argot is ribald and amusing, but their setting, outlook, and sex-lives are subtly glamorized to conform to the image of swinging Britain. However amusing, the world these films portray bears little resemblance to contemporary Britain; indeed it is curious that this time of crisis in Britain's reality should be the occasion for lighthearted and sexy films allegedly portraying the society as it is.

In these films people are always enjoying ecstatic sun-dappled interludes. When the upper-class heroine of *Up the Junction* cuts her beautiful hair into an ugly bob, and replaces her elegant clothes with a flashy minidress, we don't know whether her motivation of escape from the false and artificial life of riches is to be taken seriously. Does she genuinely believe in the freedom and earthiness of the lower orders? Is she slumming? Or just dumb? The endless sexual badinage in the factory where she works is too good to be true. To suggest that sex is a day-and-night preoccupation is to replace the old myth of English coldness with a new myth (cf. *The Knack, Alfie, The Family Way*). (In another place I would argue that the use of such myths by privileged intellectual classes to protect their way of life while foisting their imaginary world on their fellows connects up with the persistence of crisis in Britain.)

Character, on the other hand, is truthfully portrayed. Poor Cow, like her male counterpart, Alfie, is interested in getting "a bit of the other," to quote *Up the Junction*. The girl's fecklessness and naive passivity are brought out sharply in writing and direction.

Up the Junction shows us the chic rich girl Polly (Suzy Kendall) crossing the river to Clapham and getting a job in a candy factory. She makes instant friends with a couple of the factory girls, and is soon going to the pub with them and picking up boys. She takes a room and decorates it with old furniture arranged artily (this dismays her prole friends—they've gone all modern). Peter (Dennis Waterman), the boy who delivers her furniture, becomes her lover. He can't borrow the van for a seaside weekend so he steals an Aston Martin and blows his money at a posh hotel. When he is caught and jailed Polly recriminates with him for thinking money and display matter to her; he replies that they may not matter to her but they do to him.

Ostensibly the film allows that Polly is romanticizing the proles; all *they* are doing is making the best of things while she is trying to tell them that what they aspire to isn't worth having. But she only *talks* about her society; it is not *shown*, and therefore neither glamorized nor put over straight. Her remarks about it ring false, however. Somehow the grimness of prole reality never penetrates her head, although it is plain to us after a terrible motorcycle accident (handheld) and a grisly abortion. Notwithstanding all this, Polly's complacency remains triumphantly intact, unlike her virginity.

Collinson is very good with his actors—the vignettes of the furniture dealer (Alfie Bass), the cackling abortionist (Hilda Baker), the girls at the factory, are excellent. But his use of the camera is plain and orthodox, keeping up

really close unless here's a landscape needed. The abortion is just screams and faces. The lead-up to the motorcycle accident is very obvious (medium shots of wild driving and racing) whereas the tormenting of the hunchback girl is so confusingly put together the point is barely made. Collinson's *The Penthouse,* by contrast, with its five-minute close two-shots, and accelerating 360-degree tracking shot, was technically flamboyant.

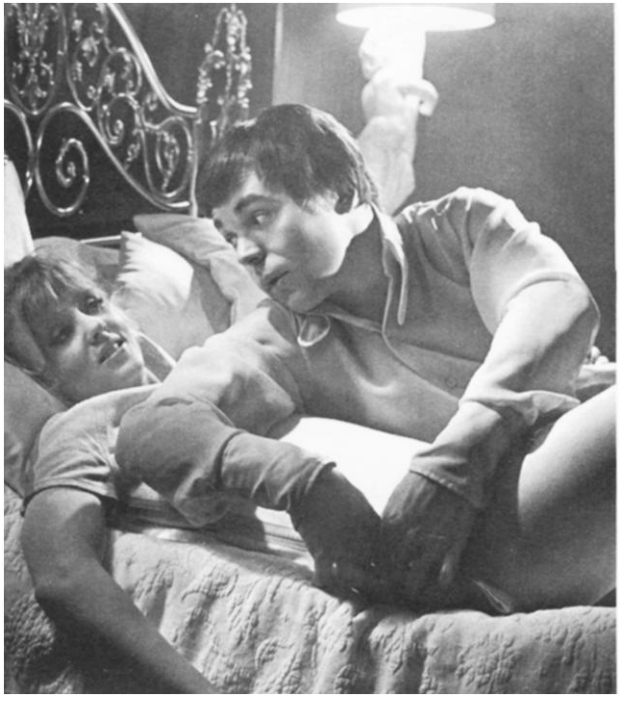
Ken Loach co-wrote *Poor Cow.* It introduces us to Joy (Carol White) after a clinical birth-sequence, she being the slatternly teenage bride of a petty criminal, Tom (John Binden). When he gets copped during his latest caper (robbery glimpsed in hand-held camera), it is not long before one of his mates, Dave (Terence Stamp), takes up with her. She leaves Aunt Emm's where she's been living (getting tips about being "on the game"), and sets up house with Dave. They holiday together in Wales (an idyll: "We 'ad it on the top of the waterfall"), but he gets copped too, for robbery with violence. She swears to be true and moves back with Aunt Emm. She visits Dave in prison but can't bear to wait for him (it's that funny feeling in her tummy when men look at her that way, you see). A job as a bar-maid, a touch of nude modelling, the lecherous baker's man and rent collector, ease her into casual promiscuity. Tom returns and she adjusts to his brutality for the sake of the child, this said in a Truffaut-Godard face-the-camera interview. Freeze.

Loach is hampered by a central character not very interesting to start with, and who doesn't develop at all. She slips a bit, gets worse, and gets on with it. "Frank" dialogue, and prole accents are all we are given to carry us through a fundamentally episodic and undramatic film. No reasons why she behaves so, no expectations of how she will drift next, why she is so feckless. Her fundamental babyishness is not acknowledged, either. *Up the Junction,* at least, has a love story of sorts and the developing clash between the heroine's naiveté and the way things really are to keep us going. *Poor Cow* certainly centers on Joy, but seems to consider it sufficient to show various aspects of her life as it drifts along, assuming the intrinsic interest of the subject and her milieu. This milieu, lower-working-class England ("the criminal classes" was once the phrase), must be quite ordinary and unremarkable for much of the audience. But the film portrays the behavior, the sex, and all that, as thrilling and exotic—though it can be exotic and revelatory only to the insular (intellectual) middle classes! Shall we dare to think Gans's research out of date?

"We 'ad it on the top of the waterfall."
(Poor Cow)

Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush suggests Clive Donner may know where he is going, so assured and confident is his style in this film—but I confess I don't. The film is in his *Pussycat* style, fast-paced and zany. Opening on a bravura extended telephoto close shot of a delivery boy weaving his bicycle in and out of traffic and doing a voice-over commentary about girls and knickers, the mood is set at once. Jamie (Barry Evans) talks about the problem of getting rid of his virginity: everyone seems able to manage easily except him. The story narrates his attempts one by one. Linda

(Adrienna Posta) is a dumb blonde who doesn't respond until she gets on the ground, whereupon she begins wriggling sexily and saying he shouldn't (as it happens, he is still standing up—being distracted). Then there is Paula (Sheila White), the churchy girl who leads him on and then manoeuvres him into a clownish stage role (shades of *The Blue Angel!*). At a gambling club he picks up Caroline (Angela Scoular), a rich girl who invites him to stay the weekend, then passes out cold in the bedroom. Made with tremendous élan, this sequence has a memorable drunken wine-tasting by Denholm Elliot, and a French-farce style of bedroom exchange. Finally, at a big bed party, with Audrey (Vanessa Howard), he manages. "That's it, then," he declares, and seizes the unoccupied hand of Mary (Judy Geeson), whom he has been lusting after since the beginning. Next thing it is nude bathing while shacked up for the weekend at a seaside hotel. In arguing, on a boat, about Mary's philosophy of "no involvements" Jamie gets soaked; next thing he learns that she has failed to enter university, but he has passed and so has a dishy friend of Mary's, Claire (Diane Keen).



Difficulties with a zipper in MULBERRY BUSH

What's it all about, then? Initiation at Seventeen By A Girl Who Resembles Julie Christie, perhaps? In the book by Hunter Davies the hero never really manages; sex is just not that easy. The film script (also by Davies) simplifies and coarsens; Jamie now fails only because of hilarious bad luck, and as soon as he manages he's a new self-confident lad. Girls and sex are seen entirely from the point of view of the male teenager—a *tour de force* for Mr. Donner, who's no teenager. But why the color-magazine version of the teenage world?

At times uproarious, not to say very sexy, Donner keeps it all going with his usual control—the emphasis is carried by the sets, very tight editing, and a swingy score. Jamie's mother, father, and younger brother are beautifully sketched in: she endlessly reading, he a sports addict, the brother irritatingly knowing and quick with the deodorant.

At this stage it becomes even more difficult to grasp at what reality could underlie these films. *Up the Junction* has persuaded us that the really swinging world is south of the river, among the proles. Donner seems to find it in lower-middle-class Stevenage. Whereas Collinson is not sure about his heroine's attitude, Donner identifies openly with his hero. But Donner's emancipated rich girl is a far cry from the Clapham birds.

I'll Never Forget What's is Name, the slightest of these films, perhaps resolves the dilemma, for its locates the swinging world firmly among the ad-men. Like Donner, Winner shows the influence of Richard Lester and pop art even more than television. But his theme is Nell Dunn's again: the hero's search for integrity in a world of false values. Perhaps the world Polly (of *Up the Junction*) is so intent on escaping from is the world of Jonathan Lute (Orson Welles). Andrew Quint (Oliver Reed), seems to have everything in the way of material and sexual success. But editing a literary magazine is what he really wants to do. He finally knuckles under again to Lute, making us wonder if this is not a case of his world of integrity being more fantasy than the tiresome swinging world

he wants to escape. The tables are turned. For the ad-men, the outside world is a comforting fantasy, swingingness is real. They *hate* their real world, as much as Polly and Jamie yearn for it.

Peter Hall comes directly from the stage, with no television initiation, to remake the play *Eh?* by Henry Livings, as *Work is a Four Letter Word.* This attempt at a futuristic comedy falls flat on its face. Set in Britain not too far hence, when export madness has led to everyone living in Domestic Industries Community Estates, needlessly overseeing automated factories, it throws the traditional human wrench in the works (cf. *Brave New World, A Nous la Liberté, Modern Times, 1984,* and Tati's last two films). Hall must have seen Warner in *Morgan* and, in deciding to let him repeat that role, gets pushed off into side tracks. This hero's particular wrench is hallucinatory Mexican mushrooms, which will only grow in the steam of the automated boiler room. Getting a job there, and taking his new wife along, he finally turns the whole community on (or literally, off). The exit over the horizon is traditional.

Hall proves fluent and ingenious—all those shots involving closed-circuit television, which Frankenheimer has already made seem so simple—but a trifle addicted to a televisual use of close-ups when a much lighter touch is needed. The slapstick and running around is always labored. There is no sex, no nudity, and a very plain heroine—hardly trendy.

So what do these films portend for British cinema? Not a breakthrough in its class bias. From being low-comedy types, the proles have become glamorous, sex-mad, swinging—from one extreme to the other, but with the underlying patronizing attitude unchanged.

Primitive discussions of the media treated them in isolation as injecting their influence into people and society (hence the nickname "the hypodermic theory"). Later analysis made it clear that the media have no more influence than any other piece of the social system, that possibly they initiate trends and fads, but they are also vehicles of trends and fads. I would go a little further and suggest that movies can be a vehicle and a means of social action. Those who yearn for there to be a swinging Britain have great influence on the media, and they suggest in the media that swinging Britain is already there. This serves to promote the cause.

The analysis can be generalized: the media are one of many socializing processes in society, means of coming to terms with reality; but it needs emphasizing that they also constitute part of that social reality. Take only a surface example—learning how to look attractive by copying a star. Every so often suddenly loads of girls appear looking like Hepburn or Christie. Their "new" kind of attractiveness does not make any sense if one is not acquainted with the originals from film or magazine. All that has happened is that a certain physical type has suddenly been crystallized in a screen recruit, and ordinary people with similar looks can cash in on them at last. That sort of personal self-discovery might well be replicated when a whole way of life is discovered—swinging Britain. Swingingness is absurd, frivolous, utterly skin deep in reality so far, but the media are synergetic with society, and may contribute to the spread and deepening of "swingingness." Communication theorists like Klapper argue that media impel society in a direction only if other factors are also contributing. My guess is that they are. Perhaps Britain is, after so many decades of remarkable social stability, undergoing a deep social change of which the mod swinging bit is only a sign. I hope so, because British films of this kind are a whole lot of fun, and have the sort of verve that might yet draw in substantial numbers of serious creative intelligences. This could yet lead to our indigenous directors building a cinema of stature—instead of emigrating.

POOR COW

JAMES ROY MacBEAN

Politics, Painting, and the Language of Signs in Godard's Made in USA

The films of Jean-Luc Godard, and particularly the films from *Une Femme Mariée* to the present, are pushing at the boundaries which have stood—more perhaps through habit than intrinsic necessity—between one art-form and another. *Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle*, for example, defies all categorization, and can only be described, in Godard's own terms, as "a sociological essay in the form of a novel, written, however, not with words, but with notes of music." *La Chinoise*, at the same time that it probes the nature of revolution, probes as well the nature of theater—especially the "dialectical theater" envisoned by the later Brecht. *Made in USA* (which Godard finished just a few days before *Deux ou trois choses*) takes a few jabs at the political intrigue film and thrusts its real assault at the tenuous boundary between film and the painter's canvas.

Moreover, just as painters today are themselves challenging the notion of the canvas and are reaching out into the world of everyday objects as media for their paints, so too does Godard reach out both to paint and to film the walls, the billboards, the posters, the gasoline pumps, and the comic-books which surround us today; to create of them, in his films, a series of semi-abstract collages which stand—more perhaps than any other contemporary art-form—as the icons of our age. In *Made In USA*, the style is a combination of the comic-strip iconography of pop art and the violent splashes of color of the "action painters." The compositions are out of Pollock, Poliakoff, Hofmann, Francis, Gorky—and there is even a flayed skull leering out at us obscenely, like one of DeKooning's terrifying "Women." But Godard has, in his own way, gone beyond the action painters to discover still another medium with which to paint —blood. *Made in USA*, as Anna Karina comments on the film's soundtrack, is the marriage of Walt Disney and Humphrey Bogart, in short, "a Walt Disney with blood." And blood there is, flowing, spurting, splattering over the whole works; but it is a photogenic blood that looks—and is used—suspiciously like paint. A man is murdered in bed and the blood-spattered sheet is cropped and photographed to resemble a composition by Jackson Pollock.

Along with Antonioni's *Deserto Rosso*, Agnès Varda's *Le Bonheur*, and Bo Widerberg's *Elvira Madigan*, *Made in USA* belongs to the burgeoning genre of what might be termed "painter's cinema" due to the way in which so much of the film-narrative is "told" in color, composition, and light. Godard, who recognized in *Deserto Rosso* the sort of film he himself had long wanted to make, has spoken of the impression he had, while watching that film, that the colors were not in front of the camera but *in* the camera, that the camera did not merely photograph *Deserto Rosso* but *created* it—a stylistic effect which Godard himself sought to achieve in *Made in USA*. "What I wanted," Godard revealed, in talking about both *Made in USA* and his short film *Anticipation*, "was to get *inside* the image . . . just the way certain paintings give one the feeling of being within them, *inside* them, or give the impression that they can never be understood as long as the viewer remains outside." But Godard is well aware that the ordinary film-viewer's habit of concentrating on the anecdotal structure of the "plot" often presents a formidable obstacle to his getting inside the film and understanding the more subtle language of color, composition, and light. To help

the viewer overcome this obstacle is always a difficult task, and the opening words of *Made in USA*—"le bonheur, par exemple"—may be Godard's way of attempting to alert the viewer at the very outset, by referring to Varda's experiments with colors in *Le Bonheur,* that the film he is watching belongs to a genre of films that do not tell a story so much as they "show" it. Godard has even declared that the film which *Made in USA* resembles most is *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg* (by Varda's husband, Jacques Demy)—a film in which all of the dialogue is sung instead of spoken. In *Made in USA,* Godard explains, "the people don't sing, but the film itself sings."

Nevertheless, *Made in USA* reveals a hard-edged contemporary sensibility which has far more affinity with Antonioni's cool abstractions than with the Romantic lushness of *Le Bonheur, Elvira Madigan,* or *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg.* Godard's sensibility, it should be pointed out, however, does not lack its own particular brand of Romanticism—a more tempered lushness—which reveals itself, for example, in *Le Mépris* and *Pierrot le fou,* in Godard's lucidly despairing but nonetheless poignant nostalgia for Mediterranean harmony; and which reveals itself in all his films in his attitude towards love, in the poignancy of his characters' perpetual search for love, in his own special way of letting the camera dwell caressingly on the gestures, the expressions, the *moues* of his actresses.

In *Made in USA,* it is Anna Karina once again whose every gesture, every blink of the eyes, every swish of the hair is offered up to our visual caress. She is on screen nearly every instant of the film, usually in close-up, usually standing in front of a brightly colored wall—as if in a series of painted still compositions which might be entitled "Anna Karina on Blue," "Anna Karina on Red," "on Yellow," "on White," etc. Her face is now a little fuller, perhaps, and at times the make-up gives her a slightly washed-out look: the gestures and expressions are the same we have seen so often in the earlier films that in *Made in USA* we sometimes have the impression we are watching an old pro's parody of the "real" Anna Karina we know and love. But when she fluffs out her hair in that feminine gesture so well-loved by Godard, we capitulate, and, like Bruno Forestier (Michel Subor) in *Le Petit Soldat,* we lose the bet and have to admit that we have fallen in love with her . . . all over again and in spite of the lack of depth (this time) in her role and in the film as a whole.

However, the notion "lack of depth" seems to have been quite consciously and quite purposefully integrated, by Godard, into both the subject and the form of *Made in USA.* Visually, the film has a markedly flat quality; and one has the claustrophobic feeling that nearly all of the film takes place in the closed space between a wall and a camera focused in close-up range on a person standing directly in front of the wall. There is even one remarkable sequence in which Paula (Anna Karina), seeking possible clues to the disappearance and presumed murder of a man she loved, keeps a rendezvous with various underworld types in the prop and publicity storage-room of a movie theater. She walks to and fro amidst a maze of life-sized cardboard cowboys, commandos, and sex-queens—a two-dimensional pop world of violence and sexual fantasies which serves as a mirror both to the American movie industry's exploitation of the aggressive tendencies and sexual frustrations of American society, and to the superficial and basically false social and political situation of a Western Europe which, in rebuilding itself in the postwar years, has come increasingly under the influence of American ways.

France's Ben-Barka affair, to which *Made in USA* often alludes, was a gangland-style kidnapping and murder, which, if it hadn't happened right before their eyes in the heart of the Latin Quarter in broad daylight, 1965, would have seemed to most Parisians something out of an Al Capone movie of the twenties, or, for that matter, still another manifestation of America's present wave of violence and political assassinations. In any case, the title is neither gratuitous nor whimsical: Godard, like most Frenchmen (and this is the one issue on which Godard and De Gaulle would agree) feels very strongly about the insidious effect of the Ameri-

canization of Europe; and, in *Made in USA,* Godard has attempted to depict, in his own cryptic way, Europe's floundering efforts to extricate herself from the stultifying morass of American "cultural" exports—guns, gangs, gadgets, and Coca-Cola—as packaged by MGM.

But Godard is by no means a crude xenophobe sputtering with indignation and rage at the sight of everything American. On the contrary, Godard's attitude towards America betrays that certain admixture of attraction and repulsion, of fascination and fear—the love/hate relationship which America seems to inspire so readily in its intercourse with the rest of the world. There are aspects of America which Godard clearly admires and seems even to love. Action painting (or, if you prefer, abstract expressionism) to which Godard pays homage in *Made in USA,* found its beginning and its most fecund development in America; and in addition to American film-style of the thirties and forties, even American comic-strips are admired by Godard (as well as by Resnais and many other French film-makers) for their lively, concise syntax, their quick-cutting shorthand which puts across its message with a minimum of signs and a maximum of emotive energy.

Made in USA is, itself, very much in the comic-strip style, even using "balloons" (the single expletive "BING!" the instant Anna Karina is slugged on the head by an underworld tough popping out from an alley doorway) and dialogue carried on from one frame to another (back and forth, with a cut each time the conversation switches from one speaker to another —the two speakers never appearing together in the same frame). There is, however, more than one comic-strip style; and given the telegraphic economy of the individual comic-strip *sign,* one can, simply according to the proliferation of individual signs, create of each frame either a "simple" or a "complex" unit of expression. This distinction (basically a stylistic one applicable to most art-forms) can easily be perceived by a glance through the comic section of any newspaper: some comic-strips, like "Peanuts" or the Jules Pfeiffer cartoons, are extremely spare and convey their visual message with very few lines and little or no background; while others, like "Dick Tracy" or "Batman" or "Steve Canyon" are extremely dense and convey their visual message with an overwhelming mass of detail, each individual part, in its own cryptic way, conveying a certain signification. The *sense,* for example, of a frame from "Dick Tracy" is as much the electro-magnetic ray-gun lying on the table in the corner as it is the punch being thrown at the hero's prominent jaw by his latest adversary.

Godard has, of course, utilized both simple and complex styles, but he has leaned increasingly, in his latest films, toward the latter; and, in particular, has experimented with the dynamic tensions which can be set up by a density of signs with conflicting and even contradictory significations. Thus, in *Deux ou trois choses,* both the viewer and the chief protagonist (Juliette—Marina Vlady) are inundated with signs clamoring for their attention, bidding them to do this, to do that, *not* to do this, *not* to do that, until the struggle to separate *sense* from *nonsense* reduces both Juliette and the viewer to a "zero-point" from which, hopefully, they will be able to start afresh. In *Made in USA,* too, the style is often complex in such a way that individual signs work against rather than with each other.

Before discussing the various types of sign-conflicts which occur in *Made in USA,* however, we should look closely for a moment at the very exemplary demonstration of sign-conflicts which Godard included within the dramatic structure of *La Chinoise.* This simple lesson shows the way two signs can come at us at once with contradictory significations, baffling us momentarily (or longer) until we refine our sensitivity to the more discrete units of meaning within a single sign and are thus able to decode more precisely the *sense* of a given sign or sign-cluster. In fact it demonstrates precisely the sort of critical operation we have been called upon to perform in *Made in USA* and *Deux ou trois choses.* I am referring to Véronique's demonstration to Guillaume of what it means to "struggle on two fronts at the same time." She tells Guillaume, by means of the spoken word, that

MADE IN USA

Laszlo Szabo, Jean-Pierre Léaud, and Anna Karina in MADE IN U.S.A.

she no longer loves him, while at the same time, by means of a Romantic piano sonata which she plays on the phonograph, she tells him just the opposite. Guillaume, like the audience, does not know at first what to make of this procedure and stares at Véronique bewilderedly, then becomes frustrated at the confusion in his decoding process and shouts angrily "What's going on?" until finally he catches on, relaxes, smiles, and admits that she had him scared for a moment.

Normally, of course, there are not just two but many signs presented simultaneously in a particular shot or even in a particular frame; and it is worth noting that Guillaume, confused by the two conflicting auditory signs, immediately searches for a third sign—a visual one—by staring intently at Véronique's face. She, however, maintains as neutral a sign as possible by remaining impassive—and Godard himself safeguards that neutrality by avoiding a front close-up, keeping the camera to the side and at middle distance.

When two signs conflict, of course, there is no need for one sign to cancel out completely another sign. Given any two signs presented (aurally or visually) at the same moment, sign A could cancel out sign B, or B cancel out A; or A could predominate over but not cancel out B, or B predominate over but not cancel out A; or A and B could be contradictory and yet, each of them, half-true (for example, as in the case of a love/hate relationship); and, theoretically at least, they could be present in equal parts, that is, in a 50/50 ratio; or finally, A and B could be mutual reinforcements or redundant statements, either both 100% true or both 100% false.

Among the various signs, words, as it happens (although they are present in great abundance in Godard's films) are often systematically undercut or over-ruled by visual or other auditory signs such as music (as in the "demonstration" by Véronique) or noise. The latter is utilized by Godard as a particularly effective source of tension, especially when what we might call random noise (that is, a sound usually not considered to occur for the explicit purpose of conveying sense: the sound of a car-motor or the drone of a low-flying plane) occurs simultaneously with a sound (such as the spoken word) which *is* normally considered to occur for the explicit purpose of conveying sense. When these two sounds occur simultaneously, our normal reaction is to consider the "random" noise as pure "interference" and therefore to dismiss it as much as possible in order to concentrate better on the supposedly more

meaningful words. In *Deux ou trois choses,* however, Godard systematically turns the tables on us by letting noise convey as much sense as the words which we strain so hard to hear—and often noise, in that film, conveys more sense than the words. In *Made in USA,* however, there are only three basic situations in which noise *per se* predominates over or cancels out the spoken words. The name, each time it is pronounced, of the man whose disappearance and presumed murder Paula is investigating, is completely drowned out by a ringing telephone, low-flying jet, or honking auto-horn, so that even at the end of the film he is known to us—unless we are excellent lip-readers—simply as Richard. The noise, by systematically smothering the name, pretty clearly signifies to us the relative unimportance of the name—and the history of the past few years has provided all too many names we could fill in: Kennedy, King, Ben-Barka, Oswald, Evers, and even (perhaps most appropriate) the name X (as in Malcolm).

A second instance of noise interfering with words is a nicely ironic example wherein the noise is, itself, made up exclusively of words, but words spoken simultaneously by two different people (Paula and Widmark — Laszlo Szabo) who, standing side by side and facing the camera, deliver, simultaneously, two rapid-fire monologues which melt quite helplessly together to form an incomprehensible jumble. Finally, the third, most important, and certainly the most irritating conflict between noise and words occurs on the two occasions when Paula listens to a tape-recorded speech which Richard (our Mr. X) had prepared for a meeting of the PCF (the French Communist Party). The tape is played, however, at such a high volume and on such a small tape-recorder that the sound is horribly distorted, producing a deafening, haranguing rasp (it is Godard's own voice, by the way, which is distorted), permitting us to comprehend little of what is said. What few fragments we do manage to comprehend (such as the statement that the communists in France must offer a concrete alternative to the "nuclear adventure and patriotic publicity of the Gaullist police-state") indicates to us that the speech, although rambling, might (in Godard's own allusive and elusive way) be quite interesting and even instructive; but, as it stands, it is instructive only as another example of the way the rhetoric of the Left (as well as that of the Right) so often deteriorates into an incomprehensible harangue. And this is not the first time that Godard has dramatized the inability of the French Left to communicate its political programs articulately.

But if words can be so easily over-ruled by other auditory signs such as music and noise, what happens to words when they come in conflict with visual signs? It is precisely this problem which provides what is undoubtedly the most extraordinary sequence in *Made in USA*—the incredible "conversation" at the bar in a small café. (This sequence, by the way, is all the more extraordinary by virtue of its being filmed over a duration of what seems like ten minutes without a single cut — capturing, through subtle camera movements and the slow, preoccupied pacing of Paula, as well as through the rhythm of the words, a ballet-like ebb and flow that is absolutely hypnotic.) The conversation takes place between Paula, the barman, and a young laborer who has come in for a few quick glasses of *vin ordinaire.* It begins with a seemingly non-sensical mélange of words and numbers. When Paula states that she is twenty-one, the laborer remarks that he is only two years older than she is (so far so good), to which Paula replies, however, that she is surprised to learn that he is nineteen (?)! The barman butts in to object that 22 and 35 (?) do not make 19, to which Paula agrees, except, she adds, that, during war, 70 plus 14 made 40. Mathematically, of course, this is all *non-sense*; but, the last equation, at least, makes *sense* if one catches the reference to war and to the "snowball" effect of war upon war upon war in the last hundred years. (1870 was the year of the Franco-Prussian War, the first of France's humiliating defeats at the hands of the Germans; 1914 was the year in which Germany invaded France in World War I; and 1940 saw Germany once again occupying French soil.) Moreover, these wars—at least the last two—have brought in-

creasing intervention of the United States in Europe's affairs, and the wars are thus key chapters in the Americanization of European life which comprises the subject of the film.

Following this playful but straightfaced game of numbers, the conversation switches to an equally straightfaced but far less playful game of words, which, it is demonstrated, can be put together in perfectly correct syntactical relation and yet make sheer *non-sense*—and even a most poetic but most disquieting form of *contre-sens*. "The barman is in the pocket of the pencil's jacket." "The counter is kicking mademoiselle." "The doors are throwing themselves through the windows." "The windows are looking out of my eyes."

These statements are delivered matter-of-factly by the young laborer, between sips of his wine. But while he uses words to turn the world upside-down and inside-out, Raoul Coutard's magnificent color-photography shows us a world so *visibly*—and, for the actors who move about in it, so *palpably*—right-side-up and right-side out, so irrefutably solid in its thingness, that, ultimately, we realize (as did Juliette in *Deux ou trois choses*) that language instead of helping us to disengage the real from the imaginary, submerges us with significations which threaten to drown that which is real, and only lead us to doubt whether language itself is of any help in our intercourse with the world.

There is, as everyone knows, an old saying that "one picture is worth a thousand words"; and Godard, in *La Chinoise,* coined a cinematographer's version of that old adage and had it painted on the wall of the activists' apartment. "One must confront vague ideas with clear images" reads the maxim of moralist Godard, who, in his exploration of the world of *signs,* and in spite of his own love for words, finds the visual sign—the clear photographic image—a far more faithful indicator of the reality of a given situation than the fickle and all-too malleable word.

But the question arises as to why Godard occupies himself, in his films, with exercises in signs, with comic-strip syntax, with pop art, with the sharp, bright graphic style of *Elle* and *Marie-Claire*. Some have attributed it to caprice, others to perversity, while still others have somewhat enviously accused Godard of cleverly cashing in on the cult of modernity. (The notion of Godard's "cashing in" on the waves of fashion is really quite ludicrous when one realizes that even the incredible creative achievement of seventeen feature films in less than ten years has brought precious little cash—or, for that matter, fame—to Godard, himself, who lives modestly and is still forced to make some of the lowest-budget films anywhere.) The answer, I would maintain, is that Godard does, in fact, interest himself in the cult of modernity, *not* in order to cash in on it, but rather because it is where today's action is, because it is where today's "mutations" (to use one of Godard's favorite words) are taking place, and because Godard, as a committed artist, seeks both to understand the social-political-biological-emotional situation as it exists today in Western Europe, and, at the same time, to act upon it, to influence it, to change it by goading, pricking, and cajoling people into a greater awareness of—and, concomitantly, a greater use of—their *responsibility.*

The nonsensical conversation at the bar in *Made in USA* provokes Paula to assert (echoing Nana's famous acknowledgement of her individual responsibility in *Vivre sa Vie*) that even though existence may be relative, "one can place in the very center of that relative existence a point of absolute reference: *morale*" (which, in the French sense of the term, comes closer to the English word "ethics" than to the narrower "morality.") One is, she affirms, responsible for what one does. Moreover, the very fact that there is nothing outside of existence which can justify it, shifts the entire problem of existence (as the French existentialists have pointed out) from the realm of metaphysics into the realm of ethics. That "point of absolute reference at the center of one's relative existence" is nothing other than the *nothingness* which each person is, and which forces him *to choose,* to create himself anew at each new moment. One is not only responsible for what one does, one *is* what one does. Or, as Godard himself once phrased

it, "the very definition of the human condition should be in the *mise en scène* itself."

Godard's style of *mise en scène* in his films is, above all, a Brechtian attempt (both in theatrical means and philosophical end) to coax the viewer-listener into a closer examination of his own individual, existential *mise en scène*. On the subject of theatrical means, however, it should be pointed out that Godard employs not only certain theatrical techniques associated with Brechtian Epic Theater, but also certain techniques associated with Artaud's Theater of Cruelty. For example, the bombardment of the viewer-listener's senses throughout *Deux ou trois choses*, the unbearable rasp of the tape-recorder in *Made in USA*, and the latter film's numerous "jets of blood" all reveal a strong affinity with—and may quite consciously be derived from—Artaud. Nevertheless, it is quite clear that what Godard seeks in the theatrical experience (and that includes film) is *not*, as Artaud would have it, the trancelike participation of a religious communicant in some eternal oneness, but rather the lucid participation of a critical and self-critical individual in the day-to-day dialectic of existence, à la Brecht. In short, what Godard seeks, like Brecht and like the existentialists, is lucidity, responsibility, and *engagement*.

But Godard is very much aware of how easy it is for an individual living in modern urban society to abdicate both his lucidity and his responsibility by passively submitting to—and unconsciously assimilating—the mass media's perpetual bombardment of signs and significations, which, as much by bewildering and benumbing the individual as by direct exhortation, succeed all too often in planting notions and arousing needs in which conscious volition plays little or no role. "To live in society today" Godard once stated, "is like living in one enormous comic-strip"; and in films such as *Bande à part* and *Pierrot le fou* Godard has clearly demonstrated the way even those who attempt to live outside of society bring their comic-book notions with them.

It is, in fact, precisely because the human being is so malleable, so adaptable, because he can assume and appropriate patterns of behavior so readily, often without even knowing he is doing so, that Godard is so much concerned with the problems of lucidity and responsibility. The individual confronted by what McLuhan calls the "electronic implosion" of *signs* pouring at him from every corner of his environment, finds himself in an extremely vulnerable position if he does not very quickly develop an ability to handle signs in a sophisticated way, to read them correctly, to decode them and process the information in a rapid and precise manner. Without this ability, the individual is a prey to what Herbert Marcuse very thoroughly describes under the rubric "The New Forces of Control" in *One-Dimensional Man*—a book, by the way, which may very well have been a source of inspiration to Godard in his depiction of the flat, depthless world of *Made in USA*. As a matter of fact, Godard's films are full of characters who have succumbed to what Godard (in *Deux ou trois choses*) calls "The Gestapo of the Structures" and who have become, in a very literal sense, one-dimensional men. (I am thinking particularly of Charlotte in *Une Femme Mariée*, Madeleine and "Mlle. 19 Ans" in *Masculin-Féminin*, Ulysse and Michel-ange in *Les Carabiniers*, and, of course, the citizens of Alphaville.) Then, too, there are, in Godard's films, the individuals (like Michel Poiccard in Breathless, Odile and Franz in *Bande à part*, and Ferdinand in *Pierrot le fou*) who dream of a Romantic escape from contemporary problems and who are always setting out, if only in their imaginations, for exotic places. But Romantic escape, in Godard's films, always ends in death—if not physical, then spiritual death. It is clearly not considered by Godard to be an authentic solution.

On the other hand, Godard's most positive characters (Nana in *Vivre sa Vie*; Lemmy Caution in *Alphaville;* Paul—until he "steps back too far" and falls to his death—in *Masculin-Féminin*; Paula in *Made in USA*; and the group of activists in *La Chinoise*) all steadfastly refuse to run away from reality, refuse to abdicate their responsibility, and involve themselves in the day-to-day struggle for mastery of the

vague, impersonal forces which, in modern society, weigh heavily upon them. The electronic age is here, whether we like it or not, and it is here and now that the "mutations" are taking place. Godard's exercises in signs in *Made in USA*, *Deux ou trois choses*, and *La Chinoise* constitute his way of helping, coaxing, almost forcing the viewer-listener to refine his processes of perception, to develop his ability to handle signs, and thereby to protect himself psychically from those who would wilfully manipulate the unsophisticated. Only through mastery of the complex system of signs and significations, Godard seems to be warning us, can we hope to extricate ourselves from the hypnotic web they spin around us.

In *Made in USA*, that spider's web of manipulation, intrigue, coercion, and violence has had its day. Near the middle of the film, we are told, by means of a quiet, brooding song by Marianne Faithfull, that we have reached "the evening of the day." The song is like a lament. The same mistakes are being made all over again. "We sit and watch the children play, doing things we used to do, doing things they think are new." And we just sit and watch . . . and cry bitter tears. The new Europe is repeating the mistakes of America, and America is repeating the mistakes of the old Europe. It is all a vicious circle. It is also getting late. For Western civilization as a whole, it may very well be "the evening of the day." Small wonder that we are sad.

What Paula has been through, in *Made in USA*, is, in her own words, "something to make one vomit"—political kidnappings, political assassinations, torture, treachery, the whole seamy and sadistic web of secret-police machinations in a state that disguises its fascism in publicity slogans of old-fashioned patriotism. It has been a narrow and constricting world—a world in which the word *liberté* has literally been plastered up against the wall and riddled with machine-gun bullets. But the very fact that it is getting late, that we are moving towards the end of something, seems in Godard's view, to be a source of hope. In the final sequence of *Made in USA*, there comes a moment when the camera shows us a book jacket with the words, "Gauche, Année Zéro" (year Zero of the Left), while we hear, on the sound track, the beginning of the beautiful Largo movement of Schumann's Fourth Symphony. "Unless you're blind and deaf," Godard asserted in an interview, "it's impossible not to see that this shot, this mixture of image and sound, represents a movement of hope."

Moreover, in that final sequence, the horizon begins to open up for the first time in the film and the soft, natural morning light is a dramatic contrast to the bright, sharp splashes of violent color we have seen all through the film. Paula leaves the corrupt world of "Atlantic City" and begins to extricate herself from the constricting morass of the past, which unravels itself like a giant ribbon as we watch the autoroute spin out behind her through the rear-window of the Europe #1 radio-car in which she is riding.

"Fascism will pass away," she says to journalist Philippe Labro, the driver of the car: "It's just a fad, like miniskirts. But the struggle for a real viable Left will be long and difficult." The conversation continues, punctuated intermittently by the long, flowing lines of the Schumann. "The Right and the Left are both the same," objects the journalist. "They'll never change: the Right because it's as stupid as it is vicious, the Left because it's sentimental. Besides," he adds, "the Right and the Left is an equation completely out-of-date; one can't put the problem in those terms anymore." "Well, how?" asks Paula, looking straight ahead at the future in front of her as the film comes, characteristically, to an end that is only a beginning.

NANCY ELLEN DOWD

Popular Conventions

The director of *Battle of Algiers* was so assured of his film's documentary look that after the credits, he informed his audience that not one frame of newsreel footage would appear on the screen. The forewarning is unnecessary.

Battle of Algiers includes an astoundingly complete collection of romanesque clichés and a classic number of set-ups—two items reality stopped providing long ago. The film opens with an enormous set-up—the open-ended, privileged (no relation to intimate) situation: four people trapped in a wall waiting to be blown up. Once the tension of this moment has been adequately established, there is an anonymous flashback, and as every-one knows, such a framework, an open situation at the beginning of a film, can portend only badly for the protagonist.

Later, we see an Algerian woman, one of the female leads, pass through a French checkpoint carrying a bomb in her shopping basket: another set-up. The pay-off comes later when Matthieu, the French colonel, to illustrate a lecture to the police on the topic, "The Enemy Can Hide His Bombs Anywhere," shows a film shot at one of the checkpoints. Out of all the hundreds of thousands of people who could have been passing when the footage was shot, it would, of course, have to be one of the principals in the film, the woman mentioned above. With this bit of crowd-pleasing melodrama, the audience smugly knows what no one else knows.

After Matthieu has ordered and watched the death of the two rebel leaders, he turns to a comrade, and, in one breath, makes a luncheon engagement and an extraordinary comment about having lived with these Algerians for 130 years and, "Here's to another 130." It is unlikely that a Dien Bien Phu veteran could be quite that sanguine. The remark is not simply bad dialogue or character stereotyping; it is part of the heavy-handed nineteenth-century romanesque tradition of never letting anyone except the hero be in any way ambiguous. The other characters get the heavy irony (Matthieu) or the cloying fondness (the boy revolutionary who hasn't changed much since his last appearance in *Open City*).

Finally, in the much-lauded finale, when the film suddenly moves forward to reveal the "outcome" of these initial acts of rebellion, the director cannot resist another melodramatic device. The beautiful transparency of the scene, its newsreel look, is destroyed when it turns out that the woman with the banner is actually the young woman who died with Ali—or her double. The presence in this scene of the older Algerian lady (one of the three who had planted the bombs) is plausible—although it does "serve to make the author's point" by connecting the two parts of the film; nevertheless, the younger woman's presence is junk. It is unlikely, in a scene so carefully planned to give a certain effect, that the director would not have noticed the striking resemblance between the two young women—if indeed it is not the same actress in both scenes.

I do not believe these four examples to be minor flaws; they are indicative of a whole mentality which makes film, documentary or fiction, the intermediary between a reality and the spectator. The inadequacies of *Battle of Algiers* are not inevitable for the fiction film which attempts to reconstruct a reality. The Algerians are real Algerians (as opposed to Italians dressed up to look like Algerians); they wear Algerian clothing; they live in Algerian houses in Algiers, eat Algerian food,

etc. *Battle of Algiers* on this superficial level seems carefully documented, carefully "national." The laws of the film are not the physical limitations of reconstruction. If the director had resisted the urge to tie the final sequence to the preceding events by means of a melodramatic double-take, the last scene might have justified the documentary disclaimer; unfortunately, the director succumbs. If the structure of the film had been less conventional, if it had had any of the tempo of a revolution, the spectator would not have been as acutely aware of a heavy-handed "well-structured" story, of a film speaking surreptitiously for an individual. The script, the screenplay rules. There has been little or no experimentation with reconstruction because Pontecorvo's concern with the Battle of Algiers is, at best, amateur (a euphemism for dishonest). The whole structure of the film, its enormous deliberate omissions are attempts to heighten the dramatic impact of the final sequence, as happy ending, as arbitrary outcome.

The death of the four revolutionaries is followed by the pontifical nonsense of the voice over, "But thousands rose to take their places"—as if revolutions were composed of first acts and short epilogues.

Battle of Algiers is a product of that broad phoney nostalgia for the Commune-you-would-have-participated-in-had-you-only-been-there, history as Drama (all the more loathsome in this contemporary situation). It would be difficult to find a scene which is neither "interesting," nor "informative," nor "important," nor "action-packed," nor phoney. *Battle of Algiers* is a self-indulgent film and like most drama-sucking parasites on cataclysms, Pontecorvo allows himself the flabby nauseating grace of retrospection—the impossible compassion for victim and rebel alike—humane and violent. It is a pity that the young people in the café get blown up but it was inevitable-necessary.

The conventions which plague the *Battle of Algiers* are not indigenous to the fiction film, or more precisely, the reconstruction film; they appear just as often in the documentary when a director tries to extract a story from his footage, thus making his film a ventriloquist's dummy—a grotesque anachronism, agonizing to watch.

In my opinion, Pontecorvo fails in convincing his audience that the events have happened, that the situation exists or existed, and in being or seeming faithful to the events —the two goals which he has ostensibly set out to reach—because he has interpreted these tasks in the light of, for want of a better term, a nineteenth-century reality. Life is no longer life-like—"life-like" being the usual misnomer for the dramatic conventions. Reality has long stopped being credible, and if the audience is rightfully prepared to disbelieve reality, to suspect the internal and external world, why should a film-maker attempt to make his audience believe that something did happen? Past time, the immutable finished event, is an illusion.

Moreover, audiences (me) are highly suspicious of:

(a) Chronology—Time has long stopped marching on.

(b) Flashbacks—Time has long stopped marching back, inside or outside minds.

(c) Important, meaningful or informative synchronized speech. People probably still do talk, still try to express themselves, still describe what they intend to do, but no one listens. Human speech is rarely surprising anymore. It is simply not very difficult to guess what other people are saying and nobody really and/or rightfully cares what other people are saying because in any one "situation" (another defunct term), speech is almost never the most revealing or compelling happening (consider radios, thoughts, broken mufflers, memories). There are too many stimuli to devote oneself to the sense of speech (the sound of speech—accents, sighs, groans, peculiar phrases, lisps, stutters —is another matter).

I am not trying to say that human speech *should* be somehow turned off or tuned out —just that it usually *is*. Speech, unlike the

sentences of *Battle of Algiers,* is no longer narrative. Nathalie Sarraute has spoken of her long aversions to the "he saids," "she saids," and "they explaineds" which are still hanging around novels, and I would argue that these spurious figures of speech are the romanesque equivalents of a certain type of synchronized dialogue in films—those discussions which give background information, provide the answers to the now irrelevant questions about the "situation"—"Who is he?", "Who was he?" "What's he thinking?", "What's he doing there?"—important, meaningful, significant exchanges—all cues to the poorly concealed presence of the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent narrator—and nobody believes in him anymore.

(d) Settings—rooms of any sort—especially rooms constructed to give a feeling of special class or personality. Detail is oversight. Balzac's rooms had curtains, bibelot, inherited furniture, cats—all meticulously described, appropriately revealing, and those rooms today would be seen as set-ups rather than settings.

(e) Narrators—unless they are mental patients, mutes, compulsive liars, children, preferably speaking a foreign language and/or speaking in tongues, stoned.

(f) Important events—in the form of battles, births, deaths, festivals, murders—large-scale happenings with causes and results. I am much more prepared to accept Warhol's twenty-seven minute *Haircut* precisely because it is a nothing-happening event. Warhol could have flashed a two-second shot of someone getting a haircut on the screen and the audience would have been informed of the event, but the fact is nothing—the uneventful happening is everything, the happening itself.

(g) Statements, the point, the theme, the moral of anything. What is the theme of *Haircut?* The film is a haircut; haircut is; haircut suffices. *Battle of Algiers,* on the other hand, is a film which tells its audience something about revolutions, a film which begs to be interpreted, restated. It is full of blinking clues, which let the audience know that inside lurks a message, content, an "about". The film-maker is saying something, and as audiences are prepared to beware of significant exchanges between characters, they are also prepared to suspect a director's attempts at a significant, straightforward, comprehensive, implicit, or explicit interpretation of his own film. Films do not have insides and/or outsides.

(f) Richard Burton.

These objections are not based upon a disgust for cinematic or romanesque traditions or upon an antipathy for the nineteenth century. They are suspicions aroused when a film *tries* (even with the ill-concealed tactics of a *Battle of Algiers* disclaimer) to make an audience believe that something has happened —that what has happened has happened in the form in which it has been presented. Reality is no longer credible; reality is experienced, and credibility has faltered as a valid criterion for acceptance. Film is no longer the say-something intermediary, the dummy speaking for reality (a long-mute ventriloquist). Film has provided, or perhaps made obvious, new, more elusive dimensions to the word "representation," and these do not include imitation, reflection, likeness, facsimile. Film would *be* reality, not its stand-in, but an object in the world, self-sufficient, the model itself, experienced by an audience, self-referring if referring at all.

Nor are these objections solely a case for Warhol films, uncut haircuts, paralyzed cameras.

At first glance, *Titticut Follies* might resemble *Battle of Algiers* structurally. The film opens with a variety show and cuts to the gym where the patients are being frisked; it closes by cutting back to the same variety show; however, unlike *Battle of Algiers,* whose initial scene is open-ended, deliberately unfinished (four people waiting in a trap to be blown up), the variety show creates no melodramatic expectations. The audience has not been conventionally conditioned to expect the film to return to the Follies; the camera is a

member of the audience, and the framework is invisible, but in *Battle of Algiers* whose camera is the invisible spectator, the over-viewer par excellence, we know very well that we will see the end of the first scene; we even know when we will see it.

Time in *Titticut Follies* is an object, not a theme or a point or a statement. Audiences are convinced of the existence of objects, especially invisible ones or ones they have never seen before. Time encloses itself in a transparent and unsuspected framework as it proceeds in an overlapping stitch V-pattern from itself to itself. When the child molester is being led to his cell early in the film, there is in the upper part of the screen a television set, the type that monitors exits in factories and prisons; on the TV screen we see a body being wheeled out, and we hear someone say, "It was a suicide." Everyone knows how complex life has become; everyone knows that we are constantly being bombarded by stimuli—visible (neon signs, snow, TV) and invisible (ids, memories, suspicions). Multiple screens are no solution; to multiply a single event is still five times nothing, fractured one-ness. The single multiple is far more complex, far more perplexing than the multiple single. While *Battle of Algiers* remains a single-streamed, straightforward story film, *Titticut Follies* is that complexity which everyone acknowledges.

What is happening on the television screen is the second-to-last act of a suicide. The man who takes his own life is also the man who is tube-fed later in the film. There is no attempt at a set-up here; there are no signs pointing to the TV screen—unlike the film-within-a-film in *Battle of Algiers* which screams to be looked at. The suicide itself will never be spoken of again, and the victim will not appear until the middle of the film (the apex of the V) when the overlap stitch will be very tight and repetitive, cutting from the man being fed to the same man being embalmed, to the man being fed, to the man being embalmed. The structure loosens again; much later we see the burial of this same inmate and the movie ends with a scene from the Follies.

Around the events which we know to be a fractured version of conventional chronology (the elements of the suicide) are scenes which have no clock or calendar relation to one another. The man ranting on in a sort of litany appears twice but it is not important to know which scene (the one in the corridor or the one in the gym) really preceded the other. It is irrelevant to know whether Vladimir went to the shrink before or after the suicide. Time, as the order in which sequences appear on the screen in this documentary situation, has nothing to do with which was shot first. The tube-feeding scene was filmed before the TV screen corpse appeared; yet, that precedence is irrelevant. Time, like any object, is experienced, and conventional chronology, time as it used to be experienced, or any kind of conventional cimematic time order, when it presumes its own acceptability, as does the *Battle of Algiers* flashback, is suspect.

I am aware of the argument which insists that Marshall has given a conventional structure to his film, selecting three or four main characters upon whom to focus (the foreign shrink, the head warden, the chinless psychologist, and Vladimir) and has even created a primitive plot (Vladimir's efforts to be released), in order to orient the audience, to create a framework upon which to suspend the small, isolated scenes. I do not believe this to be the case.

No situation, no character in *Titticut Follies* ever creates the expectation that the events will be further developed or that he will appear again. Whereas in *Battle of Algiers*, the audience knows, and the director promises, within the first ten minutes of the film, that there are certain major characters, clearly distinguishable from minor characters, that these major characters will reappear, that their problems will be sorted out, solved or dissolved; there is no such differentiation or promise in *Titticut Follies*. Indeed, the only way to make a list of major or minor figures is to calculate in dead retrospect the amount

of screen time devoted to each—a forced and irrelevant approach given that major and minor are not important to watching *Titticut Follies.*

A similar irrelevance cripples the argument that Vladimir's efforts to be sent back to prison somehow constitute a plot, another attempt at conventional structure; yet, Marshall has chosen not to exploit the dramatic or suspenseful elements in Vladimir's attempts to be released, and throughout the long periods in which he does not appear and is never mentioned, the audience is hardly left wondering what is happening or what will happen to him. Rather, Marshall has realized the horror attendant in discovering within this institution the irrational impossible survival of "conventional structures," of "recurring characters," (the ubiquitous shrink in the understaffed hospital, the sadist attendant who keeps "recurring" in one's cell every morning), of the most grotesque B-picture situations (Vladimir at the Review Board insisting that he is sane to the psychologist who is driving him mad), of plots (being systematically driven mad in a hospital for the mentally ill), of the unthreatened, unchallenged existence of those romanesque, cinematic clichés which reality has long stopped providing (hopefully though not necessarily a self-contradiction). That these conventions, at once the most appalling and routine aspects of institution life, should co-exist with the camera's sensitivity to personal quiet moments—the close-up of an old man singing two songs directly at the camera while a television screen chanteuse flickers over his shoulder—renders them more anachronistic and more horrible. Those who insist, with a critical equanimity unworthy of the hysterical possibilities of their argument, that the hospital's unrelenting schedules—getting admitted, getting reviewed, getting exercise, getting a shave, getting fed, getting entertained, getting embalmed, getting advice, getting the Last Rites, getting out—and persistent tormentors create an orienting, conventional structure are ignoring the film's *complex* sensitivity to convention.

The editing patterns in *Titticut Follies* are the unheralded and monstrous discoveries in the small of the mind. Two men become one, and two unrelated incidents form one episode as the intricately structured and highly organized madness reveals itself to an initiate. Perceptions and time are constantly regrouping—yet not in order that they should become credible or recognizable or even be given a name—simply changing. The film seems to have been cut as the hospital was perceived and the editing is touching and personal.

The narrative speech/synch sound credibility gap is avoided—even though there are relatively few scenes in *Titticut Follies* in which someone is not talking. First, unlike the dialogue in *Battle of Algiers* which reeks of intent and set-ups, the words in *Titticut Follies* almost never advance a story or even refer to some uncompleted action or to anything we ever expect to see again; when they do, (the TV screen and the suicide remark), they are underplayed, almost inaudible. The warden who jabbers on endlessly about Eddie Mitchell having been gassed is part of an open-ended scene which is never completed. We never see or hear anything about Eddie Mitchell again.

Secondly, there is comparatively little dialogue in the film. Speech is most often in the form of a litany (the man who intersperses proper names with rat-tat-tats, the man standing on his head spouting the "God Bless" business), hypnotic, and like most speech not really saying anything. There are no hackneyed exposition techniques in *Titticut Follies.* Given that reality is no longer credible, it seems unnecessary for a film-maker to worry about backgrounds, precisely catalogued data, and logical story development—which most fiction filmmakers try to provide, despite self-conscious efforts to make the information as inconspicuous as possible.

Thirdly, in *Titticut Follies,* speech is rarely directed at anyone. People are usually talking to themselves. There is stiff competition with background noise, and several people are

often talking at once. There is also a lot of singing in the film—yet, unlike opera, unrelated to any action or plot. Performances abound. The dialogue in *Battle of Algiers* lacks any sense of performance—other than the professional-actor variety. The film is full of pathologically straightforward people who say what they mean and mean what they say; even a man like Matthieu who could be counted on to give a few acutely self-conscious (perhaps even paranoid) performances does a conventionally correct and totally unconvincing turnabout and begins making soul-searching self-avowals in press conferences. Pontecorvo seems unaware that as we are prepared to accept the incredibility of reality we are also prepared to accept its staginess. People are conscious of their own inconsistencies, lies, fractured minds. It seems unlikely that the whole city of Algiers would take herself so totally seriously.

In *Titticut Follies,* the cameraman is not listening to the speech either—unlike the cameraman in *Battle of Algiers* who hangs on every word. In the courtyard, we see a man ranting on, and just over his shoulder are a pair of feet. Someone is standing on his head. The camera in *Titticut Follies,* like most eyes, Pontecorvo's excepted, is not exclusively attentive to the features of a speaker or a listener. The feet of the upside-down man dominate the frame and soon the camera moves to him. In a world where suspicions and distractions are the richest source of information, attention shifts constantly, but not randomly, and accordingly, *Titticut Follies,* unlike *Battle of Algiers,* has no conventional hierarchy of character importance necessitating that one of the principals be on screen at all times for a reason—a reason the audience can guess and incorporate into a theme; nor is there a self-conscious departure-from-conventions attitude.

Moreover, the film is not sensationalist (I worked for two years in a Massachusetts mental hospital and I imagine that Wiseman's editing was merciful to the audience); nor does it try to make a succinct statement about mental hospitals. The film reveals. To its credit, *Titticut Follies* defies interpretation. One is prompted, even prodded, to ask what is Pontecorvo's view of revolution. One is not prompted to ask what is Wiseman-Marshall's view of mental hospitals.

Reviews

FACES

Director: John Cassavetes. Script: John Cassavetes. Photography: Al Ruban and George Sims. Art Director: Phedon Papamichael. Music: Jack Ackerman.

In *Faces,* John Cassavetes stigmatizes the American middle-aged upper-middle-class couple: in the midst of the Youth Era, someone has touched the untouchable, the unfashionable, the unsellable. Until now the fatigued adults of *Faces* had served as background character parts, as caricatures to be made fun of. They were, to pronounce the horrible word, parents. But Cassavetes has brought these neglected elements of society into the limelight—Benjamin's mother and father have become the heroes of *Faces.*

Married people at forty are no subject for romantic adventures. Who could get excited about this banal and silent majority who work hard, talk little, and end up in divorce? Cassavetes has dared to portray them on the screen with no masks, no disguises. His approach is one of naturalistic cinema.

He chose two sample middle-agers: Richard (John Marley) and Maria (Lynn Carlin) Forst, who, after fourteen years of common life, share no more than a few laughs, a few drinks, and a few habits. Cassavetes makes

often talking at once. There is also a lot of singing in the film—yet, unlike opera, unrelated to any action or plot. Performances abound. The dialogue in *Battle of Algiers* lacks any sense of performance—other than the professional-actor variety. The film is full of pathologically straightforward people who say what they mean and mean what they say; even a man like Matthieu who could be counted on to give a few acutely self-conscious (perhaps even paranoid) performances does a conventionally correct and totally unconvincing turnabout and begins making soul-searching self-avowals in press conferences. Pontecorvo seems unaware that as we are prepared to accept the incredibility of reality we are also prepared to accept its staginess. People are conscious of their own inconsistencies, lies, fractured minds. It seems unlikely that the whole city of Algiers would take herself so totally seriously.

In *Titticut Follies,* the cameraman is not listening to the speech either—unlike the cameraman in *Battle of Algiers* who hangs on every word. In the courtyard, we see a man ranting on, and just over his shoulder are a pair of feet. Someone is standing on his head. The camera in *Titticut Follies,* like most eyes, Pontecorvo's excepted, is not exclusively attentive to the features of a speaker or a listener. The feet of the upside-down man dominate the frame and soon the camera moves to him. In a world where suspicions and distractions are the richest source of information, attention shifts constantly, but not randomly, and accordingly, *Titticut Follies,* unlike *Battle of Algiers,* has no conventional hierarchy of character importance necessitating that one of the principals be on screen at all times for a reason—a reason the audience can guess and incorporate into a theme; nor is there a self-conscious departure-from-conventions attitude.

Moreover, the film is not sensationalist (I worked for two years in a Massachusetts mental hospital and I imagine that Wiseman's editing was merciful to the audience); nor does it try to make a succinct statement about mental hospitals. The film reveals. To its credit, *Titticut Follies* defies interpretation. One is prompted, even prodded, to ask what is Pontecorvo's view of revolution. One is not prompted to ask what is Wiseman-Marshall's view of mental hospitals.

Reviews

FACES

Director: John Cassavetes. Script: John Cassavetes. Photography: Al Ruban and George Sims. Art Director: Phedon Papamichael. Music: Jack Ackerman.

In *Faces,* John Cassavetes stigmatizes the American middle-aged upper-middle-class couple: in the midst of the Youth Era, someone has touched the untouchable, the unfashionable, the unsellable. Until now the fatigued adults of *Faces* had served as background character parts, as caricatures to be made fun of. They were, to pronounce the horrible word, parents. But Cassavetes has brought these neglected elements of society into the limelight—Benjamin's mother and father have become the heroes of *Faces.*

Married people at forty are no subject for romantic adventures. Who could get excited about this banal and silent majority who work hard, talk little, and end up in divorce? Cassavetes has dared to portray them on the screen with no masks, no disguises. His approach is one of naturalistic cinema.

He chose two sample middle-agers: Richard (John Marley) and Maria (Lynn Carlin) Forst, who, after fourteen years of common life, share no more than a few laughs, a few drinks, and a few habits. Cassavetes makes

them live for us during a crisis triggered by the husband's abrupt phrase "I want a divorce." Fourteen years are condensed in the fourteen hours the film covers. Like the psychologist interested in the behavior of people under experimental stress, Cassavetes has exacerbated the couple's reactions under the specific stress of divorce. The disruptive menace pushes the two spouses into two parallel sexual adventures which constitute the core of the film—Richard with a deluxe call-girl, Maria with a young stud she meets at a rock club. The director's decision may seem gratuitious, since sex is not necessarily the answer to couples' problems. But it soon appears that it is through these avatars that the two members of the couple will arrive at a certain degree of consciousness, at a certain degree of awareness.

In the beginning we are as unaware as they —why are silence and laughter the only things left to spouses of many years? Why do they seem neither happy nor unhappy? What makes them tick? Perhaps the answers will come when, cut off from the dullness of daily routine, the two individuals encounter new partners.

The choice of the partners is indicative of the natures of Richard and Maria. Jeannie (Gena Rowlands) is no ordinary prostitute, but a sensitive and intelligent girl whom businessmen can take out for the weekend and whose home is full of taste and know-how. With her, Richard finds sexual generosity, and an absence of demands, that are lacking in his relationship with his wife. But his skin has grown so thick through the years that, even with Jeannie, he cannot reach a mature level of sincerity. Even with her, he has to play games.

Cassavetes does marvels with his sense of observation. Laughter and jokes are the last resources of people who have nothing to say. Richard is a perfect example of a man who, at an age close to fifty, has "devitalized" himself so much that he can relate only through business or kidding. With executives he is tough, with women silly.

Maria is more complex. Her choice is a young blond hipster, Chet (Seymour Cassel) who invited her to dance in the club where she and her three girl-friends have gone for an evening of thrills. Stunned by the rejection of her husband and insecure as she is of her charm and her sexual power, she picks a man whose aggressive sex behavior almost repels her. She is attracted by his youth and scared by his physicality. He falls for the withdrawn, unruffled bourgeois girl whose frustrated look calls for some rough treatment. Their rapport is more tortured and masochistic than that of Richard and Jeannie and, contrary to her husband, her skin is thin, and her sensitivity cannot take it. A lover for her (her first, it seems) is no distracting compensation as it is for her husband. It is only a way of feeling more put off, more insecure, and ultimately more desperate. She attempts suicide, but Chet saves her.

So much for the story line, and it is enough. What matters in *Faces* is gestures, looks, attitudes, and small reactions in the small events of life. Richard and Maria are not particularly attractive, not particularly outstanding, not particularly picturesque. They are well-to-do people with the right home, the right job, and the proper automatism of pouring themselves a drink every day at the same hour. "What do I have after all these years?" complains another executive Richard meets at the call-girl's place. "A big house, a kooky wife, and a kid who wears tennis shoes." These "status symbols" characterize the class to which Richard and Maria belong.

Cassavetes treats them with no complacency, but with a balance of compassion and lucidity. This makes the film sometimes cruel, often moving. Cassavetes presents the people of *Faces* as neither good nor bad, but *the way they are*, showing their ridiculous, their silly, their pitiful sides. Richard and his colleague Freddie half-drunk going through their college comedy routine to amuse the call-girl; Florence (Dorothy Gulliver), the older girl-friend of Maria, dancing obscenely with Chet and then begging him for a kiss; Richard telling salesmen's riddles to his wife and onomatopeic nonsense to Jeannie when both times the bed and their position call more for amorous manifestations than verbal jokes. In any other film, these scenes would be

hard to accept and the director would be accused of exhibitionistic intentions.

But the conditions in which *Faces* was made permit the frankness of its content, and so does the particular style which resulted from these conditions. *Faces* had a small budget, many nonprofessional actors, and a crew which was often made up of the actors themselves. The ferment was not discipline or dead lines, but trust. The familiarity of the locales (which belonged to Cassavetes and his relatives) certainly helped to create an ease absent from the studios. In that atmosphere, sure of the respect and friendship of the actors, the director let them improvise. In the process, nonprofessionals and professionals alike extemporized lines and gestures and what was a labor of love became also a psychodrama. This is most apparent when, in the scene of the suicide, Seymour Cassel calls the wife by her real name "Lynn," as Lynn Carlin's personality on and off screen have merged and as they are both engrossed in the tragedy they are playing.

Improvisation and psychodrama: we seem to be verging on some kind of *cinéma-vérité*. All the more so when one adds that *Faces* was shot in 16mm with fixed and hand-held cameras and direct sound. Yet this does not mean that *Faces* is *cinéma-vérité*, since the basis of *cinéma-vérité* is to record objectively *real* people in *actual* events, and *Faces* is fiction.

But by looking closer, one realizes that Cassavetes' goal was to achieve a similar truth on the screen. Cassavetes has done little more than put his characters "in situation" and direct them along their own lines. This is not to detract anything from the initial responsibility of the creator of *Faces* but to situate the film in its exceptional context of participation.

More relevant to *cinéma-vérité* is the absence of interference by the director, of stand, of bias. There is no judgment made about the Forsts or statements of responsibility: is Richard more to blame than Maria? Their sexual unhappiness is a good example, as the film shows that it is Richard's insistence as much as Maria's reluctance which is to blame. What Colin Young

John Marley and Elizabeth Deering: FACES.

wrote in the Summer 1964 issue of FQ, that a "minimum of interpretation" is required by *cinéma-vérité*, may be applied to *Faces*. Instead of explaining, the camera avidly explores the crevasses of man's face, the drooping eyelids and trembling lips of a woman close to tears, the frightened and tired expression of a prostitute, the confusion of a man who has just been slapped. By searching, by foraging in faces, the camera wants us to discover some truth about these people.

It is not objectivity that Cassavetes has achieved, but he has cast a special light on people which makes them less opaque. We don't know much about Maria at the end, except that she has had the strength to attempt suicide and now the courage of formulating what is wrong with her marriage: "I hate my life, I just don't love you," she tells her husband. Before, she did not even know it, and was ready to embark on ten more years of silent misunderstanding. This new level of consciousness is the only victory of the film. For the rest, Cassavetes lets us draw our own conclusions.

The open ending of the film is perhaps what recalls most the principles of *cinéma-vérité* whereby the future of the real person is not determined in the portion of his life depicted in the film. The final scene of *Faces* does not foretell the future of the couple: will they or will they not stay together? Is the tacit accord between them as they smoke just a temporary lull after the storm? Or is it the sign of a possible mutual

Seymour Cassell and Dorothy Gulliver: FACES.

comprehension? Cassavetes does not pronounce himself, except in the musical commentary of a song whose words ("Never felt like this before") might indicate that the couple will be reborn out of their own ashes. Still the final verdict—pessimistic or optimistic—is strictly up to personal interpretations.

The faulty technique of *Faces,* the drabness of its protagonists and the crudity of some passages were apt to repulse crowds of people looking for entertainment. When the film was shown for the first time to a paying public at Stanford University, the reaction of a disgusted reader of the Palo Alto *Times* who had left "this revolting exhibition of cinematic vulgarity . . . this parade of ruined faces and soiled psyches," did seem to indicate that the film would meet with strong resentment. But, on the contrary, the huge box-office success of *Faces* proves what market experts could never foresee; in fact, the esteem in which this film is held turns out to be as interesting as the film itself.

If *Shadows* was an important landmark for the critics and the aesthetics of the American cinema, *Faces* is one for the American public. How is it that fatigued people, harassed by their daily routine and fed up with their conjugal partners, pay to see other fatigued, harassed, and fed-up people like themselves whom they can't even hear well because of the poor sound? Perhaps sociology can supply an answer.

For the first time, a film seems to work not for escapist reasons but for reasons of therapy. Suddenly, to watch other couples work out their differences up there on the mirror of the screen where one's own reflections are caught seems to help. The screen love affairs become cathartic rather than tempting. "If this is the way it is, it might not be worth it . . ." becomes the reaction of the audience. Not that people apply the story to themselves, but to their neighbors. And to a certain extent, *Faces* forces married spectators to wonder "Is my conjugal life good or bad?"

This aspect of collective exorcism in *Faces* is just one suggestion. But the effect of the film, the very combination of fiction and direct filming which makes people respond so readily to *Facets,* cannot be denied. This could not have happened five years ago. But today people are prepared by television, reportage films and whatever commercials or underground-looking films they might have seen in which the semi-amateurish look, shaky camera, direct sound are normal routine. Rather than put spectators off, the absence of gloss shortens the distance between them and the characters on the screen who look closer, more real. Without knowing anything of *cinéma-vérité,* they have assimilated its very principles via television watching. People are what they are on the tube: neither magnified, nor embellished, but small, pimplish, real. And so they are in *Faces.* The actors also contribute a lot to create an atmosphere of credibility. For the first time in an American film, they have been selected for their authenticity, not for their glamor. Both professionals and nonprofessionals look like people and not like actors, regardless of whether they be well-known in film like John Marley and Gena Rowlands, debutant like the secretary Lynn Carlin, or stock stage actors like most of the others. The most remarkable are perhaps the secondary parts which ordinarily would be played as cardboard clichés and who are played here with simplicity and conviction: Fred Draper (Freddie) the mustachioed employee, Val Avery (Mr. McCarthy), the noisy frustrated salesman who would like to look tough, Maria's three girl-friends Darlene Conley, Joanne Moore Jordan and Dorothy Gulliver, who seem a cross-section of unfulfilled suburban housewives. They are all life-size, with

their manias, their weaknesses and above all their yearnings.

The goal of *Faces* was modest, and so is its bearing. Cassavetes's film works better as a description of a class than as a sociological explanation. The purpose of the film is neither to expose the reasons of people's behavior nor to offer formulas for their happiness but to use *cinéma* to show their *vérité*. For the first time, a film speaks to the American public of Americans, the "forgotten" ones who have committed no murders, achieved no sexual prowess, nor blown up or discovered a planet but who live, get married, settle, get bored, divorce, and die. As Henry Breitrose put it, *Faces* has gone deep into the "search for the real nitty-gritty" and found it. For that reason, it may not be the best American film of the decade, but it is no doubt the most important. —CLAIRE CLOUZOT

ROSEMARY'S BABY

Director: Roman Polansky. Producer: William Castle. Script by Polanski, from the novel by Ira Levin. Photography: William Fraker. Music: Christopher Komeda. Paramount.

Rosemary's Baby is a tolerably successful commercial movie, which is to say it isn't very good, and a clear disappointment to anyone who has admired—if only in part—Roman Polanski's earlier films. If it does fail as a horror film, however, it is, I think, because Polanski's main interest lies elsewhere: the humor of the film, especially the wit of the ending, makes the film worth considering. To begin with, any reasonably sophisticated person's response to the movie's ending is likely to be: but there are no witches. No effort is made to suspend your disbelief in witches; they are just a "given," a dramatic assumption never made compelling. This problem of belief is especially acute because the action of the film is here and now: the supernatural, the world of witches, is easier to believe in when it is made somehow remote, or removed from the present and the familiar, as in Henry James's *Turn of the Screw* or Murnau's *Nosferatu*. But to make the world of witches contemporary does give the tale a surface smartness, which whatever problems it raises, is a major asset of the film, an advance for Polanski over the banality of the world of *The Vampire Killers*. This very surface smartness indicates the level of the film: entertainment, not art. To use the new, the contemporary, even the avant-garde, to achieve an effect without working through the problems they raise, is the hallmark of the facile showman, the entertainer. What is wrong with *Rosemary's Baby*, however, is that these surface effects have not been used more richly and complexly to make a more successful entertainment.

Polanski's commitment to the pedestrian, pedestrianly executed, makes the film the least visually interesting of any Polanski has done. Polanski's talent, a not atypically Polish one, is for the baroque, for an oddness of the visual world, not only in decor, or angle of shot, or composition, but, as in the closing parts of *Cul-de-Sac*, in the very light itself, a crisply underlit, nondaylight world more awesome and madness-provoking than the weak, dull lighting of Bergman's *Hour of the Wolf*. (In the summer 1968 *Sight and Sound*, his fellow Polish director, Skolomowski, called *Cul-de-Sac* Polanski's best movie; *Knife in the Water*, the film that brought Polanski to world-wide attention, now seems atypical Polanski: it is too unbaroque). In *Rosemary's Baby*, the character of the material, largely the everyday-urban-real, would be negated if it were shaped in a sustained baroque style. Instead, Polanski falls back on blandness, as evident from the opening sequence, a paradigm for the movie as a whole: very ordinary shots of rectilinear buildings facing Central Park set up, by contrast, the closing ones of the gothic Dakota apartment house, seen from a crazy-steep downward angle; the shot lingers, and the light on the building seems to change. The strategy of setting up the unusual by the use of the pedestrian (very much Hitchcock), of contrasting the bizarre with the bland (which is not) is too crude and forced to work for the movie as a *whole*, even if its acceptable in the opening sequence because the build-up is short.

their manias, their weaknesses and above all their yearnings.

The goal of *Faces* was modest, and so is its bearing. Cassavetes's film works better as a description of a class than as a sociological explanation. The purpose of the film is neither to expose the reasons of people's behavior nor to offer formulas for their happiness but to use *cinéma* to show their *vérité*. For the first time, a film speaks to the American public of Americans, the "forgotten" ones who have committed no murders, achieved no sexual prowess, nor blown up or discovered a planet but who live, get married, settle, get bored, divorce, and die. As Henry Breitrose put it, *Faces* has gone deep into the "search for the real nitty-gritty" and found it. For that reason, it may not be the best American film of the decade, but it is no doubt the most important. —CLAIRE CLOUZOT

ROSEMARY'S BABY

Director: Roman Polansky. Producer: William Castle. Script by Polanski, from the novel by Ira Levin. Photography: William Fraker. Music: Christopher Komeda. Paramount.

Rosemary's Baby is a tolerably successful commercial movie, which is to say it isn't very good, and a clear disappointment to anyone who has admired—if only in part—Roman Polanski's earlier films. If it does fail as a horror film, however, it is, I think, because Polanski's main interest lies elsewhere: the humor of the film, especially the wit of the ending, makes the film worth considering. To begin with, any reasonably sophisticated person's response to the movie's ending is likely to be: but there are no witches. No effort is made to suspend your disbelief in witches; they are just a "given," a dramatic assumption never made compelling. This problem of belief is especially acute because the action of the film is here and now: the supernatural, the world of witches, is easier to believe in when it is made somehow remote, or removed from the present and the familiar, as in Henry James's *Turn of the Screw* or Murnau's *Nosferatu*. But to make the world of witches contemporary does give the tale a surface smartness, which whatever problems it raises, is a major asset of the film, an advance for Polanski over the banality of the world of *The Vampire Killers*. This very surface smartness indicates the level of the film: entertainment, not art. To use the new, the contemporary, even the avant-garde, to achieve an effect without working through the problems they raise, is the hallmark of the facile showman, the entertainer. What is wrong with *Rosemary's Baby*, however, is that these surface effects have not been used more richly and complexly to make a more successful entertainment.

Polanski's commitment to the pedestrian, pedestrianly executed, makes the film the least visually interesting of any Polanski has done. Polanski's talent, a not atypically Polish one, is for the baroque, for an oddness of the visual world, not only in decor, or angle of shot, or composition, but, as in the closing parts of *Cul-de-Sac*, in the very light itself, a crisply underlit, nondaylight world more awesome and madness-provoking than the weak, dull lighting of Bergman's *Hour of the Wolf*. (In the summer 1968 *Sight and Sound*, his fellow Polish director, Skolomowski, called *Cul-de-Sac* Polanski's best movie; *Knife in the Water*, the film that brought Polanski to world-wide attention, now seems atypical Polanski: it is too unbaroque). In *Rosemary's Baby*, the character of the material, largely the everyday-urban-real, would be negated if it were shaped in a sustained baroque style. Instead, Polanski falls back on blandness, as evident from the opening sequence, a paradigm for the movie as a whole: very ordinary shots of rectilinear buildings facing Central Park set up, by contrast, the closing ones of the gothic Dakota apartment house, seen from a crazy-steep downward angle; the shot lingers, and the light on the building seems to change. The strategy of setting up the unusual by the use of the pedestrian (very much Hitchcock), of contrasting the bizarre with the bland (which is not) is too crude and forced to work for the movie as a *whole*, even if its acceptable in the opening sequence because the build-up is short.

The film would have worked better with a quicker pace, but the basic problem is the crudeness of the contrasting effects. Even the opening sequence should have given us a more complex sense of the jumbled visual strangeness of New York City, while it set off and pointed up the rich gothic of the Dakota. The movie needs more visual strangeness in its long pedestrian stretches, not only to make the movie more of a piece, but to sustain interest in itself.

Whether or not successful horror films can be made in color, they probably can not be made in the homogenized studio color of *Rosemary's Baby*. Ideally, if Polanski had been free to experiment, he might have achieved an off-center sense of reality, without being overly baroque, by using special filtered color, or color controlled in the printing process, as did John Huston with *Reflections in a Golden Eye* (in the print shown before the movie's general release). Polanski has shown talent in this direction; his student film, *When Angels Fall,* uses tints for some scenes, full color for landscape scenes, and a gray colorlessness for the men's toilet scenes. Such a strange sensual use of color might not have worked in *Rosemary's Baby;* what is certain is that standard studio color doesn't.

The visual blandness of *Rosemary's Baby* is further evident in both the decor and the detail. To give an example of poor decor: when Hutch, a friend of the family, informs Rosemary and Guy of the peculiar history of the Dakota, he does so in his small, unimpressive apartment. In the book, by contrast, they are dining out in an elegant restaurant, and Hutch tells them of the weird witch-haunted history of the building between courses, casually, with stylish pauses that impress. The detail, also, could have been used far more inventively. Here, the book itself is weak: Levin's idea of novelistic detail is to use brand names and services. (Rosemary's Vidal Sassoon haircut, however, is effective in the film—even if it unrealistically never grows out during the nine months of pregnancy). Polanski eschews Levin's brand-names, but doesn't come up with enough realistic or inventive touches of his own. In a climactic scene in the movie, Rosemary has to make an important telephone call from an outdoor booth. Anyone familiar with Manhattan knows that many of the phones in the outdoor booths do not work; some phone booths look bombed out, with the glass panels shattered or removed. Inventive detail would have had her look apprehensively at a half-busted booth, and sigh perhaps, as many New Yorkers have done, when that phone actually worked. No doubt, Polanski's unfamiliarity with America is partly responsible for his neglect of decor and realistic detail; understandably, he was cautious and inhibited in his American debut. But Polanski's talent also, with its baroque predilections, runs in the opposite direction.

Polanski's first American movie can be instructively compared to Hitchcock's first American movie, *Rebecca.* Both are based on best-sellers with vulnerable heroines, and both follow their respective books rather faithfully. Consequently, both movies are slow-paced, lagging, as they do, behind another's alien step. In his Truffaut interview, Hitchcock claims that *Rebecca* isn't really a Hitchcock movie at all, which is to say that, like *Rosemary's Baby, Rebecca* isn't very good either. Yet it has excellent touches, and with its English cast, it has more going for it than Polanski's first American movie. Also, both are studio movies in which buildings are basic to the story. In *Rebecca,* the building is not an actual building, nor the place an actual place, but within the studio the effect is achieved of a spacious isolated mansion, reinforcing the sense of the emotional isolation and vulnerability of the heroine. *Rosemary's Baby,* however, suffers from being a studio movie. Whatever possibilities there are for richly textured detail in an actual building, in an actual city, except for a few exterior shots, are not realized. The very height of the building, for example, is only an indirect presence: a girl may have fallen out the window to her death, but we don't see her falling, or even see out the window to the ground below. Further, given the girl's death,

a dizzy, pregnant woman might well have been bothered just looking out the window. All we do see from the living-room window is an unconvincing studio set of the city.

In its modernization, *Rosemary's Baby* does not achieve anything comparable to the traditional gothic psychological tensions that reflect the resentments and pressures of the class system. In real life, Count Dracula was, no doubt, a bloodsucker, if not actually a vampire. In *Rebecca,* these psychological tensions, however attenuated, still operate: the husband and wife represent an extreme difference in class—an aristocrat and a paid companion. Not only does this class difference makes suspicion more plausible, it intensifies our sense of the heroine's vulnerability—further emphasized by the menacing presence of the housekeeper, played by Judith Anderson. In *Rosemary's Baby,* the psychological tensions between people are a lot weaker, involving more a sense of annoyance than of menace. The Ruth Gordon witch is one of those aggressive-vulgar-comic women Hitchcock has made a specialty of in his long career. (Although Ruth Gordon's comic witch comes from the book, as with so much else in Levin's pastiche, it is reminiscent of Hitchcock). Hitchcock would have had the good sense, however, to have confined the character to a small part—as he does with the character of Joan Fontaine's employer, Florence Bates, in *Rebecca.* An even weaker character is the John Cassavetes husband, Guy, whose self-absorption is too passive to emphasize Rosemary's vulnerability and isolation. Guy should have been shown as a man anxious and avid for success; he is too passive a puppet of the witches to have adequate dramatic force.

The acting of *Rosemary's Baby* is often good enough for what it does, but is what it does often good? The actors are at their best in realizing the humor in the book, but the humor is either not enough or too much to make the film a success. The dialogue in the film comes directly from the book (though weak at characterization, Levin does have a good ear); it's pared down by Polanski and its humor sharpened. In an oxymoronic role—as boorish businessman and old world gentleman—Sidney Blackmur is less insistent, more subtle, and successful. But Patsy Kelly's sticking out her tongue in a small cameo role is the most successful of all. Comic relief should be comic relief; it should not be the major substance of would-be dramatic roles. Thus, the weakest part and weakest performance in the film is Cassavetes; he does get the right sardonic humor, but his performance suffers in not getting much else. Mia Farrow's performance is the main asset of the film; she is a sympathetically attractive heroine, so innocent and vulnerable one wants to protect her; yet she manages to project all this without being affectedly feminine as a Maria Schell. Her haircut makes her look like a precocious child, or an early Jean Seberg; it is this modern look that makes her more appealing than the old-fashioned heroine of *Rebecca* (old-fashioned even when the movie came out), and it is the major advantage the movie has over the Hitchcock. On the whole, the acting of *Rosemary's Baby* is never worse than competent; for the most part, the serious faults in the characterizations lie not with the actors but with the roles themselves.

Is Rosemary mad at the end? Although the novel is so sketchy and unrealized that a naturalistic explanation might have been intended, the fantastic coincidences (blindness, a mysterious coma) in both the book and the movie are too far-fetched for naturalistic explanation. Further, in pulp-fiction fantasy—and *Rosemary's Baby* is of a piece with pulp fiction—the extravagance of the coincidences act as a guarantor of the reality of the supernatural and the extra-terrestrial. Also, in a primary sense, the question of Rosemary's madness is irrelevant. The main appeal of the film for the audience, the reason why the film was made, the reason why the audiences go to the film, is to be scared by "real" witches. For the teenage girls, who made up nearly all the audience the day I saw the film, and who had deeply identified with Rosemary, it would have been unacceptable if Rosemary were merely paranoid. Anyway, there is not much reason to think so: in

this straightforward film, the subjective camera, however much it may be from Rosemary's viewpoint, is never presented as merely subjective or false. To be truly subjective, the film would have had to contain the series of contradictions, the surrealistic illogic of, say, Jacques Doniol-Valcroze's *Le Viol.* In fact, the subjective viewpoint of *Rosemary's Baby* is about as subjective as the camera in *Lady in the Lake,* which as Godard has observed is really objective: it shows the objects of the real world. At the very least, then, at the end of *Rosemary's Baby,* the camera shows us people who believe themselves to be witches. Sometimes, Rosemary's lapsed Catholicism is said to be responsible for her alleged breakdown, but whatever the half-developed psychological hints in the novel, the film doesn't even dwell on this, let alone dramatize it. Whatever the private intentions of Polanski or Levin, there is not enough in either work to justify the conclusion that Rosemary is mad at the end.

Still, the last scene of *Rosemary's Baby* is not wholly real; it is more a hallucinatory realism. Although in style the last scene is presented as straight, in content it has a dream quality, not only in the bizarreness of the event, but in the inversion of conventional religious beliefs: in its Underground Virgin Mary, mother of Satan's only begotten child. The last scene is parody, and as a lapsed Catholic myself, that is the level I enjoyed it on—as, no doubt, Polanski intended, if we may judge by his marvelous parodying of religious beliefs in *When Angels Fall.* But not only are conventional religious beliefs being parodied, so are the witches themselves—not frightening, but an eccentric, absurd lot, rather like a small far-out California religious sect. Significantly, at the end Polanski does away with one of the pulp-fiction extravagances of the novel; he does not show us Rosemary's baby, with claws or golden eyes. Whereas the extravagances in coincidence earlier in the film, taken directly from the book, established the reality of the supernatural power of the witches, here in the last scene, shorn of the final supernatural extravagance, the witches seem cut down to naturalistic size. It's as if at this point Polanski were twitting the audience for its readiness to believe in witches. To be sure, anyone familiar with the history of witchcraft would find it hard to take these witches or their beliefs seriously. As indicated in Trevor-Roper's fascinating two-part article in the May and June 1967 issues of *Encounter,* Satan, unlike God the Father, was not known to have believed in or practiced one-child family planning. Satan is supposed to have had intercourse with multitudinous women and had numerous progeny (including, some Catholic theologians thought, Luther himself). But despite the parodistic overtones and the hallucinatory quality of the realism of the last scene, the audience I was with seemed captivated by the last scene at a literal level. It was almost as if the audience were, in a small way, reliving and recapitulating the witchcraft delusion. In the end, I seemed to be watching not so much a witch story, but a story which assumed the madness of the mass of humanity, who, with appropriate changes of names and descriptions, still believe in the prevalence of witches.

—ROBERT CHAPPETTA

BIRTH AND DEATH

Conceived and co-directed by Arthur Barron. Produced by Arthur and Eve Barron for Verite Productions. Photographed and co-directed by Gene Marner. Sound: Carol Marner. Additional photography by Mitch Smith. Editor: Zena Voynow.

Some non-fiction films—documentary, *cinéma-vérité*—stumble upon so much strong material that it's almost impossible for them to go wrong. Dan Halas's and Al Raymond's *How Do You Like the Bowery?,* a series of sidewalk interviews with the jetsam of the lower East Side, was packed with enough emotionally powerful content to fill a dozen documentaries. Almost every bum had a story to tell worthy of climaxing a short film; there was almost too much human misery and self-incrimination for a 20-minute film—or an audience—to bear. Similarly, the Yugoslav short, Kreso Golik's *From 3 a.m. to 10 p.m.,* simply followed a strong, fiercely

this straightforward film, the subjective camera, however much it may be from Rosemary's viewpoint, is never presented as merely subjective or false. To be truly subjective, the film would have had to contain the series of contradictions, the surrealistic illogic of, say, Jacques Doniol-Valcroze's *Le Viol.* In fact, the subjective viewpoint of *Rosemary's Baby* is about as subjective as the camera in *Lady in the Lake,* which as Godard has observed is really objective: it shows the objects of the real world. At the very least, then, at the end of *Rosemary's Baby,* the camera shows us people who believe themselves to be witches. Sometimes, Rosemary's lapsed Catholicism is said to be responsible for her alleged breakdown, but whatever the half-developed psychological hints in the novel, the film doesn't even dwell on this, let alone dramatize it. Whatever the private intentions of Polanski or Levin, there is not enough in either work to justify the conclusion that Rosemary is mad at the end.

Still, the last scene of *Rosemary's Baby* is not wholly real; it is more a hallucinatory realism. Although in style the last scene is presented as straight, in content it has a dream quality, not only in the bizarreness of the event, but in the inversion of conventional religious beliefs: in its Underground Virgin Mary, mother of Satan's only begotten child. The last scene is parody, and as a lapsed Catholic myself, that is the level I enjoyed it on—as, no doubt, Polanski intended, if we may judge by his marvelous parodying of religious beliefs in *When Angels Fall.* But not only are conventional religious beliefs being parodied, so are the witches themselves—not frightening, but an eccentric, absurd lot, rather like a small far-out California religious sect. Significantly, at the end Polanski does away with one of the pulp-fiction extravagances of the novel; he does not show us Rosemary's baby, with claws or golden eyes. Whereas the extravagances in coincidence earlier in the film, taken directly from the book, established the reality of the supernatural power of the witches, here in the last scene, shorn of the final supernatural extravagance, the witches seem cut down to naturalistic size. It's as if at this point Polanski were twitting the audience for its readiness to believe in witches. To be sure, anyone familiar with the history of witchcraft would find it hard to take these witches or their beliefs seriously. As indicated in Trevor-Roper's fascinating two-part article in the May and June 1967 issues of *Encounter,* Satan, unlike God the Father, was not known to have believed in or practiced one-child family planning. Satan is supposed to have had intercourse with multitudinous women and had numerous progeny (including, some Catholic theologians thought, Luther himself). But despite the parodistic overtones and the hallucinatory quality of the realism of the last scene, the audience I was with seemed captivated by the last scene at a literal level. It was almost as if the audience were, in a small way, reliving and recapitulating the witchcraft delusion. In the end, I seemed to be watching not so much a witch story, but a story which assumed the madness of the mass of humanity, who, with appropriate changes of names and descriptions, still believe in the prevalence of witches.

—ROBERT CHAPPETTA

BIRTH AND DEATH

Conceived and co-directed by Arthur Barron. Produced by Arthur and Eve Barron for Verite Productions. Photographed and co-directed by Gene Marner. Sound: Carol Marner. Additional photography by Mitch Smith. Editor: Zena Voynow.

Some non-fiction films—documentary, *cinéma-vérité*—stumble upon so much strong material that it's almost impossible for them to go wrong. Dan Halas's and Al Raymond's *How Do You Like the Bowery?,* a series of sidewalk interviews with the jetsam of the lower East Side, was packed with enough emotionally powerful content to fill a dozen documentaries. Almost every bum had a story to tell worthy of climaxing a short film; there was almost too much human misery and self-incrimination for a 20-minute film—or an audience—to bear. Similarly, the Yugoslav short, Kreso Golik's *From 3 a.m. to 10 p.m.,* simply followed a strong, fiercely

beautiful young woman through a typical day of sheer hell: 3 a.m.—family and farm chores before a long trip to the city and work; return, more labor until exhausted sleep at 10 p.m.—all for a lazy, uncaring husband and an adoring baby.

Of course, this overpowering "material" doesn't just walk up to the film-maker. He has to go out and find it; but once he's found it, like a reporter tracking down a lead, the interest of his subject will generally determine the interest of his film. This is the first limitation of *cinéma-vérité*. Neither the Maysles Brothers nor any other recorder could have made Joe Levine sparkling or Marlon Brando boring. If a person has some sort of star quality and is willing to expose it, the film-maker has it made. *Cinéma-vérité* is essentially a performer's medium.

This star quality—the filmic equivalent of endearing exhibitionism—is what Andy Warhol, in his Irving Thalberg period, was looking for, and what made some of his films—or sequences, notably those involving Robert Olivio (Pope Undine) and Bridget Polk in *The Chelsea Girls*—fascinating, and others touch the lower depths of ennui. (It's also what made Warhol's films such obvious chaff for the theoretician's scythe, though none of his earnest exegetes bothered to mention that, if his superstars had been a little wittier or more attractive, his films might have been as much fun to sit through as to write about.) Material for *vérité* films would seem to be limited, then, to performers (like Brando and Bob Dylan) who have constructed a public image anyway and don't mind playing this role for the unwary film-maker, and to extreme personalities who are either far enough into their own world to disregard the recorder (Julius Orlovsky in Robert Frank's *Me and My Brother*) or else far enough out to want to record themselves—pustules, psychoses and all—in a kind of screen test for Uglies. Whether they're playing themselves or trying to be someone else is difficult to determine, or perhaps simply irrelevant, in a decade when politicians worry more about make-up than making policy. And whether one is auditioning for Pennebaker, Zanuck or Brinkley probably doesn't matter much in a time when feature films are becoming more documentary, and newscasts more stagily fantastic. The crossroads of fiction and reportage are most evident in the rise of guerilla theater, whose adherents hope to make both Off-Broadway and the Six O'Clock News, but trends in Hollywood and independent films show that directors of both are enthusiastic fellow-travelers.

The strength of *vérité*, and the major limitation of theorizing about the genre, lie in the inexhaustible supply of fascinating people; and almost anyone who cares to reveal himself, whether to a friend or to a camera, can be fascinating. In *Birth and Death*, Arthur Barron has found some people, discovered a novel situation, and stumbled upon something special—documentary or document, strip of film or slice of life and death, fact or fiction, it hardly matters, for there are moments when the film lives.

Barron would argue all my points, especially the "stumbling" part. "My heroes are Bergman and Fellini," he says. "I want to be a novelist in film." And certainly the "nut" of the film—the idea of recording the weeks preceding and including the time of birth and death—is one of those epiphanies that can carry a film, and Barron merits praise for it. Barron also had to find a couple who would "want a film of the birth of your first child to have as a family album," and a man dying of cancer who would have the strength, or lack of will, to allow a group of strange-looking strangers to film his disintegration. But once Barron convinced Bruce and Debbie North and Albro Pearson to appear in his film, they—the "performers"—made it.

Not surprisingly, the "Birth" segment (the longer of the two; they are presented consecutively, not simultaneously) has less power, and in an odd way it requires the "Death" segment to lend it full impact. Part of this can be blamed on the limitations of film reportage: we demand either novelty or revelation in *cinéma-vérité*, and the birth of a baby has been shown on film (*The Case of Dr. Laurent, Poor Cow, Helga*) and television (six or seven years ago, on NET's *Life in Sweden* series) often enough to have allayed the viewer's tension and interest. Bruce and Debbie North, a normally attractive couple,

lack the star quality necessary to make the segment something more than ordinary. The few unique strands of Bruce's personality—the ingenuous arrogance of his acceptance of Debbie's financial support (he's a novice landscape painter), and his domineering direction of the (natural) childbirth— are more irritating than iridescent. Bruce and Debbie seem typically together for a young married couple, the families seem typically Jewish (and playing it as if they're auditioning for Maurice Schwartz), the delivery is typically successful . . . Next patient.

The next patient is Albro Pearson, 52 years old: dying of cancer, knowing it, hating it, and facing it. Albro believes in God and General MacArthur. He loves America and was proud to fight for it. He has been a loner, and alone, all his life. But despite these characteristics, which would make him an ideal butt for ridicule in any self-respecting independent short, he is a kind of saint, because he knows himself, knows what awaits him and what he can do about it—Nothing!—and yet endures. In his engulfing pain and weakness, he finds and communicates strength. He proves that this strength transcends unfashionable religious and political opinions. "I'm dying of cancer . . . no hope . . . I'm suffering, so I wish Jesus would take me . . . I'm glad they told me the truth because a man should know." Sanctity and strength.

The experience of watching Albro die (he was dead within two weeks of meeting Barron and his crew) is awful and healing. Finally, unnoticed, he does die. His body shrinks and disappears into the hospital morgue. We see a series of snapshots that, along with this film, is the only record of his life and death. Like Albro, and to a great extent because of him, *Death* will endure. If Barron is not yet a Bergman, Fellini or Flaherty, he can at least be proud of working, through the strengths and limitations of *cinéma-vérité*, to give Albro Pearson life and the rest of us an immediate understanding of death.

—Richard Corliss

TRANS-EUROP-EXPRESS

Written and directed by Alain Robbe-Grillet. Executive Producer: Samy Halfon. Como Films. Director of photography: Willy Kurant. Music: Michael Fano, with excerpts from "La Traviata" by Verdi.

Trans-Europ-Express, the second movie written and directed by Alain Robbe-Grillet, and the first to be shown commercially in Los Angeles this fall, seems to be an anthology of the French writer-turned-film-maker's principles, explained and illustrated *ad usum Delphini*, and sugar-coated with humor. Average audiences, which balked at the puzzling subjectivity of Robbe-Grillet's script for *Last Year at Marienbad* and at *L'Immortelle*, are now cajoled into entering the game of creation by being shown "how to" invent stories without logical or psychological background, and being assured it is fun.

What attracted Robbe-Grillet, the leader of *L'Ecole du Regard* (The School of the Glance), to the cinema was not the concept of the objective camera but rather the possibilities of expressing the subjective, the imaginary, by acting upon two senses at once, the eye and the ear, in a dialectical movement, stating and negating, and presenting concretely what may be only dreams, memories, inventions. As a result of the use of the sound track combined with the image, the film-maker has more means at his disposal than the writer to achieve the same aim: creating and contradicting reality as it is invented.

In *Trans-Europ-Express*, the only reality of which the spectator can be assured is that he is watching a movie of a certain length. The film takes an hour and a half to view, approximately the time it takes the train to go from Paris to Antwerp, and the time required by a passenger, a writer, to invent a story about the train. Being a true Hitchcock fan, he first thinks of a spy story; since they will cross the Belgian border, it must involve smuggling, and since the next stop will be the large harbor city of Antwerp, why not dope? A nervous fellow passenger provides the psychological background for the hero. He will be a sadistic dope runner on his first job for a big syndicate; obsessed by

lack the star quality necessary to make the segment something more than ordinary. The few unique strands of Bruce's personality—the ingenuous arrogance of his acceptance of Debbie's financial support (he's a novice landscape painter), and his domineering direction of the (natural) childbirth— are more irritating than iridescent. Bruce and Debbie seem typically together for a young married couple, the families seem typically Jewish (and playing it as if they're auditioning for Maurice Schwartz), the delivery is typically successful . . . Next patient.

The next patient is Albro Pearson, 52 years old: dying of cancer, knowing it, hating it, and facing it. Albro believes in God and General MacArthur. He loves America and was proud to fight for it. He has been a loner, and alone, all his life. But despite these characteristics, which would make him an ideal butt for ridicule in any self-respecting independent short, he is a kind of saint, because he knows himself, knows what awaits him and what he can do about it—Nothing!—and yet endures. In his engulfing pain and weakness, he finds and communicates strength. He proves that this strength transcends unfashionable religious and political opinions. "I'm dying of cancer . . . no hope . . . I'm suffering, so I wish Jesus would take me . . . I'm glad they told me the truth because a man should know." Sanctity and strength.

The experience of watching Albro die (he was dead within two weeks of meeting Barron and his crew) is awful and healing. Finally, unnoticed, he does die. His body shrinks and disappears into the hospital morgue. We see a series of snapshots that, along with this film, is the only record of his life and death. Like Albro, and to a great extent because of him, *Death* will endure. If Barron is not yet a Bergman, Fellini or Flaherty, he can at least be proud of working, through the strengths and limitations of *cinéma-vérité*, to give Albro Pearson life and the rest of us an immediate understanding of death.

—Richard Corliss

TRANS-EUROP-EXPRESS

Written and directed by Alain Robbe-Grillet. Executive Producer: Samy Halfon. Como Films. Director of photography: Willy Kurant. Music: Michael Fano, with excerpts from "La Traviata" by Verdi.

Trans-Europ-Express, the second movie written and directed by Alain Robbe-Grillet, and the first to be shown commercially in Los Angeles this fall, seems to be an anthology of the French writer-turned-film-maker's principles, explained and illustrated *ad usum Delphini*, and sugar-coated with humor. Average audiences, which balked at the puzzling subjectivity of Robbe-Grillet's script for *Last Year at Marienbad* and at *L'Immortelle*, are now cajoled into entering the game of creation by being shown "how to" invent stories without logical or psychological background, and being assured it is fun.

What attracted Robbe-Grillet, the leader of *L'Ecole du Regard* (The School of the Glance), to the cinema was not the concept of the objective camera but rather the possibilities of expressing the subjective, the imaginary, by acting upon two senses at once, the eye and the ear, in a dialectical movement, stating and negating, and presenting concretely what may be only dreams, memories, inventions. As a result of the use of the sound track combined with the image, the film-maker has more means at his disposal than the writer to achieve the same aim: creating and contradicting reality as it is invented.

In *Trans-Europ-Express*, the only reality of which the spectator can be assured is that he is watching a movie of a certain length. The film takes an hour and a half to view, approximately the time it takes the train to go from Paris to Antwerp, and the time required by a passenger, a writer, to invent a story about the train. Being a true Hitchcock fan, he first thinks of a spy story; since they will cross the Belgian border, it must involve smuggling, and since the next stop will be the large harbor city of Antwerp, why not dope? A nervous fellow passenger provides the psychological background for the hero. He will be a sadistic dope runner on his first job for a big syndicate; obsessed by

rape, he will meet a double-agent prostitute. She betrays him, he kills her, and is himself gunned down by the boss as the police close in. At the end of the movie, as the writer gets off the train, he comments that a script about dope would be mere trash. But is the story finished? We may doubt it as we see the two heroes, the dope runner and the prostitute, both supposedly dead, kissing each other on the station platform and then looking at the audience.

Through this tongue-in-cheek story, which brings to the fore the humor hidden in his previous works, Robbe-Grillet manages to introduce all his usual structures and the obsessional motives which form their affective supports. *Trans-Europ-Express* illustrates one of the author's main contentions: in modern fiction, whether novel or film, the concern is not to tell a story but *how* to tell it. Robbe-Grillet refuses logic, psychological analysis, metaphysical background and symbolic meaning, favoring the dynamics of imagination. His stories—which evolve in repetitious patterns with distortions and contradictions—should offer a parallel with the uncertainty and accidental nature of human thought. Capturing the process of creation appears for him, as well as for others, such as Godard, to be *the* new field of investigation.

The problem with film, an art which cannot exist without the public, is how to involve the spectator in the creation in somebody else's mind of a subjective and non-significant world. Alain Resnais managed it with his *Last Year at Marienbad*, by emphasizing formal æsthetic values and the hypnotic atmosphere.

In *L'Immortelle*, Robbe-Grillet held to his principles of nonsignificance and complete subjectivity. He attempted to touch the public's emotions by showing a man faced with objects which psychoanalytically prove to be affective supports for voyeurism, sadism, rape and impotence—ropes, chains, labyrinths, statues. And in an effort to create a more popular, almost naive, fiction form and to reach a wider audience, he turned towards the myths which inform modern imagination: detective stories with their sequel; spies, gangsters, dope, white slave trade, exoticism. Nonetheless his insistence on creating works with no ulterior significance led him to such contradictions in filmic technique as close shots of objects playing no part in the story, and cuts from which no meaning can be derived. To avoid psychological analysis, he adopted the comic-strip technique (a sort of shorthand of dramatic climaxes), showing the same basic situations fixed in space and repeating themselves endlessly with variations in the grouping of characters. *L'Immortelle* was not a popular success. Although cartoons fascinate cats, as has been proven by a study of cats watching television, cats do fall asleep watching movies. Humans, on the other hand, tend to find a long series of animated shorts rather painful, both visually and mentally. In *L'Immortelle*, the spectator, bereft of the recourse to psychological causality or logical sequence, found the succession of flashing or fixed images—memories? obsessions? intentions?—impenetrable, a closed psychopathic world.

To reach a wider audience Robbe-Grillet decided to show the spectator how to enter the world of creation. The first shots show a writer (played by Robbe-Grillet himself) joining his script-girl and his producer in the train and inventing a story about a fellow passenger they have recognized (the actor Jean-Louis Trintignant). Another cinéma-vérité touch and a nod to the in-group is added when director Alain Resnais is glimpsed walking along the platform. Are we among friends indulging in the game of creating which is their lifework? We are soon set right. This is not reality. Robbe-Grillet sidesteps the problems introduced by Godard showing his cameraman shooting, or by Bergman's audible studio instructions opening *The Hour of the Wolf;* there is no need to emphasize that we are watching a movie. So Robbe-Grillet does not pretend to be himself, but a writer named Jean about whom the audience knows nothing, and will learn nothing. The movie does not touch on the problems of the creator. We are miles away from the self-doubts of Fellini in *8½*, and from the psychopathic world of

Bergman's hero in *The Hour of the Wolf*. Robbe-Grillet, assiduously avoiding psychological characterization, gives the audience no chance to identify with any of the characters. All that it is asked to do is to participate in the invention of a story.

The film shows a man who invents, and then what he invents; it shows Trintignant as himself, the actor, travelling on the train, and then as a smuggler named Elias (alias?). What *he* imagines is also viewed concretely. The movie provides the spectator with one man's mental content as imagined by another's mind. With numerous cutbacks from one track of thought to the inventive trio on the train, most spectators can follow the pattern. To simplify matters, Robbe-Grillet has altered one of his favorite structures; in all of his previous works, in order to prevent the public from trying to replace events in chronological order, there always was an ellipse, a blank page, an unmentioned consciousness, a *Je-Néant*. Here the writer assumes the responsibility of being illogical. The script-girl constantly tracks down inconsistencies. Nonetheless, Jean dismisses them as inconsequential; sometimes he drops a whole story line, or he replaces an absurdity with another. We recall the narrators in *Last Year at Marienbad* and *In the Labyrinth* saying: "No, this is not the right solution." Invention in its flux is supposed to mimic life.

However, to the average viewer, the whole procedure seems perfectly arbitrary, whimsical at best, a game children might play on rainy days or when bored on a long ride. The basic story is banal and its variations display little of the fervid inventiveness associated with James Bond or other spy movies. The dope smuggler has to make a second trip—the first one was nothing but a dry run. All the incidents are repeated: exchange of suitcases, crossing of borders, passwords and decoys, conversation with a friendly young waiter, police arrest, meeting with and pretended rape of a prostitute. The runner's fear during his first trip is turned to derision by its pointlessness since the whole procedure was a fake. Because of this new angle, the repetitions are never quite the same and the generalized suspicions lead to the prostitute's and the smuggler's deaths.

Devoid of gadgetry and cliff-hanging episodes, the adventures of this seedy, sadistic would-be gangster, although they may appear only mildly amusing, reeval to the Robbe-Grillet fan all of our author's favorite devices. Of course, the writer Jean should not be confused with Robbe-Grillet. Jean dictating to a tape recorder a whimsical story in a modest, matter-of-fact tone, is not Robbe-Grillet, whose works are almost mathematical demonstrations which display the precision and planning which made him an engineer before he turned to writing. The careful structures he invented for *Trans-Europ-Express* are revealed in a metaphor similar to one which appears in *Last Year at Marienbad;* the latter may have been a film about a statue which a panoramic turn revealed from every angle. In the present film, a night club act, "The Chained Slave," shows a naked girl kneeling on a slow-rotating platform, wrapping a chain around her body. This is the obsession which is being elaborated: its various angles unfold before the only fixed element in a fluid world, the spectator in whose mind the story develops.

In this world of deceptive appearances, thematic returns, associative linkings, we encounter again the familiar chains, ropes in figures of eight, police interviews, *deshabillés*, even the geometrical image of two waves slapping against each other with a plume of spray as in *The Voyeur*. Objects, people, landscapes are reflected in pools which invert their images, in train windows and partitions, in bathroom mirrors which duplicate, triplicate, or truncate them, blurred and focused as the train moves in space, or fixed on postcards which become animated as time moves on. The old cliché of literature or the film being a mirror of reality is thoroughly destroyed in an *objectal* fashion. Nobody, nothing is exactly what it seems. A blind beggar is neither blind nor a beggar. A man tailing the smuggler is not another gangster checking on him but a policeman. The prostitute who advises Elias not to trust his associates betrays him herself. Rob-

be-Grillet refuses to pin detectable identities on his characters. At one point in his career, his heroes were anonymous or identified simply by an initial. The same names reappear now from books to films as if to indicate that his invention only allows for a few basic types. The people are interchangeable. The roles are fixed. The obsessions which they embody lead to their multiplication.

In previous Robbe-Grillet works all these repetitions and deceptions created a frightening psychopathic world; now, however, they are supposed to provoke laughter. There is no doubt about the parodic intention; as soon as the writer settles down in his compartment and decides to invent a spy story, a man with an obviously false beard appears running towards the train. He is captured on the platform by four equally grotesque pursuers. Then the train explodes while the film titles appear on the screen.

Robbe-Grillet has long insisted that his works were humorous. Until his last book *La Maison de Rendez-vous* few agreed with him. He told me that the public should have laughed at several instances in *Last Year at Marienbad,* just as Kafka used to laugh when he read *The Trial* aloud to his friends. Indeed the absurd and the comic are related since they both contain the irrational, the inexplicable, the nonsensical. But Kafka's novels seem to us ghastly and prophetic comedies in which each of us feels concerned. However, in Robbe-Grillet's *L'Immortelle,* the viewer, deprived of psychological or social references, tends to remain aloof. In order to move the public, while still avoiding psychology, Robbe-Grillet had to detach himself from the hero, go beyond his consciousness through irony. But unlike traditional novelists he wants to create reality while destroying it, to demystify the myth while establishing it; he reserves the irony for the dialogue. It is through conversation that the absurdity of the smuggler's second trip is pointed out. The writer and his friends *say* that Elias is changing hotels just for the sake of changing, that he has thrown the same package in the water three different times, that the locker key has reappeared by magic. It is only through the sound track that cocaine is revealed as powdered sugar, the hollow book as hiding a razor instead of a revolver. The level of the humor is illustrated when Elias, after being asked to repeat where he must meet his associates, simply repeats: "where." A French audience may smile at the humorous tone and whimsical quips, an American audience may miss most of them.

Robbe-Grillet pays extreme care to the sound track, fully aware that movies are heard as much as seen. To awaken the audience's consciousness of sounds, he imposes silence upon a few shots of people talking, he amplifies street noises, he reverberates the voices of the policemen interrogating Elias. And from *La Traviata* he uses excerpts sung in Russian. Robbe-Grillet is fascinated by the use of languages incomprehensible to the majority of the audience, typifying the barriers of communication: in *L'Immortelle* commonplace banter in Turkish seemed mysterious to the French. Antwerp is in theory bilingual and so the use of a foreign language is parodied: the old woman in the station translates in French what she has said in Flemish. But the arias of *La Traviata,* sung beautifully in Russian by a woman's voice, are felt as pure music, as a lyric expression in counterpoint with what we see, making us feel the presence of the great bourgeois myth of the nineteenth century; its romantic virulence has enabled it to filter down from Alexandre Dumas *fils' La Dame aux Camélias,* through Verdi and on to Garbo's *Camille.* The story of the noble-hearted courtesan sacrificing herself to her lover's social interests touched the sentimentality of the Second Empire while leaving its social fabric intact. Robbe-Grillet sees the spy story as the early 1960's equivalent of the myth of the 1860's. The spy permeates modern imagination as he permeates modern society. *T-E-E* seems mild, indeed, in comparison with the hundreds of spy stories which have exploded over our screens, but it does show us the realities of this world, where everything is for sale, not only prostitutes and dope runners, but policemen, and where even church masses are offered in

exchange for the purchase of a pencil. Vending machines pop up in every corner. The prostitutes in their windows or "The Chained Slave" are illustrations of every man's lot; we are all transformed into objects.

Besides demystifying the spy myth, *T-E-E* also shows the underside of Antwerp, illustrating a pun on its French name: Anvers—*L'Envers et l'endroit,* or, inside out. As the script-girl points out; why tell a story of dope smuggling about Antwerp when everybody knows that the city is famous for its diamonds? While her voice matter-of-factly lists statistical details about the diamond trade, we see no jewels, but shots of traditionally garbed Jews in caftans and side locks walking in the streets as they on New York's 47th Street. Throughout the film, documentary shots reveal the city to be a working harbor, its quays filled with junked metal, its water foaming with detergent, its red-light district provincial and deserted, its hotels seedy and labyrinthine. These images, together with those showing *La Gare du Nord* in Paris with its hundreds of commuters carried like zombies down escalators and along endless corridors, are moments of experienced truth.

Under the game of invention and its romantic subjectivity, both the realism of these images and the obsessive quality of man's eroticism remain. Photos of tied-up girls in seductive underwear crop up whenever somebody leafs through a magazine. Since Elias's fatal fascination with chains and rape leads him into a ridiculous trap, his sadomasochistic relationships with women may be a parody of an existential rapport (the couple torturer-tortured turning each other into objects). But this obsession reappears in all of Robbe-Grillet's works; he considers it an essential part of man's psyche. At the end of *Trans-Europ-Express,* when the writer gets off in Antwerp and buys a paper, an article describes two murders exactly like those of the smuggler and the prostitute. Although we see Trintignant and Marie-France Pisier kissing, we also hear Jean the writer commenting that using true stories in fiction only leads to trouble. Reality and fiction are inexorably intertwined.

Robbe-Grillet has obviously attempted to make a popular movie out of *T-E-E;* the prostitute's stripteases and the night club act may well seem the high points of what some undoubtedly consider an amusing whimsy. Those who follow his films will notice his improvement as a director: Trintignant and Marie-France Pisier give very pleasing performances; the images make a point; and the rhythm is rapid and playful. These are achievements for a man who, although visually oriented, started nevertheless with words as a means of expression. His movies have also helped develop acceptance of techniques such as contractions or dilations of time, subjective camera, imaginary inserts. Nonetheless, has he taught the public to participate in the creation or how to invent? During the projection does the spectator simply seek to reestablish chronological order and discover motivation or does he try to develop the story further by his own imagination? Watching *T-E-E* he may be reasonably interested in the adventures and smile. But if Robbe-Grillet keeps refusing to introduce psychological motivations, we may ask whether his structures should not be more inventive, his obsessions more lurid, his images of reality closer to our experience if he is to captivate the audience's affective identification. —JUDITH GOLLUB

LA RELIGIEUSE

Directed by Jacques Rivette. Script: Jacques Rivette, Jean Gruault, based on the novel by Diderot. Photography: Alain Levent. Art Director: Jean-Jacques Fabre. Music: Jean-Claude Eloy.

Jacques Rivette's *La Religieuse* is like the romanesque capitals of the Cistercian abbeys of France: pure, austere, and hard to reach. The story relates the fate of Suzanne Simonin, the third daughter of a rich family, who is forced into a convent where she tries and fails to have her vows annulled. Written by Diderot in 1760, the story was an exercise in compassion in the true case of Suzanne Saulier, a bitter pamphlet against monastic life, and a subtle attack on the religious life of his times. But when Rivette

exchange for the purchase of a pencil. Vending machines pop up in every corner. The prostitutes in their windows or "The Chained Slave" are illustrations of every man's lot; we are all transformed into objects.

Besides demystifying the spy myth, *T-E-E* also shows the underside of Antwerp, illustrating a pun on its French name: Anvers—*L'Envers et l'endroit,* or, inside out. As the script-girl points out; why tell a story of dope smuggling about Antwerp when everybody knows that the city is famous for its diamonds? While her voice matter-of-factly lists statistical details about the diamond trade, we see no jewels, but shots of traditionally garbed Jews in caftans and side locks walking in the streets as they on New York's 47th Street. Throughout the film, documentary shots reveal the city to be a working harbor, its quays filled with junked metal, its water foaming with detergent, its red-light district provincial and deserted, its hotels seedy and labyrinthine. These images, together with those showing *La Gare du Nord* in Paris with its hundreds of commuters carried like zombies down escalators and along endless corridors, are moments of experienced truth.

Under the game of invention and its romantic subjectivity, both the realism of these images and the obsessive quality of man's eroticism remain. Photos of tied-up girls in seductive underwear crop up whenever somebody leafs through a magazine. Since Elias's fatal fascination with chains and rape leads him into a ridiculous trap, his sadomasochistic relationships with women may be a parody of an existential rapport (the couple torturer-tortured turning each other into objects). But this obsession reappears in all of Robbe-Grillet's works; he considers it an essential part of man's psyche. At the end of *Trans-Europ-Express,* when the writer gets off in Antwerp and buys a paper, an article describes two murders exactly like those of the smuggler and the prostitute. Although we see Trintignant and Marie-France Pisier kissing, we also hear Jean the writer commenting that using true stories in fiction only leads to trouble. Reality and fiction are inexorably intertwined.

Robbe-Grillet has obviously attempted to make a popular movie out of *T-E-E;* the prostitute's stripteases and the night club act may well seem the high points of what some undoubtedly consider an amusing whimsy. Those who follow his films will notice his improvement as a director: Trintignant and Marie-France Pisier give very pleasing performances; the images make a point; and the rhythm is rapid and playful. These are achievements for a man who, although visually oriented, started nevertheless with words as a means of expression. His movies have also helped develop acceptance of techniques such as contractions or dilations of time, subjective camera, imaginary inserts. Nonetheless, has he taught the public to participate in the creation or how to invent? During the projection does the spectator simply seek to reestablish chronological order and discover motivation or does he try to develop the story further by his own imagination? Watching *T-E-E* he may be reasonably interested in the adventures and smile. But if Robbe-Grillet keeps refusing to introduce psychological motivations, we may ask whether his structures should not be more inventive, his obsessions more lurid, his images of reality closer to our experience if he is to captivate the audience's affective identification. —JUDITH GOLLUB

LA RELIGIEUSE

Directed by Jacques Rivette. Script: Jacques Rivette, Jean Gruault, based on the novel by Diderot. Photography: Alain Levent. Art Director: Jean-Jacques Fabre. Music: Jean-Claude Eloy.

Jacques Rivette's *La Religieuse* is like the romanesque capitals of the Cistercian abbeys of France: pure, austere, and hard to reach. The story relates the fate of Suzanne Simonin, the third daughter of a rich family, who is forced into a convent where she tries and fails to have her vows annulled. Written by Diderot in 1760, the story was an exercise in compassion in the true case of Suzanne Saulier, a bitter pamphlet against monastic life, and a subtle attack on the religious life of his times. But when Rivette

transcribes it faithfully to the screen in 1965, what becomes of it?

Suzanne's mother has managed to keep it secret that she is not her father's child. For this, the only fact of life she can neither change nor undo, Suzanne has to pay by the negation of her freedom. Her prison is not so much physical as it is moral: wherever she turns, there is no exit. The bars are replaced by the columns of the cloisters. If she would comply with the fakery of pious gestures and actions required of her, she could live undisturbed, protected by the religious costume, eat, sleep, and be forgotten. But she is logical and lucid and her lack of religious commitment does not permit her to live in that false situation. The rope strangling her is not her rebellion but her honesty: "I know not the life of the world but I do not cherish this one to which I was not called." Her superiors, her judges, humiliate her but she keeps such pride and such assurance of the rightfulness of her actions that, instead of becoming the desperate underdog, she remains erect, trapped and wounded. The only remedy to her birth is death —and damnation. Rivette completes Diderot's unfinished novel with her suicide, the only possible way out but the most horrid for one who has kept her faith in God. This foredoomed dramatic destiny gives Suzanne Simonin the dimensions of a Greek heroine. Suzanne is heroic because there never is in her a trace of depravity or degeneracy, a pinch of abandon or yielding. Chained more tightly than Prometheus, faced with more hopelessness than Sisyphus, Suzanne goes irrevocably toward her destruction.

The curve of the nun's destiny gives its shape to the film and explains its dramatic rigor. Actually, it is not a curve but a vector. It cannot but rush stubbornly toward Suzanne's annihilation, with no ascending summits of hope, no descending moments either since she is already doomed when the film opens, no development possible in any direction other than straight ahead. This is why it is wrong to say that *La Religieuse* is a static film—it moves forward, irresistibly.

Rivette allows but one breathing spell in the 140 tense minutes of the film. The nun has been transferred from the harsh, sadistic convent of Longchamp to the frivolous, libertine one of Arpajon. We relax, we smile, for we are exchanging the solitary cell, the hair shirt and the whip for lace, cakes, cushions, and caresses. As

Anna Karina
in
LA RELIGIEUSE

spectators, we think we are going to satisfy an old curiosity about the scandalous lesbian mores of eighteenth-century nuns and, in return for all we have suffered with Suzanne so far, we are ready to be entertained. It is a breath of air given to the condemned in the courtyard of a prison. At this very moment of the tragedy, Diderot and Rivette make their most pessimistic comment. For as soon as Suzanne is chosen by her new mother superior Mme. de Chelles (Liselotte Pulver) as the object of her passion, we know that Suzanne, because of her innocence and her virginity, will be able neither to share nor to stop the passion, and our laughter freezes on our lips. The hands held out to Suzanne by the bouncy sisters and Mme. de Chelles's kisses are far more treacherous than the disciplinary tortures of Longchamp. It is not because of hatred that Suzanne will reach the bottom but because of affection. Love is the ultimate deathtrap.

For a while, Rivette's camera had left the bare corridors of Longchamp for the gilded outdoor autumn of Arpajon. A warm gold has replaced the blues, but flowers and rosy cheeks will not smile at Suzanne for long. Liselotte Pulver's blond hair, at first a symbol of femininity and sensousness, reflects now the red glow of her sexual insanity. Rivette has chosen a particular color for each of Suzanne's circles of Hell: blue for the sadistic period of her first convent, dark yellow for the double lust of Mme. de Chelles and Dom Morel (Francisco Rabal) and pink, the most obscene of all colors, for the last circle, the *maison close* where the tension between the prostitutes' erotic venality and Suzanne's virtue must inescapably propel her to her death.

Music is, along with color, the other concession Rivette made to brilliance and to the twentieth century. Jean-Claude Eloy's dissonant score does more than give a modern date to the film. Eloy's music seems to be Rivette's voice, the narrator's comment. For instance, in a scene where Suzanne, walking with Sister Sainte-Christine under the arches of the cloisters, asserts her irrevocable decision to appeal, the strident chords create and predict the break between the two women and ultimately the tortures Suzanne will have to endure. In Diderot's letter-novel, written in the first person singular, we see everything through Suzanne's eyes: events, people and sufferings. If she does not complain, we don't either. In her innocence she first sees in Mme. de Chelles tenderness and beauty. Rivette has "objectivized" *La Religieuse* without trying, either by choice of cast or by camera angles, to color a character good or evil, to incline our judgment. In fact, Suzanne's three superiors are equally beautiful: Micheline Presle (Mme. de Moni) perhaps more angelic, Francine Bergé (Sister Sainte-Christine) slightly more severe, and Liselotte Pulver juicier and plumper. It is not Rivette's translation but Anna Karina's intense and sober acting which accelerates our identification with her. It is undoubtedly Karina's most profound and best performance to date. Paradoxically Jean-Luc Godard's love never did for her what Diderot's tight script and Rivette's rigid direction accomplished.

Because of the subject of *La Religieuse*, it might appear that a discussion of the aesthetics of the film should come second, after the ethics. More than ever, they are here inseparable. The iconoclastic bearing of the picture comes out more forcefully because of the restraint of the form. Rivette must have been aware that by starting the film in a stagy Comédie-Française fashion and by having the *dramaturgie* slowly roll toward its fateful completion, he was inviting violent Church criticism. What we conclude on the sadomasochism, the venality, and the licentiousness of eighteenth-century convents arises from much minute and objectively presented evidence. But Rivette, unlike many French intellectuals, is not obsessed with anticlericalism. The bitter attack on religion stems from the subject itself, not from personal embellishments by the director.

Unfortunately, the banning of *La Religieuse* and the subsequent uproar have predisposed many people in such a way that they anticipate a scandalous and flamboyant film, which blinds them to the real one. Ironically, the nuns, the Catholic right wing and the archbishops of France understood the implications in Jacques

Rivette's classicism far more clearly; they recognized in it the long French tradition of polemics hidden beneath "style"—that of Pascal, Crébillon *fils*, Voltaire, and Diderot himself.

Judging by its reception at the San Francisco Film Festival, it seems that in matters of "religion in film," moviegoers are readier for the gothic metaphysical anxieties of Ingmar Bergman, the rustic Evangelical re-enactments of Pier Paolo Pasolini, the Lutheran frigidity of Jean-Marie Straub and the baroque swipes at Catholicism of Luis Buñuel than for the subtle self-critical Christianity of *La Religieuse*. Maybe it is reassuring for them to know that Bergman is an atheist, Pasolini a Marxist, and Buñuel a former Catholic turned unbeliever. Faced with what Claude Mauriac called a "truly Christian film," they murmur their disappointment. The real achievement of Jacques Rivette is to have made a film which is both spiritual and "anti-religious." To return to the comparison with the romanesque capitals, those who miss the beauty of *La Religieuse* resemble the American tourists in France who admire the gothic exuberance of Chartres and Reims but overlook the muted denudation of the Abbey du Tholonet.

—Claire Clouzot

TWO FILMS BY WILL HINDLE

"When, uh . . . when I was first alive . . . younger than I am now . . . and . . . it was a time when you were forming inside these opinions, these things, these ideas in your mind . . . uh . . . I was living with a married woman during this time, and . . . uh . . . it was my mother. And it was very . . . it was sort of as if you were living at home . . . and it was very . . . unusual . . ."

Will Hindle's films see easily identifiable at first. *NON Catholicam* (his first film, begun soon after he graduated from Stanford in 1957, and completed in 1964) looks like one of those loving cathedral-inventory films often shown in art history classes. *Pastorale d'Eté* (*ca.* 1965) and *FFFTCM* (Fan Fare for the Common Man, 1967) fall into the pastoral, or fascist, category. *29 Merçi Merçi (ca.* 1965) could be described as a protest picture, although it kvetches more than it criticises. *Billabong* (1968) may remind viewers of the documentary welfare-center tours seen on NET. *Chinese Firedrill* (1968) is almost a story-film, almost a psychological horror-comedy, almost . . .

And yet—no. The only sure identification marks on these films are "WMH"—William M. Hindle. Further, unlike other independent, middle-generation film-makers such as Bruce Conner, Robert Breer and Ed Emshwiller, one's interpretation of a Hindle film becomes less neat, precise and certain with repeated viewings. After seeing *Cosmic Ray, Fistfight,* or *Relativity* a few times you should have a fairly clear idea of what the film says. Your idea may not be the same as mine, or the film-maker's, but it should be clear. In the normal process of understanding abstract, or difficult, art, the viewer is left, after first exposure to the work, with a certain tenuous mood, which further exposures crystallize into an interpretation. Hindle's films, especially *Chinese Firedrill,* begin with the sort of specific references to film genres suggested above, and proceed to baffle, distend, and finally elude the viewer.

Even *that* definition of Hindle's films is too facile. *Billabong,* for example, could be understood on an early viewing, or perhaps the first, if a less exotic title were applied to it and a prefatory note added explaining the film's background. "Billabong" is an Australian word meaning either "a blind channel leading out from a river" or "a backwater forming a stagnant pool" and, although it refers aptly to the *culs-de-sac* and stagnation of the boys in his film, Hindle's choice of title gives the picture an immediate tinge of obscurity that it doesn't deserve. The preface might explain that Hindle worked in Oakland with a group of Job Corps inductees—they'd had to choose between the Corps and the clink—who were ignored and thus bored during their "rehabilitation."

The film opens by showing, in color, the boys' environment: a highway, the barracks they are trapped in. Once inside, we rarely see anything

Rivette's classicism far more clearly; they recognized in it the long French tradition of polemics hidden beneath "style"—that of Pascal, Crébillon *fils*, Voltaire, and Diderot himself.

Judging by its reception at the San Francisco Film Festival, it seems that in matters of "religion in film," moviegoers are readier for the gothic metaphysical anxieties of Ingmar Bergman, the rustic Evangelical re-enactments of Pier Paolo Pasolini, the Lutheran frigidity of Jean-Marie Straub and the baroque swipes at Catholicism of Luis Buñuel than for the subtle self-critical Christianity of *La Religieuse*. Maybe it is reassuring for them to know that Bergman is an atheist, Pasolini a Marxist, and Buñuel a former Catholic turned unbeliever. Faced with what Claude Mauriac called a "truly Christian film," they murmur their disappointment. The real achievement of Jacques Rivette is to have made a film which is both spiritual and "anti-religious." To return to the comparison with the romanesque capitals, those who miss the beauty of *La Religieuse* resemble the American tourists in France who admire the gothic exuberance of Chartres and Reims but overlook the muted denudation of the Abbey du Tholonet.

—Claire Clouzot

TWO FILMS BY WILL HINDLE

"When, uh . . . when I was first alive . . . younger than I am now . . . and . . . it was a time when you were forming inside these opinions, these things, these ideas in your mind . . . uh . . . I was living with a married woman during this time, and . . . uh . . . it was my mother. And it was very . . . it was sort of as if you were living at home . . . and it was very . . . unusual . . ."

Will Hindle's films see easily identifiable at first. *NON Catholicam* (his first film, begun soon after he graduated from Stanford in 1957, and completed in 1964) looks like one of those loving cathedral-inventory films often shown in art history classes. *Pastorale d'Eté* (*ca.* 1965) and *FFFTCM* (Fan Fare for the Common Man, 1967) fall into the pastoral, or fascist, category. *29 Merçi Merçi (ca.* 1965) could be described as a protest picture, although it kvetches more than it criticises. *Billabong* (1968) may remind viewers of the documentary welfare-center tours seen on NET. *Chinese Firedrill* (1968) is almost a story-film, almost a psychological horror-comedy, almost . . .

And yet—no. The only sure identification marks on these films are "WMH"—William M. Hindle. Further, unlike other independent, middle-generation film-makers such as Bruce Conner, Robert Breer and Ed Emshwiller, one's interpretation of a Hindle film becomes less neat, precise and certain with repeated viewings. After seeing *Cosmic Ray, Fistfight,* or *Relativity* a few times you should have a fairly clear idea of what the film says. Your idea may not be the same as mine, or the film-maker's, but it should be clear. In the normal process of understanding abstract, or difficult, art, the viewer is left, after first exposure to the work, with a certain tenuous mood, which further exposures crystallize into an interpretation. Hindle's films, especially *Chinese Firedrill,* begin with the sort of specific references to film genres suggested above, and proceed to baffle, distend, and finally elude the viewer.

Even *that* definition of Hindle's films is too facile. *Billabong,* for example, could be understood on an early viewing, or perhaps the first, if a less exotic title were applied to it and a prefatory note added explaining the film's background. "Billabong" is an Australian word meaning either "a blind channel leading out from a river" or "a backwater forming a stagnant pool" and, although it refers aptly to the *culs-de-sac* and stagnation of the boys in his film, Hindle's choice of title gives the picture an immediate tinge of obscurity that it doesn't deserve. The preface might explain that Hindle worked in Oakland with a group of Job Corps inductees—they'd had to choose between the Corps and the clink—who were ignored and thus bored during their "rehabilitation."

The film opens by showing, in color, the boys' environment: a highway, the barracks they are trapped in. Once inside, we rarely see anything

CHINESE FIREDRILL

in color, and the monochrome reflects the drabness of the prisoners' lives. They play pool, humorlessly kid around, sit, sleep, stare and (the high point of their constricted experience) masturbate. Even their wet dreams, though, are revealed in the sickliest over-exposed colors. And they can't imagine such a basic and proximate form of communication as homosexual love; they keep their passion to themselves and the porno-girls who cue their sullen ecstacy. As it progresses, the film begins to share the boys' loneliness, and the film-maker becomes snared in it. He dwells obsessively on hands idly caressing each other, on one lad's gentle rocking to an unheard melody, on eyes that have not been filled with anything and so see nothing. Hindle never leaves the barracks, but in a last attempt to show the untouched possibilities, he tracks down a desolate row of bunks to an open window. Just outside, in living color, a few steps from a houseful of barren lives, is the Pacific Ocean.

So, we understand *Billabong*. We've seen some of Hindle's earlier films: they are photographed with a precision and clarity that make us less generous to certain Underground film-makers who answer the criticism of "Fuzzy photography!" with cries of "Penury!" They're handsome. Could someone whose films are filled with such clear images be a purveyor of vague ideas? We turn with assurance to *Chinese Firedrill*. It's a story-film, a man is telling his life story on the sound-track ("When, uh . . . when I first was alive . . ."); and it's a comedy, as we judge from the jokes that have ripened through many profitable summers spent in the Catskills ("[My father] died . . . oh, three years before I was born"). As the narrator, seen on screen as a shaggy-haired fellow cataloguing thousands of IBM cards, drones on, we begin to suspect that he is insane, or approaching insanity. When he goes to bed, in a room that suggests both fanatical order and psychotic clutter, and the IBM cards come floating down amid strains of the Star-Spangled Banner and an Oriental chorale, we decide we've got *Chinese Firedrill* pegged: a simple psychological parable about this man's, or the artist's, or mankind's attempt to order the unorderable universe.

And yet—no. Like Hitchcock in *Psycho*, like Bergman in *The Magician*, Hindle is deceiving us. Unlike these other, estimable film-makers, Hindle isn't playing with us, and he isn't offering, in or outside the film, any explanations. (Hindle offers these comments on *Chinese Firedrill*: the film was conceived as a series of technical challenges. He had never tried film acting, set designing, making a one-set film, shooting the main photography for a picture in a few days, narrating a film, or ad-libbing a monologue. He was given the use of a friend's warehouse for two weekends. In it, he designed the film's set and filled it with junk he'd been collecting for ten years in his own warehouse. Into the set Hindle put himself, in a fright-wig, and acted. To the images shot in those four days, he added the manic narration he'd ad-libbed some time before, as well as other images that flash on the screen and through the protagonist's splitting head. The editing took eight months. The film cost $280 to make, approximately $10 per minute of the finished product.)

We *can* say that the disarrayed room represents one man's mind, that the man is obsessed with the junk (memory, experience) in it, and that he is trapped in it, like the Job Corps boys in their barracks. He can't escape, he can't even throw the junk out; he can only reorder the disorder into a new disorder. The reordering can be spatial (he begins immediately to clear up the IBM cards) or chronological (he keeps on

with that life-story), but the task is insurmountable and the work worthless. New junk appears. His monologue, with its parenthetical remarks inside parenthetical remarks and its weak jokes, which we excuse the way we tolerated Humbert Humbert's puns as his attempt to impose order by the most desperate linguistic means ("Oh, my Lolita, I have only words to play with!"), becomes less distinct and coherent; he goes on about his childhood, trying to express verbal and visual images of placental placidity, but he keeps plunging back to a frightening present.

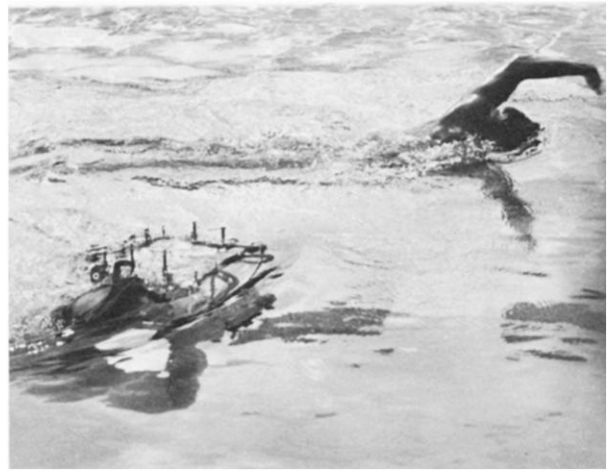
Comforting images: A child happily bathing in a basin. Two huge light balls that the man keeps fondling. A beautiful woman lighting a votive candle. A naked man who appears in silhouette behind one luminous blank wall of his cell; a woman who appears next to him; who, as the man turns to touch her breasts and kiss them, enfolds him slowly, gracefully.

Terrifying images: A boy chased by a soldier, and shot. Water from the sink turning blood-red. A man's hand stretching out for the unreachable sun and for those unattainable comforting images (terrifying not only for the film's protagonist, but also for those familiar with Hindle's other films, in which this image recurs). The scrawls on the man's burlap-papered walls, which are written backwards, as if, inside his mind, he is scribbling messages to the outside world (most are names of towns—New Brunswick, Laredo, Dachau—although there is also an unspecified HAIRY PLACE, as well as a few reversible words, like DUFTE, which is German for "smelly" and Berlin slang for "pretty"); a swastika. An 8"x10" glossy of a thumb, which, with other photographs, he washes. His room full of streamers. His reaching even for these terrifying images. The sun, with no hand reaching. A man attaching a bomb to the door of his room. An explosion. And, most terrifying: a final shot of the child, splashing in his basin, that splutters, freezes, and dies.

The narrator may be a German Jewish refugee—his accent and a few childhood memories (or fantasies) suggest it—or he may, in his paranoia, simply associate himself with a persecuted people. It doesn't really matter. What matters is that he is lonely. We have felt this loneliness before, but feel it acutely in his presence. The film-maker has felt, penetrated and evoked it, both with the clarity we expect from Hindle and with astounding new cinematic resourcefulness and human compassion. Hindle has achieved more than ridding himself of ten years' worth of warehouse waste and solving a few technical challenges; he has purged himself and, in a troubling way, us.

The critic, confronting this film and its creator, has problems. He can try the Objective approach, identifying the film-maker's objective and the extent to which he succeeded in attaining it. But this is surely arrogant and probably frustrating. In Hindle's case we know his objectives: to act in a film, to design a set, etc. Do we judge *Chinese Firedrill* on this basis alone? (If so, it gets an A+). Well, the critic can be Subjective; this approach has the advantage of being only arrogant.

There are ethical questions, too. Can he distinguish between film and film-maker? Doesn't he risk calling Hindle a superb artist and a terribly lonely man? If the critic has met him, he does. Hindle is an extremely attractive and articulate person; he looks like a model for a shirt ad and sounds like a CBS newsman. Under pressure, he stays articulate and thus becomes more attractive. The pressure came last August when he attended the Flaherty seminar on documentary films. Many of the seminarians were so unsettled by Hindle's films—the first "experimental" works to be shown, after two days of NET-



From Hindle's forthcoming film WATERSMITH.

style examples of film journalism—that they attacked him and his work during a discussion period following the screening. Hindle answered his attackers with remarkable precision (as always) and an unsettling sympathy, but it seemed as if he was packing his suitcase as he spoke.

Any analysis of a work of art dilutes its impact. Criticism can make a film sound more interesting than it is (try reading James Stoller's brilliant piece on *Echoes of Silence* and then seeing the picture); it certainly makes a film sound more cerebral. True, *Chinese Firedrill* is an intellectually demanding film, but it is essentially an overwhelming, disturbing, unique emotional experience.

I can't tell you how beautiful this film is.

It is very . . . unusual . . .

—RICHARD CORLISS

Books

THE TECHNIQUE OF FILM EDITING

Written and compiled by Karel Reisz and Gavin Millar (enlarged edition). New York: Hastings House, 1968. $13.50)

This, the only comprehensive book on film editing, was the result of an examination of the literature of the cinema by Councilmen of the British Film Academy in the early fifties. The Council then created a 10-man committee of experienced film-makers including Roy Boulting, Robert Hamer, David Lean, Ernest Lindgren, and Basil Wright—with Thorold Dickinson as chairman. Instead of choosing a film editor to write and compile the book, the Committee selected "a layman (at that time) with a scientific background and analytical skill"—Karel Reisz.

The book was published in 1953 and immediately became the outstanding work on film editing. For the past fifteen years it has served as the major text on film editing throughout the world (it has been published in Spanish, Polish, Czech, and Russian).

But from the start this sensible, lucid classic was more than a book on film editing: it was not restricted to cutting-room activity—instead it chose to define editing as the entire formative process of motion picture design and construction. In easy, straightforward style it examines the constructive interplay of writer, director, soundman, and editor to reveal how films have been created by several individual talents harmoniously fused.

Even in 1953 these experienced authors were urging that a single mind control at least both directing and editing. Since that time, of course, a great critical outcry for the cinema *auteur* has been heard and debated. Also since that time Karel Reisz has become a distinguished writer-director in his own right (*Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, Night Must Fall, Morgan!*) and many of his contemporaries have made their original marks in feature production; the development of film has not stood still. So, at last, an extensive effort has been made to update *The Technique of Film Editing*. It is not surprising that the *cinéma d'auteur* is no small part of this new edition.

The three sections comprising the original 272 pages remain unchanged. The first reviews the history of editing to the early fifties, the second is on the practice of editing (this forms the major symposium by the original committee, covering action, dialogue, comedy, montage, documentary, educational films, newsreels, and the compilation film). The third section presents the principles of editing—those elemental techniques which, because they flow out of the background of history and theory based on practice, make even better sense coming third. The brief appendix on cutting room procedure remains intact and together with the selected bibliography and glossary (both updated) is placed at the end of the new Part II.

The enlarged edition adds 114 pages—titled "The Fifties and the Sixties," introduced by Dickinson, now Professor of Film at the Slade School of Art, London. The four chapters and conclusion are written by Gavin Millar, one of Dickinson's former students at Slade, in consultation with Karel Reisz.

style examples of film journalism—that they attacked him and his work during a discussion period following the screening. Hindle answered his attackers with remarkable precision (as always) and an unsettling sympathy, but it seemed as if he was packing his suitcase as he spoke.

Any analysis of a work of art dilutes its impact. Criticism can make a film sound more interesting than it is (try reading James Stoller's brilliant piece on *Echoes of Silence* and then seeing the picture); it certainly makes a film sound more cerebral. True, *Chinese Firedrill* is an intellectually demanding film, but it is essentially an overwhelming, disturbing, unique emotional experience.

I can't tell you how beautiful this film is.

It is very . . . unusual . . .

—RICHARD CORLISS

Books

THE TECHNIQUE OF FILM EDITING

Written and compiled by Karel Reisz and Gavin Millar (enlarged edition). New York: Hastings House, 1968. $13.50)

This, the only comprehensive book on film editing, was the result of an examination of the literature of the cinema by Councilmen of the British Film Academy in the early fifties. The Council then created a 10-man committee of experienced film-makers including Roy Boulting, Robert Hamer, David Lean, Ernest Lindgren, and Basil Wright—with Thorold Dickinson as chairman. Instead of choosing a film editor to write and compile the book, the Committee selected "a layman (at that time) with a scientific background and analytical skill"—Karel Reisz.

The book was published in 1953 and immediately became the outstanding work on film editing. For the past fifteen years it has served as the major text on film editing throughout the world (it has been published in Spanish, Polish, Czech, and Russian).

But from the start this sensible, lucid classic was more than a book on film editing: it was not restricted to cutting-room activity—instead it chose to define editing as the entire formative process of motion picture design and construction. In easy, straightforward style it examines the constructive interplay of writer, director, soundman, and editor to reveal how films have been created by several individual talents harmoniously fused.

Even in 1953 these experienced authors were urging that a single mind control at least both directing and editing. Since that time, of course, a great critical outcry for the cinema *auteur* has been heard and debated. Also since that time Karel Reisz has become a distinguished writer-director in his own right (*Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, Night Must Fall, Morgan!*) and many of his contemporaries have made their original marks in feature production; the development of film has not stood still. So, at last, an extensive effort has been made to update *The Technique of Film Editing*. It is not surprising that the *cinéma d'auteur* is no small part of this new edition.

The three sections comprising the original 272 pages remain unchanged. The first reviews the history of editing to the early fifties, the second is on the practice of editing (this forms the major symposium by the original committee, covering action, dialogue, comedy, montage, documentary, educational films, newsreels, and the compilation film). The third section presents the principles of editing—those elemental techniques which, because they flow out of the background of history and theory based on practice, make even better sense coming third. The brief appendix on cutting room procedure remains intact and together with the selected bibliography and glossary (both updated) is placed at the end of the new Part II.

The enlarged edition adds 114 pages—titled "The Fifties and the Sixties," introduced by Dickinson, now Professor of Film at the Slade School of Art, London. The four chapters and conclusion are written by Gavin Millar, one of Dickinson's former students at Slade, in consultation with Karel Reisz.

What has always made *The Technique of Film Editing* most valuable and interesting is that it tempers pure theory and personal preference with frequent critical examinations of outstanding film sequences. In the old edition opinions are defended and points made through the use of 30 script excerpts from British and American films; 15 of these sequences are illustrated with frame enlargements from the films themselves. In the new edition more than a dozen additional picture-script selections from American, French, and Italian films of the fifties and sixties are included and critically discussed. This detailed analysis of visual form and framing, movement, sound, and meaning happily avoids shattering the accumulative effect and affective qualities of these sequences. The enthusiasm of the authors treads tenderly upon the films' inner life and implicative meanings, though no one of course will accept all the authors' interpretations.

In the introduction to this new material, Dickinson comments on a dozen statements in the original text to indicate that he now disagrees or to note how present-day attitudes have changed. (These notes could have been exceedingly more useful had they appeared on the bottom of the earlier pages they refer to.) Dickinson's brief backward glance reveals how rapidly the currents of cinema have shifted in the last fifteen years. We seem to have become more sophisticated, or at least relaxed, in our attitudes toward accepting new (as well as earlier) forms of film continuity and styles. This realization of the impermanence of stylistic conventions seems to have cautioned Gavin Millar to devise his new part simply as "a report on work in progress rather than as a study of an historical development which has settled into a more or less definitive pattern."

Thus, what fifteen years ago the authors regarded as raw, incomprehensible experiment by Eisenstein and Alexandrov in their intellectual cinema, now seems perfectly valid. Now, Dickinson realizes, "*October* was one of the milch cows of the *nouvelle vague*." And instead of bemoaning the need for repeated study and analysis of the genre with its ambiguities, illogical transitions, and absurdity, he recommends it as being "worthy of study at more than one viewing like any evocative work of art."

He rejects the "high standard of realistic presentation" through the use of synchronous sound (of 15 years ago)—"we have progressed far beyond those limits," so far in fact that now "synchronous realism . . . even has to justify itself." He cites the turning upside-down in our attitude toward dissolves—15 years ago a fundamental editing device for smooth, but vaguely defined transitions in space of time—which today are so rare as to make the modern audience screen-conscious. He notes the modern audience's ready acceptance of quick, momentary flashbacks. He describes how film-making's creative methods have changed; how the final shape of dramatic films is now less preplanned and more "determined during and by the shooting"; how the modern editor is no longer a creative equal to the director but rather his "executant." He pays generous tribute to Eisenstein who "told us nearly forty years ago that making a smooth cut is a wasted opportunity."

The first new chapter struggles with widescreen, which was just being forced into the theaters (as a counterattack against the standard-format TV screens appearing in every livingroom) when the first edition of this book was published. In discussing widescreen pioneer Autant-Lara (who in 1929 made a multiple-screen film using an anamorphic lens (author Millar quotes Dickinson's 1955 suggestion that, "with Vista-Vision, Autant-Lara could have 'splashed images of all shapes and sizes all over the screen . . . for that matter the way is open.' " Millar currently replies, "Well it may be, but as far as we know no one in the intervening thirteen years has taken it." This must refer only to features, considering the ingenious multiple-screen systems that have received so much attention during the last nine years. But even so it is a curiously narrow statement, ignoring Charles Eames' seven-projector system which was the sensation of the 1959 Moscow Fair, Montreal's Expo '67 which provided a great number of elaborate multi-image systems, etc. A sympathetic analysis and assessment of widescreen is

not easy—and Millar deserves credit for his labors. Nobly he strives to describe and illustrate its attributes, gingerly notes its faults and weaknesses and allows some disputable, and, he admits, tenuous speculations to creep in.

Among widescreen's distinct advantages Millar lists its suitability for diagonal or horizontal compositions, its clarity and its greater area and width. In straining to prove the cinematic advantages of its full width, the author feels that when this is exploited it can achieve effects of unusual power or delicacy, and illustrations from *Barabbas* and *El Cid* help bear him out. It is true that its sheer area makes it possible to "unfold a scene of great complexity and length without losing sight of detail or overall shape" but he then goes on to say, "meanwhile preserving the intensity which is dissipated by cuts which are only mechanically necessary." It does not seem logical that widescreen's long scenes preserve intensity within its "relaxed dimensions." Might one not argue that greater area tends to dissipate intensity? And whatever the format, cuts should never be "only mechanically necessary."

Properly, the author ignores the optic-psychological arguments put forth by promoters to justify wide screen in the early 1950s. It was alleged that by filling a greater (actually very slightly greater) area of the viewer's peripheral vision, the illusionary process would more nearly approximate life's normal view. What such an argument did not consider were the complexities of sight activity, most importantly our pinpoint (detail) vision which is constantly fleeting, jumping about the screen from point to point, so that widescreen can create more head/eye movement—up, down, sideways.

Suppose that Edison/Dickson, more influenced by the theater's proscenium arch than they were, had at the start established the Kinetoscope with a wide format and only recently a narrower (or even square format, which Man Ray once told me he thought ideal for cinema) had come into vogue. Could not at least as good reasons be set forth to defend the narrower or square screen? It has been demonstrated that not only do many individuals have strong preferences for certain format ratios, but collectively a given civilization may as well; ratios in tune with and reflecting other conditions of a certain culture. Perhaps instead of strongly defending any special format for the screen we should encourage and develop changeable formats which could adapt to differing aesthetics. The ideal is not new, as Millar states; Griffith narrowed the screen in some of his early films and Gance condemned all processes except his dream of a variable screen he called "polyvision, the cinematic language of tomorrow." Millar acknowledges these, but overlooks the many larger screen developments in America during the late twenties: with the advent of sound came Magnascope (which combined an image four times normal size with gradually moving screen masks to make the picture grow or shrink during projection); Paramount introduced Magnifilm, MGM Realife and Fox Grandeur Screen only to have them all fall victims of the 1929 crash.

But wasted or badly used space can occur in any format. We have all tried sitting through those vacuous, badly written, and poorly acted films which the superb widescreen process by its sheer greatness somehow was supposed to magically redeem. It is true that widescreen was first critically much maligned, and we must admit the widescreen aesthetic does have its own reasons. But so does and did the standard-screen "montage" aesthetic. This makes us wonder if Millar's defense of widescreen may already seem a little faddish, since we are, I suspect, on the far side of the widescreen, deep-focus period. Haven't we attained enough sophistication to easily accept various formats and sizes, just as the new wave dropped established conventions and adopted abandoned ones? The bigger screens no longer seem any bigger than the older screens. And on the rebound we have strange technical mix-ups; standard formats are cut top and bottom to fit wide screens: widescreen epics are optically printed and cropped for television transmission. So it doesn't seem to matter so much—widescreen, standard, or even square; in each case it simply depends on how effectively the director and his cinematographer analyzed and managed the space. Well-

managed image and continuity do help to satisfy us but our present sensibilities seem to be searching beyond the borders of whatever screen format for things far beyond. In the chapters which follow, Millar patiently probes with insight and understanding some of these attitudes and styles which have helped expand cinema's outer bounds.

The film of actuality which manages to record and reveal the spontaneity and flavor of the real event is discussed with a keen understanding of recently developed *cinéma-vérité* techniques as well as its historical thread throughout film history from Lumière's primitive beginnings. Millar describes and interprets outstanding *vérité* examples, mostly from France (Rouch's *Chronique d'un Eté,* Marker's *Le Joli Mai* and Franju's 1952 *Hotel des Invalides* which he considers a forerunner to *vérité*) but he recognizes America's contribution to *vérité* during the past ten years (Leacock, Pennebaker, Rogosin, Cassavetes, Frank and Leslie, Warhol, and the Maysles). He properly says that the seemingly unobtrusive camera which strictly observes what happens in the chosen situation is not as innocent or as "pure" as perhaps it seems. As simple an act as pointing the camera (where actually a complex of choices is taking place as a human eye analyzes nature and manages the camera's framing of space) is highly selective—a fundamental element of creativity. Even though Rouch, Marker and Franju are important to the *vérité* mode, and Millar does them admirable justice, he would have done well to select other important *vérité* sequences, perhaps even a more important British, Canadian, or American example.

In the short chapter on the *nouvelle vague,* a not so clearly defined movement which began about 1959, Millar describes it historically and aesthetically and offers a thoughtful interpretation of the novelty of new wave themes as well as style. From the start it was *cinéma d'auteur*; one individual is creatively responsible for both the film's conception and execution. A plot in the traditional sense is usually either rejected (*Last Year in Marienbad*), pushed to its formal extreme (*Lola*), bent till it breaks (*Breathless*), or forced into fantasy (*Shoot the Pianist*). Clearly heralding the changing attitudes of our time, the new wave chose to prefer the individual and his own individual values to those external values customarily shoring up the cinema—religion, morality, patriotism — which have buckled and collapsed.

Since the subject of the modern film is more in the relationship between the director and his material, Millar claims, than in the story, his tough and unconventional attitudes toward the traditional styles of cinema have resulted in a kind of choppy illogic (events without apparent connection in our discontinuous world) *sans* dissolves and fades as devices of time and location change. Instead, these transitional devices have been freed from tradition to be used in new (or old, previously abandoned) ways. Since the new wave was started by film critics familiar with film history, they have jumbled up all the cinematic tricks and devices and use them simply in the ways they prefer. "All weapons are useful if they are used with skill and intelligence and made to work in a precise way—that is, if the impetus of the idea forces its way through the device."

But, Millar feels, "Perhaps more attention has been paid to the trickery and gimmickry the new wave has made familiar, than the more constructive of its achievements in style." And as an example of this he describes the refinement of metaphor as it is ingeniously used by Chabrol in *A Double Tour,* effectively demonstrating how far we have come since the clumsy beginnings of *Greed*; "at moments like these . . . we see how much the new cinema has benefited from its knowledge of the past."

A final long chapter discusses particular filmmakers and their works in the "Personal Cinema in the Sixties." Truffaut, Godard, Resnais, and Antonioni are Millar's choices, since he believes their personal expressions have been extending the vocabulary of the new cinema. Detailed consideration of sections from their scripts along with frames from some of these sequences are reproduced and cross-numbered to indicate which picture the scene of the script describes.

Millar defends his abandonment of film

genres (comedy, documentary, educational, newsreels, etc. in the earlier edition) by noting that the cinema of the sixties has become too personal a medium to follow such a scheme; the author/director "uses the medium . . . more as an instrument of thought." To demonstrate Truffaut's aim—"an explosion of genres by a mixture of genres"—he presents a script sequence and pictures from *Shoot the Pianist* and analyzes its liberties and meanings and probes the meaning of sequences from four of his other films, most notably *Jules and Jim.*

Sympathetically but critically, Millar examines the singular independence of Godard's film making—the results of his experimental mind-changing as he shoots and his lack of concern for conventional editing. Millar finds many of Godard's sequences to be "a meaningless kaleidoscope," and prefers the more conventional continuity which creates "a new synthesis" and integrates "our vision of the world." Nonetheless, he recognizes that Godard has helped through his prolific creation to extend our screen language, despite his taking many liberties in "total disregard for screen language, conventions or for his audience." I think Millar's worries are largely wasted, since Godard mostly does succeed. The strange and innovative is always at first disturbing, but effrontery in art is not necessarily unaesthetic. Though Godard makes his films in a somewhat exploratory manner, I believe he does finally come up with what he pretty much desires and certainly approves. Furthermore it works.

With Resnais, "the editing is the meaning" as he "attempts to mirror the movements of the mind." Millar's handling of *Hiroshima* is somewhat indulgent, though careful. Actually Millar feels that Resnais had little to do with the new wave (though many would disagree) and takes Antonioni as his final example of the personal cinema, who had even less to do with the new wave. This long and admiring analysis of the Italian director's films (including *Gente Del Po, Le Amiche, La Signora Senza Camelie, Il Grido, La Notte, L'Eclisse,* and finally *Blow-Up*) centers its detailed attention in the island sequence from *L'Avventura,* representing a "mid-point in his development."

In defending Antonioni against what he regards as superficial criticism (that his films seem plotless, too slow moving) Millar takes great pains to develop a sensitive appreciation of Antonioni's great achievement in developing his not-so-meaningless personal style. Though I very much agree with this—it is fair, patient, and most admiring—it is the best example of how the new edition fails to measure up to the earlier text in a number of important dimensions: it lacks the older keen balance and objectivity. Perhaps the Committee contributed to help keep Reisz on a more even keel and the wealth of broad and detailed experience they brought to it was carefully woven in. Millar is somewhat embarrassingly honorific and since his choices are few and geographically as well as stylistically narrow, we could easily have expected more, I believe.

Millar finds it curious that although the technical movement in the cinema—on the whole—has lately been towards the longer take, wide-screen picture, and inclusive image, the philosophical movement has been toward dislocation, fragmentation, disassociation, best effected in sequences of short disconnected shots, "the fractured world in fractured images." In ending his treatise on the personal cinema, the author reflects that if the contemporary film begins to resemble—because of the self-consciousness of its editing—the densely worked films of Eisenstein, it will not be for the same reason. Both have made "the editing process a weapon in a philosophical investigation (but) where Eisenstein used it to try and construct a synthesis of a whole and stable reality, contemporary film makers are, on the contrary, recording impressions of disintegration."

The second edition *is* an improvement over the first; some valuable up-to-date material has been added, but we must ask how comprehensive and well balanced is its treatment of the last 15 years? Not as complete or as balanced as the original book, I regret to say. Millar's new chapters are mainly concerned with the feature

film (in the chapter on widescreen, mostly American features) and with discussing the work of four current giants, three French and one Italian. His excellent chapter on *cinéma vérité* does give some balance by taking up, to a limited extent, one other important genre—the documentary film of ideas. But though he pays tribute to some of the remarkable American activity in this style, his analytical examples again are French. The author simply does not seem too conversant with other flourishing kinds of film-making. In a curious conclusion he predicts that the cinema's next metamorphosis might be the Cinema of Immobility—filmographs which are animated from still pictures—citing only Marker's incredible 1963 *La Jetée*. He fails to recognize that filmographs have been made—some brilliantly—for some 30 years at least—*1848*, to cite an early French example from the forties, or the Canadian masterpiece, *Very Nice, Very Nice*.

The great value of the first edition is that it was the single, nearly comprehensive introduction to the subect (though it had some regrettable omissions, such as experimental and animation films). The new part might well have brought up to date at least all the major genres in the first, including the compilation film (which has been growing and maturing in the hands of writers/editors on documentary production teams such as the NFBC, BBC, NBC, CBS, and David Wolper Productions), the educational film (which has reached new heights of creativity in the past 15 years, notably in Japan, Canada, and England) and the newsreel-documentary reportage (the theatrical newsreel may have died with the closing of Universal Newsreel at the end of 1967, but television news coverage has opened entire, even instantaneous—via satellite—new international worlds). Nor has comedy been cut (though perhaps it is more rare); it has found new forms in satire and some fresh new comic modes. Wisely, though, the astounding title-page claim that the first edition contained "Basic Principles for TV" has been dropped. It did not.

Reviewers seldom comment upon the bibliographic excellence or design shortcomings of books. But this unique book is one of great importance to the enormous, growing number of people seriously concerned with film—as its 14 printings in English alone have proved. For this reason—and even more because it is a book in the field of communication arts and techniques—it is deplorable that it was not originally well designed and printed, and that the new edition is not a significant improvement over the first. The quality of the stills (all in black-and-white) has been improved over the first edition by use of a slightly better paper but the tiny pictures are still merely gray shadows of the original cinematographic picture quality. The script excerpts and stills (showing frames—often illustrating a sequence—from the same film) were not well laid out in the 1953 edition; a film's shot description will be interrupted by a page of pictures from another film, and the second film's description is in turn interrupted by another page of pictures from a third film example. Learning nothing from this, the new edition follows the bad example; picture sequences from four films are jammed together, page after page, with some text preceding and some spilling over behind them. In a book costing $13.50 and sure to sell steadily for years, Focal Press could easily have afforded a full redesign and resetting of the text, but chose not to do so; one presumes the motive can only have been simple greed.

In the first edition, Karel Reisz and his editorial committee did not restrict the process of film editing to cutting-room activity but defined it as the entire formative process of motion picture design and construction. In a reflection in his new introduction, Dickinson thanks heaven that today "film making is accepted as an integrated function from script to screen." This important classic of film literature has certainly helped to bring this about.—C. CAMERON MACAULEY

FILMS AND FEELINGS

By Raymond Durgnat. (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1967. $6.95)

Durgnat is one of the few critics around who instinctively operates according to Godard's

film (in the chapter on widescreen, mostly American features) and with discussing the work of four current giants, three French and one Italian. His excellent chapter on *cinéma vérité* does give some balance by taking up, to a limited extent, one other important genre—the documentary film of ideas. But though he pays tribute to some of the remarkable American activity in this style, his analytical examples again are French. The author simply does not seem too conversant with other flourishing kinds of film-making. In a curious conclusion he predicts that the cinema's next metamorphosis might be the Cinema of Immobility—filmographs which are animated from still pictures—citing only Marker's incredible 1963 *La Jetée*. He fails to recognize that filmographs have been made—some brilliantly—for some 30 years at least—*1848*, to cite an early French example from the forties, or the Canadian masterpiece, *Very Nice, Very Nice*.

The great value of the first edition is that it was the single, nearly comprehensive introduction to the subect (though it had some regrettable omissions, such as experimental and animation films). The new part might well have brought up to date at least all the major genres in the first, including the compilation film (which has been growing and maturing in the hands of writers/editors on documentary production teams such as the NFBC, BBC, NBC, CBS, and David Wolper Productions), the educational film (which has reached new heights of creativity in the past 15 years, notably in Japan, Canada, and England) and the newsreel-documentary reportage (the theatrical newsreel may have died with the closing of Universal Newsreel at the end of 1967, but television news coverage has opened entire, even instantaneous—via satellite—new international worlds). Nor has comedy been cut (though perhaps it is more rare); it has found new forms in satire and some fresh new comic modes. Wisely, though, the astounding title-page claim that the first edition contained "Basic Principles for TV" has been dropped. It did not.

Reviewers seldom comment upon the bibliographic excellence or design shortcomings of books. But this unique book is one of great importance to the enormous, growing number of people seriously concerned with film—as its 14 printings in English alone have proved. For this reason—and even more because it is a book in the field of communication arts and techniques—it is deplorable that it was not originally well designed and printed, and that the new edition is not a significant improvement over the first. The quality of the stills (all in black-and-white) has been improved over the first edition by use of a slightly better paper but the tiny pictures are still merely gray shadows of the original cinematographic picture quality. The script excerpts and stills (showing frames—often illustrating a sequence—from the same film) were not well laid out in the 1953 edition; a film's shot description will be interrupted by a page of pictures from another film, and the second film's description is in turn interrupted by another page of pictures from a third film example. Learning nothing from this, the new edition follows the bad example; picture sequences from four films are jammed together, page after page, with some text preceding and some spilling over behind them. In a book costing $13.50 and sure to sell steadily for years, Focal Press could easily have afforded a full redesign and resetting of the text, but chose not to do so; one presumes the motive can only have been simple greed.

In the first edition, Karel Reisz and his editorial committee did not restrict the process of film editing to cutting-room activity but defined it as the entire formative process of motion picture design and construction. In a reflection in his new introduction, Dickinson thanks heaven that today "film making is accepted as an integrated function from script to screen." This important classic of film literature has certainly helped to bring this about.—C. CAMERON MACAULEY

FILMS AND FEELINGS

By Raymond Durgnat. (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1967. $6.95)

Durgnat is one of the few critics around who instinctively operates according to Godard's

doctrine that a film is *not* what is on the screen, but what happens between the screen and the viewer. Freed, therefore, from the idea that criticism is an evaluation of a fixed and finished "object," Durgnat is able to explore the highly variable *process*. He does so with an associational aplomb that seems to me enviable and admirable, though his writings are the despair of more academic critics. Most important of all, Durgnat has no shame: he is perfectly willing to admit to his own feelings—about actresses, about story developments and their emotional ramifications and overtones, about style. Since he is not concerned with intellectual decorum, he can mix Aristotle and James Bond, psychoanalysis and sociology, without awkwardness or apology, whenever he feels it is relevant or intriguing to do so. He has more insights per column inch, so to speak, than supposedly more serious critics. Indeed it seems to me that Durgnat is among the three or four most interesting and acute critics now writing about films in English.

This is not to say that *Films and Feelings* is a large, systematic new approach to film, nor a brilliant work of sustained reasoning, nor a comprehensive survey of the modern cinema. It is a collection, somewhat revised, of articles mostly written hastily for journalistic survival—as were many of André Bazin's, we must remember. Durgnat's method here, though he has surpassed it in his monographs on Buñuel and Franju in the Movie Editions series, is accumulative, and not only from article to article but within each one. He writes by accretion. It is hard to tell, after finishing a chapter, exactly where you have been. But of course few readers remember a critic's intellectual structure: we learn some new facts, we are reminded of things we had forgotten, and we try out, as we read, the author's way of seeing films and dealing with his feelings and ideas about them; we are concerned to connect his ways of seeing with our own. His argumentation can only make us feel more respectable about it. Durgnat doesn't care about that, so he simply fires off material at us as fast as he can. Sometimes his aim wavers—but on the whole his insights are piercing and important. I found especially good in this collection his introduction to film style, "Sensation, Shape and Shade"; his even-handed discussion of the *auteur* controversy; his acute analysis of *Les Cousins* and *Psycho*, his sensibly tentative piece on *Orphée;* and his frank reactions to performer personalities throughout—a side of film curiously neglected by most "serious" critics.

There is also a practical side to Durgnat, connected with plot-construction psychology. He would make a good story-editor or producer—he has an unerring instinct for story balance and movement, and for the mythological side of plot and character which is so hard for modern film people, trained in one or another "realism," to notice and work with. He is good reading, especially, for anyone concerned with the writing of dramatic material for the screen. But he is good reading for anyone who likes films. The movies *excite* Durgnat—in which he luckily resembles the people who go to them. As he rightly if acidly says in beginning a chapter about stars, "It is a professional deformity which sees films in order to have an opinion about them."

—Ernest Callenbach

THE HORROR FILM

By Ivan Butler. (International Film Guide Series. London: A. Zwemmer, New York: A. S. Barnes, 1967.)

The Zwemmer-Barnes International Film Guide Series does its already spotty reputation no good at all by including this book on its list. Although Butler sets forth some commendable projects in his opening chapter (e.g., an attempt to regard horror films in the contexts of their periods' conventions, the impact they had on their audiences at their time of release), he unfortunately never gets around to carrying them out. As a matter of fact, a cop-out forms his closest approach to the problem: "It is difficult on re-viewing the film [*Dracula*] nowadays, to see it through the eyes of the early thirties."

Instead of working on his announced problems, he provides us with what amounts mainly to a series of weak nutshell summaries and unsupported value judgments of no instructional worth whatsoever. Inaccuracies abound, ranging from misleading statements to plain mistakes. Here's one nice example: "Chaney had already made several films before *The Monster* under one of the leading directors of early

doctrine that a film is *not* what is on the screen, but what happens between the screen and the viewer. Freed, therefore, from the idea that criticism is an evaluation of a fixed and finished "object," Durgnat is able to explore the highly variable *process*. He does so with an associational aplomb that seems to me enviable and admirable, though his writings are the despair of more academic critics. Most important of all, Durgnat has no shame: he is perfectly willing to admit to his own feelings—about actresses, about story developments and their emotional ramifications and overtones, about style. Since he is not concerned with intellectual decorum, he can mix Aristotle and James Bond, psychoanalysis and sociology, without awkwardness or apology, whenever he feels it is relevant or intriguing to do so. He has more insights per column inch, so to speak, than supposedly more serious critics. Indeed it seems to me that Durgnat is among the three or four most interesting and acute critics now writing about films in English.

This is not to say that *Films and Feelings* is a large, systematic new approach to film, nor a brilliant work of sustained reasoning, nor a comprehensive survey of the modern cinema. It is a collection, somewhat revised, of articles mostly written hastily for journalistic survival—as were many of André Bazin's, we must remember. Durgnat's method here, though he has surpassed it in his monographs on Buñuel and Franju in the Movie Editions series, is accumulative, and not only from article to article but within each one. He writes by accretion. It is hard to tell, after finishing a chapter, exactly where you have been. But of course few readers remember a critic's intellectual structure: we learn some new facts, we are reminded of things we had forgotten, and we try out, as we read, the author's way of seeing films and dealing with his feelings and ideas about them; we are concerned to connect his ways of seeing with our own. His argumentation can only make us feel more respectable about it. Durgnat doesn't care about that, so he simply fires off material at us as fast as he can. Sometimes his aim wavers—but on the whole his insights are piercing and important. I found especially good in this collection his introduction to film style, "Sensation, Shape and Shade"; his even-handed discussion of the *auteur* controversy; his acute analysis of *Les Cousins* and *Psycho*, his sensibly tentative piece on *Orphée;* and his frank reactions to performer personalities throughout—a side of film curiously neglected by most "serious" critics.

There is also a practical side to Durgnat, connected with plot-construction psychology. He would make a good story-editor or producer—he has an unerring instinct for story balance and movement, and for the mythological side of plot and character which is so hard for modern film people, trained in one or another "realism," to notice and work with. He is good reading, especially, for anyone concerned with the writing of dramatic material for the screen. But he is good reading for anyone who likes films. The movies *excite* Durgnat—in which he luckily resembles the people who go to them. As he rightly if acidly says in beginning a chapter about stars, "It is a professional deformity which sees films in order to have an opinion about them."

—Ernest Callenbach

THE HORROR FILM

By Ivan Butler. (International Film Guide Series. London: A. Zwemmer, New York: A. S. Barnes, 1967.)

The Zwemmer-Barnes International Film Guide Series does its already spotty reputation no good at all by including this book on its list. Although Butler sets forth some commendable projects in his opening chapter (e.g., an attempt to regard horror films in the contexts of their periods' conventions, the impact they had on their audiences at their time of release), he unfortunately never gets around to carrying them out. As a matter of fact, a cop-out forms his closest approach to the problem: "It is difficult on re-viewing the film [*Dracula*] nowadays, to see it through the eyes of the early thirties."

Instead of working on his announced problems, he provides us with what amounts mainly to a series of weak nutshell summaries and unsupported value judgments of no instructional worth whatsoever. Inaccuracies abound, ranging from misleading statements to plain mistakes. Here's one nice example: "Chaney had already made several films before *The Monster* under one of the leading directors of early

horror films, Tod Browning." None of these facts is in itself inaccurate, but the statement misleads by implying that Browning had *already* made horror films before the time (1925) of *The Monster.* He hadn't. *The Unholy Three* (also 1925) was his first.

Most of Butler's mistakes are less insidious and more obvious. Here's an example of another sort of frequent error, one that takes the form of technical ignorance. Speaking of Murnau's *Nosferatu,* Butler says "to give his woods and skies an uncanny, ghastly appearance he had them photographed in negative." The man obviously means that Murnau had them printed in negative, although they were just as obviously photographed in negative originally.

Butler suffers from a pervasive insensitivity to directorial styles and worldviews. On Whale's *Frankenstein:* "The ultimate tracking down of the monster took place among mountain passes and ridges patently studio-made, but so atmospherically lit and composed that this was not difficult to forgive." Forgive, indeed. That's rather like being told we may forgive Joyce for writing stream-of-consciousness passages because they are well-composed.

Not surprisingly, Butler demonstrates an insensitivity to the literary horror tradition matching the one he brings to film. He talks about the Gothic novel as if he'd only read books by the genteel lady gothics. If he'd look at some of the men, Lewis or Mathurin, for example, he'd find out that the Gothic novel was not all stately mystery, but instead that it contained plenty of the "blood-letting, stake-driving and general mayhem" that he denies it.

Butler's examination of *Les Diaboliques* illustrates the fabulous wealth of simple factual mistakes contained in his book. A couple of synopsis sentences demonstrate how the details have slipped away from him: "Luring him away from the school to a cheap lodging house [really Nicole's apartment] they induce him to drink some doctored wine [it's scotch, carefully selected for explicitly stated psychological reasons]—and drown him in a bath. The body is later wrapped in a nylon tablecloth, packed into a laundry basket, taken back to the school by an unsuspecting van driver [there is no such person; the two women drive it back themselves] and at dark [it is dark when they arrive] tipped into the grimy water of the school swimming-pool."

Now I'm not one of those who believes that total recall is an absolutely necessary prerequisite to the act of film criticism. But I do believe that a critic who really has something to say about film should be able to get basic details straight. The mistakes Butler so consistently makes show that he has quite lost any picture he ever had in his mind of the films he now claims to examine—nothing remains but vague memories. Vague memories undoubtedly have their place in a critic's treasure chest of past experiences, but they certainly have no place being represented as a factual account of a film. If we can't trust a critic's synopses, why in the world should we accept his value judgments, based on patently inaccurate impressions of something obviously lost to him long since? And in my opinion, Mr. Butler's evaluations are even weaker than his memory.

—R C DALE

The American Cinema. Directors and Directions, 1929-1968. By Andrew Sarris. (New York: Dutton, 1969. $7.95) An updating and expansion of Sarris's *Film Culture* survey, ranking and commenting upon American films and film-makers from a generally *auteurist* viewpoint, but mellower than the original, and surprisingly sensible on some additions—like Jerry Lewis. (There is no proper index, which is probably a demonic mnemonic device compelling readers to memorize which directors fall into the category called "Fallen Idols," which are "Esoterica," etc.) A new introduction clarifies and defends Sarris's conception of a properly historical film criticism, and reinterprets his use of the *auteur* label. His comments on Hollywood operations may still seem a bit credulous to those who are familiar with the actual conditions in which most films are planned and made, and with how hard it is to ascertain who is responsible for what in a film. But as Sarris himself argues, there is a use in grand overviews which neglect such mundane matters in hopes of giving coherent treatment to a vast mass of films. The risk is that other critics or readers may let themselves be imposed upon by Sarris's edifice, and neglect to build their own: I shudder to think of this book being used as a text, and forming a new generation certain that Ford and Ophuls belong in the Pantheon, while Stroheim is only on the Far Side of Paradise, and poor Lean, Reed, and Wilder are Less Than Meets the Eye . . . —E. C.

The First Twenty Years. By Kemp R. Niver. (Los Angeles: Locare Research Group, 727 N. Fairfax, L.A. 90046. $7.95) This is a copiously illustrated series of essays on one hundred of the most remarkable films restored by Niver from the Library of Congress paper print collection. Most of the films are represented by at least four frame-blow-up stills. Early

and largely unknown works by Edwin S. Porter, Méliès, and 16 films from the formative early years of D. W. Griffith are especially interesting; many of the Griffiths, although often apparently very well made, have vanished from film history, and their restoration now makes possible a thorough study of the actual development of Griffith's work.—E.C.

The Persistence of Vision. Edited by Joseph McBride. (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Film Society, 1312 W. Johnson, Madison 53706. $3.95) Another series of excellent and often iconoclastic articles and reviews, of both early and recent films; features "a *Casablanca* dossier," several good pieces on Welles by the editor, and sometimes mordant re-examination of classics by Arthur Lennig and others.

John Ford. By Peter Bogdanovich. (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press. Paper, $1.95; cloth, $4.95. Movie Editions series.) A portrait of Ford at work, drawn partly from the author's observations and partly from comments on the director by various collaborators; plus an extended interview ranging back over many of the films in Ford's astonishingly long career; plus a filmography (with plot summaries). An unusually full picture of a particularly elusive director.

Laurel & Hardy. By Charles Barr. (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press. Paper, $1.95; cloth, $4.95. Movie Editions series.) A closely observed and closely reasoned analysis; it should go far toward convincing those who still find the duo tedious that their pace is proper and their method subtle. The copious illustrations and detailed discussion make this, like the other Movie books, especially useful in showing students how movies work.

Franju. (By Raymond Durgnat. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968. $1.95 paper, $4.95 cloth. Movie Editions series) An acutely observant study of one of the most mysterious of modern directors, the maker of *Le Sang des Bêtes, Les Yeux sans Visage,* and *Judex.* Franju, who was co-founder of the Cinémathèque Français with Langlois, is an immensely sophisticated director, and his almost hallucinatory treatments of science and the industrial society with its pervasive "institutionalization" of life touch upon many raw nerves. A difficult, uncompromising director, Franju is given a sympathetic and skillful reading by Durgnat; his films deserve to be far more widely seen.—E. C.

Howard Hawks. By Robin Wood. (New York: Doubleday, 1968. $2.95. Cinema World series) A sympathetic but not idolatrous study of Hawks, making clear the limitations of his strengths, while giving intelligent analysis to the subtleties in the 'primitivism' of a director who "is perhaps too completely an artist for many critics to see that he is one at all: they need some symbols and 'striking' camera-angles and overt moral points flourished at them before they think they're seeing anything significant."

Short Notices

Barbarella. Interesting that, in the year that Stanley Kubrick and Franklin Schaffner finally elevated the science-fiction movie beyond the abyss of the kiddie show, Roger Vadim, in a single French-Italian coproduction aimed at the American market, has knocked it right back again. For all its Hugh Hefner-dreamworld nudity and blasé sensuality, *Barbarella* is pure sub-adolescent junk, bereft of redeeming social *or* artistic importance. I hate to think of the audience it's aimed at, and that is, reportedly, flocking to see it like lemmings. The sole lifeboat in this sea of boredom is David Hemmings' whimsical performance as a bumbling would-be revolutionary who is forever misplacing invisible keys and the like.
—Dan Bates

Les Biches, Claude Chabrol's New Wave set-piece, brings out the problems in Chabrol's earlier saying: "There's no such thing as a big theme and a little theme, because the smaller the theme is, the more one can give it a big treatment. The truth is, the truth is all that matters." But truth alone does not matter, or at least not to the degree that Chabrol thinks. Chabrol doesn't fail to give us the truth, but he fails to give us all that matters. From the opening shot, almost pointillist, which comes into focus as the still-soft colors of a Paris afternoon, the film remains soft and mushy. Frédérique, a rich and fashionable lesbian, encounters "Why," a young quasi-bohemian sidewalk artist. A liaison develops; they go to St. Tropez for Christmas. Why, confessed to being at least a heterosexual virgin, has an affair with a young architect, Paul. Frédérique, on a cu-

and largely unknown works by Edwin S. Porter, Méliès, and 16 films from the formative early years of D. W. Griffith are especially interesting; many of the Griffiths, although often apparently very well made, have vanished from film history, and their restoration now makes possible a thorough study of the actual development of Griffith's work.—E.C.

The Persistence of Vision. Edited by Joseph McBride. (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Film Society, 1312 W. Johnson, Madison 53706. $3.95) Another series of excellent and often iconoclastic articles and reviews, of both early and recent films; features "a *Casablanca* dossier," several good pieces on Welles by the editor, and sometimes mordant re-examination of classics by Arthur Lennig and others.

John Ford. By Peter Bogdanovich. (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press. Paper, $1.95; cloth, $4.95. Movie Editions series.) A portrait of Ford at work, drawn partly from the author's observations and partly from comments on the director by various collaborators; plus an extended interview ranging back over many of the films in Ford's astonishingly long career; plus a filmography (with plot summaries). An unusually full picture of a particularly elusive director.

Laurel & Hardy. By Charles Barr. (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press. Paper, $1.95; cloth, $4.95. Movie Editions series.) A closely observed and closely reasoned analysis; it should go far toward convincing those who still find the duo tedious that their pace is proper and their method subtle. The copious illustrations and detailed discussion make this, like the other Movie books, especially useful in showing students how movies work.

Franju. (By Raymond Durgnat. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968. $1.95 paper, $4.95 cloth. Movie Editions series) An acutely observant study of one of the most mysterious of modern directors, the maker of *Le Sang des Bêtes, Les Yeux sans Visage,* and *Judex.* Franju, who was co-founder of the Cinémathèque Français with Langlois, is an immensely sophisticated director, and his almost hallucinatory treatments of science and the industrial society with its pervasive "institutionalization" of life touch upon many raw nerves. A difficult, uncompromising director, Franju is given a sympathetic and skillful reading by Durgnat; his films deserve to be far more widely seen.—E. C.

Howard Hawks. By Robin Wood. (New York: Doubleday, 1968. $2.95. Cinema World series) A sympathetic but not idolatrous study of Hawks, making clear the limitations of his strengths, while giving intelligent analysis to the subtleties in the 'primitivism' of a director who "is perhaps too completely an artist for many critics to see that he is one at all: they need some symbols and 'striking' camera-angles and overt moral points flourished at them before they think they're seeing anything significant."

Short Notices

Barbarella. Interesting that, in the year that Stanley Kubrick and Franklin Schaffner finally elevated the science-fiction movie beyond the abyss of the kiddie show, Roger Vadim, in a single French-Italian coproduction aimed at the American market, has knocked it right back again. For all its Hugh Hefner-dreamworld nudity and blasé sensuality, *Barbarella* is pure sub-adolescent junk, bereft of redeeming social *or* artistic importance. I hate to think of the audience it's aimed at, and that is, reportedly, flocking to see it like lemmings. The sole lifeboat in this sea of boredom is David Hemmings' whimsical performance as a bumbling would-be revolutionary who is forever misplacing invisible keys and the like.
—Dan Bates

Les Biches, Claude Chabrol's New Wave set-piece, brings out the problems in Chabrol's earlier saying: "There's no such thing as a big theme and a little theme, because the smaller the theme is, the more one can give it a big treatment. The truth is, the truth is all that matters." But truth alone does not matter, or at least not to the degree that Chabrol thinks. Chabrol doesn't fail to give us the truth, but he fails to give us all that matters. From the opening shot, almost pointillist, which comes into focus as the still-soft colors of a Paris afternoon, the film remains soft and mushy. Frédérique, a rich and fashionable lesbian, encounters "Why," a young quasi-bohemian sidewalk artist. A liaison develops; they go to St. Tropez for Christmas. Why, confessed to being at least a heterosexual virgin, has an affair with a young architect, Paul. Frédérique, on a cu-

riosity visit to Paul, ends up in his bed. The tension between the three is now developed into a curiously dull statis as they co-habit Frédérique's villa: Frédérique and Paul as lovers, with Why feeding off them. Denied any clear sexual role and hence satisfaction, Why begins to compensate by dressing in Frédérique's dyke hunting outfits. Finally a transformation is accomplished: Why follows Paul and Frédérique to Paris where Why stabs Frédérique and then assumes her persona over the telephone with Paul. None of this is made pronounced and distinct through story, direction, or acting. Perhaps Chabrol would have us believe and feel that the complex sexual emotions of need and desire have the same relation to the visible story that an iceberg's submerged part has to its top. But if this is so (and who doubts it in an age of undergraduate Freud) then why bother seeing so restrained a film? Chabrol has given us only a small, partial truth, and not a very big treatment either.—BRUCE HENSTELL

Funny Girl is so thoroughly conventional that it would be hardly worthy of mention, were it not for Barbra Streisand's surprising and captivating, albeit theatrical, talent as a comedienne. One had heard so much of her, as singer and Superstar, over the years that one literally dreaded the experience of her film debut. But, like apparently everybody else in the whole world, I'm now a confirmed fan. Miss Streisand is the whole show and, thanks to her, it's a very entertaining one at that. Anyone expecting more (like a work of art, say) is a damn fool. As for William Wyler, the myth of this man's talent as a filmmaker is as badly in need of deflation as that of George Stevens.—DAN BATES

The Brotherhood. Martin Ritt's film is a largely conventional example of the new Mafia genre with a few minutes of extraordinary vehemence that make it worth seeing. The movie turns on a contrast between the old Sicilian emigrants of *L'Onore Mafioso*, with their furious family loyalties and operatic curses and vendettas, and the new Wall Street smoothies who are all but indistinguishable from ordinary businessmen. Unfortunately, the central character (Kirk Douglas), caught between these groups, is dramatically ineffective and not nearly as interesting as screenwriter Lewis John Carlino seems to think he is. Douglas is allied with the new Mafia, but is spiritually part of the old. He wants to be independent of corporate methods, but all this appears to mean is the freedom to perform his own murders and continue crooked operations on a small scale, and what are we to make of that? Is Carlino seriously suggesting a parallel with the disappearing small businessman? Such a suggestion would require a sense of the darker ironies of American life, and nothing could be straighter than *The Brotherhood*. The Douglas character is larded with so much family solicitude and spiritual wholeness ("Eat first, then love, then death," he tells his brother who comes to execute him), that we reject the whole thing as a con job. It's as if a repertory of gestures showing heroic intransigence had been borrowed from old Gregory Peck movies and put to work where they don't make sense in order to make the hero more palatable. We never saw much of what gangsters actually did in the famous thirties pictures, but at least we got an idea of their working style; here, Kirk Douglas spends so much time loving his family and friends that we can't even *imagine* him as a crooked labor leader. Nevertheless, the film has its minor achievements of craftsmanship and sincerity in its refusal to pull punches about ethnic origins and characteristics and in the acting of the minor roles, particularly ancient Eduardo Cianelli as a murderously vengeful *capo* with bulging hawk eyes and Luther Adler as a soft, resigned old traitor, made softer and yet more resigned by a slight Yiddish inflection. As usual, Irene Pappas is wasted, and Alex Cord, as Douglas's kid brother, is about as interesting as a mentholated cigaret.—DAVID DENBY

Capricious Summer. After the success of the overrated *Closely Watched Trains*, Jiri Menzel's *Capricious Summer* has been nominated for oblivion by most critics, but we should grant it a permanent stay of execution. It is a leisurely, small-scale mood piece set in a tiny placid Czech town. At a seedy bathing establishment three middle-aged men (a dryly magisterial retired major, an awkward, sour-looking Carthusian priest, and the paunchcy proprietor, garbed in a baggy turn-of-the-century swimsuit) idle away an Indian summer afternoon. A ramshackle, one-wagon circus rolls into town, and the three puffing lotharios try to make it with the luscious mistress-assistant of the show's bespectacled owner and star (Menzel himself). The amiable girl is more than willing, while the tightrope walker indulges in a mild affair with the proprietor's virago of a wife. The priest has his ear ripped open in an embarassing brawl; the major's dignity sustains a few scratches; the proprietor and his wife slump back together again; and the circus meanders away. Although many have compared this movie to the work of Renoir and then faulted it for being unworthy of the comparison, there is little resemblance between the two. Menzel's film, shot in fragrant, light-permeated

riosity visit to Paul, ends up in his bed. The tension between the three is now developed into a curiously dull statis as they co-habit Frédérique's villa: Frédérique and Paul as lovers, with Why feeding off them. Denied any clear sexual role and hence satisfaction, Why begins to compensate by dressing in Frédérique's dyke hunting outfits. Finally a transformation is accomplished: Why follows Paul and Frédérique to Paris where Why stabs Frédérique and then assumes her persona over the telephone with Paul. None of this is made pronounced and distinct through story, direction, or acting. Perhaps Chabrol would have us believe and feel that the complex sexual emotions of need and desire have the same relation to the visible story that an iceberg's submerged part has to its top. But if this is so (and who doubts it in an age of undergraduate Freud) then why bother seeing so restrained a film? Chabrol has given us only a small, partial truth, and not a very big treatment either.—BRUCE HENSTELL

Funny Girl is so thoroughly conventional that it would be hardly worthy of mention, were it not for Barbra Streisand's surprising and captivating, albeit theatrical, talent as a comedienne. One had heard so much of her, as singer and Superstar, over the years that one literally dreaded the experience of her film debut. But, like apparently everybody else in the whole world, I'm now a confirmed fan. Miss Streisand is the whole show and, thanks to her, it's a very entertaining one at that. Anyone expecting more (like a work of art, say) is a damn fool. As for William Wyler, the myth of this man's talent as a filmmaker is as badly in need of deflation as that of George Stevens.—DAN BATES

The Brotherhood. Martin Ritt's film is a largely conventional example of the new Mafia genre with a few minutes of extraordinary vehemence that make it worth seeing. The movie turns on a contrast between the old Sicilian emigrants of *L'Onore Mafioso*, with their furious family loyalties and operatic curses and vendettas, and the new Wall Street smoothies who are all but indistinguishable from ordinary businessmen. Unfortunately, the central character (Kirk Douglas), caught between these groups, is dramatically ineffective and not nearly as interesting as screenwriter Lewis John Carlino seems to think he is. Douglas is allied with the new Mafia, but is spiritually part of the old. He wants to be independent of corporate methods, but all this appears to mean is the freedom to perform his own murders and continue crooked operations on a small scale, and what are we to make of that? Is Carlino seriously suggesting a parallel with the disappearing small businessman? Such a suggestion would require a sense of the darker ironies of American life, and nothing could be straighter than *The Brotherhood*. The Douglas character is larded with so much family solicitude and spiritual wholeness ("Eat first, then love, then death," he tells his brother who comes to execute him), that we reject the whole thing as a con job. It's as if a repertory of gestures showing heroic intransigence had been borrowed from old Gregory Peck movies and put to work where they don't make sense in order to make the hero more palatable. We never saw much of what gangsters actually did in the famous thirties pictures, but at least we got an idea of their working style; here, Kirk Douglas spends so much time loving his family and friends that we can't even *imagine* him as a crooked labor leader. Nevertheless, the film has its minor achievements of craftsmanship and sincerity in its refusal to pull punches about ethnic origins and characteristics and in the acting of the minor roles, particularly ancient Eduardo Cianelli as a murderously vengeful *capo* with bulging hawk eyes and Luther Adler as a soft, resigned old traitor, made softer and yet more resigned by a slight Yiddish inflection. As usual, Irene Pappas is wasted, and Alex Cord, as Douglas's kid brother, is about as interesting as a mentholated cigaret.—DAVID DENBY

Capricious Summer. After the success of the overrated *Closely Watched Trains*, Jiri Menzel's *Capricious Summer* has been nominated for oblivion by most critics, but we should grant it a permanent stay of execution. It is a leisurely, small-scale mood piece set in a tiny placid Czech town. At a seedy bathing establishment three middle-aged men (a dryly magisterial retired major, an awkward, sour-looking Carthusian priest, and the paunchcy proprietor, garbed in a baggy turn-of-the-century swimsuit) idle away an Indian summer afternoon. A ramshackle, one-wagon circus rolls into town, and the three puffing lotharios try to make it with the luscious mistress-assistant of the show's bespectacled owner and star (Menzel himself). The amiable girl is more than willing, while the tightrope walker indulges in a mild affair with the proprietor's virago of a wife. The priest has his ear ripped open in an embarassing brawl; the major's dignity sustains a few scratches; the proprietor and his wife slump back together again; and the circus meanders away. Although many have compared this movie to the work of Renoir and then faulted it for being unworthy of the comparison, there is little resemblance between the two. Menzel's film, shot in fragrant, light-permeated

riosity visit to Paul, ends up in his bed. The tension between the three is now developed into a curiously dull statis as they co-habit Frédérique's villa: Frédérique and Paul as lovers, with Why feeding off them. Denied any clear sexual role and hence satisfaction, Why begins to compensate by dressing in Frédérique's dyke hunting outfits. Finally a transformation is accomplished: Why follows Paul and Frédérique to Paris where Why stabs Frédérique and then assumes her persona over the telephone with Paul. None of this is made pronounced and distinct through story, direction, or acting. Perhaps Chabrol would have us believe and feel that the complex sexual emotions of need and desire have the same relation to the visible story that an iceberg's submerged part has to its top. But if this is so (and who doubts it in an age of undergraduate Freud) then why bother seeing so restrained a film? Chabrol has given us only a small, partial truth, and not a very big treatment either.—BRUCE HENSTELL

Funny Girl is so thoroughly conventional that it would be hardly worthy of mention, were it not for Barbra Streisand's surprising and captivating, albeit theatrical, talent as a comedienne. One had heard so much of her, as singer and Superstar, over the years that one literally dreaded the experience of her film debut. But, like apparently everybody else in the whole world, I'm now a confirmed fan. Miss Streisand is the whole show and, thanks to her, it's a very entertaining one at that. Anyone expecting more (like a work of art, say) is a damn fool. As for William Wyler, the myth of this man's talent as a filmmaker is as badly in need of deflation as that of George Stevens.—DAN BATES

The Brotherhood. Martin Ritt's film is a largely conventional example of the new Mafia genre with a few minutes of extraordinary vehemence that make it worth seeing. The movie turns on a contrast between the old Sicilian emigrants of *L'Onore Mafioso*, with their furious family loyalties and operatic curses and vendettas, and the new Wall Street smoothies who are all but indistinguishable from ordinary businessmen. Unfortunately, the central character (Kirk Douglas), caught between these groups, is dramatically ineffective and not nearly as interesting as screenwriter Lewis John Carlino seems to think he is. Douglas is allied with the new Mafia, but is spiritually part of the old. He wants to be independent of corporate methods, but all this appears to mean is the freedom to perform his own murders and continue crooked operations on a small scale, and what are we to make of that? Is Carlino seriously suggesting a parallel with the disappearing small businessman? Such a suggestion would require a sense of the darker ironies of American life, and nothing could be straighter than *The Brotherhood*. The Douglas character is larded with so much family solicitude and spiritual wholeness ("Eat first, then love, then death," he tells his brother who comes to execute him), that we reject the whole thing as a con job. It's as if a repertory of gestures showing heroic intransigence had been borrowed from old Gregory Peck movies and put to work where they don't make sense in order to make the hero more palatable. We never saw much of what gangsters actually did in the famous thirties pictures, but at least we got an idea of their working style; here, Kirk Douglas spends so much time loving his family and friends that we can't even *imagine* him as a crooked labor leader. Nevertheless, the film has its minor achievements of craftsmanship and sincerity in its refusal to pull punches about ethnic origins and characteristics and in the acting of the minor roles, particularly ancient Eduardo Cianelli as a murderously vengeful *capo* with bulging hawk eyes and Luther Adler as a soft, resigned old traitor, made softer and yet more resigned by a slight Yiddish inflection. As usual, Irene Pappas is wasted, and Alex Cord, as Douglas's kid brother, is about as interesting as a mentholated cigaret.—DAVID DENBY

Capricious Summer. After the success of the overrated *Closely Watched Trains*, Jiri Menzel's *Capricious Summer* has been nominated for oblivion by most critics, but we should grant it a permanent stay of execution. It is a leisurely, small-scale mood piece set in a tiny placid Czech town. At a seedy bathing establishment three middle-aged men (a dryly magisterial retired major, an awkward, sour-looking Carthusian priest, and the paunchcy proprietor, garbed in a baggy turn-of-the-century swimsuit) idle away an Indian summer afternoon. A ramshackle, one-wagon circus rolls into town, and the three puffing lotharios try to make it with the luscious mistress-assistant of the show's bespectacled owner and star (Menzel himself). The amiable girl is more than willing, while the tightrope walker indulges in a mild affair with the proprietor's virago of a wife. The priest has his ear ripped open in an embarassing brawl; the major's dignity sustains a few scratches; the proprietor and his wife slump back together again; and the circus meanders away. Although many have compared this movie to the work of Renoir and then faulted it for being unworthy of the comparison, there is little resemblance between the two. Menzel's film, shot in fragrant, light-permeated

riosity visit to Paul, ends up in his bed. The tension between the three is now developed into a curiously dull statis as they co-habit Frédérique's villa: Frédérique and Paul as lovers, with Why feeding off them. Denied any clear sexual role and hence satisfaction, Why begins to compensate by dressing in Frédérique's dyke hunting outfits. Finally a transformation is accomplished: Why follows Paul and Frédérique to Paris where Why stabs Frédérique and then assumes her persona over the telephone with Paul. None of this is made pronounced and distinct through story, direction, or acting. Perhaps Chabrol would have us believe and feel that the complex sexual emotions of need and desire have the same relation to the visible story that an iceberg's submerged part has to its top. But if this is so (and who doubts it in an age of undergraduate Freud) then why bother seeing so restrained a film? Chabrol has given us only a small, partial truth, and not a very big treatment either.—BRUCE HENSTELL

Funny Girl is so thoroughly conventional that it would be hardly worthy of mention, were it not for Barbra Streisand's surprising and captivating, albeit theatrical, talent as a comedienne. One had heard so much of her, as singer and Superstar, over the years that one literally dreaded the experience of her film debut. But, like apparently everybody else in the whole world, I'm now a confirmed fan. Miss Streisand is the whole show and, thanks to her, it's a very entertaining one at that. Anyone expecting more (like a work of art, say) is a damn fool. As for William Wyler, the myth of this man's talent as a filmmaker is as badly in need of deflation as that of George Stevens.—DAN BATES

The Brotherhood. Martin Ritt's film is a largely conventional example of the new Mafia genre with a few minutes of extraordinary vehemence that make it worth seeing. The movie turns on a contrast between the old Sicilian emigrants of *L'Onore Mafioso*, with their furious family loyalties and operatic curses and vendettas, and the new Wall Street smoothies who are all but indistinguishable from ordinary businessmen. Unfortunately, the central character (Kirk Douglas), caught between these groups, is dramatically ineffective and not nearly as interesting as screenwriter Lewis John Carlino seems to think he is. Douglas is allied with the new Mafia, but is spiritually part of the old. He wants to be independent of corporate methods, but all this appears to mean is the freedom to perform his own murders and continue crooked operations on a small scale, and what are we to make of that? Is Carlino seriously suggesting a parallel with the disappearing small businessman? Such a suggestion would require a sense of the darker ironies of American life, and nothing could be straighter than *The Brotherhood*. The Douglas character is larded with so much family solicitude and spiritual wholeness ("Eat first, then love, then death," he tells his brother who comes to execute him), that we reject the whole thing as a con job. It's as if a repertory of gestures showing heroic intransigence had been borrowed from old Gregory Peck movies and put to work where they don't make sense in order to make the hero more palatable. We never saw much of what gangsters actually did in the famous thirties pictures, but at least we got an idea of their working style; here, Kirk Douglas spends so much time loving his family and friends that we can't even *imagine* him as a crooked labor leader. Nevertheless, the film has its minor achievements of craftsmanship and sincerity in its refusal to pull punches about ethnic origins and characteristics and in the acting of the minor roles, particularly ancient Eduardo Cianelli as a murderously vengeful *capo* with bulging hawk eyes and Luther Adler as a soft, resigned old traitor, made softer and yet more resigned by a slight Yiddish inflection. As usual, Irene Pappas is wasted, and Alex Cord, as Douglas's kid brother, is about as interesting as a mentholated cigaret.—DAVID DENBY

Capricious Summer. After the success of the overrated *Closely Watched Trains*, Jiri Menzel's *Capricious Summer* has been nominated for oblivion by most critics, but we should grant it a permanent stay of execution. It is a leisurely, small-scale mood piece set in a tiny placid Czech town. At a seedy bathing establishment three middle-aged men (a dryly magisterial retired major, an awkward, sour-looking Carthusian priest, and the paunchcy proprietor, garbed in a baggy turn-of-the-century swimsuit) idle away an Indian summer afternoon. A ramshackle, one-wagon circus rolls into town, and the three puffing lotharios try to make it with the luscious mistress-assistant of the show's bespectacled owner and star (Menzel himself). The amiable girl is more than willing, while the tightrope walker indulges in a mild affair with the proprietor's virago of a wife. The priest has his ear ripped open in an embarassing brawl; the major's dignity sustains a few scratches; the proprietor and his wife slump back together again; and the circus meanders away. Although many have compared this movie to the work of Renoir and then faulted it for being unworthy of the comparison, there is little resemblance between the two. Menzel's film, shot in fragrant, light-permeated

color, has its own odd but striking tone. As the film drifts onward, Menzel gradually imparts to it a peculiar blending of sleepy geniality and styptic alertness. Then the priest has his nearly-severed ear sewn back onto his head by his companions-in-arms, and the film's tone changes remarkably. Close-ups of the bleeding and gouged ear being pierced and stitched with a needle and thread fill the screen, and this moment of physical pain, bursting unexpectedly into the movie, is a crystallization of the emotional distress that has lurked beneath the bumbling antics and the dour chatter of the earlier episodes. We receive a fleeting intimation of the men's suffering, which is no less real for also being absurd. It's a poignant moment, quite similar to the attempted suicide in *Closely Watched Trains* yet (unlike it) totally convincing. This movie lacks the daring juxtapositions of farce and drama in *Trains;* and, even though its major concern seems to be atmosphere, some of its relationships, especially the liaison between the girl and her master, should have been explored more. And there are clumsy moments, particularly the one in which the star is shaken off his pole during his act. Nevertheless, *Capricious Summer* is a minor but distinctive movie and a good antidote to the over-promoted and over-blown merchandise that clutters our screens.

—MICHAEL DEMPSEY

Charly, about a pitiful moron who is surgically transformed into a genius, is a crude blend of soap opera and science fiction. At first, Charly (Cliff Robertson), who can barely scribble his name, is a peon at a bakery where a trio of oafs use him as the victim of their nasty pranks. Due to the encouragement of his nightschool teacher (Claire Bloom), he eventually submits to an experimental brain operation. He gets the last laugh on his hecklers when he shows off his brand new brain power and makes them feel like dummies. The operation apparently perks up his gonads too, because he plunges right into an affair with the teacher. It should be noted that plausibility is not one of the strong points of this film. What should be a crucial phase of Charly's life (if you can believe it, he becomes a Hell's Angel and a hippie) is covered in less than a minute. Director Ralph Nelson and writer Stirling Silliphant are even shameless enough to include a scene in which the teacher slips and calls Charly "a stupid moron." Robertson is quite effective as Charly, though his efforts are not sufficient to compensate for the blunders of Nelson and Silliphant.—DENNIS HUNT

The Extraordinary Seaman is the film John Frankenheimer directed before *The Fixer,* but due to studio jitters about the satiric use of World War II newsreel footage, its release was delayed for more than a year. Yet this quirk of distribution works in the film's favor—what might have seemed an insignificant comic trifle at any other time is quite refreshing to see right after the overblown, oversolemn *Fixer;* it is gratifying to know that Frankenheimer has not lost his sense of humor. You may wish, though, that he had tried to exercise it on material a *little* more ambitious than this genial spoof. The structure of the film is extremely simple: a scraggly band of American sailors are marooned on a Pacific island near the end of the War, and again and again their ludicrous misadventures are intercut with rousing newsreel propaganda of the period and even some glamorous Errol Flynn movies. Much of this is very funny, because Frankenheimer has found some priceless footage—a nationwide roundup of canned goods for the overseas soldiers, Bess Truman trying unsuccessfully to christen a battleship— but since the film is essentially the same joke repeated, it gets tiring even before the short (75 minute) feature time is up. A couple of subplots attempt to compensate—one with David Niven as the ghost of a British seaman determined to perform one posthumous heroic action to atone for his cowardice while on earth (this seems a weird throwback to forties movies like *The Canterville Ghost* and *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir*), the other with Faye Dunaway as a tough plantation boss who shares her affections with the ghost and one of the sailors. The charming thing about the film is its unpretentiousness; it looks inexpensive (though technically fine), casual, relaxed, fun to have made. Niven gives his best performance in years—which is not saying a great deal—and Alan Alda is very charming, as he was in *Paper Lion.* Faye Dunaway looks nice, though since this film was made before the release of *Bonnie and Clyde,* her part is skimpy. A pleasant minor entertainment, but too obvious in its satire, too narrow in its scope to last.—STEPHEN FARBER

Image, Flesh and Voice. That's the hierarchy of things in Ed Emshwiller's graceful, colorful world; so it's a shame that his new film, bearing that title and made during the past three years with the help of a grant from the American Film Institute, emphasizes the word over the flesh, and the flesh over the Emshwillerian image. The words (carefully assembled snatches of a therapy group's ramblings) aren't forceful or quirky enough to hold our interest—ex-

color, has its own odd but striking tone. As the film drifts onward, Menzel gradually imparts to it a peculiar blending of sleepy geniality and styptic alertness. Then the priest has his nearly-severed ear sewn back onto his head by his companions-in-arms, and the film's tone changes remarkably. Close-ups of the bleeding and gouged ear being pierced and stitched with a needle and thread fill the screen, and this moment of physical pain, bursting unexpectedly into the movie, is a crystallization of the emotional distress that has lurked beneath the bumbling antics and the dour chatter of the earlier episodes. We receive a fleeting intimation of the men's suffering, which is no less real for also being absurd. It's a poignant moment, quite similar to the attempted suicide in *Closely Watched Trains* yet (unlike it) totally convincing. This movie lacks the daring juxtapositions of farce and drama in *Trains;* and, even though its major concern seems to be atmosphere, some of its relationships, especially the liaison between the girl and her master, should have been explored more. And there are clumsy moments, particularly the one in which the star is shaken off his pole during his act. Nevertheless, *Capricious Summer* is a minor but distinctive movie and a good antidote to the over-promoted and over-blown merchandise that clutters our screens.

—MICHAEL DEMPSEY

Charly, about a pitiful moron who is surgically transformed into a genius, is a crude blend of soap opera and science fiction. At first, Charly (Cliff Robertson), who can barely scribble his name, is a peon at a bakery where a trio of oafs use him as the victim of their nasty pranks. Due to the encouragement of his nightschool teacher (Claire Bloom), he eventually submits to an experimental brain operation. He gets the last laugh on his hecklers when he shows off his brand new brain power and makes them feel like dummies. The operation apparently perks up his gonads too, because he plunges right into an affair with the teacher. It should be noted that plausibility is not one of the strong points of this film. What should be a crucial phase of Charly's life (if you can believe it, he becomes a Hell's Angel and a hippie) is covered in less than a minute. Director Ralph Nelson and writer Stirling Silliphant are even shameless enough to include a scene in which the teacher slips and calls Charly "a stupid moron." Robertson is quite effective as Charly, though his efforts are not sufficient to compensate for the blunders of Nelson and Silliphant.—DENNIS HUNT

The Extraordinary Seaman is the film John Frankenheimer directed before *The Fixer,* but due to studio jitters about the satiric use of World War II newsreel footage, its release was delayed for more than a year. Yet this quirk of distribution works in the film's favor—what might have seemed an insignificant comic trifle at any other time is quite refreshing to see right after the overblown, oversolemn *Fixer;* it is gratifying to know that Frankenheimer has not lost his sense of humor. You may wish, though, that he had tried to exercise it on material a *little* more ambitious than this genial spoof. The structure of the film is extremely simple: a scraggly band of American sailors are marooned on a Pacific island near the end of the War, and again and again their ludicrous misadventures are intercut with rousing newsreel propaganda of the period and even some glamorous Errol Flynn movies. Much of this is very funny, because Frankenheimer has found some priceless footage—a nationwide roundup of canned goods for the overseas soldiers, Bess Truman trying unsuccessfully to christen a battleship— but since the film is essentially the same joke repeated, it gets tiring even before the short (75 minute) feature time is up. A couple of subplots attempt to compensate—one with David Niven as the ghost of a British seaman determined to perform one posthumous heroic action to atone for his cowardice while on earth (this seems a weird throwback to forties movies like *The Canterville Ghost* and *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir*), the other with Faye Dunaway as a tough plantation boss who shares her affections with the ghost and one of the sailors. The charming thing about the film is its unpretentiousness; it looks inexpensive (though technically fine), casual, relaxed, fun to have made. Niven gives his best performance in years—which is not saying a great deal—and Alan Alda is very charming, as he was in *Paper Lion.* Faye Dunaway looks nice, though since this film was made before the release of *Bonnie and Clyde,* her part is skimpy. A pleasant minor entertainment, but too obvious in its satire, too narrow in its scope to last.—STEPHEN FARBER

Image, Flesh and Voice. That's the hierarchy of things in Ed Emshwiller's graceful, colorful world; so it's a shame that his new film, bearing that title and made during the past three years with the help of a grant from the American Film Institute, emphasizes the word over the flesh, and the flesh over the Emshwillerian image. The words (carefully assembled snatches of a therapy group's ramblings) aren't forceful or quirky enough to hold our interest—ex-

color, has its own odd but striking tone. As the film drifts onward, Menzel gradually imparts to it a peculiar blending of sleepy geniality and styptic alertness. Then the priest has his nearly-severed ear sewn back onto his head by his companions-in-arms, and the film's tone changes remarkably. Close-ups of the bleeding and gouged ear being pierced and stitched with a needle and thread fill the screen, and this moment of physical pain, bursting unexpectedly into the movie, is a crystallization of the emotional distress that has lurked beneath the bumbling antics and the dour chatter of the earlier episodes. We receive a fleeting intimation of the men's suffering, which is no less real for also being absurd. It's a poignant moment, quite similar to the attempted suicide in *Closely Watched Trains* yet (unlike it) totally convincing. This movie lacks the daring juxtapositions of farce and drama in *Trains;* and, even though its major concern seems to be atmosphere, some of its relationships, especially the liaison between the girl and her master, should have been explored more. And there are clumsy moments, particularly the one in which the star is shaken off his pole during his act. Nevertheless, *Capricious Summer* is a minor but distinctive movie and a good antidote to the over-promoted and over-blown merchandise that clutters our screens.

—MICHAEL DEMPSEY

Charly, about a pitiful moron who is surgically transformed into a genius, is a crude blend of soap opera and science fiction. At first, Charly (Cliff Robertson), who can barely scribble his name, is a peon at a bakery where a trio of oafs use him as the victim of their nasty pranks. Due to the encouragement of his nightschool teacher (Claire Bloom), he eventually submits to an experimental brain operation. He gets the last laugh on his hecklers when he shows off his brand new brain power and makes them feel like dummies. The operation apparently perks up his gonads too, because he plunges right into an affair with the teacher. It should be noted that plausibility is not one of the strong points of this film. What should be a crucial phase of Charly's life (if you can believe it, he becomes a Hell's Angel and a hippie) is covered in less than a minute. Director Ralph Nelson and writer Stirling Silliphant are even shameless enough to include a scene in which the teacher slips and calls Charly "a stupid moron." Robertson is quite effective as Charly, though his efforts are not sufficient to compensate for the blunders of Nelson and Silliphant.—DENNIS HUNT

The Extraordinary Seaman is the film John Frankenheimer directed before *The Fixer,* but due to studio jitters about the satiric use of World War II newsreel footage, its release was delayed for more than a year. Yet this quirk of distribution works in the film's favor—what might have seemed an insignificant comic trifle at any other time is quite refreshing to see right after the overblown, oversolemn *Fixer;* it is gratifying to know that Frankenheimer has not lost his sense of humor. You may wish, though, that he had tried to exercise it on material a *little* more ambitious than this genial spoof. The structure of the film is extremely simple: a scraggly band of American sailors are marooned on a Pacific island near the end of the War, and again and again their ludicrous misadventures are intercut with rousing newsreel propaganda of the period and even some glamorous Errol Flynn movies. Much of this is very funny, because Frankenheimer has found some priceless footage—a nationwide roundup of canned goods for the overseas soldiers, Bess Truman trying unsuccessfully to christen a battleship— but since the film is essentially the same joke repeated, it gets tiring even before the short (75 minute) feature time is up. A couple of subplots attempt to compensate—one with David Niven as the ghost of a British seaman determined to perform one posthumous heroic action to atone for his cowardice while on earth (this seems a weird throwback to forties movies like *The Canterville Ghost* and *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir*), the other with Faye Dunaway as a tough plantation boss who shares her affections with the ghost and one of the sailors. The charming thing about the film is its unpretentiousness; it looks inexpensive (though technically fine), casual, relaxed, fun to have made. Niven gives his best performance in years—which is not saying a great deal—and Alan Alda is very charming, as he was in *Paper Lion.* Faye Dunaway looks nice, though since this film was made before the release of *Bonnie and Clyde,* her part is skimpy. A pleasant minor entertainment, but too obvious in its satire, too narrow in its scope to last.—STEPHEN FARBER

Image, Flesh and Voice. That's the hierarchy of things in Ed Emshwiller's graceful, colorful world; so it's a shame that his new film, bearing that title and made during the past three years with the help of a grant from the American Film Institute, emphasizes the word over the flesh, and the flesh over the Emshwillerian image. The words (carefully assembled snatches of a therapy group's ramblings) aren't forceful or quirky enough to hold our interest—ex-

color, has its own odd but striking tone. As the film drifts onward, Menzel gradually imparts to it a peculiar blending of sleepy geniality and styptic alertness. Then the priest has his nearly-severed ear sewn back onto his head by his companions-in-arms, and the film's tone changes remarkably. Close-ups of the bleeding and gouged ear being pierced and stitched with a needle and thread fill the screen, and this moment of physical pain, bursting unexpectedly into the movie, is a crystallization of the emotional distress that has lurked beneath the bumbling antics and the dour chatter of the earlier episodes. We receive a fleeting intimation of the men's suffering, which is no less real for also being absurd. It's a poignant moment, quite similar to the attempted suicide in *Closely Watched Trains* yet (unlike it) totally convincing. This movie lacks the daring juxtapositions of farce and drama in *Trains;* and, even though its major concern seems to be atmosphere, some of its relationships, especially the liaison between the girl and her master, should have been explored more. And there are clumsy moments, particularly the one in which the star is shaken off his pole during his act. Nevertheless, *Capricious Summer* is a minor but distinctive movie and a good antidote to the over-promoted and over-blown merchandise that clutters our screens.

—MICHAEL DEMPSEY

Charly, about a pitiful moron who is surgically transformed into a genius, is a crude blend of soap opera and science fiction. At first, Charly (Cliff Robertson), who can barely scribble his name, is a peon at a bakery where a trio of oafs use him as the victim of their nasty pranks. Due to the encouragement of his nightschool teacher (Claire Bloom), he eventually submits to an experimental brain operation. He gets the last laugh on his hecklers when he shows off his brand new brain power and makes them feel like dummies. The operation apparently perks up his gonads too, because he plunges right into an affair with the teacher. It should be noted that plausibility is not one of the strong points of this film. What should be a crucial phase of Charly's life (if you can believe it, he becomes a Hell's Angel and a hippie) is covered in less than a minute. Director Ralph Nelson and writer Stirling Silliphant are even shameless enough to include a scene in which the teacher slips and calls Charly "a stupid moron." Robertson is quite effective as Charly, though his efforts are not sufficient to compensate for the blunders of Nelson and Silliphant.—DENNIS HUNT

The Extraordinary Seaman is the film John Frankenheimer directed before *The Fixer,* but due to studio jitters about the satiric use of World War II newsreel footage, its release was delayed for more than a year. Yet this quirk of distribution works in the film's favor—what might have seemed an insignificant comic trifle at any other time is quite refreshing to see right after the overblown, oversolemn *Fixer;* it is gratifying to know that Frankenheimer has not lost his sense of humor. You may wish, though, that he had tried to exercise it on material a *little* more ambitious than this genial spoof. The structure of the film is extremely simple: a scraggly band of American sailors are marooned on a Pacific island near the end of the War, and again and again their ludicrous misadventures are intercut with rousing newsreel propaganda of the period and even some glamorous Errol Flynn movies. Much of this is very funny, because Frankenheimer has found some priceless footage—a nationwide roundup of canned goods for the overseas soldiers, Bess Truman trying unsuccessfully to christen a battleship— but since the film is essentially the same joke repeated, it gets tiring even before the short (75 minute) feature time is up. A couple of subplots attempt to compensate—one with David Niven as the ghost of a British seaman determined to perform one posthumous heroic action to atone for his cowardice while on earth (this seems a weird throwback to forties movies like *The Canterville Ghost* and *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir*), the other with Faye Dunaway as a tough plantation boss who shares her affections with the ghost and one of the sailors. The charming thing about the film is its unpretentiousness; it looks inexpensive (though technically fine), casual, relaxed, fun to have made. Niven gives his best performance in years—which is not saying a great deal—and Alan Alda is very charming, as he was in *Paper Lion.* Faye Dunaway looks nice, though since this film was made before the release of *Bonnie and Clyde,* her part is skimpy. A pleasant minor entertainment, but too obvious in its satire, too narrow in its scope to last.—STEPHEN FARBER

Image, Flesh and Voice. That's the hierarchy of things in Ed Emshwiller's graceful, colorful world; so it's a shame that his new film, bearing that title and made during the past three years with the help of a grant from the American Film Institute, emphasizes the word over the flesh, and the flesh over the Emshwillerian image. The words (carefully assembled snatches of a therapy group's ramblings) aren't forceful or quirky enough to hold our interest—ex-

cept to search for some thematic progression, which I couldn't find—so we move our concentration to the parade of Nordic, big-boned, buxom nudes whom Emshwiller manages to discover on, or lure to, his Long Island home ground. The rhythm and textures of these sequences are familiar enough to viewers of *Dance Chromatic, Lifelines, Totem,* and *Relativity,* but the lack of color here adds a strange touch of asceticism to Emshwiller's patented languorous sensuality. (And the sensuality *is* his, not that of the young women he uses; for, though he picks the ripest girls this side of Orange County, he also strips them of any individual sex appeal. His tracking close-ups of their bodies resemble Apollo 8 surveys of the moon's surface.) Finally, surfeited with surfaces, we seek some deeper meaning—through the images, of course—but Emshwiller, apparently disappointed with the clarity of his previous films' "statements," attempts to elude us, and succeeds. The images themselves, as always with this superb photographer, are rich, compelling and even evocative, but they do not, at least in the mind's eye of this viewer, cohere. The problem seems to be that Emshwiller bound himself too tightly to the words of others. As a result, the flesh of others (which, characteristically, he makes his own) and his own images (though they are both personal and universal) convey less power than we would expect them to possess in this important artist's first feature-length film.—RICHARD CORLISS

The Killing of Sister George. Just a few years ago, successful plays had to be toned down for their movie adaptations; from now on it looks as if the process will be reversed. Frank Marcus's play was about lesbianism, but all handled very discreetly; Robert Aldrich's film makes the relationships overtly physical. Marcus's play was superficial but funny. The characters were all two-dimensional, and we could relax and enjoy the ingeniousness with which the central blasphemy was drawn out: the actress who plays a cheerful, angelic, nationally beloved hymn-singing nurse on a BBC soap opera is a crude, vicious, boozing lesbian off camera. In between the jokes on TV shows and personalities, Marcus coldly described the disintegration of the actress's life—she is written out of the series (her ratings have dropped a few points) at the very moment that she is losing her long-suffering roommate to another lesbian from the BBC. But none of this could be taken seriously in the play; you certainly didn't *care* about the killing of Sister George. Aldrich and Beryl Reid do make you care—the part has become fuller, richer, more human on film. The nastiness that dominated the play is balanced by moments of humor and melancholy; in the film, even when George is most venomous, we understand *why.* When the film focusses on her character, it transcends its exploitable subject and tells us something about insecurities that are not peculiar to lesbians—as in the scene when the BBC executive visits George to reprimand her for a lewd assault on two nuns, and George, desperate to keep her job and yet a measure of integrity too, oscillates helplessly between unctuous docility and flashes of irrepressible sarcasm and rage. At other moments, though, some mechanical perverted "business" that worked satisfactorily in the more shallow play—like the scene in which the dependent roommate Childie kneels at George's feet and eats her cigar butt—looks creaky and contrived. The BBC executive remains a two-dimensional lady monster (though Coral Browne fortunately has the screen presence to make her amusing), while Childie, who seems a caricature of a doll-fondling child-woman one moment and very intelligent the next, has become simply incomprehensible. The film is visually dull, for the most part, and much too long, and even maudlin at a couple of points, but thanks mainly to Beryl Reid, it holds us.

The well-publicized climactic scene in which Coral Browne fondles and kisses Susannah York's breasts deserves a separate comment, because it seems to come from a separate film. The scene is genuinely sexy but also slightly embarrassing—partly because Coral Browne seems embarrassed to be playing it, partly because it goes on past the point of arousal to make us conscious of our voyeurism. Susannah York seems quite relaxed, though, and her strange masochistic orgasm should prove as interesting to psychologists as to collectors of film erotica. Just as a footnote, Aldrich has a couple of lawsuits pending—against two local Los Angeles television stations and the Los Angeles *Times,* for censoring his advertising—that could have more important implications. His main point is that the ads were censored because the film has an X-rating under MPAA's rating system, and he insists that Jack Valenti clarify the fact that X means simply "adult" and *not* "dirty"—as the TV stations and most other people assume. This could be a crucial point if producers, distributors, and exhibitors are not to be intimidated by the possibility of an X-rating. Some people may be sorry that a blatantly commercial film-maker like Aldrich is taking on the philistines, but it is a truth about movies that shrewd entrepreneurs like Aldrich and Otto Preminger continue to fight the censorship battles so that more "serious" artists can claim the spoils.—STEPHEN FARBER

cept to search for some thematic progression, which I couldn't find—so we move our concentration to the parade of Nordic, big-boned, buxom nudes whom Emshwiller manages to discover on, or lure to, his Long Island home ground. The rhythm and textures of these sequences are familiar enough to viewers of *Dance Chromatic, Lifelines, Totem,* and *Relativity,* but the lack of color here adds a strange touch of asceticism to Emshwiller's patented languorous sensuality. (And the sensuality *is* his, not that of the young women he uses; for, though he picks the ripest girls this side of Orange County, he also strips them of any individual sex appeal. His tracking close-ups of their bodies resemble Apollo 8 surveys of the moon's surface.) Finally, surfeited with surfaces, we seek some deeper meaning—through the images, of course—but Emshwiller, apparently disappointed with the clarity of his previous films' "statements," attempts to elude us, and succeeds. The images themselves, as always with this superb photographer, are rich, compelling and even evocative, but they do not, at least in the mind's eye of this viewer, cohere. The problem seems to be that Emshwiller bound himself too tightly to the words of others. As a result, the flesh of others (which, characteristically, he makes his own) and his own images (though they are both personal and universal) convey less power than we would expect them to possess in this important artist's first feature-length film.—RICHARD CORLISS

The Killing of Sister George. Just a few years ago, successful plays had to be toned down for their movie adaptations; from now on it looks as if the process will be reversed. Frank Marcus's play was about lesbianism, but all handled very discreetly; Robert Aldrich's film makes the relationships overtly physical. Marcus's play was superficial but funny. The characters were all two-dimensional, and we could relax and enjoy the ingeniousness with which the central blasphemy was drawn out: the actress who plays a cheerful, angelic, nationally beloved hymn-singing nurse on a BBC soap opera is a crude, vicious, boozing lesbian off camera. In between the jokes on TV shows and personalities, Marcus coldly described the disintegration of the actress's life—she is written out of the series (her ratings have dropped a few points) at the very moment that she is losing her long-suffering roommate to another lesbian from the BBC. But none of this could be taken seriously in the play; you certainly didn't *care* about the killing of Sister George. Aldrich and Beryl Reid do make you care—the part has become fuller, richer, more human on film. The nastiness that dominated the play is balanced by moments of humor and melancholy; in the film, even when George is most venomous, we understand *why.* When the film focusses on her character, it transcends its exploitable subject and tells us something about insecurities that are not peculiar to lesbians—as in the scene when the BBC executive visits George to reprimand her for a lewd assault on two nuns, and George, desperate to keep her job and yet a measure of integrity too, oscillates helplessly between unctuous docility and flashes of irrepressible sarcasm and rage. At other moments, though, some mechanical perverted "business" that worked satisfactorily in the more shallow play—like the scene in which the dependent roommate Childie kneels at George's feet and eats her cigar butt—looks creaky and contrived. The BBC executive remains a two-dimensional lady monster (though Coral Browne fortunately has the screen presence to make her amusing), while Childie, who seems a caricature of a doll-fondling child-woman one moment and very intelligent the next, has become simply incomprehensible. The film is visually dull, for the most part, and much too long, and even maudlin at a couple of points, but thanks mainly to Beryl Reid, it holds us.

The well-publicized climactic scene in which Coral Browne fondles and kisses Susannah York's breasts deserves a separate comment, because it seems to come from a separate film. The scene is genuinely sexy but also slightly embarrassing—partly because Coral Browne seems embarrassed to be playing it, partly because it goes on past the point of arousal to make us conscious of our voyeurism. Susannah York seems quite relaxed, though, and her strange masochistic orgasm should prove as interesting to psychologists as to collectors of film erotica. Just as a footnote, Aldrich has a couple of lawsuits pending—against two local Los Angeles television stations and the Los Angeles *Times,* for censoring his advertising—that could have more important implications. His main point is that the ads were censored because the film has an X-rating under MPAA's rating system, and he insists that Jack Valenti clarify the fact that X means simply "adult" and *not* "dirty"—as the TV stations and most other people assume. This could be a crucial point if producers, distributors, and exhibitors are not to be intimidated by the possibility of an X-rating. Some people may be sorry that a blatantly commercial film-maker like Aldrich is taking on the philistines, but it is a truth about movies that shrewd entrepreneurs like Aldrich and Otto Preminger continue to fight the censorship battles so that more "serious" artists can claim the spoils.—STEPHEN FARBER

The Magus is a mixed-up metaphysical drama that would have been better off as a metaphysical musical. Some of the absurd shenanigans would be more acceptable in the context of a musical, where the characters have license to carry on like kooks, and where chaos can be charming. When director Guy Green and writer John Fowles (who also wrote the novel) aren't leading us in circles, or up blind alleys, they are putting us to sleep. Though nothing is ever really explained, they seem to be exploring truth, the individuality of perception, and the folly of devoting oneself to self-pleasure. They probably expect to be patted on the back for tackling philosophical issues, but they should be kicked in the pants for making such a mess of a potentially intriguing film. Anthony Quinn portrays a weird old man on an isolated Greek island whose flashy villa becomes a theraputic environment for the reformation of an amoral schoolteacher (Michael Caine). The old man apparently is a magus, or magician, though he confesses to a variety of identities, such as psychiatrist and film director, throughout the film. It seems like each time there is a lull, the old man perks things up by announcing a new identity. No one is ever sure what he is or why he even gives a damn about a shallow cad like the teacher. While the teacher is trying to figure out what is happening, he is making whoopee with an earthy stewardess (Anna Karina) and a gorgeous blonde (Candice Bergen) who is in cahoots with the old man. We are never sure what is real and what isn't. Characters out of the past cavort in the present as if they belonged there. The stewardess commits suicide, but she pops up at the end, rosy and healthy, as if nothing had happened. Quinn, who looks as much like a Mafia leader as he ever did, has several effective moments before the ludicrous identity switching turns his character into a clown. Anna Karina is quite an actress and, happily, her style has not been permanently jaded by all those deadpan monologues that she did in the Godard films. Candice Bergen, who looks like the girl next door but has the figure of a go-go dancer, is terrible, but she still has an edge on Caine. Caine's problem is that everytime some one points a camera at him and yells "Action!", he automatically starts doing Alfie.

—Dennis Hunt

Oliver, directed by Carol Reed, is the best of the recent musical films adapted from the stage—in other words, the only tolerable one—because it is the only one that has understood the need to find cinematic equivalents for the artificialities of the theater. The approach is neither the open air realism of *The Sound of Music* and *Finian's Rainbow,* nor the constricted staginess of *How To Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* and *My Fair Lady.* The nineteenth-century England created for *Oliver* is never intended to be a literal reconstruction; there is always a touch of stylization in the sets and compositions, but a uniquely filmic kind of stylization, whether in a spectacular panorama inventively fashioned for the widescreen—Oliver leading a funeral procession through the snow, a dazzling early morning parade of Bloomsbury street-vendors —or, on the other hand, in a dramatic, witty close-up of a bookseller's window or a burnt sausage. The production design work by John Box is highly imaginative, and he has not settled for easy prettification; until the Bloomsbury sequence in the second half of the film, everything we see is dark, grim, earthy. But not sordid. The film *is* a fantasy, and the key to its success is its conception of the slightly exaggerated, romanticized realistic detail. The world of *Oliver* is one of workhouse, funeral parlor, seamy tavern and thieves' den, but all seen slightly larger-than-life, through the amazed eyes of a child. This sense of childlike wonderment in the film's visuals is even true to the imaginative exaggeration of Dickens's novel, though the film softens the novel's moments of terror. Because the film has a stylized look, the songs—very lively ones, by Lionel Bart—rarely seem jarring or embarrassing, as they do in the more inept musical films. Bart's book, though, is flimsy and humorless; the episodes with Nancy and Bill Sikes seem particularly tiresome and protracted. The performances are decent and uninteresting, but there is one standout: Ron Moody's Fagin. I think the part is actorproof, but even so, Moody makes a delightfully deceitful and even touching figure—a sympathetic portrait of an old man who can play only a villain and doesn't even play that so well any more; his soliloquy, "Reviewing the Situation," in which he contemplates reformation and then ruefully abandons the idea, is memorable. Onna White's dances are energetic, but unlike the sets, they have *not* been conceived for the camera. *Oliver* does not have the *élan* and suppleness of the best American musicals, but as long as the American musical seems to be exhausted, this skillful British imitation does about as well as a facsimile could.

—Stephen Farber

The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie. While everyone is babbling about a revolution in film style, unusual subject matter—even in very conventionally made films —has not lost its excitement. As far as technique is

The Magus is a mixed-up metaphysical drama that would have been better off as a metaphysical musical. Some of the absurd shenanigans would be more acceptable in the context of a musical, where the characters have license to carry on like kooks, and where chaos can be charming. When director Guy Green and writer John Fowles (who also wrote the novel) aren't leading us in circles, or up blind alleys, they are putting us to sleep. Though nothing is ever really explained, they seem to be exploring truth, the individuality of perception, and the folly of devoting oneself to self-pleasure. They probably expect to be patted on the back for tackling philosophical issues, but they should be kicked in the pants for making such a mess of a potentially intriguing film. Anthony Quinn portrays a weird old man on an isolated Greek island whose flashy villa becomes a theraputic environment for the reformation of an amoral schoolteacher (Michael Caine). The old man apparently is a magus, or magician, though he confesses to a variety of identities, such as psychiatrist and film director, throughout the film. It seems like each time there is a lull, the old man perks things up by announcing a new identity. No one is ever sure what he is or why he even gives a damn about a shallow cad like the teacher. While the teacher is trying to figure out what is happening, he is making whoopee with an earthy stewardess (Anna Karina) and a gorgeous blonde (Candice Bergen) who is in cahoots with the old man. We are never sure what is real and what isn't. Characters out of the past cavort in the present as if they belonged there. The stewardess commits suicide, but she pops up at the end, rosy and healthy, as if nothing had happened. Quinn, who looks as much like a Mafia leader as he ever did, has several effective moments before the ludicrous identity switching turns his character into a clown. Anna Karina is quite an actress and, happily, her style has not been permanently jaded by all those deadpan monologues that she did in the Godard films. Candice Bergen, who looks like the girl next door but has the figure of a go-go dancer, is terrible, but she still has an edge on Caine. Caine's problem is that everytime some one points a camera at him and yells "Action!", he automatically starts doing Alfie.

—Dennis Hunt

Oliver, directed by Carol Reed, is the best of the recent musical films adapted from the stage—in other words, the only tolerable one—because it is the only one that has understood the need to find cinematic equivalents for the artificialities of the theater. The approach is neither the open air realism of *The Sound of Music* and *Finian's Rainbow,* nor the constricted staginess of *How To Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* and *My Fair Lady.* The nineteenth-century England created for *Oliver* is never intended to be a literal reconstruction; there is always a touch of stylization in the sets and compositions, but a uniquely filmic kind of stylization, whether in a spectacular panorama inventively fashioned for the widescreen—Oliver leading a funeral procession through the snow, a dazzling early morning parade of Bloomsbury street-vendors —or, on the other hand, in a dramatic, witty close-up of a bookseller's window or a burnt sausage. The production design work by John Box is highly imaginative, and he has not settled for easy prettification; until the Bloomsbury sequence in the second half of the film, everything we see is dark, grim, earthy. But not sordid. The film *is* a fantasy, and the key to its success is its conception of the slightly exaggerated, romanticized realistic detail. The world of *Oliver* is one of workhouse, funeral parlor, seamy tavern and thieves' den, but all seen slightly larger-than-life, through the amazed eyes of a child. This sense of childlike wonderment in the film's visuals is even true to the imaginative exaggeration of Dickens's novel, though the film softens the novel's moments of terror. Because the film has a stylized look, the songs—very lively ones, by Lionel Bart—rarely seem jarring or embarrassing, as they do in the more inept musical films. Bart's book, though, is flimsy and humorless; the episodes with Nancy and Bill Sikes seem particularly tiresome and protracted. The performances are decent and uninteresting, but there is one standout: Ron Moody's Fagin. I think the part is actorproof, but even so, Moody makes a delightfully deceitful and even touching figure—a sympathetic portrait of an old man who can play only a villain and doesn't even play that so well any more; his soliloquy, "Reviewing the Situation," in which he contemplates reformation and then ruefully abandons the idea, is memorable. Onna White's dances are energetic, but unlike the sets, they have *not* been conceived for the camera. *Oliver* does not have the *élan* and suppleness of the best American musicals, but as long as the American musical seems to be exhausted, this skillful British imitation does about as well as a facsimile could.

—Stephen Farber

The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie. While everyone is babbling about a revolution in film style, unusual subject matter—even in very conventionally made films —has not lost its excitement. As far as technique is

The Magus is a mixed-up metaphysical drama that would have been better off as a metaphysical musical. Some of the absurd shenanigans would be more acceptable in the context of a musical, where the characters have license to carry on like kooks, and where chaos can be charming. When director Guy Green and writer John Fowles (who also wrote the novel) aren't leading us in circles, or up blind alleys, they are putting us to sleep. Though nothing is ever really explained, they seem to be exploring truth, the individuality of perception, and the folly of devoting oneself to self-pleasure. They probably expect to be patted on the back for tackling philosophical issues, but they should be kicked in the pants for making such a mess of a potentially intriguing film. Anthony Quinn portrays a weird old man on an isolated Greek island whose flashy villa becomes a theraputic environment for the reformation of an amoral schoolteacher (Michael Caine). The old man apparently is a magus, or magician, though he confesses to a variety of identities, such as psychiatrist and film director, throughout the film. It seems like each time there is a lull, the old man perks things up by announcing a new identity. No one is ever sure what he is or why he even gives a damn about a shallow cad like the teacher. While the teacher is trying to figure out what is happening, he is making whoopee with an earthy stewardess (Anna Karina) and a gorgeous blonde (Candice Bergen) who is in cahoots with the old man. We are never sure what is real and what isn't. Characters out of the past cavort in the present as if they belonged there. The stewardess commits suicide, but she pops up at the end, rosy and healthy, as if nothing had happened. Quinn, who looks as much like a Mafia leader as he ever did, has several effective moments before the ludicrous identity switching turns his character into a clown. Anna Karina is quite an actress and, happily, her style has not been permanently jaded by all those deadpan monologues that she did in the Godard films. Candice Bergen, who looks like the girl next door but has the figure of a go-go dancer, is terrible, but she still has an edge on Caine. Caine's problem is that everytime some one points a camera at him and yells "Action!", he automatically starts doing Alfie.

—Dennis Hunt

Oliver, directed by Carol Reed, is the best of the recent musical films adapted from the stage—in other words, the only tolerable one—because it is the only one that has understood the need to find cinematic equivalents for the artificialities of the theater. The approach is neither the open air realism of *The Sound of Music* and *Finian's Rainbow,* nor the constricted staginess of *How To Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* and *My Fair Lady.* The nineteenth-century England created for *Oliver* is never intended to be a literal reconstruction; there is always a touch of stylization in the sets and compositions, but a uniquely filmic kind of stylization, whether in a spectacular panorama inventively fashioned for the widescreen—Oliver leading a funeral procession through the snow, a dazzling early morning parade of Bloomsbury street-vendors —or, on the other hand, in a dramatic, witty close-up of a bookseller's window or a burnt sausage. The production design work by John Box is highly imaginative, and he has not settled for easy prettification; until the Bloomsbury sequence in the second half of the film, everything we see is dark, grim, earthy. But not sordid. The film *is* a fantasy, and the key to its success is its conception of the slightly exaggerated, romanticized realistic detail. The world of *Oliver* is one of workhouse, funeral parlor, seamy tavern and thieves' den, but all seen slightly larger-than-life, through the amazed eyes of a child. This sense of childlike wonderment in the film's visuals is even true to the imaginative exaggeration of Dickens's novel, though the film softens the novel's moments of terror. Because the film has a stylized look, the songs—very lively ones, by Lionel Bart—rarely seem jarring or embarrassing, as they do in the more inept musical films. Bart's book, though, is flimsy and humorless; the episodes with Nancy and Bill Sikes seem particularly tiresome and protracted. The performances are decent and uninteresting, but there is one standout: Ron Moody's Fagin. I think the part is actorproof, but even so, Moody makes a delightfully deceitful and even touching figure—a sympathetic portrait of an old man who can play only a villain and doesn't even play that so well any more; his soliloquy, "Reviewing the Situation," in which he contemplates reformation and then ruefully abandons the idea, is memorable. Onna White's dances are energetic, but unlike the sets, they have *not* been conceived for the camera. *Oliver* does not have the *élan* and suppleness of the best American musicals, but as long as the American musical seems to be exhausted, this skillful British imitation does about as well as a facsimile could.

—Stephen Farber

The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie. While everyone is babbling about a revolution in film style, unusual subject matter—even in very conventionally made films —has not lost its excitement. As far as technique is

concerned, *Miss Jean Brodie* could have been made in 1949 as easily as in 1969, and in fact, the old-fashioned, cosy look of the film does not quite prepare us for the surprising characterizations and insights that the film contains. We've seen a lot of movies about saintly schoolteachers, and the conservative girls school of the thirties is a familiar setting, but Jean Brodie is not the noble, self-sacrificing heroine we expect; there's something frightening about the influence she wants—and gets—over her girls' lives. She goes so far as to scheme to involve one of her girls with her own former lover (a sort of sexual intercourse by proxy), and sends another girl off to fight for Franco in Spain, where she is killed. A Svengali of the boarding-school, Miss Brodie is a strange mixture of idealistic aesthete and fascist, sexual libertarian and fierce authoritarian—a character we may know from life, but whose intriguing paradoxes have rarely before been dramatized in films. Though Miss Brodie is a monster, she is appealing too, for her desires are only more extreme forms of desires we all have. She refuses marriage because she will not accept a subservient role in her society; she insists on creating a meaningful life that is hers alone. Her dedication to teaching is ultimately selfish—she wants dominion, power to control other destinies, the satisfaction of molding human lives in her own image. A classic kind of pride, of course, and unfortunately the film sees fit to punish Miss Brodie for her sin. The conclusion, in which her whole world collapses around her, seems overly moralistic; but more damagingly, it seems false to the characterization—no one as astute and calculating as Miss Brodie has appeared through most of the film could be so completely blind to the betrayal that her star prodigy is planning. The film undercuts and complicates some of the pieties that schoolteacher movies have been spouting for decades, but perhaps its conventional style is a clue, after all, to its chief failure—a certain slackness, a willingness to settle for the theatrical effect in place of a painstaking exploration of the authoritarian spirit; *Miss Jean Brodie* is offbeat, witty, absorbing, but it is finally rather glib. No one would call Ronald Neame the most inspired of directors, but he has done a good job of suggesting the repressive atmosphere of the school, particularly through his restrained and effective use of color, and he has drawn convincing performances from the girls. But the film's major interest is Maggie Smith's performance. I think she may overdo Miss Brodie's stiffness in a few scenes, still the range of her performance is extraordinary—the self-controlled, deliberate flamboyance of the teaching scenes, a spontaneous, fiery outburst in the prissy headmistress's office (the most entertaining confrontation scene I can remember seeing), the unabashed romanticism of the scenes in which she thinks about her own frustration while discussing poetry. Few actresses could sustain such different moods in a film, but what is even more remarkable is that nothing in this part is the least bit like Maggie Smith's other film performances—Desdemona in Olivier's *Othello,* the shy innocents in *Young Cassidy* and *The Honey Pot,* the wacky cockney girl in *Hot Millions.* This is her first starring role, a juicy *tour de force,* and she is commanding. Along with Vanessa Redgrave, she is probably the finest young actress in English speaking cinema.

—STEPHEN FARBER

The Ruined Map, directed by Hiroshi Teshigahara. Although I don't know what's going on in terms of plot when I see *The Big Sleep,* I return to see it whenever it's in town because of the fascinating world it opens up to me. Teshigahara's latest film has somewhat the same appeal. As I watched it, I certainly couldn't follow the plot (whether that's the fault of the odd substitles or the original story or the screenplay or my own shortcomings I can't say) but I didn't really care because I was so swept up in Teshigahara's treatment of this murky Dostoyevskian detective story. *Woman in the Dunes* gave an idea of how brilliantly he can elaborate surfaces and confined spaces, *Face of Another* went beyond it to show what he could do with a camera when he wasn't restricted to one major locale, and *The Ruined Map* escapes all the former limitations (including the use of black and white) to burst forth with a sort of fantastic visual bravado that is more reminiscent of Griffith, Murnau, and Freund in its daring sumptuousness than it is of today's fashionable prettycolor French and Scandinavian bourgeois slop. From the standpoint of creation, I think the most important thing about a movie is an implicit statement made in it and through it by the director: "This is a way to make a movie." And indeed, in *The Ruined Map,* Teshigahara appears to be much more concerned with his freedom to make a movie than he was in any of his earlier films that I have seen. For one thing, this picture does not show the tenacious dedication to story displayed in the others. Here, Teshigahara goes so far as to throw in gratuitous shots for our delectation—shots that do not distract from the progress of the narrative, but which are nonetheless unmotivated, unjustified by it. He often sacrifices potential human drama for striking visual drama in his compositions, since he is more interested in the continuity and flow of images

concerned, *Miss Jean Brodie* could have been made in 1949 as easily as in 1969, and in fact, the old-fashioned, cosy look of the film does not quite prepare us for the surprising characterizations and insights that the film contains. We've seen a lot of movies about saintly schoolteachers, and the conservative girls school of the thirties is a familiar setting, but Jean Brodie is not the noble, self-sacrificing heroine we expect; there's something frightening about the influence she wants—and gets—over her girls' lives. She goes so far as to scheme to involve one of her girls with her own former lover (a sort of sexual intercourse by proxy), and sends another girl off to fight for Franco in Spain, where she is killed. A Svengali of the boarding-school, Miss Brodie is a strange mixture of idealistic aesthete and fascist, sexual libertarian and fierce authoritarian—a character we may know from life, but whose intriguing paradoxes have rarely before been dramatized in films. Though Miss Brodie is a monster, she is appealing too, for her desires are only more extreme forms of desires we all have. She refuses marriage because she will not accept a subservient role in her society; she insists on creating a meaningful life that is hers alone. Her dedication to teaching is ultimately selfish—she wants dominion, power to control other destinies, the satisfaction of molding human lives in her own image. A classic kind of pride, of course, and unfortunately the film sees fit to punish Miss Brodie for her sin. The conclusion, in which her whole world collapses around her, seems overly moralistic; but more damagingly, it seems false to the characterization—no one as astute and calculating as Miss Brodie has appeared through most of the film could be so completely blind to the betrayal that her star prodigy is planning. The film undercuts and complicates some of the pieties that schoolteacher movies have been spouting for decades, but perhaps its conventional style is a clue, after all, to its chief failure—a certain slackness, a willingness to settle for the theatrical effect in place of a painstaking exploration of the authoritarian spirit; *Miss Jean Brodie* is offbeat, witty, absorbing, but it is finally rather glib. No one would call Ronald Neame the most inspired of directors, but he has done a good job of suggesting the repressive atmosphere of the school, particularly through his restrained and effective use of color, and he has drawn convincing performances from the girls. But the film's major interest is Maggie Smith's performance. I think she may overdo Miss Brodie's stiffness in a few scenes, still the range of her performance is extraordinary—the self-controlled, deliberate flamboyance of the teaching scenes, a spontaneous, fiery outburst in the prissy headmistress's office (the most entertaining confrontation scene I can remember seeing), the unabashed romanticism of the scenes in which she thinks about her own frustration while discussing poetry. Few actresses could sustain such different moods in a film, but what is even more remarkable is that nothing in this part is the least bit like Maggie Smith's other film performances—Desdemona in Olivier's *Othello,* the shy innocents in *Young Cassidy* and *The Honey Pot,* the wacky cockney girl in *Hot Millions.* This is her first starring role, a juicy *tour de force,* and she is commanding. Along with Vanessa Redgrave, she is probably the finest young actress in English speaking cinema.

—STEPHEN FARBER

The Ruined Map, directed by Hiroshi Teshigahara. Although I don't know what's going on in terms of plot when I see *The Big Sleep,* I return to see it whenever it's in town because of the fascinating world it opens up to me. Teshigahara's latest film has somewhat the same appeal. As I watched it, I certainly couldn't follow the plot (whether that's the fault of the odd substitles or the original story or the screenplay or my own shortcomings I can't say) but I didn't really care because I was so swept up in Teshigahara's treatment of this murky Dostoyevskian detective story. *Woman in the Dunes* gave an idea of how brilliantly he can elaborate surfaces and confined spaces, *Face of Another* went beyond it to show what he could do with a camera when he wasn't restricted to one major locale, and *The Ruined Map* escapes all the former limitations (including the use of black and white) to burst forth with a sort of fantastic visual bravado that is more reminiscent of Griffith, Murnau, and Freund in its daring sumptuousness than it is of today's fashionable prettycolor French and Scandinavian bourgeois slop. From the standpoint of creation, I think the most important thing about a movie is an implicit statement made in it and through it by the director: "This is a way to make a movie." And indeed, in *The Ruined Map,* Teshigahara appears to be much more concerned with his freedom to make a movie than he was in any of his earlier films that I have seen. For one thing, this picture does not show the tenacious dedication to story displayed in the others. Here, Teshigahara goes so far as to throw in gratuitous shots for our delectation—shots that do not distract from the progress of the narrative, but which are nonetheless unmotivated, unjustified by it. He often sacrifices potential human drama for striking visual drama in his compositions, since he is more interested in the continuity and flow of images

he is creating than in the story he is ostensibly treating. He uses intrusive objects—often the actors themselves—as mattes to gain complete freedom from the ordinary format of the Scope frame, and he couples this practice with a dazzling sense of color dynamics to create breathtaking swells of visual rhythm that sweep us along from the beginning to the end of the picture. While *The Ruined Map* will probably displease most of the *littérateurs* of cinema, I think the real *cinéastes* will find it a welcome resumption of many of the implications inherent in the finest work of late silent film.—R. C. DALE

Secret Ceremony, luckily, takes place mostly in a beautiful old London mansion stuffed with rich bluegreen tiles, stained glass, and bricabrac of the vanished Empire. The house is inhabited by Cenci (dig that, Shelley fans), a mad rich girl played by Mia Farrow in a silky black wig; she takes a pious whore named Leonora (Elizabeth Taylor) for her dead mother and brings her home; later Leonora meets some predatory aunts, and Cenci's step-father Albert (bemusedly played by Robert Mitchum) turns up too, fresh from professorial adventures at some American university and full of his old incestuous longings for Cenci—who is, despite her regressed state, a cute piece and distinctly polymorphous perverse. Albert gets Cenci despite Leonora's defenses, and this seems to break the regressive spell—at any rate Cenci is cruelly patronizing to Leonora instead of childlike—but she commits suicide anyway. Finally, in a funeral parlor, Leonora stabs Albert. What's it all about really? Difficult to guess, through the jerks and plunges of all the cast save Mia Farrow, who manages to be touching and perverse and human, and the heavy-handed doses of religion and allegory that Losey dishes out. (Leonora spends a lot of time in the church of Mary Magdalene, and at the end delivers a weighty parable about two mice.) The dominant note, if there is one, is of Losey's usual creepy, misanthropic disgust with sex and how people misuse each other to get it; but all the elegant decor and careful framing cannot make us care that nobody cared about Cenci—not even Losey.—E.C.

Up Tight is Jules Dassin's self-conscious copy of Ford's *Informer,* replacing the Irish revolutionaries with a catalogue of the ghetto: black revolutionaries, a bourgeois fag, an old-time Negro politician, a girl militant, a young white radical from the civil-rights days, and the older generations of both sides. The informer is Tank, an old-time unionist. Dassin pulls no punches in telling you the ghetto is up tight; the militants are plotting a revolution. But something's wrong; you sense it from the opening—a beautifully photographed widescreen sequence of King's funeral, which somehow obscures the grief of the situation. And the characters are woodenly conceived and directed without Dassin's usual skill. Perhaps Dassin (and his co-scriptwriters Ruby Dee and Julian Mayfield) were defeated by their attempt to sample every possible character in the black universe—which might be accomplished with Eisensteinian techniques. Or perhaps Dassin's political exile has lasted too long. He has returned with a vengeance to a situation which he simply does not understand: hence the pseudo-militancy of the film. Dassin learned Cartesian rationalism in France; he pins down every corner of the subject, but from the outside. *Up Tight* shows us blacks, rather than the Negro as white man of *In the Heat of the Night,* or the "colored folk" of earlier films (stereotypes *do* change, though very slowly) but it still denies the Negro his essential humanity. Black audiences may perceive human beings behind Dassin's silhouettes (Rap Brown liked the film) but it precludes empathy from white audiences, unless they are masochistic. At worst, it could encourage reaction from a society already too close to reaction. A useful contrast can be found in a low-budget cinéma vérité film, *No Vietnamese Ever Called Me Nigger* (Paradigm Films), about a Harlem antiwar march. The response of this film to the ghetto situation is not to proclaim a cultural nationalism, but to insist on a wider humanity—which the Black Panthers also insist on. The black people interviewed on the streets are human beings like us. They make the ghetto real, through their own reality, for audiences who have not grown up in one. The film is weakened by its device of intercutting interview footage with three black veterans—which ought to have been a separate film. Yet even so, this footage suggests that documentary is not inherently the best means of exploring the human condition, in the ghetto or outside it. The powerfully built veteran, who stutters as he explains his terrible story, hints at the powerful character developments missed in the schematism of *Up Tight.* In the next riot, this man will not be standing on the street stuttering, trying to speak to a country which will not listen—he will be on the rooftops with a rfle. To appreciate him, filmmakers will have to avoid the preconceptions of a Dassin, and find the formative talent and economic resources which Paradigm lacked. Then we may have films which show black and white where it's really at and how it feels to be there.

—WILLIAM ROTH

he is creating than in the story he is ostensibly treating. He uses intrusive objects—often the actors themselves—as mattes to gain complete freedom from the ordinary format of the Scope frame, and he couples this practice with a dazzling sense of color dynamics to create breathtaking swells of visual rhythm that sweep us along from the beginning to the end of the picture. While *The Ruined Map* will probably displease most of the *littérateurs* of cinema, I think the real *cinéastes* will find it a welcome resumption of many of the implications inherent in the finest work of late silent film.—R. C. DALE

Secret Ceremony, luckily, takes place mostly in a beautiful old London mansion stuffed with rich bluegreen tiles, stained glass, and bricabrac of the vanished Empire. The house is inhabited by Cenci (dig that, Shelley fans), a mad rich girl played by Mia Farrow in a silky black wig; she takes a pious whore named Leonora (Elizabeth Taylor) for her dead mother and brings her home; later Leonora meets some predatory aunts, and Cenci's step-father Albert (bemusedly played by Robert Mitchum) turns up too, fresh from professorial adventures at some American university and full of his old incestuous longings for Cenci—who is, despite her regressed state, a cute piece and distinctly polymorphous perverse. Albert gets Cenci despite Leonora's defenses, and this seems to break the regressive spell—at any rate Cenci is cruelly patronizing to Leonora instead of childlike—but she commits suicide anyway. Finally, in a funeral parlor, Leonora stabs Albert. What's it all about really? Difficult to guess, through the jerks and plunges of all the cast save Mia Farrow, who manages to be touching and perverse and human, and the heavy-handed doses of religion and allegory that Losey dishes out. (Leonora spends a lot of time in the church of Mary Magdalene, and at the end delivers a weighty parable about two mice.) The dominant note, if there is one, is of Losey's usual creepy, misanthropic disgust with sex and how people misuse each other to get it; but all the elegant decor and careful framing cannot make us care that nobody cared about Cenci—not even Losey.—E.C.

Up Tight is Jules Dassin's self-conscious copy of Ford's *Informer,* replacing the Irish revolutionaries with a catalogue of the ghetto: black revolutionaries, a bourgeois fag, an old-time Negro politician, a girl militant, a young white radical from the civil-rights days, and the older generations of both sides. The informer is Tank, an old-time unionist. Dassin pulls no punches in telling you the ghetto is up tight; the militants are plotting a revolution. But something's wrong; you sense it from the opening—a beautifully photographed widescreen sequence of King's funeral, which somehow obscures the grief of the situation. And the characters are woodenly conceived and directed without Dassin's usual skill. Perhaps Dassin (and his co-scriptwriters Ruby Dee and Julian Mayfield) were defeated by their attempt to sample every possible character in the black universe—which might be accomplished with Eisensteinian techniques. Or perhaps Dassin's political exile has lasted too long. He has returned with a vengeance to a situation which he simply does not understand: hence the pseudo-militancy of the film. Dassin learned Cartesian rationalism in France; he pins down every corner of the subject, but from the outside. *Up Tight* shows us blacks, rather than the Negro as white man of *In the Heat of the Night,* or the "colored folk" of earlier films (stereotypes *do* change, though very slowly) but it still denies the Negro his essential humanity. Black audiences may perceive human beings behind Dassin's silhouettes (Rap Brown liked the film) but it precludes empathy from white audiences, unless they are masochistic. At worst, it could encourage reaction from a society already too close to reaction. A useful contrast can be found in a low-budget cinéma vérité film, *No Vietnamese Ever Called Me Nigger* (Paradigm Films), about a Harlem antiwar march. The response of this film to the ghetto situation is not to proclaim a cultural nationalism, but to insist on a wider humanity—which the Black Panthers also insist on. The black people interviewed on the streets are human beings like us. They make the ghetto real, through their own reality, for audiences who have not grown up in one. The film is weakened by its device of intercutting interview footage with three black veterans—which ought to have been a separate film. Yet even so, this footage suggests that documentary is not inherently the best means of exploring the human condition, in the ghetto or outside it. The powerfully built veteran, who stutters as he explains his terrible story, hints at the powerful character developments missed in the schematism of *Up Tight.* In the next riot, this man will not be standing on the street stuttering, trying to speak to a country which will not listen—he will be on the rooftops with a rfle. To appreciate him, filmmakers will have to avoid the preconceptions of a Dassin, and find the formative talent and economic resources which Paradigm lacked. Then we may have films which show black and white where it's really at and how it feels to be there.

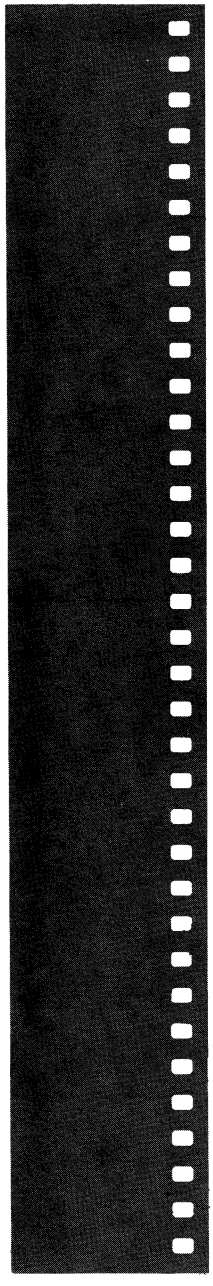
—WILLIAM ROTH

he is creating than in the story he is ostensibly treating. He uses intrusive objects—often the actors themselves—as mattes to gain complete freedom from the ordinary format of the Scope frame, and he couples this practice with a dazzling sense of color dynamics to create breathtaking swells of visual rhythm that sweep us along from the beginning to the end of the picture. While *The Ruined Map* will probably displease most of the *littérateurs* of cinema, I think the real *cinéastes* will find it a welcome resumption of many of the implications inherent in the finest work of late silent film.—R. C. DALE

Secret Ceremony, luckily, takes place mostly in a beautiful old London mansion stuffed with rich bluegreen tiles, stained glass, and bricabrac of the vanished Empire. The house is inhabited by Cenci (dig that, Shelley fans), a mad rich girl played by Mia Farrow in a silky black wig; she takes a pious whore named Leonora (Elizabeth Taylor) for her dead mother and brings her home; later Leonora meets some predatory aunts, and Cenci's step-father Albert (bemusedly played by Robert Mitchum) turns up too, fresh from professorial adventures at some American university and full of his old incestuous longings for Cenci—who is, despite her regressed state, a cute piece and distinctly polymorphous perverse. Albert gets Cenci despite Leonora's defenses, and this seems to break the regressive spell—at any rate Cenci is cruelly patronizing to Leonora instead of childlike—but she commits suicide anyway. Finally, in a funeral parlor, Leonora stabs Albert. What's it all about really? Difficult to guess, through the jerks and plunges of all the cast save Mia Farrow, who manages to be touching and perverse and human, and the heavy-handed doses of religion and allegory that Losey dishes out. (Leonora spends a lot of time in the church of Mary Magdalene, and at the end delivers a weighty parable about two mice.) The dominant note, if there is one, is of Losey's usual creepy, misanthropic disgust with sex and how people misuse each other to get it; but all the elegant decor and careful framing cannot make us care that nobody cared about Cenci—not even Losey.—E.C.

Up Tight is Jules Dassin's self-conscious copy of Ford's *Informer,* replacing the Irish revolutionaries with a catalogue of the ghetto: black revolutionaries, a bourgeois fag, an old-time Negro politician, a girl militant, a young white radical from the civil-rights days, and the older generations of both sides. The informer is Tank, an old-time unionist. Dassin pulls no punches in telling you the ghetto is up tight; the militants are plotting a revolution. But something's wrong; you sense it from the opening—a beautifully photographed widescreen sequence of King's funeral, which somehow obscures the grief of the situation. And the characters are woodenly conceived and directed without Dassin's usual skill. Perhaps Dassin (and his co-scriptwriters Ruby Dee and Julian Mayfield) were defeated by their attempt to sample every possible character in the black universe—which might be accomplished with Eisensteinian techniques. Or perhaps Dassin's political exile has lasted too long. He has returned with a vengeance to a situation which he simply does not understand: hence the pseudo-militancy of the film. Dassin learned Cartesian rationalism in France; he pins down every corner of the subject, but from the outside. *Up Tight* shows us blacks, rather than the Negro as white man of *In the Heat of the Night,* or the "colored folk" of earlier films (stereotypes *do* change, though very slowly) but it still denies the Negro his essential humanity. Black audiences may perceive human beings behind Dassin's silhouettes (Rap Brown liked the film) but it precludes empathy from white audiences, unless they are masochistic. At worst, it could encourage reaction from a society already too close to reaction. A useful contrast can be found in a low-budget cinéma vérité film, *No Vietnamese Ever Called Me Nigger* (Paradigm Films), about a Harlem antiwar march. The response of this film to the ghetto situation is not to proclaim a cultural nationalism, but to insist on a wider humanity—which the Black Panthers also insist on. The black people interviewed on the streets are human beings like us. They make the ghetto real, through their own reality, for audiences who have not grown up in one. The film is weakened by its device of intercutting interview footage with three black veterans—which ought to have been a separate film. Yet even so, this footage suggests that documentary is not inherently the best means of exploring the human condition, in the ghetto or outside it. The powerfully built veteran, who stutters as he explains his terrible story, hints at the powerful character developments missed in the schematism of *Up Tight.* In the next riot, this man will not be standing on the street stuttering, trying to speak to a country which will not listen—he will be on the rooftops with a rfle. To appreciate him, filmmakers will have to avoid the preconceptions of a Dassin, and find the formative talent and economic resources which Paradigm lacked. Then we may have films which show black and white where it's really at and how it feels to be there.

—WILLIAM ROTH



Announcing

ELEMENTS OF FILM

LEE BOBKER, New York University and Vision Associates

This exciting new textbook introduces students to the study of the film, the most dynamic of contemporary art forms. Unique in its approach, the book emphasizes the relationship between the technical elements of filmmaking and the creative and artistic uses of these elements.

Elements of Film reflects the author's vast experience in filmmaking. Winner of numerous awards from national and international film festivals, Lee Bobker has written, produced, and directed more than 300 motion pictures. In this book he examines in detail the roles of scriptwriters, film editors, cameramen, actors, and directors, and their relation to each other. In particular, he focuses attention on the modern director—the complete filmmaker—who shapes every element of the film and whose "style" (as in the case of a Bergman or an Antonioni) pervades the entire production.

Cameras, lenses, lighting equipment, sound recordings, and other tools and processes of filmmaking are fully described. The equipment and the techniques, and the ways in which they are used to achieve various artistic effects, are illustrated through some 60 supporting photographs—about half of which are taken from recent films. Four pages of full-color photographs, also drawn from recent films, are included to demonstrate the values and techniques of color photography.

An important feature of *Elements of Film* is the inclusion of actual film scripts. Although no script is presented in its entirety, complete sequences are reproduced—some running as long as 20 pages—to illustrate points under discussion.

In the two concluding chapters the author analyzes the work of major contemporary filmmakers and examines the function of film criticism, reproducing reviews by important film critics.

Paperbound. 416 pages, $4.95 (probable)
Publication: April 1969

HARCOURT, BRACE & WORLD, INC.
New York • Chicago • San Francisco • Atlanta

"I WANT TO EXPRESS MY UNBOUNDED ADMIRATION of Jan Troell's 'Here's Your Life.' You don't just watch the film, you live through it. Here, Sweden, is your life."

—Vernon Young, FILM IN SWEDEN

SVENSK & BRANDON FILMS PRESENT A FILM BY **JAN TROELL**

HERE'S YOUR LIFE

Directed, photographed, edited by Jan Troell & screenplay by Mr. Troell & Producer Bengst Forslund. Based on a novel by Eyvind Johnson. Music by Erik Nordgren (Wild Strawberries, Seventh Seal, Smiles of a Summer Night, etc.). Starring **Eddie Axberg,** with Ulla Sjoblom, Per Oscarsson, Gunnar Bjornstrand, Ulf Palme. A Svensk Filmindustri Picture. Released by Brandon Films.

"IMMEDIATELY THERE'S A THRILL OF EXPECTATION, that this film is in the hands of a director with a vision of his own, and the expectation is quickly confirmed. The film is generally lovely, made with an ingenuity that enriches its materials. Superb photography!" —Stanley Kauffmann, NEW REPUBLIC

"IT IS UNCOMPROMISING IN ITS ARTISTRY, HONESTY AND HUMANITY. And it really is your life — yours, mine, everybody's — examined and illuminated!" —John Simon, NEW LEADER

Available in 35 mm and 16 mm.

Theatrical Distribution / Non Theatrical Distribution

BRANDON FILMS, INC.

Dept. FQ, 221 West 57 St., New York 10019 (212) CI 6-4867