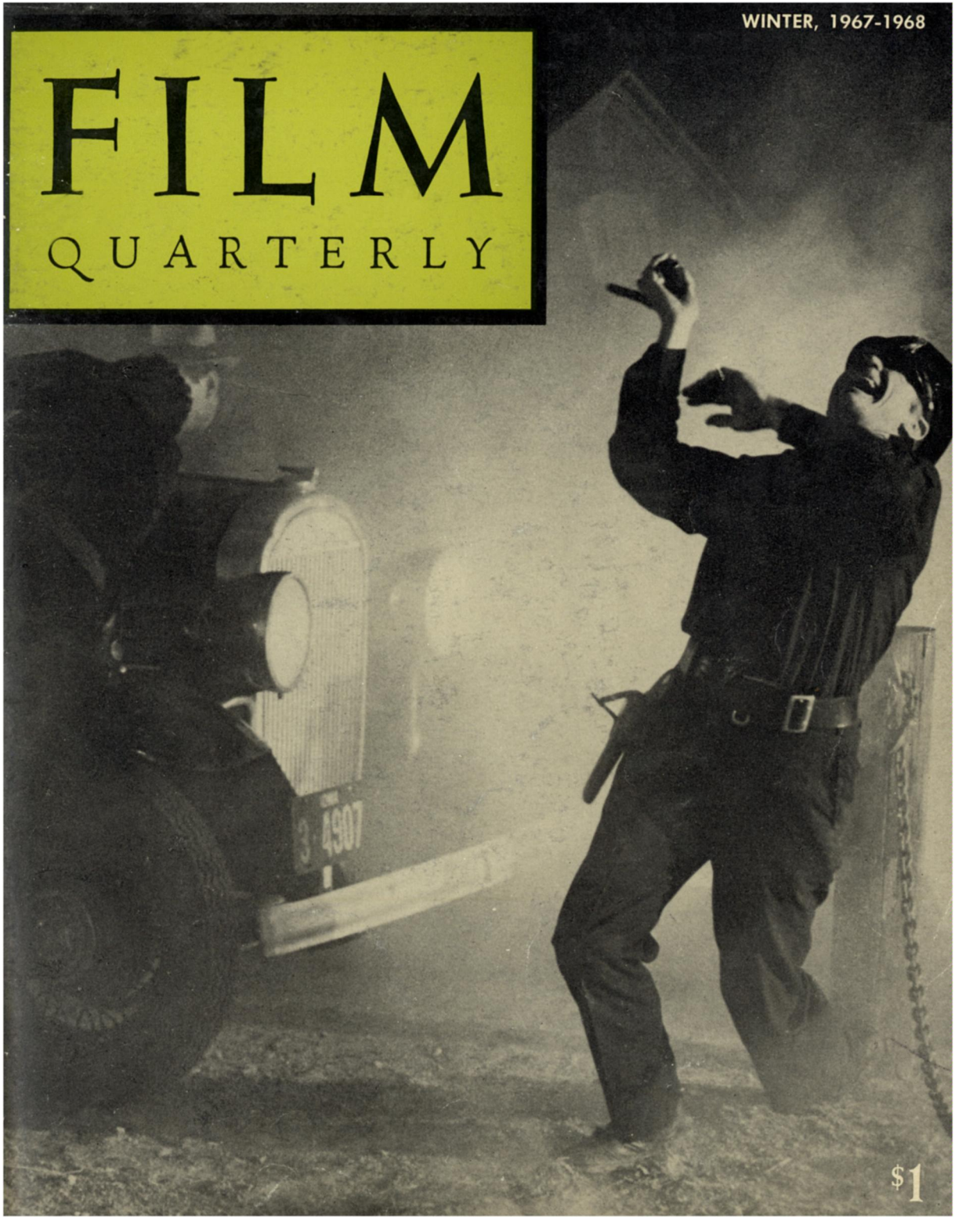
WINTER, 1967-1968

FILM QUARTERLY



$1

VOL. XXI, No. 2 Winter 1967-68

ARTICLES

FILM REVIEWS

BOOKS

COVER: Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde.*

Editor's Notebook

BEST OR WORST OF TIMES?

Large new audiences in and around the universities clamoring for unusual films. Students and film-makers receiving grants. Nudie-cuties taking over former art-houses. Five-hour waiting lines for film shows at Expo. Formation of the American Film Institute. Lectures and books everywhere. Fewer foreign films getting to New York, or beyond it to other cities. Theaters blocked for a year by *A Man and A Woman.* And almost imperceptibly, the war in Vietnam escalating, embittering the political life of the country, soaking up the intellectual energy of the land; the inescapable obsession with the war becoming a major force among film-makers and critics, as among writers, scientists, artists, doctors, students.

The present issue, although it was not planned that way, reflects this spreading concern.

RELIEF IN SIGHT

A test case on a vexing problem for film-makers is being planned. Film-makers who have had processed film held by laboratories on grounds of alleged "obscenity" are urged to send full details to: Marshall Krause, A.C.L.U. of Northern California, 503 Market Street, San Francisco, Calif. 94105.

SHORT NOTICES

With this issue we are retitling our section of brief reviews, formerly called "Entertainments," to reflect the increasing proportion of films dealt with which cannot be considered trivial, even though they are not analyzed at length. New writers welcome here, as elsewhere in the magazine.

CONTRIBUTORS

RANDALL CONRAD is a critic and film-maker presently in Paris. RICHARD CORLISS lives in New York;

[*Continued on Page 64*]

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: MARTINA FLACH-AGNAR. New York Editors: ROBERT HUGHES and JUDITH SHATNOFF. 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. Views expressed in signed articles are those of the authors. Indexed in *Art Index* and *Social Sciences and Humanities Index.* Published quarterly. Second-class postage paid at Berkeley, California. Printed in U. S. A.

creations that establishes a reputation, at once original, memorable and technically brilliant. Inspired by the frozen delicacy and immutability of the figures in Seurat's painting, and the mocking ambiguities of Pirandello's plays, Frans Weisz has brought this quality of human mystery into the contemporary world. On a summery afternoon, the characters in the park are pursued by the watchful authors (as well as ourselves)—the literary creators carefully *observe* life but find it impossible to capture. The camera holds every nuance of visual lyricism in the imagery; the broad sweep of lawns, a sudden rainfall, with the characters racing into the luxurious warmth of a castle, raising the drawbridge against the somber writers, who peer intently through the windowpanes. The film (to be seen many times) is a metaphoric work; the interplay between creative literature and life is visualized in short vignettes, like a remembered dream. The writers retire to their libraries, typewriters click—a youth, symbolic of a reader's freedom, his inquisitiveness undaunted (even by the promise of a coquette's smile), steals a book and joyously devours its contents: Life's intellectual roundabout of knowledge, stolen by creators and reclaimed by new life, a new generation. . . . Robert Heppener's musical score intensifies the elegiac quality of this small masterpiece, and we can only wait with hopefulness for Weisz's first feature, now in production.—ALBERT JOHNSON

The Tiger and The Pussycat is a perfect example of an interesting script that is destroyed by its production and direction. The screenplay, by two Italians, is a serio-comic depiction of a married man's uncontrollable desire for a teen-age bitch, but the producer and director seem to be working under orders to make it look playful and bland and they seem to have obeyed these orders with a vengeance. The explanation might lie in the fact that Mario Cecchi Gori, the producer, and Dino Risi, the director who proved himself a memorable surveyor of manners and morals in *The Easy Life,* have made this film for Joseph E. Levine. Levine is guilty of applying a straitjacket to Mario *(The Organizer)* Monicelli when he directed *Casanova 70* for him. Vittorio Gassman manages, however, an unforgettable realization of the aging lover, but Ann-Margret, who is too old for the teen bitch, plays her with a hot pants vulgarity that could make you vomit.—RAYMOND BANACKI

The Trip is Roger Corman's groovy drama of Peter Fonda's expanding consciousness. There's too much to praise in the movie: the subtle poetry of Fonda's sincere-bearded guide alluding to the Beatles' "Turn off your mind, relax and float downstream—this is thorazine"; the convincing realism of the gelatin of the capsule in which Fonda droops his acid; the astounding clarity of long-shots of a smog-free Los Angeles; the originality of such gems of dialogue as "You're really getting into some beautiful stuff, man"; the kick of seeing Hollywood extras join Bruce Conner in passing a joint in 35mm widescreen; beautiful stoned starlets, and Susan Strasberg too, writhing ecstatically in paisleyed passion; and most of all, special psychedelic visual effects by Charlatan Productions, Inc.: a virtual anthology of techniques drawn from the most daring experiments of the underground film of three years ago. The film is of course not flawless. One scene, in a laundromat, is insufficiently groovy; its misplaced humanity is a real drag. The cameraman has also erred in photographing one shot, of Fonda sliding out of frame on a sand-dune, in a jarringly sensitive manner. At several moments in the film, the music fails to reflect the general tone of the work. However, on balance we must credit *The Trip* as an astonishing achievement: a full-length film on LSD seen exclusively through Hollywood's plastic bag.—SEU DO NIM

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK, contd.

he writes for *National Review* and other publications. STEPHEN FARBER is now studying films at UCLA. DENNIS HUNT is a student at Berkeley. WILLIAM JOHNSON is British by origin, and formerly lived in Paris. MARGOT KERNAN now lives in Washington, D.C. MAX KOZLOFF is an art critic whose writing appears in *Artforum* and other journals. TOVE NEVILLE is a poet and science writer; after living in Berkeley, she is now in Denmark. GRAHAM PETRIE is British, and teaches at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. SU DO NIM is a Vietnamese acid-head now resident in Berkeley. JAN ZALMAN is a Czech critic who has been actively concerned with the Czechoslovak film industry for many years.

JACQUES JOLY

Between Theater and Life: Jean Renoir and *Rules of the Game*

There are two ways of approaching *Rules of the Game*. One can apply oneself to the *structure* of the film, analyze its dramatic scheme, note its resemblances to the comedies of Marivaux, Beaumarchais's *Marriage of Figaro* and Musset's *Marianne*. Thus the film appears tied to an artistic tradition, which is why Jean de Baroncelli insists on its "French" character, and Michel Cournot finds in it "a far more beautiful Marivaux, a living Marivaux." Critics on the left, however, have chiefly emphasized the social and historical *content* of the film. For Georges Sadoul, *Rules of the Game* "was the film of an era"; for Samuel Lachize, "the prelude to the death of a world." It seems to me that the film is original precisely for the connection it makes between a traditional theatrical structure and a new content, and for the way it articulates their relation. For *Rules of the Game* is the one film in a thousand where the study of a given milieu is inseparable from a particular dramatic scheme: in it, artistic reflection is on a par with historical analysis.

Renoir's project was clear: to perform the "autopsy" of the bourgeoisie in crisis, to record the proof positive of a class overwhelmed by the events in Europe. "When I made *Rules of the Game*," Renoir writes, "I knew where I had to go. I knew the disease that was eating my contemporaries. That doesn't mean that I knew how I could give a clear idea of this disease in my film. But my instinct guided me." Thus Renoir's film was intended, in his own words, as "an exact description of the bourgeois of the time." Directly, then, *Rules of the Game* is given as a totality; each of its characters becomes part of a whole and thereby acquires his significance. Thus, the secondary figures in the film form a survey of the bourgeois society of

Translated from *La Nouvelle Critique*, No. 168 (July-Aug. 1965) by permission; copyright 1965 by *La Nouvelle Critique*.

the time: through M. and Mme. de la Bruyère, the aristocrats of La Colinière are connected with the new industrialists from Turcoing; the homosexual, the South American diplomat, the retired general give us a rapid view of a certain society. Some remarks by the servants recall the antisemitism of the time; the crowd's enthusiasm for André Jurieu's exploit appears as a compensation for the humiliation of Munich. One thing is striking in Renoir's description: the allusive character of the references to contemporary history, together with the schematization of the secondary characters, who recall the puppet-figures of conventional social criticism. The industrialists, Saint-Aubain, and the general could appear as they are in the satirical comedies of Jean Anouilh, *Ardèle* for example; and points as important as antisemitism or Munich are entrusted to a simple remark or an indirect allusion. Renoir's intention is, then, not to analyze the society of the time objectively, from outside, but to put together stroke by stroke—by reducing each character to his essential significance within the whole—an image of the bourgeois class which is capable of revealing its contradictions.

Locating his film in a History, Renoir at the same time proceeds to define the essential characteristics of that History: the world of *Rules of the Game* is a world of falsehood. "Everybody lies," Octave tells Christine, "medical products, governments, the radio . . ." The theme of the film is that of a collective lie: the ruling class's lie to the masses, the bourgeoisie's lie to itself. La Chesnaye lies to his wife, who lies to herself; Lisette lies to Schumacher and Geneviève to Christine. Individual duplicity here symbolizes the elevation of the lie to the status of an institution. Sincerity is impossible; it would challenge the foundations of an order. In the scene of the evening party at the château, Renoir casts over this world a shadow of what awaits it. When the guests of the château, in Tyrolese costumes, sing an old patriotic army song, their derision of the army brutally reveals the willful blindness and frantic need for diversion that characterize a disillusioned and skeptical bourgeoisie. And over this gathering, who are dancing on a powder-keg, passes, for an instant, the wing of death. Saint-Saëns's *danse macabre* leads the guests into a dance of death they have prepared with their own hand.

This world, which is pushing France to catastrophe, still holds together only because it has turned in upon itself; it endures only on its own momentum. The structure of Renoir's film was thus dictated by its intentions. Renoir had to find a dramatic scheme that would serve at once as the symbol of this closed universe and the translation of its desire for diversion. He found it in a parallel development of the plot, at the level of the masters and at that of the servants. The film is given as an organic whole, whose different elements acquire their meaning only in reciprocal relation. The schematic and sometimes mechanical aspect of the plot, the "lie" of its structure, translate exactly the "lie" upheld by the characters, in a world itself founded on falsehood. The film is a game that ends in death, just as the bourgeoisie of France was playing with what was to be the ruin of the country. We now understand why the social and historical references remain allusive in character: Renoir enters into the game of the propertied class in order to expose its contradictions *from within*. *Rules of the Game* is above all a "critical" film, which recomposes a class reality using a dramatic scheme capable of appealing to the viewer's intelligence.

The structure of *Rules of the Game* recalls that of Marivaux's comedies, *The Game of Love and Chance* for example, with the exception that in Renoir there is no substitution of servants for masters and vice versa: only Schumacher's final error recalls the disguised identities in Marivaux. Moreover, Marivaux's play is directly referred to in the maid's name, Lisette, and in the film's title. On the other hand, the "mad evening" at La Colinière is treated like the "mad night" in the last act of *The Marriage of Figaro*, and the film opens with a quotation ironically recalling the psychological and sentimental imbroglio of Beaumarchais's comedy. And finally, the name Octave, and the exchange

between Christine de La Chesnaye and Octave in the greenhouse refer clearly to Musset's *Marianne*. Yet Renoir's film is radically different from the works of these three authors, and the explicit recall of Beaumarchais, supposedly the prelude to a sentimental comedy (*"Si l'amour a des ailes, n'est-ce pas pour voltiger?"*), actually constitutes an ironic invitation not to look for sentimental variations in the film, not to be fooled by the appearances Renoir has momentarily adopted the better to make us see. The similarity to Beaumarchais then concerns, not the particular meaning of the film, but the lucidity of Renoir, the intellectual faced with a world in crisis. Indeed, whereas Marivaux, Beaumarchais and Musset present their plays basically as a "geography of the heart" and a poetics of sentiment, Renoir's point of departure is on the contrary a reflection on the notion of class, so that the film in a way "historicizes" the conventional scheme of these comedies.

In *Rules of the Game*, each character is in strict solidarity with the class he belongs to. What is more, each social category contains in its margins a certain number of satellites—declassed individuals or parasites—opposed to those individuals who are perfectly integrated in the system. This is the case of Jurieu, who is seldom allowed to forget that he lacks wealth, or of Octave, who amuses the bourgeois to live on their charity. But here we must further distinguish between Octave, the failed artist, definitively deprived of a social status and altogether "alienated" from the propertied bourgeoisie, and Jurieu, the pilot, whose personal merit may give him access to a class he doesn't belong to by origin. If we now analyze the relationship of the different groups within the whole, we find that each group is opposed to a sub-group: the bourgeois to the servants, and the servants to Marceau, the poacher, the type of the outlaw (of the sub-proletarian, as it were), who himself dreams of finding his place in a system that rejects him—of becoming a servant, "on account of their costume." Within the world of the servants, moreover, we find the counterpart of Jurieu and Octave in the character of Schumacher, who is only a subordinate in relation to Lisette, the lady's maid, or Corneille, the house steward. So the relationship of the different social categories is clear: Renoir shows us a closed world where each group is totally alienated from the one next above it. Marceau dreams of a "costume"; Lisette is above all "Madame's personal maid," and consents to her marital status only so long as her position is guaranteed: "Leave Madame's service? I'd rather divorce!"

Indeed, in *Rules of the Game*, each character would rather "divorce" than cease to be what he is. The lesson of the film will be that one doesn't gain entry to a class if one is outside it. Jurieu's death, the departure of Octave and the dismissal of Marceau are necessary, from the moment they set eyes on what is beyond their reach. The film is a closed circuit; no real story appears in it, because it is really the film of a non-story. The more the plot unfolds, the closer we come to the starting point—a characteristic regression in a film in which rigid class structure permits no narrative development outside its closed system. The principal characters in *Rules of the Game* therefore cannot be human and are entitled to a personal story only *up to a certain point*. Not the least of the film's merits is this balance between individual elements and class traits in La Chesnaye or Christine, this way of dialectically constructing a character at once as a type and as an individual.

The Marquis de La Chesnaye is presented from the first as a psychological case. A certain awkwardness, inseparable from his aristocratic polish, suggests the presence of a secret beneath his façade of good breeding. His unexpected timidity with his wife, his inability to refuse anything to anyone (whether Geneviève de Marrast, Lisette, or Marceau), the repressed sensitivity which only finds expression in his passion for music-boxes, betray a fundamental inadaptation, a sort of guilt complex. The servants' dinner conversation gives us the key to his character: the Marquis is a "foreigner." The Semitic origins of this character, the sense that they constitute a social blemish, account

in part for the sensitivity of the Marquis, which culminates with the presentation of the music-box to his guests, and in the scene in which he dismisses Marceau and Schumacher. Similarly, Christine de La Chesnaye is distant kin to the countess in *The Marriage of Figaro.* She is a stranger to the world to which she belongs at once by birth and by her Austrian origin, and has remained nostalgic for her "bohemian" childhood. The character of Christine perhaps recalls certain stage heroines from the 1930's, for example Anouilh's "wild woman." Renoir's skill consists in interesting the viewer in his characters, appealing to sentiment if need be, without ever abolishing a critical distance, a parallel reflection which gives the work its sense. We are introduced into this bourgeois world in order that we may discover its vanity and falsehood. Renoir's attitude toward the protagonists of his drama recalls Brecht's toward his character Puntila, although it is more flexible: La Chesnaye and Christine may be human, but they are no less bound to their class interest. Their humanity has been merely apparent; it has never endangered their class logic.*

Thus, Renoir lends his bourgeois protagonists an individual story only to dissolve it in the collective analysis of a class. In a certain sense, Christine and La Chesnaye have no right to a story; their adventure can unfold only in a false temporality, outside of real history. *Rules of the Game* is a "game of love and history" in which the former term is gradually engulfed by the latter—a privileged moment of diversion outside of a history which is soon to destroy it. For this reason, viewers who laugh when Christine changes her feelings for the fourth time and confesses her love to Octave in the very words of Musset's Marianne are wrong to have expected a psychological coherency which is not among the film's intentions. The only logic of this work is a social one: Christine hesitates because, like Musset's heroine, but for different reasons, she is not really engaged in her feelings as she is in her social function. *Rules of the Game* is, then, not the story of a few characters, but more profoundly, through their lack of a story, the story of a class in crisis. At the end of the film, La Chesnaye and Christine have taken their proper place in their world in spite of their individual characteristics. *Rules of the Game* is the story of a class which discovers its solidarity.

Of course, this story Renoir tells us is not the "real" story of the French ruling class. As in *Grand Illusion* and *La Marseillaise,* Renoir's viewpoint remains that of a moralist. Where one might have expected an analysis of the reasons (and, no doubt, the limits) of the confused French reaction to Hitler, Renoir gives us only a portrait of this confusion. Besides, the characters in *Rules of the Game* are never presented as representative of the ruling class. They simply belong to the propertied class; and La Chesnaye and Saint-Aubain are aristocrats, who do not represent the properly active segment of the class in power. Therefore we must not extend the film's historical scope into regions it never risks entering. It is far from certain that the bourgeoisie had everything to lose in the war of 1940; it may be that Renoir's film sidesteps determinant factors in the policies of the French government. The film should be considered in its true dimension: the critique of certain more or less hypocritical values which have been swept away by the war. The crisis Renoir depicts is, then, a crisis of moral values, which does not prejudge the real destiny of the French bourgeoisie during and after the war. The character of La Chesnaye is merely an extreme case, enabling Renoir to strike the balance of the moral state of the French at the end of the Popular Front. Consequently, to call *Rules of the Game* the story of a class is simply to infer the lesson of the film on the moral level, and from Renoir's own point of view. Renoir has written: "I want

* Renoir is even clever enough to give La Chesnaye a hobby which is strictly dependent on his social position. The music-boxes are an image of that harmoniously ordered universe which is the ideal of the propertied class. Thus, even when La Chesnaye seems to touch our sentiments most closely, critical reflection should lead us back to the film's real subject.

to show that every game has its rules. If you play it differently, you lose your match." Thus Jurieu pays with his life for having tried to upset a rigorous order. The class, momentarily threatened, re-establishes its unity.

Renoir has discovered, beneath a complex of moral values endangered by the war, the profound cohesion of a class for which "appearance" is founded in a "reality," which continues to live (and perhaps to threaten) beneath the apparent crisis of moral values which concealed it. Here we reach the threshold which Renoir, for obvious reasons, could not dare to cross. Nevertheless, Renoir's film is not solely that trial of a closed world, that autopsy of a class in crisis which we mentioned at the outset: the bourgeois rules obeyed by the guests at La Colinière are not depicted as a vain and hollow style of life. Renoir has made us sensitive to the latent violence contained in this social structure, at both the individual and the collective level. After his scuffle with Jurieu, La Chesnaye affirms: "Whenever I'd read that a Spanish bricklayer had killed a Polish miner, I thought that such things weren't possible in our world. Well, they are, my friend! They are possible! . . ." But Renoir's film is not limited to satirically exposing the apparent "polish" of a social category which has sought to impose its own order; it also translates, into direct language, the potential for violence belonging to a class threatened in its very existence. In the hunting scene, the hard faces, a certain "family" resemblance, made up of seriousness and cruelty, unites all the hunters, beyond particularities and individual dissensions, in a sort of collective rite, a class's propitiating sacrifice. This clearly symbolic hunt illustrates the deeply rooted solidarity of the propertied class, its ability to sustain its "sacred union" to the point of crime as soon as a foreign element threatens to shake it. Only Octave, by virtue of his origin, remains on the margin of the collective rite, while Christine, though she admits her disgust at hunting, doesn't dare to rebel completely against a world which will eventually absorb her for good. Ultimately, Renoir's lesson is that deep beneath the ridiculous surface of bourgeois proprieties lies a logic, a vital necessity. At the end of the film, it is the general (the most amusing, apparently the least dangerous of the guests at the château, and hence the most suited to express the common opinion of a class) who has the last word. The last resort of this world is to safeguard its unity, its rules: "This La Chesnaye has class, and that's getting rare, my friend, that's getting rare."

A study of *Rules of the Game* would not be complete if we did not situate this work in the history of Jean Renoir himself; we are especially invited to do so by the problematics of this film, above all by the complex character of Octave. In a certain sense—leaving aside *La Bête humaine*, in which Renoir turns again to the work of Zola and the problem of a popular cinema—one can consider *Rules of the Game* as the last part of a trilogy begun by *Grand Illusion* and *La Marseillaise*. Each of these films is closely connected with its contemporary historical problems; together they constitute, beyond the diversity of themes and times, a reflection upon the continuity of a history, which illuminates, and is illuminated by, the atmosphere of 1935–39. In *Grand Illusion*, Renoir, faced with the menace of Nazism, affirms his faith in certain human values, which become so many calls to reason addressed to the German people. The end of the film calls for a collaboration of all classes and all nations to safeguard peace. In *La Marseillaise*, Renoir exalts the union of all Frenchmen in the name of the values proposed by the Popular Front. Even the Coblenz émigrés are entitled to the director's sympathy: even in error, they are still patriots who believed they were serving their country. *Grand Illusion* and *La Marseillaise* thus participate, to different extents, in a political optimism whose idealistic character history would soon expose. When Renoir began making *Rules of the Game*, the Nazi menace had become a reality, the Popular Front had crumbled, and the Munich agreements had consecrated the bankruptcy of the Third Republic: France, "relieved," breathed again, but for how long? It is therefore not surprising that

the positive perspective, the optimistic vision of the first two films gave way, in the third, to an internal critique of the class in power: without abandoning the moralist viewpoint of his first two films, Renoir now analyzed the bankruptcy of certain moral values, the "lie" of a world gasping for breath. We have seen that this pessimistic viewpoint is what dictated Renoir's choice of a closed structure and his references to *The Marriage of Figaro,* also the product of a contradictory period and a menaced world. Political reflection is thus necessarily doubled by a reflection upon the French theatrical tradition, on the significance of a cultural and literary heritage, on the role of the artist in a society in crisis.

Already in his first films, Renoir had shown his taste for the *commedia dell' arte,* his wish to think over the significance of traditional theatrical structures and the role of the actor within a work. In *Rules of the Game,* artistic reflection and critical satire are combined: the study of past art is particularly appropriate to the description of a world incapable of reflecting upon present history. Art then takes constant refuge in a complex of rules inherited from the past, and recollects its former grandeur. The character of Octave "polarizes" the elements of this reflection, and at the same time poses the problem of the artist in society, and perhaps even (in terms less immediate but still present in the film) the problem of the relationship of the creator to his work.

What does Octave represent in *Rules of the Game?* We have remarked his position as an outsider to the bourgeois world, analogous to Marceau's exclusion from the world of the servants. Is Octave then merely the latest avatar of the character (traditional in French cinema of the period: consider the sailor in *L'Atalante*) of the likeable vagabond, the anarchist, opposed to the fossilized world of the bourgeoisie? This character exists in Renoir films previous to *Rules of the Game:* he is most fully personified, and virtually theorized, in the tramp hero of *Boudu Saved from Drowning.* Yet Renoir did not choose to entrust the role of Octave to Michel Simon, the unifying figure

RULES OF THE GAME

of Vigo's *L'Atalante* and the hero of Renoir's own *Boudu* and *La Chienne.* The figure of Octave, which at first has certain traits in common with that of Boudu (minus the grotesque), acquired an original significance once Renoir decided to play the part himself. Critics, to the present day, have often said that Renoir acts the part badly. This judgment implies a relative understanding, to a certain extent, of the significance of Renoir's rendition of Octave. Octave's part is played, not badly, but *differently* from the other parts. Renoir's acting, free from all constraint in its gestures, from the bourgeois proprieties, partakes of an immediate humanity and brings life into the cinematic fiction. Octave's character is thus enriched with a freedom of expression, including even redundancy and exaggeration, which belongs to him alone, whereas the other characters in the film remain the tributaries, even in expressing their personal feelings, of a certain "language" appropriate to their social position. The conventions which determine their physical and verbal expression objectively reveal their social conditioning, and

prepare the conclusion of the film. Octave, on the contrary, is constantly inventing, repeating himself and correcting himself. Renoir improvises each scene from a succinct basic idea, in the manner of the *commedia dell' arte,* but using a real inventiveness, far removed from the characteristic conventions of the eighteenth century's "comedy of art." Renoir's reflection upon the work of the actor, already present in *Nana* and *Boudu,* here ends in the ultimate opposition between life and social convention, between the unexpected and the predetermined.

Such a freedom of expression is altogether appropriate to Octave's status as outsider in *Rules of the Game.* His lack of class affiliation enables him to serve as connecting link between the different social categories: "Monsieur Octave" can embrace Lisette as well as Christine, and trigger the dramatic mechanism by introducing Jurieu into this closed world. Octave thus will lead the game; without him, the film would not exist. In reference to our earlier analysis, we can say that Octave brings the semblance of a story into a world which has no individual right to one. Yet this apparent leader will be the dupe of the others in many respects: because Octave is free, the other characters in the film, conscious of their social conditions, will make use of his freedom to give themselves a story they cannot have. Octave's apparent freedom is thus illusory: he is the slave of the others even while he seems to be leading the game. In fact Octave is merely an idealist, who wrongly insists on seeing the bourgeois around him as individuals. The film's job will be to force him to see the true face of his "friends" and the limits of his own freedom. At the end of the film, Octave discovers he has been the dupe of the others and of himself. He is the only character in the film to evolve (indeed the only one able to evolve); he is the only one really to have a story.

The viewer must not therefore become the dupe of Octave. He must be sensitive to this character's complexity; he must tell when Octave is the persona of the author and when he has himself fallen into the trap of a certain society. On several occasions, Octave invites us to adopt a critical distance from the story we are watching; sometimes he even explains the author's intentions, particularly in his monologue on lies. But Octave is not Renoir. His lucidity is not without blind spots; he lets himself be trapped for a while by his feelings for Christine, even thinks of taking her away. In the long balcony scene before the conclusion of the film, Octave reveals his secret to Christine: he is a failed artist; his "bohemian" air actually conceals an artistic inadequacy. In the figure of this musician who could not confront his responsibility to a public, Renoir thus gives us the portrait of the creator who has miscarried. Octave could never gain his independence as an artist; he is, in a sense, "alienated" from the class that keeps him alive. Far from being a Figaro, far from being Musset's Octave, "Monsieur" Octave on the contrary represents everything that Jean Renoir, as an artist, has avoided becoming: a man of the ruling class, the clown who, beneath a satiric exterior, remains in fact the lackey of capitalism. Here, Octave's role in the structure of the film takes on another meaning. Octave, we thought, brought an individual story into the game as long as he seemed to be leading it; now that story proves a lie, and turns against the two pariahs. His "story" betrays in fact the pseudo-artist's nostalgia for creation: he "stages scenes" in life to make up for those he cannot realize as a creator. Through the character of Octave, Renoir in a sense exercises the temptation to let the man precede the artist; the true freedom of Renoir consists in the distance he constantly adopts toward the established order, in order to criticize it or, at the very least, to satirize it.

The fact that Renoir, the director, has entrusted the role of Octave to Renoir, the man, anticipates the problems of the author's relation to his work as it is currently represented by certain tendencies of contemporary criticism and prose fiction. By focusing the problems of the creative artist in the character of Octave, and by deciding to play the film's essential part himself, Renoir attempts to find the cinematic equivalent of those types of fictional narrative

in which the problem of the creator is closely bound to the ideological content and the formal elements of the work: the viewer is invited to the performance of a work (the "game") whose author (Octave) is himself challenged by the director, who constantly establishes a distance between the film as spectacle and the film as reflection.

To conclude this study, it remains to be noted that the perfect fusion of critical and dramatic elements which we have tried to analyze in *Rules of the Game,* and which can also be found in *Grand Illusion, La Marseillaise,* or *Toni,* is characteristic of the films of Renoir before his period of exile in America. The years he spent in the United States accentuated his taste for plastic creation and reflection upon artistic tradition. In *The Diary of a Chambermaid, The Golden Coach, French Cancan,* and *Elena et les hommes,* we find a structure, a direction of actors, a taste for the "theater" which recall those of *Rules of the Game,* but the director has moved gradually towards a cinema of "diversion" (in the most generous sense of the word), towards a universe of form, color, and *brio,* in which the "game" element has decisively prevailed over critical reflection. In Renoir's earlier films, moreover, in *Nana, Madame Bovary, Boudu,* and as far as *La Chienne* or *The Lower Depths,* the appeal of the theater as diversion lent to the acting and direction a freedom, an inventiveness, a refusal of cinematic convention which we have come to associate with Renoir's name. But to this "baroque" Renoir, one may prefer those works in which the director has rooted the formal elements in a concrete reality and has thought out this reality in terms of spectacle, rather than giving the appearance of life to essentially theatrical material.

(Translated by Randall Conrad)

GRAHAM PETRIE

The Films of Sidney Lumet: Adaptation as Art

Georges Sadoul's comment on *Twelve Angry Men* in his *Dictionnaire des films* provides an accurate reflection of the attitude many critics take toward, not just this film, but all of Lumet's films to date: "Unity of place, action and time: an excellent film whose success is due more to its writer (Reginald Rose) and its principal actor (Henry Fonda) than to its director, Lumet, who was adapting a television play." According to this view, Lumet is an intelligent, sensitive interpreter of other people's work, who is most successful when he keeps himself in the background and confines himself to unobtrusive direction of actors and creation of atmosphere; unfortunately he is not always content to limit himself to this, and the result, it is claimed, is that his films are too often flawed by stylistic pretentiousness and technical gimmickery, leading to a loss of artistic control at climactic moments. The charge of stylistic failure is often complemented by the accusation that the emotional tone of films like *Fail Safe, The Pawnbroker* and *The Hill* is destroyed or disrupted by hysteria, rhetoric, and a barrage of liberal clichés.

These criticisms, however, are usually accompanied by a rather puzzled acknowledgment that Lumet is nevertheless a talented,

in which the problem of the creator is closely bound to the ideological content and the formal elements of the work: the viewer is invited to the performance of a work (the "game") whose author (Octave) is himself challenged by the director, who constantly establishes a distance between the film as spectacle and the film as reflection.

To conclude this study, it remains to be noted that the perfect fusion of critical and dramatic elements which we have tried to analyze in *Rules of the Game,* and which can also be found in *Grand Illusion, La Marseillaise,* or *Toni,* is characteristic of the films of Renoir before his period of exile in America. The years he spent in the United States accentuated his taste for plastic creation and reflection upon artistic tradition. In *The Diary of a Chambermaid, The Golden Coach, French Cancan,* and *Elena et les hommes,* we find a structure, a direction of actors, a taste for the "theater" which recall those of *Rules of the Game,* but the director has moved gradually towards a cinema of "diversion" (in the most generous sense of the word), towards a universe of form, color, and *brio,* in which the "game" element has decisively prevailed over critical reflection. In Renoir's earlier films, moreover, in *Nana, Madame Bovary, Boudu,* and as far as *La Chienne* or *The Lower Depths,* the appeal of the theater as diversion lent to the acting and direction a freedom, an inventiveness, a refusal of cinematic convention which we have come to associate with Renoir's name. But to this "baroque" Renoir, one may prefer those works in which the director has rooted the formal elements in a concrete reality and has thought out this reality in terms of spectacle, rather than giving the appearance of life to essentially theatrical material.

(Translated by Randall Conrad)

GRAHAM PETRIE

The Films of Sidney Lumet: Adaptation as Art

Georges Sadoul's comment on *Twelve Angry Men* in his *Dictionnaire des films* provides an accurate reflection of the attitude many critics take toward, not just this film, but all of Lumet's films to date: "Unity of place, action and time: an excellent film whose success is due more to its writer (Reginald Rose) and its principal actor (Henry Fonda) than to its director, Lumet, who was adapting a television play." According to this view, Lumet is an intelligent, sensitive interpreter of other people's work, who is most successful when he keeps himself in the background and confines himself to unobtrusive direction of actors and creation of atmosphere; unfortunately he is not always content to limit himself to this, and the result, it is claimed, is that his films are too often flawed by stylistic pretentiousness and technical gimmickery, leading to a loss of artistic control at climactic moments. The charge of stylistic failure is often complemented by the accusation that the emotional tone of films like *Fail Safe, The Pawnbroker* and *The Hill* is destroyed or disrupted by hysteria, rhetoric, and a barrage of liberal clichés.

These criticisms, however, are usually accompanied by a rather puzzled acknowledgment that Lumet is nevertheless a talented,

sensitive, intelligent film-maker, whose work deserves to be taken seriously. Most critics seem to sense that something about Lumet's films commands respect, or ought to; yet there seem to be too many obstacles in the way of wholehearted recognition of him as a first-rate director. I would suggest that this kind of difficulty is to a large extent the result of a certain confusion about the nature of adaptation in the cinema. On the one hand, there seems to be an assumption that a film which remains very faithful to the dramatic work it is derived from is somehow "easy" to make. As a result of this, Lumet has been given less than credit for his achievement in *Twelve Angry Men* and *Long Day's Journey into Night:* the director is given a perfunctory pat on the back, and critics reserve their acclaim for the performances of the actors. On the other hand, in films where Lumet has taken rather more liberties with his source—such as *The Pawnbroker* and *The Deadly Affair*—there has, I think, been a failure to realize that he has evolved a coherent visual style which captures the essence of the original text while translating it successfully into cinematic terms. There are, of course, many great films which take a novel or play merely as their starting point, and proceed to ransack or distort it in order to assimilate it completely to the directors' personal style and outlook. Lumet's method is less glamorous, but, as André Bazin has pointed out in *What is Cinema?*, it can be much more difficult, and it requires a thorough understanding and control of the film medium. A faithful adaptation of a play is never the result of accident or luck; it requires the choice of a style which respects both the integrity of the text and the limitations which fidelity to the words imposes. This style need not necessarily be a naturalistic one, and it is often better if it is not: the structure and words of the original play were organized to suit certain spatial limitations, and the film must therefore find equivalent restrictions in spatial movement and setting if it is to retain the authenticity created by the original text. To "open the film up," therefore, as most directors of theatrical adaptations do, is a fatal mistake. The result of exploiting the cinema's indifference to spatial limitations and its ability to create completely realistic settings is not realism but incongruity, and a slackening of dramatic consistency and tension. A successful cinematic adaptation of a play, therefore, is one which replaces one set of conventions by another, not one which tries to substitute a superficial visual realism for the restrictions of the stage.

It is the great merit of *Twelve Angry Men* (1957) and *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (1962) that Lumet has thoroughly understood this and has therefore avoided almost all the pitfalls usually associated with "filmed theater." His two other major theatrical adaptations—*A View from the Bridge* and *The Fugitive Kind*—are less successful, and represent the opposite side of the coin to the advantages that can be gained from faithful adaptation of an original source, for where the source is itself badly flawed as drama, the film is bound to inherit these weaknesses. Both films, however, seem to me to be interesting and to have received less than justice from the critics. In both cases, Lumet has done his best to tone down the weaknesses of the original, and, at the very least, each film seems to me to be an improvement on the original play.

However, Lumet's main achievement in dramatic adaptation lies in *Twelve Angry Men* and *Long Day's Journey into Night.* No one would attempt to argue that the original script of *Twelve Angry Men* is in itself a great work of art; in fact when the original television play was produced on the stage in London a few years ago, critics found it facile and unexciting—most of them comparing it unfavorably with their memories of the film. It does, however, lack the basic flaws of, for example, *A View from the Bridge;* it is thoroughly competent, but uninspired—an ideal example of a second-rate work of art which can be transformed into a first-rate one by skillful adaptation to another medium. The "message" of the play, which survives into the film, now seems to many people dated and obvious, though it is worth remembering that the film offers no assump-

tions either way as to the guilt of the boy on trial. Its conclusion is that, guilty or innocent, he deserves at least a fair hearing, and prejudice is by no means so completely eradicated from American society as to make this a question of fighting battles already won.

The whole action of the film, apart from the opening and closing sequences, takes place in the jury room and the washroom adjoining it. This could easily have led to a fatal tediousness and monotony; Lumet avoids this, not by attempting to escape the limitations of the setting (e.g., by flashbacks) but by working fruitfully within them. He exploits and emphasizes the restricted space of the film to underline the tensions and clashes caused by the opposing viewpoints and personalities of the characters. The oppressive atmosphere of the film is created largely by the spatial restrictions, emphasized periodically by reminders of the sultry, brooding summer weather outside, and finally dissolved in the last sequence, outside the courthouse, where the audience shares in the physical sensation of freshness and release felt by the jurymen as they are at last allowed to leave. Inside the external closed world which the film creates, the inner horizons of the characters, dominated by prejudice, fear, and ignorance, are gradually extended. The structure of the film is made up of a series of small encounters, between individuals and groups, where the clash of personalities builds up to a climax, then relapses into lethargy or muted triumph. The rhythm of these encounters is carefully correlated with our increasing awareness of the spatial restrictions of the jury room, from which there is no escape until agreement is reached, and the reminders of the outside world during the pauses of slackened tension. The camera continually underlines the moral tensions of the situation, moving in to close-up as an individual is forced to come to terms with his own beliefs and prejudices, isolating the various conflicting groupings in medium-shot, slipping back to long-shot as the men relax in exhaustion after each encounter. It is through a brilliant manipulation of this kind of cinematic rhythm that Lumet obtains his effects, creating an unforgettable atmosphere of tension, hatred, fear, prejudice and exhaustion.

A similar effect, though on a much deeper emotional and intellectual level, is achieved in *Long Day's Journey into Night*. Praise for the film has normally centered round the performances of the four actors; superb though these are, however, they would have counted for little if Lumet had not found the exact cinematic equivalent for the dramatic world created by O'Neill. Once again, this is done, not by avoiding limitations, but by finding the exact visual correspondences for them. The film begins outside, in sunshine and open air; a faint suggestion of unreality is created which is dramatically appropriate, for the real life of these characters is to be found in the emotional hell they create for themselves within the confines of the house. Once the film moves inside the house it never leaves it, and Lumet takes care to emphasize the spatial restrictions of the rooms and furniture among which the family move. The characters are trapped, forced into physical proximity to each other whether they wish it or not (the brief escapes of Jamie and Mary Tyrone—which we do not follow—end inevitably in a return to the Tyrone living room). By accepting the spatial limitations imposed by the play, Lumet manages to create an atmosphere in which O'Neill's rhetorical language is completely appropriate and where the stylization of the text is in no danger of working against the naturalism one normally associates with the cinema.

Within the limitations imposed by this framework Lumet uses the camera as a means

TWELVE ANGRY MEN

of creating and developing the relationships between the characters. The camera moves freely when required, but he is not afraid to film many of the speeches from a purely static set-up, with the result that the camerawork is never a distraction from the vigor and meaning of the language—as is often the case in other films of plays. Instead Lumet uses the camera to underline the emotional tone of the dialogue, isolating the characters from one another through close-ups, joining them together for brief moments of harmony and understanding, distancing them and studying them dispassionately during the pauses of drained and exhausted vitality which, as in *Twelve Angry Men,* punctuate the series of emotional clashes which constitute the structure of the film. Even the few moments of virtuoso camerawork are used, not to escape the spatial restrictions of the setting, but to emphasize them. The 360° pan which watches Mary Tyrone pace round the living room like a caged beast early in the film emphasizes both the physical and mental traps in which she finds herself. Later in the film, the camera watches Mary come down the stairs dressed in her wedding grown; still immobile it sees her move away towards the kitchen; then, as the camera tracks left into the livingroom, a wall hides her for a moment from sight, and once again we are reminded of the physical limitations within which she moves. One result of this is that, even without dialogue, one could follow the emotional progression of the film, and catch the emotional tone, simply from the way in which the camera moves among the characters, creating a relationship based on tension, fear, suspicion, jealousy, and a bewildered groping towards love and understanding.

Throughout the film the camera is used subjectively, to create atmosphere and to suggest emotional states; it is not merely a dispassionate recorder of events. It is because of this that the brilliant last scene is so astonishingly effective. The whole film is "poetic" in the sense of the term established by Pasolini (*Cahiers du Cinéma,* No. 171): we are made aware of the presence of the camera interpreting events from a subjective point of view by means of close-ups, long-shots, high- and low-angle shots, tracking shots, and so on. We are reminded too of the artificial limitations imposed on the action by the setting. As these limitations are arbitrary, chosen to suit the style of the film, they can be emphasized, and they can also be, when necessary, transcended, as they are in the last scene. The four characters are seated round a table in their living room; as Mary Tyrone's closing monologue begins, the naturalistic lighting changes to illumination from a light immediately above the table, which leaves the rest of the room in total darkness. The windows to their left are illuminated occasionally, but not regularly, by what might be either the beam of a lighthouse or the lights of passing cars (the effect is, again, deliberately artificial). As Mary speaks, reminiscing of her childhood and her lost happiness, the camera tracks endlessly away from them; furniture, doors, walls are nowhere to be seen and now no longer exist. The characters are caught in the pool of light and surrounded by darkness; they seem to exist now in a world all of their own. The tracking movement continues till almost the end of Mary's speech: then, with the words "That was in the winter of senior year," there is a cut to a close-up of her which is held till the closing line ("I fell in love with James Tyrone and was so happy for a time"); this is followed by a close-up of each of the other characters in turn; and then there is a cut back to extreme long-shot, showing the family again round the table and the light outside flashing on and off.* Although this last speech is already one of the most moving in all drama, it is made even more effective by the cinematic treatment. Just as the camera

* Many people feel that the cut at this point destroys the emotional effect which the endlessly tracking camera has carefully built up. In an interview in *Films and Filming* (June, 1965) Lumet makes an ambiguous comment which could be taken to mean that the editing at this point was imposed upon him and he disagrees with it. It is more likely, however, to mean simply that the editors wanted to break up the whole shot with cuts

has previously *created* the emotional relationship between the characters, now it sums them up for us: we are shown Mary's loneliness and isolation from her family; the isolation of each of them from the others; the family's complete withdrawal from the outside world; and finally the fragile unity which still keeps them together to torment and comfort each other. The effect is quiet, compassionate, and almost unbearably moving. It is this intelligent and restrained use of cinematic resources which makes *Long Day's Journey into Night* Lumet's best film, and one of the greatest films of the past decade.

All of Lumet's films since this one have been adapted from novels rather than plays. The problems of adaptation are thus rather different, but they still center round the creation of a viable style which represents accurately the emotions and meaning of the novel.† In *Fail Safe* (1963), his next film, Lumet treats his story of nuclear disaster deliberately as melodrama, but films it in a documentary and naturalistic style which creates an impressive air of authenticity and tension. One of the chief merits of the film is its complete credibility and the intelligence with which it examines various responses to the threat of nuclear war. Although it was made before *Dr. Strangelove,* it was not released until some time after it, and the similarity of the situations presented in the two works led many critics to compare Lumet's film unfavorably with Kubrick's. *Fail Safe* seems to me to be a more frightening film because it is a truer one: it is surely much more honest, and much less simple-minded, to present American military leaders as men who are sincere and straightforward by their own lights, but who are too often incapable of readjusting to changed circumstances, than it does to present them as a collection of rather lovable fools and madmen. The two extremes of "hawk" and "dove" are represented by the scientist Groeteschele and the president. The latter's liberal views are placed in perspective by the arguments and alternatives which surround him; they are not accepted uncritically, and the main point of the film is the terrifying irony of the fact that, despite his good will and good intentions, the president cannot escape from the trap created for him, and is forced to resort to his barbaric expedient at the end of the film to avoid even greater disaster. A further irony arises from the fact that, although the film is hostile to Groeteschele's general position, the president finds himself forced to accept Groeteschele's strategy of nuclear bargaining and calculated risk once the trap has been sprung. The quiet, matter-of-fact style pays off handsomely in inducing the audience to accept the situation, and in creating a set of circumstances where men who do not really want war find themselves forced into it. These two elements come together perfectly in the finest scene in the film, that where the Russian and American generals exchange a few words of friendship—a scene which in its quiet dignity reflects the complete control which Lumet has over his material.

LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT

of this kind, and he resisted them. Either way, the cut to the close-up for these vital lines seems to me appropriate in that it focuses attention first of all on Mary's own loneliness, and then on the isolation of each of the other members of the family. The final move back to extreme long-shot then combines this with our realization that the family group is even further isolated—this time from the outside world. The emotional effect seems to me to be intensified by this means.

† The chief exception to this is *The Group.* Lumet has said that he disliked the book, and the film is his only one to date to use the original source merely as a starting point from which something very dissimilar, at least in tone, is created.

At first sight, it might seem that the bare, restrained style of *Twelve Angry Men, Fail Safe* and *Long Day's Journey into Night* has been submerged in an excess of *Nouvelle Vague* techniques in *The Pawnbroker* (1963) and *The Hill* (1965). *The Pawnbroker* has aroused violent reactions both for and against: some critics have called it one of the most important American films in years; others have condemned it outright as a collection of liberal platitudes dressed up in pretentious stylistic gimmicks. Some of the latter charges may be based on misunderstandings: for example, the fact that the characters in the film make up a varied assortment of races and nationalities does not mean that the film is a pretentious attempt at portraying a microcosm of suffering humanity. It is merely a realistic reflection of actual social conditions in an area of New York which Lumet himself knows very well; and the film is much more narrowly about one man and his experiences than is often assumed, though of course wider implications are, incidentally, involved.

The film is adapted from a novel by Edward Lewis Wallant which is itself emotional and rhetorical in style and tone. Lumet has evolved a visual style which enables him to retain this feature of the original, and which also allows the viewer both to understand Nazerman and to move from an initial position of dislike or hostility to one of compassion. For most of the first half of the film the emphasis is on Nazerman's everyday existence; he behaves with a mixture of callousness and indifference which at first seems strangely over-emphasized. The film, however, has opened with a slow-motion dream sequence which makes us aware that the Nazerman whom we see now is a different person from the Nazerman of the past. As the pawnbroker moves indifferently through the routine of his daily existence, Lumet begins a series of almost subliminal flashbacks which stab Nazerman's daily life and remind him wherever he turns of his experiences in a concentration camp. In the novel, these memories come in the form of dreams; the use of flashbacks, however, is ideally suited to this film, for they constantly present us with the linking together of past and present which is thematically central to it: it is not so much about the pawnbroker's *inability* to forget the past, as his *refusal* to do so. Hence the fact that almost anything in his daily experience can trigger off these memories is not merely a stylistic device, but an indication of the almost willed and deliberate nature of his sufferings.

Nazerman is not intended to be an attractive or a sympathetic character; he is a man who has undergone extreme suffering, but who does not wish to attempt to get over his experiences. He chooses rather to feel that his sufferings set him apart from others, that he can despise and degrade them, and that moral questions are irrelevant (hence the details of his association with the Negro are unimportant; Nazerman has deliberately avoided asking questions and does not care what it is he is involved in). He is a character who forces himself to live at an extreme level and who does not wish anything "normal." The film progresses as a series of traps—the more Nazerman tries to dissociate himself from ordinary life and ordinary emotions, the more his past and present combine to remind him he is still capable of feeling. The flashback technique, which juxtaposes past and present, is perfectly suited to this purpose; one of the most effective sequences is the one which progresses from a scene in the pawnshop through a repetition of the slow-motion sequence which began the film; extends this sequence past the point it ended at when it first appeared, to show the three soldiers who have come to arrest the family; then cuts to the three youths who have appeared in the doorway to rob the pawnshop. Nazerman cannot escape from his past or his present; he would choose to live in the past but the present forces him to take notice of it, and, paradoxically, by learning to accept the present he begins to learn to accept humanity again. Ironically, this acceptance immediately involves him again in pain and suffering, but it is now the pain of a living being, not that of a zombie. If the film is considered then, less as an attempt to describe the "Jewish experience" than as an account of one man's thoughts and feelings, it can be seen to be much less forced and strained

THE PAWNBROKER

than critics have thought it. The tone is often harsh, even rhetorical, because the nature of the central character demands this treatment; it is not a symptom of lack of control on the part of the director.

The closing sequences of the film, however, perhaps require somewhat closer attention, for even critics favorable to the film as a whole have argued that it goes out of control at the climax. William Johnson, for example, in an article on "Hollywood 1965" in *Film Quarterly* (Fall, 1965), suggests that Lumet chose completely the wrong style of camerawork for the ending. He discusses in particular the scenes in the street outside the shop as a crowd gathers round the dying boy, and says that Lumet opts, wrongly, for a technique of "calculated naturalism" at this point. We have, Johnson says, an almost *cinéma-vérité* situation: the crowd may very well be a real crowd, and not extras; they may not even realize that the boy is just an actor. And the whole scene, he says, is filmed as "an extended sequence with a hand-held camera" to give an air of authenticity and realism. This, he goes on, obscures the point of the ending: we have it on Lumet's own authority that the pawnbroker has been given a new life as a result of his experiences, for he has learned to feel once more; but the ending is in fact so muddled and confused that we feel no sense of spiritual release at all, merely despair that life has dealt one final blow to Nazerman.

Other critics have objected to the loud and frenzied music which accompanies the scenes inside the pawnshop which are intercut with the crowd scenes outside. Lumet attempted to forestall these objections even before the film was released, in an article in *Films and Filming* (October, 1964). He says there that he and the composer, Quincy Jones, wanted above all to avoid sentimentality at this stage. As Nazerman impales his hand on the spike on his desk, the music becomes overwhelmingly loud and joyous in order to counteract the images of pain on the screen. The music, then, is intended to help us understand the rebirth which Nazerman is experiencing.

What in fact actually *happens* in the closing minutes of the film seems to me to contradict both Johnson and Lumet himself, and I would like to examine this part of the film in some detail. After the scene of the shooting inside the shop, which is filmed, very effectively, in close-up and in a series of extremely swift cuts, there is a high-angle tracking shot which follows the wounded Ortiz as he crawls towards the door. There is a cut to a long-shot outside the shop as Ortiz pulls himself out on the sidewalk. The scenes which follow as the crowd gathers and the ambulance arrives are taken almost entirely in long-shot and with an almost completely static camera. The main exception is a long reverse tracking shot in front of the boy's mother as she runs towards him; she is stopped by two neighbors and led away. There is a cut to a series of close-ups of the pawnbroker inside the shop, after which he comes slowly out to the street. Up to this point there has been no trace at all of a hand-held camera; there is an impression of speed and confusion, certainly, but this is created almost entirely by means of cutting—the camera itself remains coolly aloof.

Nazerman kneels beside the body; there are close-ups of his agonized face and of the boy's. He touches the body; close-ups of his blood-stained hands follow. Ortiz dies, Nazerman goes back into the shop. In these scenes too the camera remains still. Then follow close-ups of the body being covered up and placed in the ambulance; here, if anywhere in these scenes, a hand-held camera may have been used; if so, it is only briefly and with complete propriety, for the stretcher-bearers have to

push their way through the crowd to reach the vehicle. An immobile long-shot watches the ambulance disappear.

There is a cut to the interior of the shop. We see Nazerman's face in close-up and then a series of swift flashbacks of memories of his family and customers. Then a cut gives us a close-up of the paper-spike and Nazerman's hand drifting towards it. As his hand touches the top of the spike, the camera tracks in to a close-up of his face. It is at this point that the music becomes obtrusive and, to my mind, irritating and unnecessary. We have already been shown clearly enough that Nazerman feels remorse at having spurned the boy's attempts at friendship, and that he knows he is responsible for his death. Steiger's performance during the unbearably long seconds of the impalement is in itself quite enough to show that Nazerman has learned to feel the reality of pain and agony once again, that he has become once more a living person. The music merely distracts from this and, if anything, tends to spoil the impact.

The camera cuts to a close-up of the bleeding hand, then back to Nazerman's face. A cut again to long-shot outside as he comes out of the shop. A series of medium-shots and long-shots shows him making his way through the indifferent crowd. The closing shot of the film is a high-angle shot which tracks slowly back to extreme long-shot, then pans to the left to follow Nazerman as he moves away; and this is held over the closing credits.

My own conclusion from this is that Lumet cannot possibly be accused of spoiling the impact of the climax by an excess of *cinéma-vérité* techniques, for these simply are not there. The camerawork is in fact classically cool and restrained. For the scenes outside the shop, Lumet works largely in immobile long-shots and tracking shots; for those inside, he relies mainly on close-ups. This is entirely appropriate: we identify with Nazerman during his private agony, but we realize too his essential loneliness as we see him a distant figure almost lost in the uncaring crowd. The point Lumet wants to make seems to me clear enough from the camera style alone: Nazerman has learned to live again in re-experiencing pain and agony, but this does not of itself and automatically re-integrate him into the human community. The tone of the ending is muted, but, it seems to me, ultimately hopeful rather than depressing. What makes this part of the film less effective than it ought to be, however—though it by no means destroys it—is the unfortunate choice of music, and it is possible that critics and audiences alike have allowed their dissatisfaction with this to color adversely their reaction to the scene as a whole. It is noticeable, incidentally, that the most impressive parts of the film have little or no background music in them, and it is unfortunate, though not catastrophic, that Lumet did not adhere to this principle at the climax.

An interesting feature of *The Pawnbroker* is the liberal do-gooder who tries to help Nazerman by telling him that other people, like herself, have suffered too. She is met with stony contempt, and throughout the film the fact of her helplessness is emphasized. Her view of life, based on a vague feeling of benevolence, is quite irrelevant when set up against the pawnbroker's experience. In a sense, the failure of the liberal experiment is the subject of *The Hill*. Critics have complained that the film breaks down halfway through: the controlled ferocity of the first half, its emphasis on the physical fact of the punishment hill and the physical exhaustion of the men condemned to it, seems to dissolve in a welter of emotional hysteria and liberal clichés. But the hysterical atmosphere of the latter part of the film and the grotesque happenings in it are not the result of a failure of control on Lumet's part; they are instead the theme and point of the film. Once again, the liberal solution is irrelevant and ineffective; there can be no "reasonable" response to the behavior of the sadists who run the camp; hatred and force inevitably breed hatred and force in response; and, ironically, control and discipline enforced by these means bring about their own opposites. The grotesque events at the end of the film, therefore, are portrayed grotesquely, as symptoms of a world gone mad; the liberal viewpoint is too limited to find a place here any longer.

The critique of liberalism is continued and expanded in *The Group* (1966). The film is said to lack the sustained irony and even malice of Mary McCarthy's novel, but it creates instead a balance of sympathy and ironic observation which suits Lumet's purpose. The girls create their own obsessive, exclusive world where all that *really* matters takes place on the level of personal relationships within the group, while they make vague and ineffective gestures towards coming to terms with the great "issues" of the outside world—marriage, female emancipation, politics, and war. They feel they "ought" to do something about these things, they wish to feel "responsible" and "involved"; but they find that somehow they have enough difficulty keeping their own lives straight without taking on other responsibilities as well. The extremely rapid pace of the film captures very well the atmosphere of breathless trivialities in which the girls live; there is a narcissistic involvment with themselves and each other, while husbands, lovers, and external issues are pushed to the periphery of their existence. Yet the great world goes its own way very well without them, and in due course carries them off as its victims, either through the physical fact of death or through their emotional and intellectual helplessness.

Lumet's most recent film, *The Deadly Affair* (1967), has had a generally favorable reception from both critics and public, though there have been those who have accused him of spoiling a perfectly good thriller by dragging in irrelevant and pretentious references to concentration camps and the moral problems of responsibility and betrayal. The concentration camp element is of course already present in John Le Carré's novel: it provides the essential motivation for Elsa Fennan's actions; and, if anything, Lumet tones down this aspect of the theme—he certainly does not exaggerate it. And it is the subtle and intelligent handling of the moral questions raised by the story which makes the film something more than just an extremely well-made thriller.

Lumet's style in this film is quieter and more restrained than in his other recent works, but this is perfectly in keeping with the mood and atmosphere which the film sets out to create. The story is pitched at a low key throughout and the significant events take place always just below the surface action; yet the film never becomes boring and the complicated narrative is handled with the utmost clarity. Attention is directed beyond the action to the motives and thoughts of the characters, for it is the latter which the film is really concerned with. The muted colors of the photography, the meticulously accurate choice of settings, and the sensitive handling of the actors, all contribute to the creation of a total effect which is perfectly harmonious and consistent.

The one *tour de force* of the film is the counterpointing of the murder of Elsa Fennan at a performance of *Edward II* with the murder of the king on the stage (developed from merely the slightest hint in the novel), and this too is thematically and aesthetically appropriate. Both the murder of the king and the murder of Elsa involve betrayals—the one on a public level, the other on a private one—and the major theme of the film is in fact the relationship between public and private betrayal. Elsa passes British secrets to the Communists because she feels that the West has betrayed her and her people, and has allowed her persecutors to flourish once again. Charles Dobbs, the British agent who investigates her, feels drawn towards her because he shares her sense of frustration and helplessness, as a result of the nature of his job, and he knows too that his own wife is deceiving him. In helping to trap Elsa, he discovers ironically that he is in addition being deceived in a way he had not suspected, and that the friend he most trusted has also betrayed him. The strength of the film comes from its sensitive and honest investigation of the problems of loyalty, trust, and responsibility, and from Lumet's ability to create characters who are not just abstractions but living people whom we can understand. Although the tone of the film is sombre and often despairing, it does not end with the currently fashionable gesture of withdrawal and "a plague on both your houses"; but it does not attempt to impose any easy solutions either. It merely presents us with the facts, scrupulously

and intelligently, and leaves us to draw our own conclusions.

In any attempt to trace the thematic or stylistic consistency of the work of an American director there is always the problem of knowing just how much real freedom the director was given within the confines of the studio system. Fortunately Lumet has been in an extremely enviable position from the very beginning of his career: from *Twelve Angry Men* onwards, he has made only those films which he has wanted to make, and he has made them in conditions of almost complete independence. He has never worked in Hollywood and has made most of his films in New York or England, working for sympathetic and cooperative producers. He has struck up a close and fruitful partnership with Boris Kaufman, who has been his director of photography on *Twelve Angry Men, That Kind of Woman, A View from the Bridge, Long Day's Journey into Night, The Pawnbroker,* and *The Group.* Although he does not write his own scripts, it is clear from statements he has made in interviews, and from the finished products, that the ultimate decision on what is to be filmed and how it is to be filmed is his own. His comments on *The Pawnbroker,* for example (*Films and Filming,* October 1964), make it clear that the story was one which he had wanted to film for a long time, that the choice of location and of almost all the cast was entirely his own, that the editing technique was his own decision, and that he was ultimately responsible for the major details of adaptation, emphasis, and treatment. Such a degree of freedom is not found in all his films, but even in the stage adaptations, where the script stays very close to the original text, Lumet creates a personal style, by means of camera technique, editing, and rhythm, which is the ideal cinematic equivalent of the structure of the original. At his best, his films show clearly that adaptation need not be inferior to "pure cinema" as long as the director is able to create a cinematic style which respects and corresponds to the intention and subject-matter of his source.

JAN ŽALMAN

Question Marks on the New Czechoslovak Cinema

Jan Zalman is a well-known Czech film critic who has been active in controversies over the development of the Czechoslovak film industry.

I hope the reader will forgive me if in this article I do not refer to that part of the present-day Czechoslovak film output which is devoted to entertainment pure and simple. My interest here is solely in the artistic aspect of the films, whether this is called "the new Czechoslovak cinema" or by any other name. The total annual output in both parts of the country—Bohemia and Slovakia—is at present in the neighborhood of thirty-five full-length feature films, of which (as has always been the case) the great majority are artistically unambitious pictures designed solely to entertain. This is so obvious a statement, applicable to every advanced film industry, that it would scarcely re-

and intelligently, and leaves us to draw our own conclusions.

In any attempt to trace the thematic or stylistic consistency of the work of an American director there is always the problem of knowing just how much real freedom the director was given within the confines of the studio system. Fortunately Lumet has been in an extremely enviable position from the very beginning of his career: from *Twelve Angry Men* onwards, he has made only those films which he has wanted to make, and he has made them in conditions of almost complete independence. He has never worked in Hollywood and has made most of his films in New York or England, working for sympathetic and cooperative producers. He has struck up a close and fruitful partnership with Boris Kaufman, who has been his director of photography on *Twelve Angry Men, That Kind of Woman, A View from the Bridge, Long Day's Journey into Night, The Pawnbroker,* and *The Group.* Although he does not write his own scripts, it is clear from statements he has made in interviews, and from the finished products, that the ultimate decision on what is to be filmed and how it is to be filmed is his own. His comments on *The Pawnbroker,* for example (*Films and Filming,* October 1964), make it clear that the story was one which he had wanted to film for a long time, that the choice of location and of almost all the cast was entirely his own, that the editing technique was his own decision, and that he was ultimately responsible for the major details of adaptation, emphasis, and treatment. Such a degree of freedom is not found in all his films, but even in the stage adaptations, where the script stays very close to the original text, Lumet creates a personal style, by means of camera technique, editing, and rhythm, which is the ideal cinematic equivalent of the structure of the original. At his best, his films show clearly that adaptation need not be inferior to "pure cinema" as long as the director is able to create a cinematic style which respects and corresponds to the intention and subject-matter of his source.

JAN ŽALMAN

Question Marks on the New Czechoslovak Cinema

Jan Zalman is a well-known Czech film critic who has been active in controversies over the development of the Czechoslovak film industry.

I hope the reader will forgive me if in this article I do not refer to that part of the present-day Czechoslovak film output which is devoted to entertainment pure and simple. My interest here is solely in the artistic aspect of the films, whether this is called "the new Czechoslovak cinema" or by any other name. The total annual output in both parts of the country—Bohemia and Slovakia—is at present in the neighborhood of thirty-five full-length feature films, of which (as has always been the case) the great majority are artistically unambitious pictures designed solely to entertain. This is so obvious a statement, applicable to every advanced film industry, that it would scarcely re-

quire mentioning, were it not for the fact that in the case of Czechoslovakia we are dealing with a socialist film industry, one of whose fundamental characteristics is that it refuses to apply industrial and commercial criteria, insisting that the cinema, like literature, music, and the fine arts, is important insofar as it contributes something to the national culture. Is this function of the cinema threatened in any way at the present moment? That is a disturbing question which keeps cropping up with ever increasing frequency not only in discussions among the film-makers themselves but is also being posed, with varying degrees of frankness, by Czechoslovak film critics.

What is at stake?

Nothing less than the future fate of that film art which roughly five years ago made its unexpected and remarkable début, surprising the world public as the Czechoslovak "film miracle" and starting a new and hitherto most glorious era of Czechoslovak cinematic history, as well as the most interesting chapter of contemporary Czechoslovak culture. This art is at present under pressure from two different directions—on one side there is economic pressure resulting from the general reconstruction of the country's economic structure, and on the other pressure of an ideological nature. Both constitute potential dangers.

It is hardly necessary to add that the economic danger stems from the commercial character of the cinema. This danger did not exist—or at least not to the same extent—while the film industry was regarded as a special kind of State enterprise which, like all the other branches of industry, was of course required to fulfill its production quotas but in which, owing to the artistic and cultural-political character of the cinema, the profit motive to all intents and purposes did not apply. The alarm came when it was decided to rebuild the entire Czechoslovak industrial system according to the principles of a new economic "model," to make it conform better to the requirements of the market, profit, saleability, and so on. The menace which loomed large over the film industry in this connection can be expressed by a single word—self-sufficiency. This opened the flood-gates for unending debates and polemics, which go in a vicious circle round several basic questions: Are films first and foremost an article of commerce and only secondarily works of art, or vice versa? Is it at all possible—and if so, how—to bring economic and artistic principles into line so that neither socialist economy nor socialist art should suffer? And so forth. Particularly the last question demands an urgent answer, and yet it is here that there is the greatest confusion. It suddenly transpired that although socialist cinematography will shortly celebrate its fiftieth birthday (if we include its initial Soviet phase), there is to this day no real economics of the socialist cinema worthy of that name. And so the debates continue. However, the film industry cannot wait for the outcome, it has to go on making films; and it is doing so in a way which, the circumstances being what they are, it considers the most advantageous for itself. Over the past eighteen months alone, it has served up for Czechoslovak cinemagoers and for millions more in the other socialist countries no less than seventeen crime films; since the overwhelming majority of these were below average, it has recently been decided to make comedies instead. As we shall see later, the more ambitious Czechoslovak films have not so far suffered as a result of this policy, but there are growing fears that they may do so, fears which are by no means without foundation. In spite of official attempts to pooh-pooh the danger, the magic formula of box-office is beginning to take effect. Only latently at the moment, but it is this very latency which is causing grave misgiving on the part of both film-makers and critics. For apart from economic box-office we must —at least in this case—also consider the "box-office" of culture and of national prestige. And although this cannot be expressed in terms of money, can anyone deny that it is fully worthy of respect?

If we now turn to the ideological factor, we are approaching the problem from an entirely different direction. It is a problem that is linked with the moral and social attitudes of the young film-makers and with the form, or rather the poetics, of their films.

This requires some explanation. Every art that has not lost its inherent vitality quite naturally refuses to stagnate by sitting on its laurels. This applies in full to the Czechoslovak "new wave." Not long after it produced its first films, linked by the same approach to reality and to a considerable extent also by similar artistic means, the various members of this movement began to search for their own individual style. Today only a distinct minority of the young directors (Forman, Jurácek, Passer) still insists on the principles of *cinéma vérité* and tries to develop this inspiration further. A few others (Schorm, Bocan, Menzel) have also retained their original methods and styles, the difference in their case being that they are not following the

example of *cinéma vérité* but are giving us a modern adaptation of critical realism. In the case of a third group (Chytilová, Nemec, Máša, Uher) there has been a decided change of style; the strong stylization and extreme metaphorical character of their latest films quite clearly breaks all the "rules of the game" adopted by Czechoslovak film-makers to date. But the situation is extremely complicated and defies all attempts at schematic simplification. Elements of *cinéma vérité*, for example, have to some extent infiltrated all the films of the "new wave," representing what is in point of fact a new convention. The same thing can be said of the changes that have come about in the way of "telling the story," the firm dramatic construction of earlier films being replaced by a "Brechtian" analytical epic. Each of the directors is making his own use of these elements, without at the same time giving up the style he has evolved.

Thus there is differentiation within the "new wave," but I think it is erroneous to see in this differentiation the total disintegration of the whole movement of young Czechoslovak film-makers. While admitting that things are in a constant state of flux, I yet cannot agree with those Czechoslovak critics who are trying to anticipate future developments and assert that, as a result of the growing differentiation within its ranks, the Czechoslovak "new wave" is already just a historical concept. It is becoming clearer all the time that the decisive linking factor of the young movement was not an identity of style, but rather an identity of a generation's way of thought. It has to be said that this was seen by the authorities responsible for cultural-political and ideological development, and it is as a result of this that the present crisis has come about. Outwardly this crisis manifests itself by the severe official censure of two films—Nemec's *The Feast and the Guests* and Chytilová's *Daisies*—in actual fact, however, the weight of political criticism has come down on a number of other "new wave" films as well. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that, if not all the young film-makers, then certainly the decisive majority now finds itself in a paradoxical situation: at a time when they have reached the (relatively) culminating point of their artistic endeavors, they have been dealt the as yet heaviest ideological blow.

Criticizing conditions in the Soviet Writers Union some time ago, Solzhenitsin wrote: "Only the dead are right." In regard to the present situation in Czechoslovak feature films, this would need to be amended to: "Only the old are right." That, at least, is what the young directors are saying, and it must be admitted that in at least one respect their words are borne out by the facts: even those films made by the older generation which take up a merciless attitude towards social reality or are contraverting official myths are "given the green light." *The Defendant* by Kadár and Klos was awarded a State Prize, Kachyná's *Coach Ride to Vienna* received one of the main prizes at the Karlovy Vary Festival in 1966. . . . Many more examples could be given, and the explanation is only partly to be found in the fact that these are films made by experienced directors, many of whom have a life's work behind them and who therefore do not need to prove their positive attitude to socialism. Far more important criteria are the artistic means used in the making of the films, as well as the attitude adopted by the makers towards the social reality.

As regards the form, we are in principle dealing with a regeneration of perennial dramas which are no less dramatically effective nor less intelligible for the modern techniques applied to them. The plot generally moves on an objective level, with little or no resort to subjective elements, the metaphors are easily understandable, presented in a form which even the simplest of filmgoers is well acquainted with from classical literature and the stage. From a purely ideological point of view, these characteristics are considered just as important as the fact that the attitude of the authors of these films to social reality and its shortcomings is one of moral co-responsibility, so that even the sharpest criticism is accepted as criticism aimed "within their own ranks."

I have tried, as objectively as possible, to set out the reasons for the political "immunity" of the films of the older film-makers, and now I should like to try, with equal objectivity, to find the reasons for the ideological "discrimination" against the works of the younger generation of film-makers. The reasons are to be sought in the same phenomena mentioned in the foregoing paragraph—but the reaction here is exactly the opposite: neither the style, nor the attitude of the young directors to the social reality have met with understanding.

To the already mentioned *The Feast and the Guests* and *Daisies* we must add another film by Jan Nemec, *The Martyrs of Love,* Máša's *Hotel for Foreigners,* and Uher's *The Magic Virgin,* if we wish to gain a complete picture of the works which all the fuss is about. Their most general common denominator lies in the fact that they are all films in which a realistic treatment of the story has been

replaced by one in which creative imagination and poetic exaggeration have been given free rein. The stylistic means here are symbols and allegories, an undercurrent of subjective reflection and poetic association being far more important than the plot itself, the metaphorical "superstructure" presenting some difficulty to easy understanding: the film cannot be simply and easily "read," it has to be "deciphered" on a level of complex meanings, and this requires a great deal of poetic perception on the part of the audience.

I would spare the reader this explanation, which may perhaps appear banal, if it were not just these characteristics of the "new wave" films that were responsible for the ideological *casus belli* and that threaten to have dire consequences. "Had these films borne the signature of Fellini, Resnais, or Bergman, nobody would have so much as lifted an eyebrow. Since they're signed by young Czechoslovak directors, the result is well-nigh a national scandal," said someone in the heat of discussion. An argument put forward in the course of an excited polemic need not certainly be given exaggerated importance, yet many Czechoslovak critics share the views that the main reason behind the official reaction to these films is to be found in their style, or their poetics. They are condemned for their "unintelligibility and ambiguity" which allows different interpretations; they have even been called "deceitful."

The truth is, we have here come a long way not only from the norms of so-called socialist realism but in fact also from the original positions of the "new-wave" film-makers. That is only logical, the inevitable consequences of their development. They entered the lists in the name of continuity with the world's cinema, and it was only a question of time (and their own resources) how soon they would join in the experiments of the most progressive directors and try to absorb them without relinquishing their own national originality. They found this the easier as they had their Czech forerunners and were thus not forced to become mere imitators. "If there was anything in Czech art that made a genuine contribution to the world's culture in the twenties and thirties," wrote Ivan Sviták in an article, "then it was the poetic and lyrical element in their world view, characteristic of the Czech avant-garde." He is thinking primarily of the literary, artistic, and theatrical avant-garde, but a deeper look at artistic development in this country between the wars shows that there are other affinities. It would no doubt be useless to try and find traces of a Czech cinematic avant-garde in that period, yet there is one name that should be mentioned in this connection, that of Gustav Machaty. His *Ecstasy* will probably be found in every history of the cinema, often indeed as the only example of Czech film-making. The concept of alienation was at that time current at best only among a handful of philosophers, but it cannot be denied that it was even then the most striking and constant feature of Machaty's films—not only *Ecstasy* but all his other pictures as well.

What I mean by this is that not only is there a continuity between the work of the young Czechoslovak directors and the contemporary world trends but that there likewise exists an organic inner continuity which links everything that is forward-looking in the Czechoslovak culture of today. This needs to be said in refutation of the alleged non-national character of these new films. But they are also accused of being pessimistic, undisciplined, of containing hostile philosophy, even of constituting "ideological sabotage." This shows that the whole thing is far more serious than might be thought at first glance. It is thus not merely a matter of "unintelligibility"—far more vital questions are under consideration, questions that are decisive for the further development of the young generation of Czechoslovak film-makers. To put it as bluntly as possible, the question is whether or not these directors are basing their art on the same principles as those on which the social order has been created: whether this art can or cannot truthfully be called socialist.

Having no qualification for the uttering of apodictic judgments, I can only give my own personal views. It is in the nature of every young generation to pose questions differently from its elders. The young enter a world they have not created and are "not responsible for," yet a world they will have to live in just the same. What is this world really like? is what they ask, ignoring the inflexible truths it has created about itself. What is the cause of its imperfections, its sorrow, and its suffering? What, indeed, is the meaning of their existence in this world? Is it a world of lost opportunities in which it is useless to try and do anything, or does it offer sufficiently worthwhile objectives to strive and if need be fight for? It should by now be quite evident that the all-important question, where the young film-makers are concerned, is that of the true aspect and meaning of modern humanity. They are posing this question stubbornly, with an uneasiness that borders on anxiety, and they do not shrink from any revelation they are able to make. All "perspectivism" is

alien to them; they recognize nothing but perceived reality, which they approach without rose-colored glasses, without the voluntarist prejudices which prevented the older generation, advancing towards an ideal, from seeing that they were wading towards it through blood and mire. This tragic experience, to quote one of the young directors, is invaluable for an artist, giving him a brutally true image of the world into which he has been born, as well as a standard of values for which he is fighting. Once we understand this, we shall also understand why it is that so many of the films by the young generation are in the nature of moralities. They revive, in an unexpectedly vivid fashion, the double tone present in Czech history since ancient times: a fervent and frequently angry moral pathos on the one hand, and the sober logic of rationally matter-of-fact analysis on the other. *Truth is what I myself see.* Adopting this motto, the young directors have taken the subjectivity of the film-maker to be the only means by which art can depict the world we live in and contribute to a more objective understanding of its ways.

It must be admitted, however, that the conflict has not been caused so much by this emphasis on personal experience and cognition, as by the scepticism with which the young film-makers put their disturbing questions, the critical distance behind their attitude towards the social reality of the world they live in. The central theme of these new films in *the experience of man in the socialist era,* and this may well be what is found most shocking by those who have grown too much used to the the idea that there are certain things "too sacred to be touched." The young are touching them with an abandon hitherto unprecedented in the socialist film world. In less than five years they have managed to destroy so many illusions, demythologized so many well-meant lies, uprooted so many fossilized truths that these would make up a large moral-social and -political treatise. The question is, does this suffice to deny this art its right to exist? The paradox inherent in the fact that it is this very art which has gained such resounding success, drawing the world's attention to contemporary Czechoslovak culture as a whole, is not the really important aspect of the problem. The crux of the matter surely is that every true art seeks after truth, is directed towards some moral ideal, champions the inalienable values of humanity. In its angry defense of these ideals and values against evil, in its allegories aimed at showing how vulnerable they really are, in its revelations on the emptiness of so much of human life, the debasing of human existence and the falsity of myths, this art is not betraying the cause of socialist culture but, on the contrary, is consciously furthering it.

The whole controversy would probably not have reached the present menacing dimensions if it were not for the unresolved problems in the relationship between art and society and its institutions. This is acutely so in the case of that section of the young artistic generation which has provided the greatest stimulus and which, by its experiments, is trying to open up new fields of artistic endeavor. There is a growing tendency on the part of many young directors to seek help with foreign producers; others are attempting to find a solution by selecting escapist, noncommitted subject-matter; and as a result the production plan of 1967/68 presents a picture of a cinematography in retreat. Only one thing can be said with any certainty about the crisis that has come about as a consequence of this impatient cultural policy: if tomorrow, or the day after, the young, socially committed and experimentally minded Czechoslovak cinema has ceased to exist, it will not be by reason of any lack of its own resources and vitality.

What is the true picture of the Czechoslovak cinema at this moment, regardless of the abovementioned ideological consequences?

The predictions of a forthcoming decline in the new Czechoslovak film wave after the fiasco of Jasny's *Pipes* at Cannes in 1965 have been proved wrong: quite on the contrary, it was in 1966 and the beginning of 1967 that the trend started in the first few years of this decade by the eruption of the "new wave" found its culmination. And it is important to realize that we are here dealing not with the work of a single generation, but that the fine and successful films made over the past few years have members of practically every generation as their authors. It is hardly necessary for me to underline the importance of, for instance, Kadár and Klos's *Shop on Main Street.* The award of the Oscar only served to confirm qualities which had already been recognized earlier, giving them the stamp of world recognition diametrically different from the polite sympathy with which the film had met in Cannes. Also Procházka and Kashyna's *Coach Ride to Vienna* has had its baptism of world publicity, following its success at Karlovy Vary. It has provoked polemics on the part of the Czech film critics, but it seems that the controversy, far from weakening the importance of the film in the context of the contemporary Czechoslovak quality film production has, on the contrary, helped to

strengthen it. It is true that the brilliant direction has not succeeded—particularly in the final sequences—in concealing the speculative nature of the whole story. This shortcoming, however, does not in my view alter the fact that next to Kadár and Klos's *Death Is Called Engelchen* this film has dealt what is probably the strongest blow to historical schemata which, in their stony rigidity, completely ignored the "ordinary" dramas of humanity. War is not a lesser evil just because right stands opposed to injustice, humanity to inhumanity. In the blind, nonsensical conditions of war even the "just" may be guilty of cruelty without this in any way altering the overall moral and historical picture—and it is in this that we must acknowledge the demythologizing nature of *Coach Ride to Vienna.*

While both the above-mentioned teams of filmmakers have from the very beginning been part of the new look of Czechoslovak feature film production, the appearance among the vanguard of František Hrubín and Otakar Vávra came as a considerable surprise. Their first attempt was not a success. This was *A Sunday in August,* Hrubín's play about "inner emigration" which on the stage had been one of the greatest achievements of modern Czech drama, but which turned out flat and insipid in Vávra's conventional film treatment. But their next film, *The Golden Rennet,* with its introspective presentation of a man's misspent life, proved to be a decisive turning-point. A man in late middle age returns to the scene of his childhood and there comes to realize that his entire life has been nothing but a succession of lost opportunities, full of indecision and a fear of a really full life. The "realism" of the so-called Czech man-in-the-street is revealed in all its inner shoddiness, the basis of his whole philosophy being nothing but the craven wish to survive, whatever the cost. The same motif—that of an unfulfilled, disappointing life—continues to occupy Hrubín, and it recurs in Vávra's latest film, *Romance for Bugle.* Here again a grown man looks back at his youth. As a student he loved a girl from a gypsy-like traveling fair, but when he had to choose between running away with her and staying at home to look after his dying grandfather, he stayed. And even though his decision was humanly laudable, it is no less tragic for all that. Torn between his desire to live a full life, his cowardice, and his sense of duty, man struggles on from one defeat to the next.

The Golden Rennet and *Romance for Bugle* represent a rebirth of Vávra's artistic personality, for he has at last managed to overcome the academic coldness of most of his previous postwar films; his work had suffered by being too "official," but now Vávra rediscovered the potency of independent thought and warm feeling. While *The Golden Rennet* stands higher by virtue of its critical approach and the revelations it has to make about the Czech national character, *Romance for Bugle* is the more effective of the two taken simply as films. In the context of modern Czechoslovak cinema, Vávra (like Jasny before *Pipes*) represents the truly national, Czech element.

Let us leave aside Zbynek Brynych, who kept his countenance with *The Virgo Constellation,* only to lose it entirely with *Transit Carlsbad,* and also Vancura's *Marketa Lazarová,* a full-blooded historical epic which, in Vlácil's poetic transcription to the screen, represented Czechoslovakia at this year's Venice festival. With all due respect to this kind of film, which is the reliable mainstay of every film industry and a guarantee of its stability, the struggle for the contemporary aspect of Czechoslovak cinema is being waged on a different level.

Three names stand out in this connection: Jan Nemec, Vera Chytilová, and Ester Krumbachová. The first two need no introduction to the informed reader, Nemec's *Diamonds of the Night* as well as Chytilová's *Another Way of Life* being fresh in the memory. Ester Krumbachová, however, is a new name for most people. As a costume designer and art director she was for a long time known to only a few; she came to the fore as the script writer of Nemec's two latest films, *The Feast and the Guests* and *The Martyrs of Love,* and wrote *Daisies* with Vera Chytilová. Needless to say, she also acted as art director on all these films. She is the first to bring her gift of philosophical abstraction and Kafkaesque understanding of symbolism, which Max Brod called "the illumination of eternity by earthly means," to bear upon the somewhat limited world of Czech cinematic reality, making a spiritual breakthrough and bringing the new wave to the level of modern literature and drama. For her contribution in this respect, Ester Krumbachová must be regarded as a key personality in the modern Czechoslovak cinema.

In *The Feast and the Guests* Nemec has abandoned the somewhat excessive surrealist poetics of his earlier film, *Diamonds of the Night,* to produce a crystal-clear story which has its relevance to all mankind. To collaborate with evil is in a sense worse than to do evil; it is the condition without which evil could not exist. Two scenes are all Nemec needs to express this social morality. In the

first we see a group of people, invited by "the ruler" to an outdoor feast, surrounded by strange men as they walk through the forest. There is a feeling of menace in the air, the people threatened by some undefined violence. In the second scene the same people, now free of danger, sit down to the table with "the ruler" and listen to his speechifying ("One has to forget, I too have forgotten—I've had to forget a great deal in my life . . ."), and although they hold different views on the matter, they not only find excuses for their host, whose men played a nasty joke at their expense, but they do their utmost to show that they agree with him, vying with each other in their sycophancy. A single member of the company refuses to join in the servile chorus and keeps silent; suddenly (just when his wife tells him: "Why don't you at least think of me . . . You'll never get anywhere like this . . . And what about me? . . . Such a good opportunity . . .") he gets up and leaves without a word. This provocation astonishes all those present, and then is answered by action. The fugitive must be brought back! With a man leading a furiously barking police dog at their head, they all set off in pursuit of the "one just man."

The Feast and the Guests is not an isolated case. It has its links with a whole current of European thought which, over the wreckage of humanity left behind by the second world war, over the remnants of collapsed philosophical and political ideals, is trying to discover the roots of the evil hanging like a dark cloud over the recent history of mankind. Regardless of the concrete shape this evil may assume, it is basically of a moral nature, existing in the attitude adopted by people to the events taking place around them, in a "realism" which is in fact a capitulation in the face of Power, a conformism which tries to escape its own responsibility by means of compromise. Nemec's memento is taken completely from life: let us not turn to metaphysics when seeking the causes of the shocking capitulations of mankind before evil, for they are to be found in the "insignificant" capitulations of our everyday life as much as in the hatred we reserve for the "one just man" who, by his very existence, reproaches us for our defeat.

However, the Kafkaesque in Nemec's work has not only this one aspect. While in *Diamonds* and *The Feast* he is dealing with the moral crisis of the contemporary world, in *The Martyrs of Love* "there is, under all that light-hearted play, a defense of the timid, clumsy and unsuccessful man." This kind of man was typical of practically all of Kafka's stories, but Nemec is the only one to take up the cudgels in his defense. It might be said that *The Martyrs of Love* is his most humane film, because it shows the greatest understanding and comparison. It is also the most humorous. Only the heroes and their environment change in the three stories which go to make up the film—"The Junior Clerk," "Nastenka's Dreams," and "Rudolf the Orphan"—but the grotesquely lyrical motif remains the same. Man is at his most human when he dreams. He needs to dream of love as he needs to eat, and even though he knows that his dreams will not come true, the existence of the dream is in itself his consolation. This idea finds its fullest expression in the second story, whereas in the other two the realization has a slightly bitter taste. Yet this touch of sadness does not deprive *The Martyrs* of its genial character—the melancholy adds a human dimension to the smile. Krumbachová and Nemec show the futility of human dreams but at the same time appreciate the momentary happiness they give to the dreamers. That is a feature we would look for in vain in the work of Kafka. I quite agree with those critics who see in this particular aspect an organic affinity between *The Martyrs* and the ideas and the style of Czech poetics. *The Martyrs of Love* is sentimental banality raised to the level of pure poetry.

It is characteristic of the development of the young Czechoslovak film generation that Nemec has not remained alone in this turning towards symbolism. He has been joined most unexpectedly by Antonín Máša in his *Hotel for Foreigners*—unexpectedly because there was nothing in *Courage for Every Day*, of which he was the author, nor in *Wandering*, which he co-directed, to indicate any such affinity. Perhaps that is why some Czech critics shrug their shoulders over his latest film, accusing Máša of having resorted to uncommitted film-making, while others point out parallels with Resnais and his *Marienbad*. This concerns especially the environment and atmosphere in which the film is set. A young poet comes to meet the girl he loves in a hotel in which a mysterious murder had been committed. But the strange world in which he finds himself is not the right milieu for a love affair. There is something unclean and treacherous in the air, dogging the poet's every footstep. The crime has left its imprint on the place, and the poet himself is to be the next victim, shortly after he discovers that the fresh charm of the girl he was in love with had in fact also been tainted by the same poison of untruth, hypocrisy, and vice as that which plagues this whole world. The inspiration here leads partly to

Robbe-Grillet and partly to Martin Fric *(The Poacher's Ward).* Máša, who up to now had seemed to be preoccupied with one single subject, has discovered the poetic force of black humor, creating an absurd allegory of a world whose moral certitudes have been hopelessly corroded by human alienation.

What the Czech critics have failed to notice—and the critics at Cannes as well—is the style and design of the film. This is again the work of Ester Krumbachová. She has discovered for Czech films the magic of Czech *fin de siècle* art, the last art style that gave a certain specific character to a whole era and whose ineradicable traces we can still find in Prague as well as in a number of other Czech towns. It is here that we must seek the roots of the cultural tradition behind these films, apparent in *The Martyrs of Love* as much as in *Hotel for Foreigners.* They appear in an entirely new guise in *Daisies,* for which Krumbachová has invented a remarkably controlled synthesis of the art of the fashion magazines with that of *fin de siècle* decorativism. Kucera's camera alternates black-and-white passages with sequences in color, reinforcing the impression of duality as the film daringly vibrates between the reality of life and the unreality of symbols.

What is the image of our contemporary world, rent by social strife, convulsed with wars, holy and unholy, a world in which we are regularly presented with alternating evidence of amazing technical progress and of no less astounding destruction and ruin? *Daisies* does not try to present a total vision of this world. Krumbachová and Chytilová select a single aspect, which they then use to produce a grotesquely philosophic allegory. Its chief protagonists are two Marys—one a blonde, the other a brunette, two casts, as it were, from one and the same mold. They go through a series of hopelessly monotonous adventures: if they are not lounging at the swimming pool, chattering away in their flat, eating, or chasing away boredom by perpetrating a variety of nonsensical, destructive pranks, they spend their time in bars and restaurants, letting themselves be treated to food and drink by elderly men, whom they entice with promises, only to accompany them aboard a train and jump off at the last moment as the train draws away from the platform. Their "emotional" life is glimpsed in a scene played out in the flat of a man we know nothing about. While he prepares for a night of love with the blonde Mary, uttering the most banal phrases of the "experienced" seducer, the girl flits about the room in the nude, covered only by two boxes containing part of her host's collection of butterflies. No trace anywhere of any individuality. There is no real dialogue between the two Marys; the empty, impoverished verbal stereotypes, underlined by a childishly declamatory delivery, are reminiscent of the idiom of the theater of the absurd.

In *Daisies* Chytilová is continuing along the road she first set out on, with lesser success, in *The Ceiling* and *Another Way of Life;* as though she had realized that she can only win by going to extremes, she now combines *cinéma vérité* with sharply delineated poetic touches *à la* Fellini. The ideas expressed in the film can—as was the case with *Another Way of Life*—be interpreted in a number of different ways. Chytilová's abstract imagination, which does not allow itself to be hindered by a "plot" but is all the more attentive to details, has in her latest film reached stylistic perfection, at the same time adding another, hitherto missing, element: humor. In Chytilová's case, however, humor is not to be understood in the sense of comedy, it merely gives expression to the cynicism of the two Marys and, like some pungent spice, helps to stress the underlying theme of the film (the empty absurdity of the girls' lives), showing that whatever they turn their hands to, they "nibble down to the bone." Chytilová has thus discovered a symbol for destructive cynicism: in what way is our present-day world, with its destructive mania, better than the two Marys?

The work of Evald Schorm seems at first sight to stand at the very opposite pole, but all we have to do to dispel that illusion is to take note of the moral aspect of his films. Already in his *Courage for Every Day* Schorm had created the saddest "hero of our time" ever to appear on the Czech screen. In *The Return of the Prodigal Son* he probes further in an attempt to diagnose the disease, ascertaining that its causes are to be found everywhere. The moral immunity of socialist society is only illusory, we are all exposed to the universal ailments of the time. Sebek is a young technician with a pretty wife, a child, a good, well-paid job. He is not the victim of any apparent injustice, nor has he suffered a rude awakening from political illusions. And yet he has attempted to commit suicide and ends up in a psychiatric clinic. Schorm's diagnosis shows that there are no "unusual" causes. We all, in our different ways, suffer from the same things as Sebek, the difference being merely in the degree to which we realize this. More important than his actual illness, duly recorded by the doctors, is the unre-

corded disease afflicting his seemingly normal environment.

Just as in *Courage for Every Day,* here again Evald Schorm is not concerned with supplying an answer. He is trying to establish the present condition of society. His analysis concerns the latest crisis of a society intent on satisfying its material needs, a society whose vigilance has been weakened by mechanical reliance on a proclaimed ethical ideal, as well as by growing moral apathy. No one feels it his duty to bother about the needs and uncertainties of his fellow-men, at least not before some evident tragedy intervenes to disturb the relative calm of everyday life. Schorm's "clinical case" is a blow aimed against this relativity. As distinct from his earlier film, *The Return of the Prodigal Son* does not shock by presenting the victim of tormenting disillusion over the loss of a false ideal. It warns against moral apathy. The external certainties of a society can be a tragic self-delusion if spiritual and moral values are not equally safe and balanced.

Wherein lies the true happiness of a consumer society? This seems to be the question posed by Ivan Passer in *Intimate Lighting.* It is the first full-length feature film by this young director, who had hitherto collaborated on all the pictures of Miloš Forman. He first tried his hand as a director in his own right on a Bohumil Hrabal story, a *Dull Afternoon,* but it was only in *Intimate Lighting* that he was able to show the full scope of his talent. A young man called Peter and his girl friend pay a visit to a former school-fellow living in a newly built villa on the outskirts of a small country town. They spend the weekend with the family, gossiping, music-making, taking a ride in the friend's new car, and playing at a funeral. Far more important than the actual incidents is Passer's way of looking at them. Like Forman, Passer is well aware of the artistic value of banality and everyday facts, like Forman he too works by means of description (the family lunch) and by magnifying close-ups. The difference between the two directors lies in the quality of their critical approach. Passer's analysis is all the more cruel for its exactness in revealing the substance of the modern *petit bourgeois* way of life, in detecting the emptiness of its aims.

Another film belonging to that genuinely artistic part of the Czechoslovak film production which seeks to discover the true meaning of human relationships is *Every Young Man,* directed by Pavel Jurácek. It is a film on Army life, composed of two stories, one shorter ("The Heel of Achilles") and the other, the title story, longer. Absurdity does or does not play a part, depending on the point of view. It does, if we accept as absurd the logical nonsensicality of *Joseph Kilian;* it does not, if we realize that an absurd state of affairs arises everywhere once the disparity between reality and its interpretation forces man to become a pawn in a game whose rules his reason rejects but which he nevertheless accepts through his actions. While in the first story this theme is only hinted at, in the second it has taken full charge. Not forgetting his debt to Franz Kafka, Jurácek in it also draws on Jaroslav Hašek, thus indirectly lending support to the theory put forward by some critics who claim to have discovered, in the work of these two otherwise so disparate writers, two poles of the same kind of mentality. Jurácek, however, applies it to a different situation: the army of a socialist state is not the Imperial Army of Austria-Hungary, its members are not Schweiks. Fully aware of all this, Jurácek yet cannot fail to see the similarities between the feelings of Hašek's hero and the young conscripts of the sixties. Their common denominator is to be found in the awareness of the absurdity of military life. It is a world of its own, not unlike a ghetto: isolated behind the wire fence of the army camp, the young soldier in peacetime trains to be able to kill, finding in this mission the inviolable meaning of his civic and moral existence.

Like Hašek before him, Jurácek does not attempt to create a "plot." He produces instead a series of freely linked episodes whose strength and charm lie in their microscopic attention to detail. He is a film-maker "with his eyes on the ground," to quote one of the critics. That is the secret not only of his working method but also of his success.

The last director I should like to mention in this incomplete survey is Jirí Menzel. He was first able to show his talent in two short films: the first, "The Death of Mr. Balthasar," formed part of *Pearls at the Bottom,* a film with which the young film-makers paid their tribute to Bohumil Hrabal; the second, "The Crime at the Girls' School," was the title story of a film based on three detective stories by Josef Skvorecky. Immediately afterwards, Menzel again turned to the work of Bohumil Hrabal, and with his *Closely Guarded Trains* at once became a member of the Czechoslovak "new wave."

In Menzel the Czech cinema has gained a film-maker of considerable individuality. "We all know that life is cruel and sad. What's the point of

demonstrating this in films? Let us show how brave we are by laughing at life. And let us not consider that laughter to be an expression of cynicism but rather of reconciliation." Perhaps it was these words of his that earned Menzel's films the label of "smiling humanity." Yet Menzel not only smiles, he as often as not laughs outright. And his humanity would remain an anaemic concept if we were to ignore his interest in human sexual behavior, which is so typical of Menzel.

The story is set at the time of the German occupation. A young railway employee starting on his first job at a small country station hopes that one day some woman will help him to become "a real man." At last, with the help of a young artiste, he manages it, but the next day he is killed while trying to blow up a German munitions train. To speak of "a confrontation of obscenity and tragedy," as does Menzel himself, is to invite misunderstanding. Despite the sultry eroticism of some of the scenes in the film, *Closely Guarded Trains* is a far cry from the sex epics so popular in literature and the cinema, particularly in the West. Sexuality as treated by Menzel is a sexuality filtered through shyness and naivety and relieved by an understanding compassion. Menzel is not interested in sexual obsession or violence. The question which intrigues him is that of the sexual freedom of modern man. The necessity of a full sex life does not strike Menzel as a complex, but rather as one of the defence mechanisms adopted by modern mankind against the menace of dehumanization.

However, the outcry raised by the more orthodox spirits over *Closely Guarded Trains* was not based on moralistic grounds. The young artiste who initiates the lad into the secrets of love happens to be the same girl who brings the time bomb for the destruction of the German train. It was this daring linking of the sexual theme and the "sacred" subject of the fight for freedom that gave the story its absurd dimension. Its opponents were thus able to hide behind "higher" interests, their criticism being a defence of taboos against inadmissible "desecration." Such an attitude of course considers the bare facts only, not their artistic rendering. It is true that the young railwayman's brave deed has no motivation in his earlier behavior. The question whether this is an artistic lapse is equally justifiable as the question whether by means of this very ending Menzel is not trying to challenge the accepted stereotypes of the official "resistance" legend.

Film Reviews

SHOOTING AT WARS: Three Views

THE BATTLE OF ALGIERS. Director: Gillo Pontecorvo. Producer: Antonio Musu. Screenplay: Franco Solinas. Photography: Marcello Gatti. Editors: Mario Serandrei, Mario Morra. Music: Ennio Morricone, Gillo Pontecorvo. Rizzoli.

FAR FROM VIETNAM. Directed by Alain Resnais, William Klein, Joris Ivens, Agnes Varda, Claude Lelouch, and Jean-Luc Godard. Editor: Chris Marker.

LES CARABINIERS. Director: Jean-Luc Godard. Producer: Georges de Beauregard. Screenplay: Roberto Rossellini, Jean Gruault, and Godard, from a play by Benjamin Joppolo. Photography: Raoul Coutard. West End Films.

HOW I WON THE WAR. Produced and directed by Richard Lester. Screenplay: Charles Wood, based on the book by Patrick Ryan. Photography: David Watkin. Music: Ken Thorne.

❶

Much of the fascination of *The Battle of Algiers,* Gillo Pontecorvo's much-honored film which opened the New York Film Festival, lies in the ambiguity of its genre. Were it a merely heroic war piece, a political tract, or just a straight documentary, we could praise it for its competence, and dispatch it from memory as just one more respectable example of its kind. It is gratifying to say this can't be done. Here is a film which many viewers felt must be all, or at least partly, newsreel footage; its fidelity to actual historical events was carried past any of the usual goals of fictional re-enactment. As an emotional experience, this gave it such a haunting credibility and strength, that for its only ancestor, in theme as well as treatment, we must go back as far as René Clément's 1945 *Battle of the Rails.*

When a movie especially compels the illusion that one is witnessing "live" events, yet at the same time heightens them by its art, when, moreover, its subject is recent and highly sensitive, then it has truly inflammatory possibilities. Focusing only on the FLN uprising in the Algiers casbah, from 1954 to 1958, Pontecorvo seems to have filled this bill. It is said that the work has been banned in France, where its content would be almost as troubling as would

demonstrating this in films? Let us show how brave we are by laughing at life. And let us not consider that laughter to be an expression of cynicism but rather of reconciliation." Perhaps it was these words of his that earned Menzel's films the label of "smiling humanity." Yet Menzel not only smiles, he as often as not laughs outright. And his humanity would remain an anaemic concept if we were to ignore his interest in human sexual behavior, which is so typical of Menzel.

The story is set at the time of the German occupation. A young railway employee starting on his first job at a small country station hopes that one day some woman will help him to become "a real man." At last, with the help of a young artiste, he manages it, but the next day he is killed while trying to blow up a German munitions train. To speak of "a confrontation of obscenity and tragedy," as does Menzel himself, is to invite misunderstanding. Despite the sultry eroticism of some of the scenes in the film, *Closely Guarded Trains* is a far cry from the sex epics so popular in literature and the cinema, particularly in the West. Sexuality as treated by Menzel is a sexuality filtered through shyness and naivety and relieved by an understanding compassion. Menzel is not interested in sexual obsession or violence. The question which intrigues him is that of the sexual freedom of modern man. The necessity of a full sex life does not strike Menzel as a complex, but rather as one of the defence mechanisms adopted by modern mankind against the menace of dehumanization.

However, the outcry raised by the more orthodox spirits over *Closely Guarded Trains* was not based on moralistic grounds. The young artiste who initiates the lad into the secrets of love happens to be the same girl who brings the time bomb for the destruction of the German train. It was this daring linking of the sexual theme and the "sacred" subject of the fight for freedom that gave the story its absurd dimension. Its opponents were thus able to hide behind "higher" interests, their criticism being a defence of taboos against inadmissible "desecration." Such an attitude of course considers the bare facts only, not their artistic rendering. It is true that the young railwayman's brave deed has no motivation in his earlier behavior. The question whether this is an artistic lapse is equally justifiable as the question whether by means of this very ending Menzel is not trying to challenge the accepted stereotypes of the official "resistance" legend.

Film Reviews

SHOOTING AT WARS: Three Views

THE BATTLE OF ALGIERS. Director: Gillo Pontecorvo. Producer: Antonio Musu. Screenplay: Franco Solinas. Photography: Marcello Gatti. Editors: Mario Serandrei, Mario Morra. Music: Ennio Morricone, Gillo Pontecorvo. Rizzoli.

FAR FROM VIETNAM. Directed by Alain Resnais, William Klein, Joris Ivens, Agnes Varda, Claude Lelouch, and Jean-Luc Godard. Editor: Chris Marker.

LES CARABINIERS. Director: Jean-Luc Godard. Producer: Georges de Beauregard. Screenplay: Roberto Rossellini, Jean Gruault, and Godard, from a play by Benjamin Joppolo. Photography: Raoul Coutard. West End Films.

HOW I WON THE WAR. Produced and directed by Richard Lester. Screenplay: Charles Wood, based on the book by Patrick Ryan. Photography: David Watkin. Music: Ken Thorne.

❶

Much of the fascination of *The Battle of Algiers,* Gillo Pontecorvo's much-honored film which opened the New York Film Festival, lies in the ambiguity of its genre. Were it a merely heroic war piece, a political tract, or just a straight documentary, we could praise it for its competence, and dispatch it from memory as just one more respectable example of its kind. It is gratifying to say this can't be done. Here is a film which many viewers felt must be all, or at least partly, newsreel footage; its fidelity to actual historical events was carried past any of the usual goals of fictional re-enactment. As an emotional experience, this gave it such a haunting credibility and strength, that for its only ancestor, in theme as well as treatment, we must go back as far as René Clément's 1945 *Battle of the Rails.*

When a movie especially compels the illusion that one is witnessing "live" events, yet at the same time heightens them by its art, when, moreover, its subject is recent and highly sensitive, then it has truly inflammatory possibilities. Focusing only on the FLN uprising in the Algiers casbah, from 1954 to 1958, Pontecorvo seems to have filled this bill. It is said that the work has been banned in France, where its content would be almost as troubling as would

a similar account of the Vietnam war here. Doubtless the effectiveness of such a rendering is greatest if the social and psychic distance between the subject and its audience is small. Can one imagine now, or at any time in the forseeable future, the Soviet authorities welcoming a Pontecorvo film on the Hungarian revolution?

Proximity of theme has something to do with impact, but is hardly its sole criterion. Hollywood may yet give us its version of the Vietnam war, if John Wayne has his way, but it cannot reasonably be expected to abandon its well known equation of glamor with gore. For other reasons, on-the-spot film reporting of war, despite its undoubted veracity, has already shown itself uninvolving. The strictly factual recording of violence has a numbing effect, a kind of banality when recorded impersonally. Behind its random and casual look, it conceals no internal sense of cause, no moral resonance of anguish, in human mutual destruction. It can register facts, but it cannot express tragedy. But *The Battle of Algiers* combines the clip, the grabbed quality, and the authenticity of reportage, with the calculated omniscience of a dramatist's eye and sense of character. As it distances by showing events as part of history (headlines, dates, narration), it simultaneously reconstructs, and hence regenerates them anew: by revealing their local underpinnings, by an orderly revelation of their reciprocal impacts, and by an illumination of much in them, which by the nature of conspiracy, had to be concealed at the time.

This is political exposure, but it is not necessarily, by virtue of the fact, a partisan cry to arms. Pontecorvo examines a cold escalation of mutual reprisals from both sides—oppressed and oppressors. Though he is in obviously great sympathy with the rebels, his overview is not simplified into a defense of their terrorist massacres of innocent people. Rather, he seems to be telling us that both parties to an injustice—the givers and the receivers—are hooked into a merciless circuit of brutalization. To a hostile group of reporters, a captured Arab leader remarks that he would gladly exchange his homemade bombs for French napalm. Caught by the implacable logic of their situation, both sides commit atrocities against each other, out of all proportion to their instincts in any other context. Despite being particularized in one time and place, this has a nightmarishly timeless, even epic ring to it. For the principle involved is that no sacrifice of humanity is too great if done in the name of maintaining colonial rule, on the one hand, or the craving for freedom, on the other.

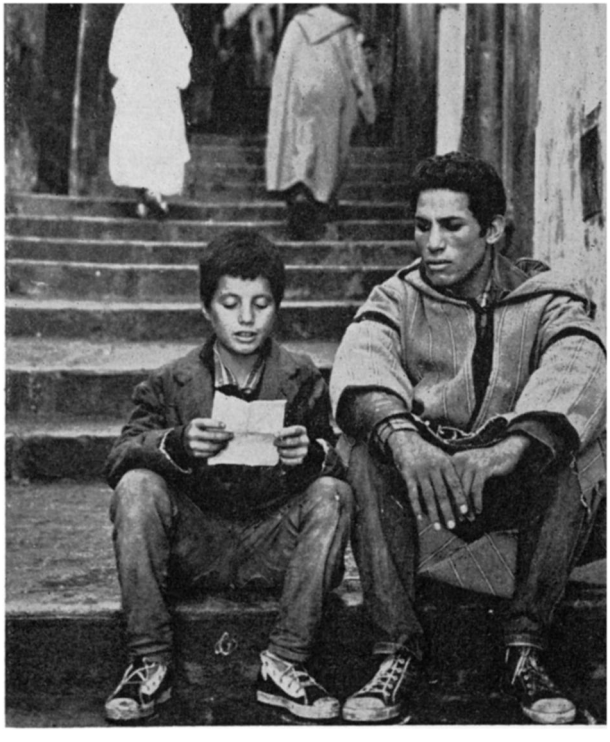
Pontecorvo actually starts at the end of his story, with the French paras closing in on the last Arab leader. If, therefore, there is no suspense in the narrative, there is still enormous tension generated in the cumulative density of events. Much of the taut structure of the film deals with the manner in which the two sides organize their forces: the Algerians forming isolated three-man units, without hierarchial control; their enemies setting up charts of the FLN groups, each of which must be individually prised loose from the stubborn webbing of resistance. With a relentless build-up, one follows the recruitment to one of the earliest FLN cells of the protagonist, Ali (a man whose very face is lethal), the assassination of gendarmes, a secret bombing of the casbah by ultra police, the blowing-up of three public places by the insurrectionists, arrival of the paratroopers, a massive strike, interrogation and torture of captives, and finally, a ferreting of the betrayed down to their last remnant of defiant leadership. Even though a coda sketches the later defeat of the French, the recklessness combined with implacability in the way events set each other in motion bring the spectator up suffocatingly tight with his own helplessness.

Two incidental touches among many render this tone with great poignancy. In one episode an Arab woman, who has disguised herself as Western, has planted her explosive-laden bag in a bar. Before she leaves, after a glance around at the unaware bystanders—women, children—the camera has hesitated for once just long enough to evoke the abyss between these combatants, none of whom, in the real sense, are warriors at all. The other scene is of the torture of wretches from the alleys, the

dripping of their blood seeming almost to be slowed down by the lyric accompaniment of an organ. More is apparent here than that big causes kill little people—sucking them in to their death—and yet the director does not intend to say that revolution is absurd and meaningless. Far from it. The scale had to balance exceedingly in favor of the Algerians—for since men cannot tolerate the long-term deprivation of their freedom, they are justified in bearing arms to attain it. It is a question of being able to live in dignity.

Still, in view of recent history, nothing could be more obvious, and ironic, than the fact that *The Battle of Algiers* is merely one installment in a sequence of chronically switched roles. The compatriots of those French railroad workers murdered in their struggle against the Germans, are shown, ten years later, to play the part of those very Germans in Algiers; meanwhile, the Algerians have enthusiastically endorsed an Arab "Holy War" against Israel, while the Jews, classic victims of the Nazis, are now illegally arresting, without trial, Arabs in the old city of Jerusalem. And who is to say that *The Battle of Algiers* will not provide a cinematic primer for what is to happen in American cities in the near future? A film which skirts these phenomena very provokingly (but not prophetically, despite being made in 1962), is another offering at the Festival, Jean-Luc Godard's *Les Carabiniers.*

Being the political and aesthetic anarchist that he is, Godard finds it natural to mix all the tenses of modern international conflict. His aboriginally ignorant soldiers, Ulysse and Michelange, are recruited only too easily into the campaign of the Condor Legion, by the promise of Masarati cars and chateaux. They are the socially atomized men of the west slaying in Asia, capitalists executing Marxists, sending home guileless letters to their girls, and finally bringing them, as proof of their spoils, only a Pop art world of post cards. Moreover, all this is realized in an incredibly flat, nerveless style, devoid of affect, causality, climax, in scenes splintered in their relationships, and hollow in their action, as if the business of taking life is both improvised and impersonal.



THE BATTLE OF ALGIERS

It sounds like a very good idea, but it does not come to look like one. In such a great later film as *Alphaville,* Godard was able to wire past, present, and future into the Paris of the moment, using the stereotypes of his detective and science-fiction yarn to conjure a dreamland of menace and perplexity. There, he would delay or speed up, or even cancel character motivations in a close-cropped environment, so that all behavior seemed to have a false bottom, and all meaning in the conflict between humanistic individuality and mindless self-destruction was held in question. Godard adds, to men's willful denial of their nature, the dehumanization of his film form. There is a dissociated moment in *Les Carabiniers* which prefigures this: the machine-like but brief hesitations of a firing squad about to shoot a blonde who can think of nothing better as a last gesture than to spout a bad Miaskovsky poem. Yet in this earlier work, Godard, all in all, founders on one critical problem: locale. *Les Carabiniers*

resembles nothing so much as a backyard *Shape of Things to Come*. It is a bad bet to situate an allegory in ordinary surroundings, the more so since there is no chance here of playing the two off against each other conceptually. The reality of the open fields and the studio sound of the machine guns do not crystallize into a higher unreality; rather, they fall apart into the unassimilated materials of artifice. Godard's abstractness of approach completely overwhelms its physical embodiment. Neither protest nor parody, his act of mind is not yet integrated by directive thought.

An infinitely more particularized, altogether political and powerfully eloquent work, representing the collaboration of five of France's most gifted directors, was the Festival's last entry, *Far From Vietnam*. In contrast to the above films, it could not afford itself the luxury of fiction, but it was scarcely documentary either. A spectrum of techniques, not so much of persuasion, but of indignation, formed a startling color mosaic, in which each tessera constituted an indictment against an America which has not only reneged on its own rhetoric of freedom, but now threatens world peace. But if it was an unabashedly rhetorical film, it had sections of great ambivalence, too. In an unfortunately theatrical tableau, Resnais's "intellectual," for example, dissects his own guilt: he remembers his relieved affection for the bubblegum-chewing GIs of the second World War, speaks sardonically of the 40,000,000 French anticolonialists, and characterizes Vietnam as the "first war everyone can see" (on television), and yet do nothing about. He ruminates on the ineffectiveness of "Gustave," a photo of a burned Japanese soldier, reprinted everywhere, which, in twenty years of standing for the bestiality of war, has done nothing. Additionally, he remarks that the Americans are Vietnam's Germans, that modern man "chooses victims according to fashion," and that the present scene is "a class struggle among the dead." For his part, Godard, the man who earlier castigated the right as stupid (because mean), and the left as lost (because sentimental), glues himself to a camera which, despite its ominously blinking strobe lights, is so close-framed as possibly to be photographing nothing. Deprived of a visa by Hanoi, he begins to wonder if it is not better, after all, to create a Vietnam in ourselves, and to ask if, perhaps, the Vietnamese are not fighting for all of us. Despite their strain, these scenes come across as genuine moments of conscience and self-examination. It is not uncommon for artists to feel hemmed in by their vicarious means of expression. Somewhere, in typically French fashion, it is asked "Have I the right to admire their dying? It is too much like being a spectator." But the quite just answer comes elsewhere: "To be behind the camera does not mean to be neutral."

Except for these problematical stoppages and speculations (and a few extraneous interviews of Ho and Castro), *Far From Vietnam* is an extremely fast-paced and self-assured film. It opens with intimate sequences of bomb-loading on an American carrier (Claude Lelouch)—all the terrifyingly expensive and elaborately destructive hardware that a nation of 200,000,000, which every day spends more on wrapping paper than all of India on food, can muster. This is juxtaposed with shots of people in Hanoi jumping into their little two-man shelters as the sirens wail. Time and again images resonate with the actuality of this berserk epoch, as peasants examine guava bombs, American stockbrokers smilingly intone their praise of the war, a "patriot" reminds you to "support your local police," and General West-

LES CARABINIERS

moreland revises history on a color television whose acid tones gorgeously corrode the ghostly countenance of Congress (William Klein). All this is interspersed with shots like those of a North Vietnamese minstrel show chanting of the visitations of Phantoms, Sabers, and Thunderchiefs; and of a Times Square "novelty" store window, which displays the icons of Johnson and Batman. No fantasy could have been more farfetched and accurate than this vividly real footage, which Chris Marker had no trouble in organizing as a pungent incrimination of a world traumatized by the American presence. All of modern history is pictured as swept up indiscriminately by that vacuum cleaner which is the land of Wheaties, breakfast of champions. With grim conviction, this film, which may yet be released commercially to cause discomfort in the movie houses, asks how far we really are from Vietnam.

—MAX KOZLOFF

❷

Making a good antiwar movie is almost impossible. If the movie has action scenes in it, no matter how bloody, the effect is more likely to be exhilarating than depressing. Even the least belligerent of spectators are probably excited by (say) the strafing of the beach in *The Longest Day,* and an "antiwar" battle scene can hardly avoid giving the same kinesthetic pleasure. In fact, the battle scenes in *All Quiet on the Western Front, The Last Bridge* and so on say little more about the horror or war than does Griffith's *Hearts of the World,* which was commissioned by the British government as propaganda to urge America into World War I.

Antiwar movies accomplish even less when they leave the heat of battle and start appealing to reason or sentiment. In cold blood, nearly everyone agrees that war is a tragic waste. So we nod or applaud when the German soldiers in *All Quiet* discuss the senselessness of war, and wait to see what else is new. But wars rarely start because one side believes that they're a good thing; they start because each side believes the other ought to (or will) give way without fighting. Thus most antiwar movies are monumental platitudes that completely miss the point.

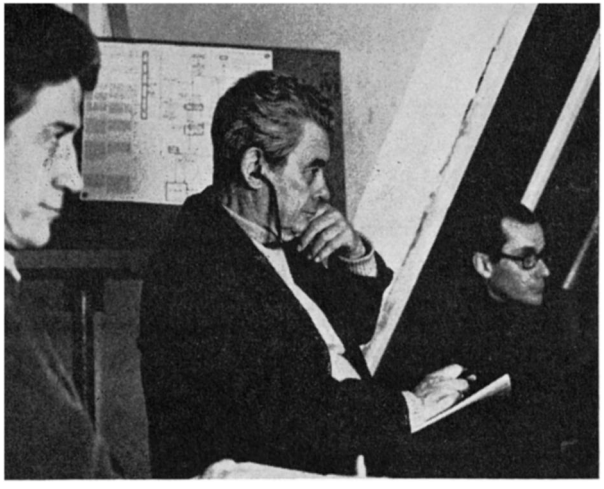
About the only thing that *Far from Vietnam* and *How I Won the War* have in common is that they come closer than usual to the point.

Far from Vietnam has a somewhat easier task, as it's concerned with only one war. But the issues involved are complex, and the film's complexity is compounded by the fact of being the work of half a dozen different directors. All of these are opposed to the US action in Vietnam, but to varying degrees and for varying reasons. Some of them are not at all antiwar in the wider sense of the word, since they clearly favor continued fighting by the FLN and North Vietnam.

The partisan tone of the film has led many American reviewers to dismiss it as Marxist and dishonest. In part, it is both; as a whole, however, it is curiously open-minded. The Marxist line is at its strongest when Castro is brought in to declare that the United States is trying to suppress popular revolutions throughout the world. Yet scenes of a loyalty parade in New York City concentrate on a group of pro-US and far from Uncle-Tom-ish Negroes—a phenomenon that no present-day Marxist would admit without trying to explain away. In any case, one doesn't have to be a Marxist in order to believe that the United States is throwing its weight around in the world and sustaining regimes that have no more popular support (perhaps less) than Castro's.

Dishonesty is more difficult to assess. Is it dishonest for Joris Ivens, filming in North Vietnam, to show only the amiable side of life, implying that the North Vietnamese are pure-hearted Davids oppressed by the American Goliath? Or is he simply countering the official American view—just as false—that the South Vietnamese are pure-hearted Davids oppressed by the Communist Goliath? A partisan statement on any side is bound to contain more or less deliberate half-truths.

But *Far from Vietnam* is much more than a string of half-truths. It draws considerable



Alain Resnais, Joris Ivens, Jean-Luc Godard.

strength from what is also a weakness—its fragmentary make-up. Instead of being predictable, like most partisan arguments, *Far from Vietnam* is continually changing gear and direction. You never quite know what is coming next or how it will be presented. There are objective newsreel-style shots of demonstrations and counter-demonstrations in New York City; Tom Paxton singing his "Lyndon Johnson told the nation, Have no fear of escalation" ballad; a glib parody of American magazine ads and TV commercials; a *cinéma-vérité* interview with the widow of Norman Morrison (the Quaker who burned himself to death in front of the Pentagon), and so on. My notes record seventeen different sections, and there were probably more.

Part of the unexpectedness of the film must be due to Chris Marker, who pieced it all together. Marker's own documentaries (such as *Cuba Si!* and *Le Joli Mai*), despite their strong left-wing slant, always acknowledge the fact that reality is too complex to fit any single ideology. In *Far from Vietnam* Marker makes no attempt to smooth over the differences between sections. On the contrary, he deliberately alternates calculated effect with passionate outburst, dogma with doubt.

There are two particularly undogmatic sections—by Resnais and Godard—which contribute even more to the film's unexpectedness. They do this partly because they are by far the most clumsily made of all the sections. Shots of Godard peering through his camera viewfinder and twiddling with the controls are accompanied by a monologue expressing his rambling thoughts on the Vietnam war. Resnais also offers a monologue, but through the intermediary of an actor playing a reviewer who is disturbed by one of Herman Kahn's war-theory books: the monotony of the reviewer's pacing around his study is relieved only by occasional close-ups of the unresponsive young woman he's talking to.

Yet each of these sections has something to say, and the clumsiness—with Resnais, at least—seems due to the desire to say it as artlessly as possible. (Godard is more likely having one of his frequent lapses from brilliance into inanity.) Resnais's spokesman is the kind of person who finds it hard to take sides because he can see too many of the complexities involved: the moral ambiguities of violence, the way a war perpetuates itself, the fact that the French are in no strong position to accuse the Americans of colonialist attitudes, the fact that amid worldwide concern over Vietnam the killing of thousands of Sudanese and Kurds is being overlooked, and so on. It is as if Resnais wanted to exercise his own conflicting thoughts on the American role in Vietnam, knowing that it is too important an issue for anyone to avoid wholehearted commitment for or against, no matter how scrupulously he may have weighed it beforehand.

Godard's monologue culminates in this statement: "I don't know what one can do about Vietnam, but I feel one ought to do something. That's why I bring a reference to Vietnam into every one of my films."

These two sequences neutralize in advance the strongest objections that can be leveled against *Far from Vietnam:* that it is both one-sided and ineffective. Yes, the film *is* one-sided, often to an extreme degree. But Resnais makes it clear that any thoughtful decision must override all kinds of doubts and reservations, or else it ceases to be a decision. And the fact that other people may have reached the same decision through prejudice or doctrinaire politics or for any other wrong reason does not invalidate it.

Yes, too, the film is probably ineffective. It isn't dishonest or angry enough to make good propaganda: the variety of moods and viewpoints expressed tends to blur the directors' common concern. For the most part, spectators are going to boo or cheer the more extreme passages of the film according to their preconceptions, and pass over the rest. But, as Godard's statement implies, the film's effectiveness is unimportant. A group of film-makers felt so strongly about Vietnam that they had to do something, and the natural thing for them to do was make a film.

Far from Vietnam may still provoke some people into thinking more deeply about the war—and perhaps into doing something about it in their own particular *métiers*. But the film is an expression of concern rather than an attempt to persuade. Its significance lies in the simple fact that it exists.

How I Won the War contains just one brief reference to Vietnam. Otherwise it is preoccupied with World War II—which at first seems a curiously remote setting for an antiwar film in the age of Westmoreland and Giap, Robin Moore and Joan Baez, John Roche and Staughton Lynd. But for Lester's ambitious purposes the choice is good. Nearly everyone on both sides of the Vietnam debate today would agree that it was right to wage war against the Nazis. If Lester can make that "just" war seem ludicrous and repellent, he is striking an even harder blow at more debatable wars.

Lester's chief antiwar weapon is the alternation of humor and horror. His humor is rapid-fire, flippant to the point of offensiveness. There is no solemnity to bore one, no indignant fervor to stir one to easy but short-lived acquiescence. Some of the grisly battle scenes injected into this humor are fictitious, others are drawn from archives, and nearly all are far too abrupt to generate any pleasurable excitement.

The combination of humor and horror is effective in two ways. First, there is the shock of contrast. In one scene a platoon of British soldiers is creeping up on an Italian gasoline dump in North Africa. The Italian sentries spot them and both sides raise their guns—which turn out to be jammed. The resulting tableau is hilarious; but suddenly the guns start to work and, while the audience is still laughing, a soldier is shot in the stomach. In a straight war film this shooting could pass unnoticed; here, cutting into a laugh, it gives a sharp jolt.

The horror also drives home the point of the deliberate flippancy of the humorous scenes. With all ridicule, there's a danger of arousing indignation not against the thing ridiculed but against the person ridiculing. Even before the film opened, Lester was attacked for lampooning Churchill, misusing army footage, and so on. Some people who actually see the film may also object to his sick humor, as in the scene where a nurse leans over a wounded man, delivers a patriotic speech about bravery and sacrifice and, when the man cries out "My legs! my legs!" says impatiently, "Why don't you just put them under the tap?" The straight battle scenes help to show where the real offensiveness lies—not in Lester's humor but in the belief that it is normal or edifying for men to have their legs blown off.

The big weakness of Lester's asault on war is that he chose the wrong book to base his film on. Patrick Ryan's novel is a satire on the military, but that is very different from being antiwar. Ryan's "hero," Ernest Goodbody, is a preposterously keen but idiotic young officer who takes part in all the major campaigns against the Germans in World War II and continually fouls up his assignments; most of the other officers who appear are either bunglers in their own right or are involved in some scheme that has little to do with winning the war. In other words, the book expresses the traditional enlisted man's cynicism about authority—a cynicism that has never been incompatible with a readiness to kill the enemy. In fact, if the book is seriously against anything at all, it's against inefficiency in waging war, which is almost exactly the opposite of being against war itself.

In adapting the book, Lester and Charles Wood have sometimes let their delight in zany

humor carry them even further in the wrong direction. For example, Ryan has a scene in the Greek campaign where Goodbody staves off complaints from Greek Communists by launching into a lengthy description of the rules of cricket. The ironic idea of using the peaceable game of cricket as an offensive weapon could quite easily have been adapted to Lester's purposes (the point of a cricket stump might serve gorily as a bayonet). Instead, Ryan's brief scene is transformed and elaborated into the film's longest, funniest but least antiwar sequence. Goodbody and his platoon are instructed to land in North Africa and prepare a cricket pitch behind enemy lines, in readiness for the advancing British troops. The laughter aroused by this venture is directed not against war but against the ludicrousness of sending men on such a mission when they might be usefully killing the enemy. If Lester hadn't announced that his film was antiwar, it would be hard to tell from sequences like this.

The confusion of attitudes is deepened by some of the major characters. Ryan's Goodbody is a lay figure: most of the time he represents a man who tries to do absolutely everything by the book, but occasionally he is allowed flashes of sense in order to point up someone else's stupidity. The film takes him over all of a piece, and it probably isn't Michael Crawford's fault that he often appears tongue-in-cheek when he should be in dead earnest. The film's Colonel Grapple (well played by Michael Hordern) has been given one magnificent speech that epitomizes the daft, semi-mystical, semi-earthy enthusiasm with which some leaders are able to inspire loyalty. But Lester and Wood have also combined in Grapple the bumbling qualities of many other superior officers in the book, and he is reduced from a dangerous clown to a clown pure and simple. For extraneous reasons, the presence of John Lennon as Private Gripweed may add some confusion, since many people in the audience may be waiting eagerly for him to have an important scene—which he never does.

Even when Lester is on target, he often uses a shotgun instead of a bullet straight to the bullseye. He goes into and out of fantasy and switches locations with bewildering speed. One typically puzzling feature is that, throughout the film, more and more men of Goodbody's platoon suddenly appear colored from head to foot in pink or green or orange. Reading an interview with Lester, I discovered that these men represent the casualties: the archive footage used for each campaign is tinted a different color, and the men are tinted the color of the campaign they died in. Many spectators may, like me, fail to spot the connection.

Lester has of course relied heavily on the shotgun technique ever since *The Running, Jumping and Standing Still Film,* and excessively so from *The Knack* onward. What is surprising and good about *How I Won the War* is that, amid the confusion, Lester also shows himself capable of bringing off a sustained effect. Near the end of the film, when Goodbody's platoon takes part in the ill-fated assault on Arnhem, there is a lengthy sequence of almost unrelieved grimness. German tanks come rumbling toward the house where the platoon (and the camera) have taken up their positions. The house shakes around the men and collapses as they run outside, only to be hunted down by the tanks and German infantry. The camera follows three of the men in turn as they are cornered and killed. Here Lester builds up a contrast to everything that has gone before: the audience expects him to continue switching moods, and because he does not, the sequence accumulates tremendous tension. As with the brief shock effect of the jammed guns mentioned earlier, this sequence conveys the horror of war far more vividly than if it were embedded in a straight war film.

Despite its many flaws of conception and execution, *How I Won the War* is still the nearest thing to an effective antiwar film that I've yet seen. But I wonder whether nearest is near enough. —WILLIAM JOHNSON

HOW I WON THE WAR

❸

"What profiteth it a man," Richard Lester asks in his new film, "if he win the whole war but suffer the loss of his soul?" World War II, for Lester's vulnerable protagonist Ernest Goodbody, is a soul-shattering experience. In 1939 he is callow and inept, but he believes in the efficacy, if not the desirability, of a just war. By 1945 he is neither earnest nor good: he wins the war by bribing a sympathetically portrayed German officer, with a $19,000 Traveller's Check, to hand over a strategic bridge. He then leads his company of corpses across the bridge to the cadence of a Churchillian eulogy to war.

How I Won the War is, at its best, a stinging study of war's corruption, a stringent depicting of war's large lies—stratagems, if you like—and small ones: a musketeer's wife invents sex exploits to put in her letters from home in return for the fabricated war exploits in his. As Franju's *Hotel Des Invalides* stunningly showed the physical degradation war inflicts, *How I Won the War* shows the moral side. And it is (this has been the critics' favorite descriptive phrase) a brave film. Churchill and Eisenhower may be dead as war gods, but it still takes a certain amount of moxie to portray the former as the puppet of a demented comic whose baggy music-hall uniform is decorated with Iron Crosses, and the latter as a drawling dolt (played by Alexander [Wilson] Knox) chuckling over a murderous mission.

Lester could have been braver—if he had made a film condemning the American position in Vietnam, for example (*War* does contain one gratuitous reference to the current police action), or the Israeli military mystique in the Middle Eastern War—but we are not asking the man to slit his cinematic wrists as a gesture of protest. If he has not gone far enough in satirizing war, he has at least gone further than any other commercial film-maker, including Stanley Kubrick. None of Lester's characters are soaked in the lugubrious sentimentality that drowns Timothy Carey in *Paths of Glory;* and in *Dr. Strangelove,* Kubrick had the advantage of burlesquing a future war, one that no one can be nostalgic for, one that does not have the emotional and personal connotations of Lester's war—nuclear war is fought by machines and madmen, World War II by earnest, goodbodied men and boys.

Further, Lester's choice of World War II, a conflict that can be justified as an act of self-defense against National Socialism, forces him into the position—which he accepts gladly—that all war is (his term) obscene. This raises the standard question: if Country A marches on Country B with the objective of demolishing or appropriating B, isn't B required to bear arms in an attempt to save the lives of its people? Lester dodges this question. He simply says that, once involved in a war, everyone is tainted—a general philosophy a lot less radical than the sum of its brutal parts. In his death speech, the soldier played by John Lennon says, "I fought this war for three reasons. The first one got me in. I don't remember what it was now." Neither, it seems, does Lester. But if he had investigated that first reason—self-defense, national sovereignty, or abduction of the king's wife—and found in it a point weak enough to be satirized, he would have made a more honest film and, incidentally, solved one of the unsolvable problems.

How I Won the War is also diluted by having to aim the same satirical spear at two targets, war and war films. Since the latter is a

much broader target and thus easier to hit, the film is most successful when describing the usual war-movie types: the blustering sergeant, the cowardly volunteer, the pompous general, the nice-guy Nazi. The difference in Lester's approach is that none are meant to be either funny or blameless. When the German officer who captures Goodbody, and who is the only man in the film with whom he can speak, casually remarks that he has killed "quite a few" Jews, Goodbody cannot feel morally superior simply because the mass murders for which he is responsible were carried out without regard to race, color, or creed. Germans and British, generals and musketeers—all are culpable. And none are funny. Critics who fault the film for not giving us more laughs (Andrew Sarris said "For me it was six laughs in a hundred minutes"—and six is the number of ghastly death scenes) miss the point. Lester has said, and the film bears it out, that he wanted to evoke, not our sense of humor, but our sense of horror. And this he does, for example, when an officer tries to convince us and himself that "it's very important to raise a laugh on the battlefield." It will be difficult for anyone moved by this scene to laugh on a battlefield again.

The film has been accused of being so involved with technique that it stifles any emotional response. It is true that Lester never lets us forget (in the manner of Bergman's *Persona*) that we are watching a film: as the camera closes in on a hysterical soldier, the sergeant says to us, "Go away. Haven't you seen enough?" When the same soldier dies (in a sequence reminiscent of the bridge scene in *Oktober*), he lets us examine his bloody face for a moment and then remarks, "Well, you see? Good." These moments, however, involve us—for the first time in a Lester film. And the performances are of a quality not found in the Beatle films or *The Knack*. The entire cast, with the exception of Lennon (who is merely adequate), is excellent. Michael Crawford, whose characterization begins in the usual Crawford fashion, elicits naiveté, heroism, expertise and finally bitterness from the Goodbody role. Michael Hordern (the general) and Jack McGowran (the music-hall clown) gave madly comic performances, and Ronald Lacey (the hysterical soldier) and Karl Michael Vogler (the German) are fine in sympathetic roles. These actors conquer the patchiness of some of their parts, just as the film, with all its faults, is greater than its parts. The message may be muddled, but *How I Won the War* is more than a message; it is a film, and one of the few anti-war films that transcend the sentimental.

—Richard Corliss

THE DIRTY DOZEN

Director: Robert Aldrich. Producer: Kenneth Hyman. Script: Nunnally Johnson and Lukas Heller from the novel by E. M. Nathanson. Photography: Edward Scaife. Music: De Vol. MGM.

Occasionally a commercial film is successful enough and spurious enough to require serious consideration. According to *Variety*, *The Dirty Dozen* has been setting box office records around the country since June, and MGM officials say that when the totals are in, it will be one of the highest grossing films in their history. Figures can't tell whether the customers like the movies they pay for, but *The Dirty Dozen* is one box-office smash I suspect people do like. The *Daily News* reported that the New York première brought "the loudest burst of applause ever heard on Broadway." I can verify that the film is a crowd-pleaser from my own experience—I saw it once with a predominantly lower-class audience in San Francisco, once with a better-dressed suburban crowd, and both times the laughter and applause were explosive. The reviews have been favorable too; the majority of influential critics have been calling it the most unusual and exciting war movie in years. I don't agree. Because it pokes around important material, and because of the way in which it manipulates audience response, *The Dirty Dozen* is one of the most vicious, though one of the craftiest movies I know.

It begins on an intriguing premise. London, 1944: The American generals know of a re-

much broader target and thus easier to hit, the film is most successful when describing the usual war-movie types: the blustering sergeant, the cowardly volunteer, the pompous general, the nice-guy Nazi. The difference in Lester's approach is that none are meant to be either funny or blameless. When the German officer who captures Goodbody, and who is the only man in the film with whom he can speak, casually remarks that he has killed "quite a few" Jews, Goodbody cannot feel morally superior simply because the mass murders for which he is responsible were carried out without regard to race, color, or creed. Germans and British, generals and musketeers—all are culpable. And none are funny. Critics who fault the film for not giving us more laughs (Andrew Sarris said "For me it was six laughs in a hundred minutes"—and six is the number of ghastly death scenes) miss the point. Lester has said, and the film bears it out, that he wanted to evoke, not our sense of humor, but our sense of horror. And this he does, for example, when an officer tries to convince us and himself that "it's very important to raise a laugh on the battlefield." It will be difficult for anyone moved by this scene to laugh on a battlefield again.

The film has been accused of being so involved with technique that it stifles any emotional response. It is true that Lester never lets us forget (in the manner of Bergman's *Persona*) that we are watching a film: as the camera closes in on a hysterical soldier, the sergeant says to us, "Go away. Haven't you seen enough?" When the same soldier dies (in a sequence reminiscent of the bridge scene in *Oktober*), he lets us examine his bloody face for a moment and then remarks, "Well, you see? Good." These moments, however, involve us—for the first time in a Lester film. And the performances are of a quality not found in the Beatle films or *The Knack*. The entire cast, with the exception of Lennon (who is merely adequate), is excellent. Michael Crawford, whose characterization begins in the usual Crawford fashion, elicits naiveté, heroism, expertise and finally bitterness from the Goodbody role. Michael Hordern (the general) and Jack McGowran (the music-hall clown) gave madly comic performances, and Ronald Lacey (the hysterical soldier) and Karl Michael Vogler (the German) are fine in sympathetic roles. These actors conquer the patchiness of some of their parts, just as the film, with all its faults, is greater than its parts. The message may be muddled, but *How I Won the War* is more than a message; it is a film, and one of the few anti-war films that transcend the sentimental.

—Richard Corliss

THE DIRTY DOZEN

Director: Robert Aldrich. Producer: Kenneth Hyman. Script: Nunnally Johnson and Lukas Heller from the novel by E. M. Nathanson. Photography: Edward Scaife. Music: De Vol. MGM.

Occasionally a commercial film is successful enough and spurious enough to require serious consideration. According to *Variety*, *The Dirty Dozen* has been setting box office records around the country since June, and MGM officials say that when the totals are in, it will be one of the highest grossing films in their history. Figures can't tell whether the customers like the movies they pay for, but *The Dirty Dozen* is one box-office smash I suspect people do like. The *Daily News* reported that the New York première brought "the loudest burst of applause ever heard on Broadway." I can verify that the film is a crowd-pleaser from my own experience—I saw it once with a predominantly lower-class audience in San Francisco, once with a better-dressed suburban crowd, and both times the laughter and applause were explosive. The reviews have been favorable too; the majority of influential critics have been calling it the most unusual and exciting war movie in years. I don't agree. Because it pokes around important material, and because of the way in which it manipulates audience response, *The Dirty Dozen* is one of the most vicious, though one of the craftiest movies I know.

It begins on an intriguing premise. London, 1944: The American generals know of a re-

THE DIRTY DOZEN

treat for German officers in Brittany, and they want to send a commando unit to kill as many of the officers as possible, thus weakening the Nazi command on the eve of the Normandy invasion. Major Reisman has a reputation as an insubordinate; the generals decide to get him out of the way by assigning him to the treacherous mission, and put under his command a dozen men from British military prison – thieves, murderers, rapists – many of them awaiting execution. If they are killed, then the Army has lost only long-term prisoners and condemned men. If they succeed, they are promised clemency.

Reisman is presented in the early scenes as a fiercely independent man, impudent to his superiors, even humane in his concern over military hypocrisy and injustice. He tells the generals that "the man who dreamed up this scheme must be a raving lunatic," but he reluctantly agrees to the assignment–because he has no choice–and sets in to train the men. His first dialogues with the prisoners are fine, dramatic exchanges. We are moved by their bitterness at the travesty of the "opportunity" offered them, and delighted by their irreverence for all authority and moral platitude. One of the men is a passionately resentful Negro who initially refuses the offer because, as he tells the Major, it is a white man's war. Still, the chance to postpone death, no matter how tentative, is convincingly attractive, and it is no surprise when they all accept the job. But the terms of the drama look harsh and vivid: The dozen convicts have, for the most part, rejected the conventions of their military society, and in these early moments their defiance is presented with force, even sympathy. The grim irony of their situation–condemned men being given a chance to die in battle–is clear. The treatment of antisocial behavior promises to be complex and incisive. And the Major (tartly played by Lee Marvin), attracted to the men he must tyrannize, sharing their insolence even while he is forced to play policeman, is a fascinating focus of the drama.

All of this interest gradually dribbles away. The ironic resonance is sidestepped completely. Instead of the complex play of sympathies we expect from the opening scenes, the suspense is reduced to one very simple question: Will the convicts be able to form a spirited team, become devoted and committed to each other and to their mission? We are asked to plug for their "reformation," their happy accommodation to military reality.

It's not hard to believe in their conversion, because after the first few minutes, only one of the convicts–the one played by John Cassavettes–resists Reisman's discipline. The movie doesn't really have *any* suspense. We know the men will "reform," because they never seriously threaten to rebel; they're the most innocent-looking, submissive group of ostensibly violent

men you'll ever find. *The Dirty Dozen* pretends to be very bold and tough by asking us to sympathize with murderers and rapists, but we're only *told* that they are murderers and rapists; we never *see* them do anything the least bit startling. They swagger a little, and a few of them look slightly neurotic, but they could be any group of rambunctious, brawny, easily manageable soldiers. The gimmick of making them criminals is a fraud. Reisman masters them much too effortlessly and efficiently.

What is most disturbing is the increasing docility of the Negro (rather well-played, incidentally, by Jim Brown). If he believes at the start that it is not his war, what changes his mind so quickly? After his first conversation with Reisman, he collapses without a struggle. The point, I suppose, is that even racial differences can be swept aside through rigorous discipline and commitment to a common cause; but who can really believe that prejudice is this readily erased or that a lifetime of degradation can be painlessly forgotten in a furor of camaraderie? The facility of the Negro's reconciliation to what he calls the white man's war is the clearest indication of the film's cheapness.

But the movie *is* complicated. Clearly the scriptwriters, Nunnally Johnson and Lukas Heller, and the film's director, Robert Aldrich, wanted to woo their audience by arousing its antisocial aggressiveness, and they knew they would have to find a way of titillating this aggressiveness even as they sold their criminals over to respectability. So they came up with a good safe target for some belligerent satire—official pomposity, and in particular the West Point Colonel (Robert Ryan) with whom the men must study parachuting. The sequence in the parachuting school shows Reisman and the criminals disobeying the Colonel's orders and roguishly mocking the West Point group for their gentility. In the most ingenious scene, the arrival at the school, the Colonel believes that one of Reisman's men is a general travelling incognito, and Reisman sees the chance for a savage put-on—he tells an especially scabby and stupid convict, filthy and unshaven, to pose as the general and "examine" the Colonel's dapper troops while a military band salutes him; his humiliation of their good manners and his groggy burlesque of military affectation ("They look pretty, but can they fight?") are irresistibly funny.

But nothing is really at stake in such an encounter. It's awfully easy to tease a priggish West Point dandy; but it's much more challenging—and dangerous—to attack the foundation of military life, the philosophy that callously encourages the sacrifice of individuals to expediency. The film promises this kind of subversion, then backs away. Reisman's instigation of his men's hostility toward the Colonel is designed solely to give them a sense of solidarity; in ridiculing the Colonel's unit, they come to have a group identity, a common purpose, loyalties.

The Dirty Dozen glibly ignores the absolute irreconcilability of the aggressiveness the convicts feel and their ultimate placid resignation to military authority. The movie really has it both ways: we are asked to identify with the scrappy underdogs and cheer when they make fun of their superior officers, but we are never asked to endorse any genuinely unconventional activity. For example, consider the war-games sequence, in which Reisman's men are to prove their proficiency by competing against the Colonel's more respectable unit. The dirty dozen do not hesitate to break regulations; they keep changing sides unscrupulously, even steal an ambulance in order to defeat the Colonel's team. But for all of the cynicism of their methods, their aim is identical with the aim of the soldiers who act with every fussy propriety —to win the war games, be congratulated by the generals, and secure the opportunity to begin their almost certainly suicidal mission against the Germans. Bosley Crowther criticized the film for being "brazenly antisocial," but the point is that it isn't really antisocial at all; it never questions the military ethos or the validity of war, it only taunts certain *details* of the establishment. The convict's rebelliousness is channeled finally toward a socially estimable goal.

In a way, of course, there's something terribly logical about aggressive impulses, no matter how ruthless and disillusioned, being put to the service of the war machine. And there is one moment when the film itself toys with this recognition: the army psychiatrist tells Reisman that he must be crazy to train a group of criminals and psychopaths, and Reisman replies, "Can you think of a better way to fight a war?" But then a movie like this tries to throw in something for everyone; the people who wrote the script aren't stupid, and every once in a while they play sophisticated. Mostly, though, they play safe. The film contains no coherent, controlled awareness of the way in which the military feeds on men's dissatisfactions and animosities for its own purposes; usually it's straight glory-guys melodrama. In other words, *The Dirty Dozen,* like the military society it pretends to despise, glosses over the grotesque ironies of wartime civilization with plenty of he-man calisthenics and cheery belly laughs.

Still, the movie might not be worth discussing if its climactic sequence were less compelling and less horrible. This sequence details the destruction of the German officer villa and the loss of all but one of the convicts. Aldrich is talented, and this sequence is very well executed—energetic and exciting, interesting to look at. But accomplished technique is being put to reprehensible ends. After a series of elaborate maneuvers, the shooting has begun, and all of the German officers and their guests —mostly women—have run to the bomb shelter in the basement of the villa. Reisman and one of the men have been inside the villa disguised as Nazis, and they manage to lock the Germans in the shelter. The Americans drop first unreleased grenades, then gasoline, then fuses through the ventilators of the shelter, all the while fighting off the German reinforcements outside the villa. The camera peers down, through the vents, at the terrified Germans trying to catch the grenades as they are dropped in on them, then at the gasoline being poured over them; they look like trapped animals when we see them from above. The inevitable reference would be to the gas chamber, but the film-makers don't seem to be aware of it; at any rate, they're urging us to cheer the American killers.* Aldrich cuts back and forth, in standard thriller fashion, from the Germans getting closer and closer to freedom—breaking through the inner door of their deathtrap, storming the outer, untouchable doors—to the American soldies preparing for the explosion with greater and greater frenzy. After spending two and a half hours watching a dozen men, we can't help championing them over some Germans we can't tell apart. And the editing, by playing it as straight cops-and-robbers, painfully intensifies our sympathy for the destroyers.

We may resist to some extent (largely because half of the trapped people are women; we have unfortunately become accustomed to applauding the destruction of German officers, but the presence of civilian women is unnerving). But Aldrich has worked the scene so skillfully that a part of us is eager, for a few seconds anyway, to see them killed. What is truly dreadful about the sequence is that it is impossible to withstand its relentless cruelty. If we could remain comfortably superior to the movie and scorn it, it wouldn't deserve attention.

But taste, intelligence, sophistication are *not* absolute dividers; *The Dirty Dozen* at moments unifies the audience by playing to sadistic impulses that none of us can ignore. Great art may force us to acknowledge the same im-

* Aldrich has stated (*New York Times,* September 3) that he *was* aware of the gas chamber reference and did *not* mean to endorse the coldblooded efficiency of the Americans. But whatever his intentions, they're lost in the bloodletting and in the general confusion of the film's attitudes. It's worth noting that not one of the reviews of the film, as far as I know (and I've checked most of them), has mentioned, even in passing, any parallel to the gas chamber. And almost no one I talked to had thought of it either. Apparently the point isn't getting through, except unconsciously, and in perverted form.

pulses, but acknowledgment is an invaluable kind of self-illumination. *The Dirty Dozen*, by contrast, doesn't ask us to reflect honestly on our vulnerabilities, it simply makes us respond —as if we were dogs—with bloodthirsty vehemence, and then pretends that this degradation is relaxing, inspiring entertainment.

The Dirty Dozen is not the first movie to treat its public with contempt. But the film is uncannily, frighteningly in keeping with today's military mentality. Unlike Second World War movies made during the War, and many of them later (*The Guns of Navarone*, for example), *The Dirty Dozen* does not have a hostile attitude toward Germans. We don't see or hear about any Germans until that last sequence of the film, and even there most of them look quite harmless, almost human in their dallying and their innocent chatter. This isn't to say that the movie presents any of them with much sympathy either, as has been done, to some extent, in recent movies like *36 Hours* and *The Night of the Generals*. The Germans in this movie aren't good, aren't bad, aren't people really; they are pallid, indifferent Enemy who must be exterminated. But the Second World War, complicated as it was, had in Hitler a palpable, truly hateful enemy; *The Dirty Dozen* gives no sense of that, no inkling of what in Nazism was worth fighting, even at frightful human cost. In this respect the war being fought in the movie, though it is called World War II, is really the Vietnam War. Perhaps a few soldiers in Vietnam really feel committed to fighting a Communist monster, but most of them, judging from printed interviews and my talks with the ex-soldiers I know, have few feelings one way or the other about their Vietnamese opponents. If anything, they admire them for their ability to withstand the most advanced war technology the world has seen. But they destroy them, do not scruple, even, at destroying civilians (as happens in *The Dirty Dozen* too), because they will not question the Army's injunction to fight to kill. The hideous moral of the war in Vietnam and of *The Dirty Dozen* is that you kill Enemy, and have a lively time at it, because that is what you are ordered to do; you never worry much about why you're fighting or what's at stake.

The epilogue to *The Dirty Dozen* is a clear sign of its confusion. An official voice drones, "It was recommended that the survivors be returned to active duty"—surely ironic, since there is only one survivor. But is there any irony at the very end, when the narrator reads off the names of the convicts, to the accompaniment of rousing martial music, and concludes, voice swelling, "They died in the line of duty"? No, I'm afraid the underlined message is completely solemn: these criminals won salvation by dying nobly in battle. At a time when we need to be reminded that there are no heroes in war, *The Dirty Dozen* blows a loud, raucous trumpet for Duty, Country, and the hardfighting Common Man. Of course these men must die for their unpunished crimes, as has been happening in Hollywood movies for decades. The sole survivor is the one convict who did not deserve his sentence. The others die an ugly but, we are told, a glorious death. Here is how Aldrich has explained the point of his film: *The Dirty Dozen*, he said, means "to show the necessity for collective courage in circumstances that would make collective cowardice more likely, and to show that almost anybody can be redeemed if certain circumstances and pressures are sufficient." (*New York Times*, September 3).

In spite of this sanctimoniousness, the *Saturday Review's* Arthur Knight praised the film for affirming the importance of authority: "Thus the men begin to appreciate their Major, the Major respects his General, and, presumably, the General has a higher regard for those above him. And, strangely, in an age of nonconformity rampant, the logic of an authoritarianism that is understanding, understandable—and right—becomes not only acceptable but welcomed." I don't see how a gesture like Reisman kicking Cassavettes in the face could be lauded as "understanding" authoritarianism. I do see that it's easy to like Reisman at first, because of his sympathy for the men, his hatred of his own superiors, his apparent iconoclasm, his cynical toughness. His remark about fighting a war with psychopaths even

seems to show that he's enlightened, but when he confronts the Germans at the end, he talks like the worst kind of Know-Nothing. The convict who's inside the villa with him complains that his German may not hold up; Reisman advises him, with a smirk, "Don't worry. Just act mean and grunt." The audience laughed, but is it funny, really? Or is it funny when another soldier asks him what to do with the servants, and he answers breezily, "Feed the French and kill the Germans" as he walks out? The man who talks this way would laugh about "killing gooks" today. Reisman sounds intelligent, but he's the fascist policeman as hero.

Whenever a film urges us to wish for the reformation of "bad" men, we have to ask why they're reforming. Is reformation a good in itself, is there anything commendable about it when men reform in order to kill—and especially when they kill as cavalierly and as monstrously, with as little commitment, as they do in this film? The Pentagon might say so, which is why this film would be perfect, subtle propaganda for today's inductees. But that's no reason to praise a movie. Isn't there something to be said for rebellion—even rebellion as criminal and psychopathic and anarchic as that threatened by the dirty dozen (though, as I've noted, the threat is actually pretty feeble)—when the alternative is a satisfied participation in the kind of slaughter we see in the movie's last sequence? The answers may seem crushingly obvious, but this film doesn't even pose the questions.

It may be said that a movie like this one only reflects popular confusions, sicknesses, and prejudices, and so isn't worth condemning. I don't believe that entirely. I think *The Dirty Dozen* contributes to as well as mirrors the public neurosis. And I'm *not* saying, as some moralists would, that violence in movies leads to an increase in crime; the effect of an intricately rigged movie like *The Dirty Dozen* is much more complicated, much less perceptible than that. Anyone who sees this film and swallows it walks out a little more confirmed in his apathy toward Vietnam and in his conviciton that war is a lot of gutsy action and a stirring road to manhood and fulfillment; and in spite of the movie's mood of exuberant masculine adventure, he probably walks out feeling strangely, inarticulately desolate about the possibility of fighting authority or of ever altering the Great Society's mandates for his "adjustment," that is, his subjection.—STEPHEN FARBER

MICKEY ONE

Director: Arthur Penn. Script: Alan Surgal. Photography: Ghislain Cloquet. Score: Eddie Sauter. Columbia.

BONNIE AND CLYDE

Director: Arthur Penn. Script: David Newman and Robert Benton. Photography: Burnett Guffey. Score: Charles Strouse. Warners-Seven Arts.

The history of symbolic narrative in the American cinema is understandably brief. Over the past forty years, only one work roughly fits into the genre, and that is James Cruze's *Beggar On Horseback* (1925), a silent film. The entire intellectual structure of the film industry in this country is based upon commercial success and those vague tenets applicable to the creation of old-fashioned *entertainment*, a word still closely linked to the era of Moran and Mack and *Abie's Irish Rose*. The moguls of the large studios, who are always willing to admit that they are "reasonably intelligent" (and are often quite mistaken) have reached such a point of confusion these days regarding the changed tastes of the public—whose pulse has grown noticeably less discernible to their aging ears—that it comes as no surprise that Arthur Penn's production of *Mickey One* has been a box-office failure. The miracle is that the film was actually released by a major film company. In time, the film will be recognized as a major contribution to the *art* of film making in this country. To date, few people have seen *Mickey One* because its distribution has been almost surreptitious. Its debut at the New York Festival in 1965 was received with bafflement or hostility. Here, at last, was a totally symbolic film narrative, set in contemporary America, one that demanded concentration, presumed

seems to show that he's enlightened, but when he confronts the Germans at the end, he talks like the worst kind of Know-Nothing. The convict who's inside the villa with him complains that his German may not hold up; Reisman advises him, with a smirk, "Don't worry. Just act mean and grunt." The audience laughed, but is it funny, really? Or is it funny when another soldier asks him what to do with the servants, and he answers breezily, "Feed the French and kill the Germans" as he walks out? The man who talks this way would laugh about "killing gooks" today. Reisman sounds intelligent, but he's the fascist policeman as hero.

Whenever a film urges us to wish for the reformation of "bad" men, we have to ask why they're reforming. Is reformation a good in itself, is there anything commendable about it when men reform in order to kill—and especially when they kill as cavalierly and as monstrously, with as little commitment, as they do in this film? The Pentagon might say so, which is why this film would be perfect, subtle propaganda for today's inductees. But that's no reason to praise a movie. Isn't there something to be said for rebellion—even rebellion as criminal and psychopathic and anarchic as that threatened by the dirty dozen (though, as I've noted, the threat is actually pretty feeble)—when the alternative is a satisfied participation in the kind of slaughter we see in the movie's last sequence? The answers may seem crushingly obvious, but this film doesn't even pose the questions.

It may be said that a movie like this one only reflects popular confusions, sicknesses, and prejudices, and so isn't worth condemning. I don't believe that entirely. I think *The Dirty Dozen* contributes to as well as mirrors the public neurosis. And I'm *not* saying, as some moralists would, that violence in movies leads to an increase in crime; the effect of an intricately rigged movie like *The Dirty Dozen* is much more complicated, much less perceptible than that. Anyone who sees this film and swallows it walks out a little more confirmed in his apathy toward Vietnam and in his conviciton that war is a lot of gutsy action and a stirring road to manhood and fulfillment; and in spite of the movie's mood of exuberant masculine adventure, he probably walks out feeling strangely, inarticulately desolate about the possibility of fighting authority or of ever altering the Great Society's mandates for his "adjustment," that is, his subjection.—STEPHEN FARBER

MICKEY ONE

Director: Arthur Penn. Script: Alan Surgal. Photography: Ghislain Cloquet. Score: Eddie Sauter. Columbia.

BONNIE AND CLYDE

Director: Arthur Penn. Script: David Newman and Robert Benton. Photography: Burnett Guffey. Score: Charles Strouse. Warners-Seven Arts.

The history of symbolic narrative in the American cinema is understandably brief. Over the past forty years, only one work roughly fits into the genre, and that is James Cruze's *Beggar On Horseback* (1925), a silent film. The entire intellectual structure of the film industry in this country is based upon commercial success and those vague tenets applicable to the creation of old-fashioned *entertainment*, a word still closely linked to the era of Moran and Mack and *Abie's Irish Rose*. The moguls of the large studios, who are always willing to admit that they are "reasonably intelligent" (and are often quite mistaken) have reached such a point of confusion these days regarding the changed tastes of the public—whose pulse has grown noticeably less discernible to their aging ears—that it comes as no surprise that Arthur Penn's production of *Mickey One* has been a box-office failure. The miracle is that the film was actually released by a major film company. In time, the film will be recognized as a major contribution to the *art* of film making in this country. To date, few people have seen *Mickey One* because its distribution has been almost surreptitious. Its debut at the New York Festival in 1965 was received with bafflement or hostility. Here, at last, was a totally symbolic film narrative, set in contemporary America, one that demanded concentration, presumed

the intellectual involvement of its audience (it is definitely an art film, in the sense of *Orphée* or *The Caretaker*) and was, despite the rigors imposed upon the spectators' consciousness, visually compelling. *Mickey One,* an exceptional film because it dares to bring innovation and experimentalism into the Establishment of Hollywood finances, is not a flawless one, but it deserves the support of all who care about the future of new ideas and approaches in American motion pictures. It is hoped that Penn and his associates are not discouraged by what has happened to *Mickey One* so far, because as it is seen more often by the audience it deserves, it will be discussed, remembered, and respected.

Alan Surgal's script has some of the patterns of classical Greek tragedy within it, but these are steadfastly remolded into a modern setting (Chicago), and the nameless young hero (Warren Beatty) is a successful nightclub comedian. The traditional fall in status and flight from retribution are recognizable influences in the film, but unlike the Greek heroes, the comedian neither knows the nature of his transgression, nor the identity of his pursuers. There are other imaginative borrowings: from the literature of Kafka, Ionesco, and Beckett; from the cinematic nighttowns of every American gangster-film ever made; the carnival art of George Grosz and Paul Cadmus; the sculpture of Tingueley; the comic artistry of mime, and the artistic utilization of rubble in the tradition of von Sternberg's *The Salvation Hunters,* Kershner's *Stake-Out on Dope Street;* and (although made later) Penn's own *The Chase.* Add to all of these a sense of excitement and joy and there is *Mickey One.*

Penn embarks upon astonishment as soon as the film begins: the hero, fully dressed, in topcoat and derby, smoking a cigar, sits in a clouded steam-room, surrounded by laughing fat men wrapped in towels. Then, in rapid succession, a montage of impressions showing the hero's crazy pattern of existence, a visual whirligig of sensuality, nightclub crowds and wild rides in an open convertible, all ending in the deserted, half-lit club, with a woman's chiffon scarf draped over a drummer's cymbal. We hear the hero's voice saying: "The ride was over. I was trapped. I find out I was suddenly a fortune." This is the brief, initial indication of the hero's plight. When he confronts his employer, Ruby Lapp (Franchot Tone), a grim-faced individual who stares out knowingly beneath a visored cap, his question, "Who owns me?" is not answered. Whatever the crime, one is forced to believe that it is something unforgivable because the hero is petrified by fear, and Ruby's attitude exemplifies negative judgment and condemnation. When the hero decides to flee Detroit, running out the back door of the club, Ruby screams into the night: "There's no place you can ever hide from 'em! You'll have to be an animal!"

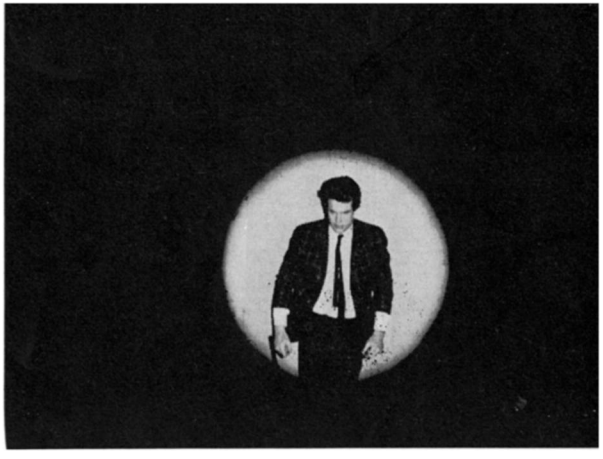
The spectator should, of course, be bewildered, but the chaotic world of symbol and displaced reality should be recognizable by this point in the film. The hero bums a ride to Chicago and burns all of his identity cards. He finds himself in a black-and-gray territory of disruption and waste, an auto graveyard where these machines are being wrecked and molded into cubes of crushed steel. His imagination causes him to visualize his own death in one of these devices—some policemen appear to be investigating the area; giant cranes hover over him, pincers open to grasp; cars mysteriously explode. In the distance, a smiling Oriental junkman beckons to him from a horse-drawn cart.

The director has now hit his stride and one is never released from a total immersion into a world of "happenings." Penn has co-mingled cinema of the absurd with the cinematic underworld of Lang's *Mabuse,* but without the definition of German expressionism. The Chicago slum environment is kept on the visual level of clearcut documentary, so that when the hero is given a free bowl of gruel in a sleazy, empty-chaired mission house, one is rather jolted back into the disciplines of symbolism by hearing the mission-owner stutter incoherently over a reading from Jeremiah, while his wife silently mouths the text—a sequence reminiscent of Ionesco's *The Chairs.* As one looks at the film, knowing that it is all symbolic narrative, the mind clings to each moment of identification

supplied by the atmospheric verisimilitude of Chicago's urban realities, or holds on to any "normal" reaction supplied by characters encountered in the unraveling of the story. One continually waits for clues or the ultimate revelation, because we are so conditioned to the traditional disciplines of storytelling in American films.

The hero steals a social security card from a man whom he has seen mugged by some derelicts, and (like Kazan's immigrant in *America, America*) is given a nickname by his first employer who finds the Polish name on the card unpronounceable, and refers to him as "Mickey One." Mickey's progress from garbage helper back to the profession of entertainer, and his tentative triumph over his fearsome pursuers, comprise the rest of the film. He secures the services of an agent, Berson (Teddy Hart), who, in turn, arouses the interest of a remotely sinister, latently inverted nightclub entrepreneur, Ed Castle (Hurd Hatfield). The relationship between Mickey and Castle is a modern recreation of the psychological tensions explored by Penn in his first film, *The Left-Handed Gun,* and Castle's exhortations to help Mickey overcome his fear of holding an audition are strange, indeed. Notice the menacing way in which Castle articulates the word, "Splendid!" after seeing Mickey perform in a cheap West Side dive; the persuasive arguments between the two in another sequence when Castle shouts, "Al Jolson had 150 overcoats in his closet when he died! I want you!"; or the odd physical struggle which ends with Castle wrestling Mickey to the floor, and holding a piece of broken bottle near his face.

The tapestry of *Mickey One* is filled with human emblems of good and evil, mostly the latter, ranging from those who articulate their positions and their relationships toward Mickey, to those who remain outside the action—the loudly argumentative club manager (Jeff Corey), seeming to represent and in league with Mickey's unseen pursuers; the enigmatic Ruby Lapp; or the ever-present junkman (Kamatari Fujiwara). The heroine, Jenny Drayton (Alexandra Stewart) is presented in a Kafkaesque framework: the hero's eccentric landlady rents her Mickey's room even though he has refused to be evicted, so they live together. Jenny's characterization is straightforward; she is from Kansas, beautiful, unaffected, and concerned about Mickey's problems. She seems normal and it is perhaps a bit too facile on Surgal's part that she accepts so much of the strangeness of the life around her without question. She manages to get Mickey to reveal that he considers himself a "Polack Noel Coward," and evokes his monologue about the momentary illusions a comedian embraces while on stage. The spectator is given, from this point onward, a series of hints regarding the film's levels of meaning. Mickey's insecurities are not only physical, but, most importantly, he is plagued by the fear of not being a worthwhile artist. The symbolic position of the entertainer-as-outsider, the tragic jester to whom life is a succession of irresolute audiences, crafty agents, and vacuous producers—this lies at the basis of *Mickey One.* When an entertainer realizes that he is being judged, his fears may overcome his personality; this is particularly true with successful comedians, the rapid-patter, wryly insulting stand-up comic who has become such a major figure in show business today. One need only imagine that Mickey's nightclub manner and comic material is equivalent to that associated with entertainers like Joe E. Lewis, Don Rickles, or, going further back, Ted Healy, and that he is prone to the violence that their brand of comedy might inspire from a disapproving underworld. Mickey



MICKEY ONE

had obviously accepted his success and its pleasures without being concerned about the controlling interests behind the scenes; his irresponsible talents, momentary indebtedness and social anarchy have mocked the unseen people who "own" him, and Penn has taken a demoniacal approach to illustrating his hero's dilemma. If Society is God, then the difficulty in this film is one of empathy with the strange symbol of Everyman as nightclub comedian. The connotations of a mysterious, violent underworld are now conventions for the average film spectator, because of the gangster-film tradition, but the implication that violence and degradation are *necessary* to the development of the artist is rather extraordinary.

In dramatizing these points, Penn fluctuates between symbolic fantasy and symbolic realism. Two marvelous sequences illustrate the former style: one in which Mickey and Jenny's spiritual release through love is expressed by suddenly seeing them in mid-air, bouncing above a trampoline, with a number of others similarly in flight around them; a balletic exhilaration shown in a dreamlike image. Secondly, a nocturnal exhibition of the Oriental's massive sculpture on the Chicago lakefront shows this conglomeration of clanging ashcan tops, toy cars, etc., which he has named "Yes," and the exhibition's announcer proclaims that "its greatest freedom will come out of its greatest threat." When the machine suddenly explodes and begins to destroy itself, some fire trucks spray and engulf the sculpture in a mass of white, sudsy foam. Only Mickey and Jenny remain to watch the sculptor's joy when he discovers that a single piece of the mechanism continues to function, and they join him in laughter. The anarchic spirit thrives best for youth and the revolutionary artist, both in social isolation. These fantasy elements in *Mickey One* also underline the film's insistence upon a concept that the world of derelicts, that tawdry atmosphere of bums, alcoholics, junkies, and scavengers, holds within it a dangerous freedom that can either be creative or destructive. When Mickey finds himself in this world, it brings him into contact with the benign, silent sculptor who symbolizes an unknown but positive force of creativity, of artistic rediscovery that Mickey cannot entirely distrust and vainly eludes. Conversely, Mickey also encounters a group of bizarre human wrecks when he seeks refuge in an abandoned milk truck in the junkyard; they, too, beckon to him to join them in the oblivion of society's rejected misfits, but with such frightening effect that he retreats from them.

In the areas of symbolic realism, which control most of the film, Mickey's conflicts with the entertainment world are more complex. A key sequence is his ominous audition in Ed Castle's empty nightclub. Mickey stands on stage, with a single spot upon his face, seeming to face a retributive God in the light-booth. "What are ya, laughin' or aimin'?" he yells into the dark. In panic, he cannot continue the audition and runs out into the streets, only to be savagely beaten later by a group of exotically dressed doormen from neighboring nightspots, each wearing the native dress of a foreign country. Like Mickey, the spectator never knows who "they" are. One has heard of the Mafia, of course, and the tendency of show business to dehumanize the performer is well-known. In fact, when Ruby Lapp tells Mickey that his entire way of life may have been a transgression, the scene is played in the nightclub's commissary, amid huge carcasses of beef strung from the ceiling—an ominous, correlative image to Ruby's final call to Mickey-in-flight.

One runs from failure, from the death of art in oneself, from those to whom he is responsible: Mickey's final acceptance of himself comes only through a complete surrender to his "beating," the compromise and self-abnegation before Society. If the spectator catches a mere glimpse of the terrifying disillusionment of Mickey's confused confrontations with the modern world's mad values, he can accept the film's grotesque visual excursions, its flirtations with paranoia and philosophic meaning. The film's nightclub "audience" is also capable of accepting the mixture of wisecracks and derangement that emerges from the inexplicable, battered human being who faces them toward the end of the story. It might have been more satisfying if the spectator had been able to

determine whether Mickey's nightclub act was superb or mediocre; one is never shown enough of his talent to decide. The general tone of the story implies that he is a sensation, and it must be admitted that the lack of evidence given to support this contention is a major flaw. Warren Beatty succeeds in conveying the anguished terror of Mickey and his continued dismay before the prevalence of Furies; however, his attempts at nonintellectual speech are not entirely satisfactory, for his worldly wise eyes, hip manner, and collegiate charm tend to belie those occasional efforts to have him sound like a Joe E. Lewis. Nevertheless, Beatty reveals that he has the flexible talent and ingenuity of style to be considered one of America's more dedicated young screen actors. The highest praise must also be given to Ghislain Cloquet's superb cinematography and the subtle, jazz-oriented score of Eddie Sauter, embellished by Stan Getz's intricate improvisations.

Mickey's final acceptance of his nameless destiny confirms the purpose of the film—to dramatize one artist's lack of self-knowledge and his total confusion in a world lacking in spiritual values or artistic integrity. "I gotta live the only way I know I'm at least free," Mickey says, and he implies that this is by *trying to entertain,* to create laughter as much as possible. Jenny, the romantic ideal, is a catalyst, but finally, one is left with an image of Mickey One facing his world at the piano, isolated against the nighttime skyline of Chicago, seeking "the word." The word is determinism, or hope, but whatever happens, the artist in the world of entertainment must never question the fantasies of death-in-life. A clash of ashcan-cymbals or a hatchet in the jukebox are symbols of the opposite ends of human existence, and in *Mickey One,* we are given an opportunity to share one director's excitement regarding this phenomenal American nightmare.

Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde* created such fantastic controversy among some of the New York film critics that one is taken aback by the uproar. By now, it can be assumed that most film devotees have seen the film or at least have read reviews or articles about it. A great deal of credit for the success of *Bonnie and Clyde* must be given to the writers, David Newman and Robert Benton. They have, in this single film, brought international attention to the nineteen-thirties as the era most identifiable, in its violence of mood, aesthetic excesses, and doomed romantic optimism, with our own time. By reworking the reality of a five-year reign of banditry and terror spread by Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker into a folk-saga of the Southwest, the writers have embellished facts with great sympathy for a world they barely knew, and endowed an essentially grim, terrible series of crimes with the sardonic humor of a Twain or O. Henry. Thus, *Bonnie and Clyde* throws all of its dramatic weight into the realm of entertainment-above-all; its moral is the same as that of its predecessors in the genre of gangster films: the criminals die quite violently. The criticisms leveled against the film are chiefly based upon the writers' constant utilization of laughter and farcical situations throughout this gore-laden story. However, it is this device that most distinguishes *Bonnie and Clyde* from all other gangster films and leaves one with a confirmed awareness that the director and the writers have deliberately created a unique pseudo-documentary style by which spectators could be entertained and astonished at the same time. It is the *romantic imagination* in this work that makes it such a distinguished American film. There are those of us who know that the real Bonnie Parker looked more like Margaret Hamilton than Faye Dunaway, and it is certain that Clyde Barrow lacked the physical attractiveness and subtle mannerisms of Warren Beatty. It is fascinating to notice how the film rearranges the stuff of life to fit into its brilliant pattern of Technicolor episodes. The original Barrow gang was larger than *Bonnie and Clyde* would have us believe, and Bonnie was a hardened creature who longed to be a coquette. The detailed performances of Dunaway and Beatty are extraordinary because they are totally imaginative (what do they care about Depression types —the dust-destiny look of a John Garfield or

the slum-weary cynicisms of a Sylvia Sidney?). One recognizes their own determination to create and vivify a personal linkage to their roles, but their cleverness shows through. Still, they win an audience's affection in the first sequence of the film, playing out a round of flirtatious wisecracks on a half-deserted rural street, outrageously *modern* and amusing, as if those two lost souls were destined to meet; charming, beautiful miscreants in defiance of poverty and boredom. One should accept the spirit of romanticism at this point, for the early escapades, Clyde's inexplicable shyness at lovemaking and the meeting with C. W. Moss (Michael J. Pollard) are all permeated with the picaresque spirit of adventure and frolic. The character of Moss is a masterstroke by the writers: an embodiment of back-country slyness and puckish truculence that is transformed into unforgettable humanity by Pollard. When he confronts Bonnie and Clyde with an air of suspicion and curious disbelief, turning roundabout with involuntary delight, and finally riding off with them in rumble-seat triumph, one knows that he has beheld an original talent.

Great attention is given to period details. The old automobiles, clothing, and furnishings are pretty much in order, except, as expected, with Dunaway. The blame should not be placed upon Theodora Van Runkle, who designed the costumes, but upon those who have always insisted that leading ladies must never be dressed or coiffed *entirely* in the mode of an earlier period. But Bonnie's persistent 1967 look is disturbing, and it is a flaw that Penn should not have allowed. Since the character of Blanche Barrow, Clyde's sister-in-law, is presented almost (again, *almost*) perfectly à la mode of the nineteen-thirties, it must be concluded that the glamor of the Dunaway image precluded placing her nearer to the reality of her ankle-skirted, finger-waved sisters of the past. Ironically, Dunaway would have been just as attractive if they had made her a period-figure, and it is totally out of character for Bonnie *not* to have tried to look like those Busby Berkeley girls singing "We're In The Money" in *Gold Diggers of 1933*.

Many have commented upon the sense of Americana that *Bonnie and Clyde* evokes in its imagery. This is true to a degree, but again, it must be emphasized that the camera of Burnett Guffey is guided by that nostalgic spirit which Penn insistently strengthens throughout the film. The FDR posters, Burma Shave signs, and Eddie Cantor's radio program sounding in the calm evening air; the strains of popular songs ("Deep Night," "Shadow Waltz"), all synthesize an era immediately for older members of the audience, who accept these touches and forget the past as it really was. These are very thrilling things to see in an American film, presaging an overdue movement toward neo-realism in our films. The world that is shown to us is the Southwest, but often, one is confused about exact towns or states. Penn places his tragic couple in a vast network of country roads, small towns, and cheap auto courts. One shares the isolation and bickering camaraderie of the lawless quintet because Penn draws them very close to the spectator. Gene Hackman's loudmouthed, backslapping role of Buck Barrow is a knowledgable study in insecurity and earthy humanism. A man with a single joke to tell, he brings great insight to a comic view of the American dreamer. Estelle Parson's portrait of guilt-ridden hysteria and fear makes Blanche one of the best characterizations in films for many years, in the category of Moorehead in *The Magnificent Ambersons* or Collinge in *The Little Foxes*. Her pitiful involvement with the Barrow gang represents that inexplicable, unavoidable capability for individuals to become part of a criminal way of life during the Depression, as if everyone was a potential Jean Valjean or misguided Robin Hood. The bloody violence of the period was part of the law of survival, and it was not confined to the thirties; it is just that many of us who live comfortably today are unaware of, or have forgotten, the sociological urgencies and commitments of those days. By humanizing Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow, making them youthful, rather guileless prototypes of Depression rebels, it became easier for the film-makers to treat much of their story with

humor. The folk quality is spiced by country-western breakdowns that musically celebrate Clyde's miraculous escapes from several brilliantly staged gun battles with the police; these pieces of lyricism bolster the atmosphere of fantasy which has to leaven the burden of seeing a number of policemen shot dead, and great quantities of blood pouring from wounds. But the gore is a part of folk-balladry and legend, and that is exactly what the film is about—the *legend* of Bonnie and Clyde, not the truth about them. The truthful things are in those little touches mentioned before, and in the Steinbeckian moment when an evicted farmer and his Negro sharecropper shoot the panes from the windows of his abandoned farmhouse as a futile, temporary gesture against the bank. When Clyde tells the farmer, "We rob banks," there is a priceless interchange of glances—the old man wonderingly taciturn, Clyde full of shy pleasure. And so The Bank is the Depression villain in this case, with Bonnie and Clyde as the avengers of poverty. They risk their lives, have their fun and excitement by robbing banks, the only source of money. They are classified with the noble desperadoes of filmdom: Jesse James, Joaquin Murieta, and the rest, bandits of circumstance, fighting to withstand the impersonal, cruel powers of the Railroad, the Landowners, or the Bank.

Two of the most beautiful interludes in *Bonnie and Clyde* describe the couple's involvement with the poor. First, a haunting, dream-like picnic and reunion with Bonnie's relatives at an abandoned quarry that is like an album of old color-photographs come to life. The images are soft, misty and brief, quite timeless, with voices at a distance—the men and women caught in the poses and movements of casual talk or horseplay with children. Bonnie's mother, a thin, white-haired crone, squints into the sun, resigned to death; children roll down a slope: Clyde, white shirtsleeves aglow against his drab vest and slouch-cap, munches an Eskimo Pie. It is a reverie by Dorothea Lange, Walker Evans, or W. Eugene Smith. Then, another hushed encounter becomes an exemplary sequence, defining the awestruck attitudes of poor people toward the lawless, thirty years ago. Moss drives his two wounded companions to a squatters' camp near a river. The children peer into the automobile at the blood-stained couple, whispering, "Are they *famous*?" while their elders murmur in low, respectful voices, understanding everything and presenting Moss with soup, water, and blankets as he departs. Help is given humbly, tentatively, and with a touch of fear and regret.

BONNIE AND CLYDE

The sense of melancholy behind the ribald escapades in *Bonnie and Clyde* is ever-present. The bandits seldom accumulate enough money to justify their risks ("Well, times is hard," says Buck when Clyde wryly looks at the amount of their haul); the film does not glorify the crimes, it praises the incredible bravado and recklessness of those who chose the criminal's way as a career and made the best of it, regardless of the consequences. Penn's study of the nature of violence is carried a step further in this film; the representatives of the law are chided (farmers, bank presidents, and policemen are all too pleased to have their pictures in the papers as "victims" of Bonnie and Clyde), or as in the figure of Sheriff Frank Hamer (Denver Pyle), the law is symbolized in his stern, mustachioed visage. When Hamer is humiliated by the gang,

he spits in Bonnie's face, and Clyde's rage becomes his most outspoken challenge to law and order. Hamer is treated as a *force,* a more terrifying version of Brando's sheriff in *The Chase,* a human god in khaki, indomitable and vengeful. (In reality, Hamer's frustrations were more complex: an ex-Texas Ranger, he was embittered and nonheroic. He became obsessed by the elusiveness of the Barrow gang and vowed to destroy them because of their wanton murders of police officers. The episode in the film never happened because Hamer never caught up with Bonnie and Clyde until the final ambush, when no words were exchanged.)

Some very pleasant sequences: Bonnie and Clyde kidnap two lovers and take them for a joyride, expressing the bandits' loneliness and deeply felt need to be involved with "Jus' folks" —there is great warmth in this episode, despite Penn's tendency to let the man (Gene Wilder) overplay his polite apprehensions. When the bandits meet C. W. Moss's father (Dub Taylor), the film offers another fine character: a bully with a streak of homespun geniality, he is not as starstruck by Bonnie and Clyde as his son, and he becomes the grizzled Judas of this tale.

The dénouement is touched with a grotesque, visual poetry. Bonnie and Clyde have solved their sexual incompatibility. (This aspect of the film is unduly sensationalistic and contrived—in reality, Bonnie loved another member of the gang, not shown in the film, and actually, she was simply not Clyde's kind of woman. The implied homosexuality of Clyde is also of dubious origin and clumsily handled in terms of clarifying his personality.) They have gained national attention through their crimes and Bonnie's doggerel verse in the newspapers, and on their last ride together, they are like any fresh, country-healthy couple. When Hamer's posse riddles their car with bullets, the twitchings of death are punctuated by a slow-camera glance at Bonnie's blond hair cascading in an arc, and of Clyde rolling gently across the ground. This is not too much blood, and deep silence settles at the death of a legend.

Again, one must turn to reality: Bonnie and Clyde were ready for an ambush when they were killed on that country road in Louisiana, for both of them died holding guns. Bonnie had a machine gun in her lap, and Clyde was clutching a sawed-off shotgun as he drove. He had $507 on him and one lens was shot out of his colored glasses; Bonnie was wearing a red dress, red shoes, and a red-and-white hat, and it was discovered that she had a tattoo on her thigh. Over 167 bullets were pumped into the car, and nestled among the guns and ammunition in the back seat was a saxophone and some sheet music.

The legend clashes gently and movingly with the real. Arthur Penn's backward glance is filled with beauty and affection for an era, and there is so much talent involved in this film that his *Bonnie and Clyde* will remain an outstanding piece of cinema art, recreating social history in terms of today's acceptable myths. Above all, the mystery of Clyde Barrow and his woman accomplice remains intact. Warren Beatty has become an actor of undeniable importance with his performance here (an indelible moment, when, feelings hurt by Bonnie's sharp tongue, he stands in a field with arms raised against his chest, fists ineffectually clenched), but one still wonders about Bonnie's tattoo, and the lost notes of Clyde's saxophone, sounding old tunes in those lonely Texas nights, ages ago.

—ALBERT JOHNSON

FUNNYMAN

Directed and photographed by John Korty. Script: Peter Bonerz and John Korty. Editing: David Schickele. Music: Peter Schickele. Sound: J. Paul Oppenheim. Produced by Hugh McGraw and Stephen Schmidt.

The film that *Funnyman* calls most to mind is Godard's *Masculin/Feminin;* it is Korty's *Funny/Sad.* Like the French movie, its characters live in that hazardous zone between straight acting and straight existing. (Originally Korty planned to call the film *The Act.*) The central figure, Perry, is not only played by Peter Bonerz; to reverse the advertising slogans, he *is* Peter Bonerz. That is to say, the basic strategy of the script, which Korty

he spits in Bonnie's face, and Clyde's rage becomes his most outspoken challenge to law and order. Hamer is treated as a *force,* a more terrifying version of Brando's sheriff in *The Chase,* a human god in khaki, indomitable and vengeful. (In reality, Hamer's frustrations were more complex: an ex-Texas Ranger, he was embittered and nonheroic. He became obsessed by the elusiveness of the Barrow gang and vowed to destroy them because of their wanton murders of police officers. The episode in the film never happened because Hamer never caught up with Bonnie and Clyde until the final ambush, when no words were exchanged.)

Some very pleasant sequences: Bonnie and Clyde kidnap two lovers and take them for a joyride, expressing the bandits' loneliness and deeply felt need to be involved with "Jus' folks" —there is great warmth in this episode, despite Penn's tendency to let the man (Gene Wilder) overplay his polite apprehensions. When the bandits meet C. W. Moss's father (Dub Taylor), the film offers another fine character: a bully with a streak of homespun geniality, he is not as starstruck by Bonnie and Clyde as his son, and he becomes the grizzled Judas of this tale.

The dénouement is touched with a grotesque, visual poetry. Bonnie and Clyde have solved their sexual incompatibility. (This aspect of the film is unduly sensationalistic and contrived—in reality, Bonnie loved another member of the gang, not shown in the film, and actually, she was simply not Clyde's kind of woman. The implied homosexuality of Clyde is also of dubious origin and clumsily handled in terms of clarifying his personality.) They have gained national attention through their crimes and Bonnie's doggerel verse in the newspapers, and on their last ride together, they are like any fresh, country-healthy couple. When Hamer's posse riddles their car with bullets, the twitchings of death are punctuated by a slow-camera glance at Bonnie's blond hair cascading in an arc, and of Clyde rolling gently across the ground. This is not too much blood, and deep silence settles at the death of a legend.

Again, one must turn to reality: Bonnie and Clyde were ready for an ambush when they were killed on that country road in Louisiana, for both of them died holding guns. Bonnie had a machine gun in her lap, and Clyde was clutching a sawed-off shotgun as he drove. He had $507 on him and one lens was shot out of his colored glasses; Bonnie was wearing a red dress, red shoes, and a red-and-white hat, and it was discovered that she had a tattoo on her thigh. Over 167 bullets were pumped into the car, and nestled among the guns and ammunition in the back seat was a saxophone and some sheet music.

The legend clashes gently and movingly with the real. Arthur Penn's backward glance is filled with beauty and affection for an era, and there is so much talent involved in this film that his *Bonnie and Clyde* will remain an outstanding piece of cinema art, recreating social history in terms of today's acceptable myths. Above all, the mystery of Clyde Barrow and his woman accomplice remains intact. Warren Beatty has become an actor of undeniable importance with his performance here (an indelible moment, when, feelings hurt by Bonnie's sharp tongue, he stands in a field with arms raised against his chest, fists ineffectually clenched), but one still wonders about Bonnie's tattoo, and the lost notes of Clyde's saxophone, sounding old tunes in those lonely Texas nights, ages ago.

—ALBERT JOHNSON

FUNNYMAN

Directed and photographed by John Korty. Script: Peter Bonerz and John Korty. Editing: David Schickele. Music: Peter Schickele. Sound: J. Paul Oppenheim. Produced by Hugh McGraw and Stephen Schmidt.

The film that *Funnyman* calls most to mind is Godard's *Masculin/Feminin;* it is Korty's *Funny/Sad.* Like the French movie, its characters live in that hazardous zone between straight acting and straight existing. (Originally Korty planned to call the film *The Act.*) The central figure, Perry, is not only played by Peter Bonerz; to reverse the advertising slogans, he *is* Peter Bonerz. That is to say, the basic strategy of the script, which Korty

and Bonerz worked out jointly, was to capture Bonerz's own existence within a framework of lightly dramatized episodes. Bonerz is a formidable character: inventive, charming, insecure, marvelously skillful at the offhand interpersonal turns that made him a leading performer in San Francisco's improvisational-satire club, "The Committee." He is also an actor, and hence either less than human or doubly human. He travels with his internal coach, the interior director who calls his scenes, even his most intimate ones. He can't stop acting; yet acting is his life, even when he becomes restive or even positively sick of it. His mixture of *savoir faire,* edginess, wryness, self-consciousness, is constantly turned to brilliant account, as in the ad-agency scene when he over-eagerly accepts criticisms of his commercials. This comic channelling of agony is characteristic of the film's cool, ironic, yet humane assessment of the human condition.

Funnyman is a loosely structured chronicle of Perry's efforts to find himself—a series of often funny, often sad, sometimes sexy misadventures. He breaks up with his longstanding girlfriend, seduces a pretty but dumb secretary, is seduced by a pretty young dynamo on a rice diet. He wearily tries to make some money by inventing TV commercials. He attempts to escape the theatrical conventions of the club with an evening of his own devising; it doesn't work. All this is narrated deftly, good-humoredly. Handling his own camera as well as directing, Korty works closer to the characters, and relies more for his effects on cutting and score, than do most dialogue films in this country. In an excruciating windswept-barbecue scene, he is not afraid to employ a broadly comic device by cutting back and forth pointedly between men's talk and women's. In some of the film's funniest scenes, those between Perry and the animator he collaborates with on the commercials, Korty's photography creates a glumly magical world of glowing animation table, transmogrified gin bottle, hanging wires, gleaming reflections; the squeak of cleaning tissue becomes a mordant comment on commercial "creativity." The breakfast scene with the secretary is, like the best of Mike and Elaine,

FUNNYMAN: *Peter Bonerz*

a hilariously biting view of contemporary relations between the sexes, but it would not be comic without Korty's gently disenchanted camerawork and David Schickele's astute editing.

The method is, clearly, a demanding one, and most of all on the structural side. Since the film concerns a person's relation with himself, Korty has used Perry's narrating voice to establish a tone and continuity (mistakenly, I think, he has also put the girl's voice on the track near the end). *Funnyman* begins with a leisurely dying fall, as Perry increasingly realizes that things are not well. It takes a brief, shaky, upward jump as he prepares his show, and then a sickening slide downward. This much of the film has the unnerving, almost embarrassing actuality of *cinéma-vérité;* the characters, the events, and the style all reinforce one another. From his crisis onward, as Perry leaves the city to collect himself in a nearby beach town, there is a certain creeping dramaturgy in the film—as was necessary, no doubt, if the film was to end rather than simply stop. (Godard resolved his similar problem in *Masculin/Feminin* with one of his handy off-screen strokes of fate.) Perry meets a beautiful, soulful girl; she shakes him up by her refusal to fall for his usual games; but she goes back to the city with him. Her seriousness has made him study serious drama *(Faust!)* but she stays with him at the very end, paradoxically, because of accidentally hearing one of his brain storming tapes for the commercials. The trouble is that the confrontation with the girl is sketchy

and lacks the electricity of the personal interaction in the body of the film. Hence the lyrical treatment of the girl and her life at Bolinas, although very beautiful, seems to come from Korty rather than through Perry.

Even with this deficiency in its ending, *Funnyman* is the nearest an American has yet come to the astonishing balance of actors and form that Godard has sometimes achieved. The contribution of Bonerz also reminds us that our small satirical theaters are now our only visible source of new comic talent; Bonerz and Alan Arkin are the funniest new actors to have graced the screen since Jack Lemmon.

—ERNEST CALLENBACH

TO SIR, WITH LOVE

Director and producer: James Clavell. Script by Clavell from the novel by E. R. Braithwaite. Photography: Paul Beeson. Music: Ron Grainer.

UP THE DOWN STAIRCASE

Director: Robert Mulligan. Producer: Alan J. Pakula. Script: Tad Mosel, based on the novel by Bel Kaufman. Photography: Joseph Coffey. Music: F. Karlin.

James Clavell's *To Sir, with Love* is such a foolish, offensively simple-minded movie that it wouldn't be worth mentioning if it didn't mutilate an "important" subject—teaching the unteachable. The film takes place in a school in the London dock district; the kids are tough, from poor homes, mostly dropouts or rejects from other schools. To the new teacher the problems seem stupefying. Nothing he has been told to teach them is remotely related to what interests them; none of it concerns the world they've actually seen. The gimmick is that he's a Negro, so he's got the color barrier to face, as well as the generational barrier.

But he wins them over easily. He throws away the textbooks and decides to talk about "life, death, love, sex, rebellion. . . ." When I heard that list, I groaned, but the movie doesn't bother trying to show what any of the discussions would sound like. Sir's educational bombshell, as far as I could tell, involves his taking the class to the museum one day, and dribbling a few platitudes now and again: "Forgiveness is the gift of God"; "No man likes a slut for long"; "I think you *should* fight for what you believe." Since he never gets beyond the introductory sentences, we have to accept a lot on faith. And the pretense that those milky aphorisms will make gentlemen of hoodlums may be what suburban audiences want to hear—but can even they believe it? Sidney Poitier, of course, is the suburban audience's dream of a well-adjusted Negro; it's another of his sweet, saintly, sexless performances. Sir tells the kids that his background is like theirs, but Poitier doesn't look as if he's ever been outside the Establishment. He gets angry once, but he's outrageously prissy even then—he has no desires, no passions, no weaknesses. I still believe that Poitier's a good actor, but he can't keep playing these inhuman parts without compromising himself irrevocably.

Sir's smooth conversion of the entire class is an insult to anyone who's ever taught. He has a little resistance, for a while, from the chief hood, but he gives the kid one punch in the stomach, and the next day the boy has combed his hair, washed his clothes, and he winks at Sir from the back row. At the end they've all reformed, and are eager to work at the terrible jobs society will provide for them; they write a song to Sir and give him a present and some tears at the farewell party. The music isn't bad in this movie, but little else sounds genuine. It's a heartwarming movie for people who want to think that the harshest problems of the world are just waiting to be oozed away by Sir's gentle-firm cooing of Sunday school treacle.

Robert Mulligan's *Up the Down Staircase* isn't really a good movie either, but it's so much better than *To Sir with Love* that it's monstrous to link them. This schoolteacher, Sylvia Barrett (Sandy Dennis), doesn't convert the whole class; the happy ending comes when she reaches one student. The scenes between Miss Barrett and *her* class hood are excruciating, because she never gets through to him. There are no songs or farewell parties.

and lacks the electricity of the personal interaction in the body of the film. Hence the lyrical treatment of the girl and her life at Bolinas, although very beautiful, seems to come from Korty rather than through Perry.

Even with this deficiency in its ending, *Funnyman* is the nearest an American has yet come to the astonishing balance of actors and form that Godard has sometimes achieved. The contribution of Bonerz also reminds us that our small satirical theaters are now our only visible source of new comic talent; Bonerz and Alan Arkin are the funniest new actors to have graced the screen since Jack Lemmon.

—ERNEST CALLENBACH

TO SIR, WITH LOVE

Director and producer: James Clavell. Script by Clavell from the novel by E. R. Braithwaite. Photography: Paul Beeson. Music: Ron Grainer.

UP THE DOWN STAIRCASE

Director: Robert Mulligan. Producer: Alan J. Pakula. Script: Tad Mosel, based on the novel by Bel Kaufman. Photography: Joseph Coffey. Music: F. Karlin.

James Clavell's *To Sir, with Love* is such a foolish, offensively simple-minded movie that it wouldn't be worth mentioning if it didn't mutilate an "important" subject—teaching the unteachable. The film takes place in a school in the London dock district; the kids are tough, from poor homes, mostly dropouts or rejects from other schools. To the new teacher the problems seem stupefying. Nothing he has been told to teach them is remotely related to what interests them; none of it concerns the world they've actually seen. The gimmick is that he's a Negro, so he's got the color barrier to face, as well as the generational barrier.

But he wins them over easily. He throws away the textbooks and decides to talk about "life, death, love, sex, rebellion. . . ." When I heard that list, I groaned, but the movie doesn't bother trying to show what any of the discussions would sound like. Sir's educational bombshell, as far as I could tell, involves his taking the class to the museum one day, and dribbling a few platitudes now and again: "Forgiveness is the gift of God"; "No man likes a slut for long"; "I think you *should* fight for what you believe." Since he never gets beyond the introductory sentences, we have to accept a lot on faith. And the pretense that those milky aphorisms will make gentlemen of hoodlums may be what suburban audiences want to hear—but can even they believe it? Sidney Poitier, of course, is the suburban audience's dream of a well-adjusted Negro; it's another of his sweet, saintly, sexless performances. Sir tells the kids that his background is like theirs, but Poitier doesn't look as if he's ever been outside the Establishment. He gets angry once, but he's outrageously prissy even then—he has no desires, no passions, no weaknesses. I still believe that Poitier's a good actor, but he can't keep playing these inhuman parts without compromising himself irrevocably.

Sir's smooth conversion of the entire class is an insult to anyone who's ever taught. He has a little resistance, for a while, from the chief hood, but he gives the kid one punch in the stomach, and the next day the boy has combed his hair, washed his clothes, and he winks at Sir from the back row. At the end they've all reformed, and are eager to work at the terrible jobs society will provide for them; they write a song to Sir and give him a present and some tears at the farewell party. The music isn't bad in this movie, but little else sounds genuine. It's a heartwarming movie for people who want to think that the harshest problems of the world are just waiting to be oozed away by Sir's gentle-firm cooing of Sunday school treacle.

Robert Mulligan's *Up the Down Staircase* isn't really a good movie either, but it's so much better than *To Sir with Love* that it's monstrous to link them. This schoolteacher, Sylvia Barrett (Sandy Dennis), doesn't convert the whole class; the happy ending comes when she reaches one student. The scenes between Miss Barrett and *her* class hood are excruciating, because she never gets through to him. There are no songs or farewell parties.

And the movie looks authentic. It's set in a recognizable America, not in a mythical British kingdom where the heavens smile on good intentions. Mulligan filmed *Staircase* in New York, at a real school, and the opening, hand-held shots of Miss Barrett pushing her way through the street and the halls urgently capture the confusion of a big city school. The commands shouted over the loudspeakers—"All cases of assault must be reported immediately," "Ignore all bells"—have a persuasively insane flavor. But after several minutes of wild activity, Mulligan creates an eerily compelling contrast—Miss Barrett walking into her empty classroom, suddenly isolated from the noise and the people, and rather frightened. Mulligan showed in *Inside Daisy Clover* that he knows how to use large, empty spaces poetically, to emphasize the vulnerability of people trapped in them. *Up the Down Staircase* suggests, powerfully, that the busiest, most chaotic places in our world can be the loneliest too.

Unfortunately, once the movie gets past this sharp, almost documentary introduction, it feels it has to manufacture drama to keep us interested. But the point of Miss Barrett's story must be its undramatic quality. The reason that teaching the unteachable is such a frustrating experience is that there's so little excitement, so little variety—the same failures day after day after day, class after class after class. The movie doesn't want to risk monotony, so it never gives a sense of the routine desperation of teaching. Instead, it goes for Big Moments—the hood pulling a knife on Miss Barrett, later almost raping her; a girl in love with a male English teacher, who attempts suicide when he rejects her. (The scene in which he corrects the grammatical and stylistic errors in her love letter to him is a strident but appallingly effective protest at academic pretension.) It's to Mulligan's credit that he tries to underplay these episodes; still, they *are* melodramatic, and although they may happen to teachers, they happen only occasionally. Most teachers I know would be grateful for so much agitation in any one term.

The satire on school administration, though amusing, is overdone. At some moments the film even implies that the real demon in Calvin Coolidge High School is the bureaucracy—if only the red tape could be slashed, if the over-professional vocabularly could be dropped, then education would work. But that's facile, of course. In its best scenes the film alludes to the profound social problems underlying the educational, that no amount of administrative overhaul could touch. The scene in which Miss Barrett gropingly urges a Negro boy to stay in school, unsuccessfully tries to talk him out of his conviction that he is at the mercy of Whitey no matter what he does, is affecting; so is a scene with the Nego "mother" of one of the other students, when she tells Miss Barrett that his real mother is a prostitute, and that he sleeps through classes because he must work most of the night to be able to live. Given circumstances like these, the movie's jokes about computerized memos and assembly programs are cheap. To have any success, education must somehow come to terms with these kids' lives outside school. In one extraordinary scene Miss Barrett animates a discussion of *A Tale of Two Cities* by asking the class whether their own world is "the best of times, the worst of times." As they talk honestly, passionately about their deprivations, we get a remarkably precise idea of what a good class in an urban high school can be like. It goes much further than any scene in *To Sir with Love,* and I wish the movie had risked this kind of illumination more often.

The film as a whole has a sentimental attitude toward education. We're supposed to be sorry that the class can't respond to Emily Dickinson, as if there was something wonderful and magical about studying the Masters, if only the kids could appreciate it. Yet as that scene on Dickens reminds us, the whole idea of education must be changed to meet the needs of today's students—the teacher's only hope is to forget the classics, and persuade the students to think about their own experience, question themselves. *Up the Down Staircase,* for all of its swinging exteriors, breathes an old-fashioned schoolmarmish attitude toward books and learning that seems to me evasive, and inconsistent with its own best insights.

Sandy Dennis's performance hurts the film. She looks right for the part, and she's able to move us. But she doesn't deliver one line without quivering or stammering. She plays the role with such bizarre tremors that we can't believe she could ever control a class, or even get a job. Dennis seems as if she's about to cry at almost every moment of the film; it's a strange idea of acting.

With his nonprofessional kids, though, Mulligan is superb. The climaxes—cynical teacher barging into Miss Barrett's classroom to discuss his hatred of the school, an awkward confession of admiration from a delinquent student—are badly forced. Perhaps it's just not possible to treat certain everyday subjects, like teaching, in the movies; perhaps boring routines must be gussied up for the camera. But there are several quiet, unobstrusive details almost lost in the turbulence in *Up the Down Staircase*—a brief, futile meeting with one of the students' ignorant fathers, the disciplinarian principal pulling smokers out of the bathroom, the giggly friendship of two shy girls, the class's uproar at the sexual inuendo in the word "frigate"—that are touching, funny, true. Moments like these make the movie worth seeing, but there aren't nearly enough of them.

—STEPHEN FARBER.

WARRENDALE

Directed and produced by Allan King. CBC executive producer: Patrick Watson. Photography: William Brayne. Sound recording: Russel Heise. Editing: Peter Mosely.

HOME FOR LIFE

By Gerald Temaner and Gordon Quinn. Distribution: Encyclopedia Britannica Films.

PHYLLIS AND TERRY

By Eugene and Carol Marner. Distribution: Center for Mass Communication, Columbia University.

As *cinéma-vérité* techniques expand and proliferate, film-makers have begun to deal with institutions as well as the particular persons or events which seemed attractive in the beginning: racing-car drivers, politicians, businessmen. Both *Warrendale* and *Home for Life* attempt to get at the nature of life within institutions: the Warrendale treatment center for disturbed children outside Toronto, the Drexel Home for the aged in Chicago. Both were made, as far as I can tell, with that special kind of stubborn honesty which is obligatory if one is to use the cinema to capture the ambiguities of real human situations. Neither film is an exposé, neither is an advertisement of the institution. Both are troubling, inconclusive, far from reassuring. They are, in short, attempts to document the human condition, in a sense very remote from that of Grierson's "dramatization of actuality."

Warrendale is more exciting than *Home for Life*, since it contains scenes of children flailing about and screaming, and it will perhaps seem more harrowing to some people. We are more accustomed to seeing the old—even the postwar one-class, one-age suburbs have mouldered down into relatively normal communities. Their crotchetiness, their touchy pride, their terrible sense of dislocation from the world and from their families, are a routinely tragic side of American life, to which we normally respond by putting them away. *Home for Life* shows what this looks like from the old person's side. By following two people at some length, it captures the relations between the woman, her children's family, and her roommate, and between the man and his former life. The staff is also portrayed in some psychological detail; and here, as in *Warrendale*, the picture is not the uniformly would-be flattering one of the sponsored film.

In fact, in the opening episode of *Warrendale* a girl refuses to get up, and the head resident, Terry, forces the situation into what Warrendale terminology calls a "holding session"—physical, personal, warmly involved restraint, permitting hostile emotions to be worked off. To the viewer, this has the feel of a mistaken strategy, and one initially mistrusts the film: is it advocating this as characteristic staff behavior? But then in a staff counseling meeting Terry and the supervising psychiatrist discuss the episode; Terry may or may not grasp what else she might have done; a remark by Walter, who is apparently the operating head of the

Sandy Dennis's performance hurts the film. She looks right for the part, and she's able to move us. But she doesn't deliver one line without quivering or stammering. She plays the role with such bizarre tremors that we can't believe she could ever control a class, or even get a job. Dennis seems as if she's about to cry at almost every moment of the film; it's a strange idea of acting.

With his nonprofessional kids, though, Mulligan is superb. The climaxes—cynical teacher barging into Miss Barrett's classroom to discuss his hatred of the school, an awkward confession of admiration from a delinquent student—are badly forced. Perhaps it's just not possible to treat certain everyday subjects, like teaching, in the movies; perhaps boring routines must be gussied up for the camera. But there are several quiet, unobstrusive details almost lost in the turbulence in *Up the Down Staircase*—a brief, futile meeting with one of the students' ignorant fathers, the disciplinarian principal pulling smokers out of the bathroom, the giggly friendship of two shy girls, the class's uproar at the sexual inuendo in the word "frigate"—that are touching, funny, true. Moments like these make the movie worth seeing, but there aren't nearly enough of them.

—STEPHEN FARBER.

WARRENDALE

Directed and produced by Allan King. CBC executive producer: Patrick Watson. Photography: William Brayne. Sound recording: Russel Heise. Editing: Peter Mosely.

HOME FOR LIFE

By Gerald Temaner and Gordon Quinn. Distribution: Encyclopedia Britannica Films.

PHYLLIS AND TERRY

By Eugene and Carol Marner. Distribution: Center for Mass Communication, Columbia University.

As *cinéma-vérité* techniques expand and proliferate, film-makers have begun to deal with institutions as well as the particular persons or events which seemed attractive in the beginning: racing-car drivers, politicians, businessmen. Both *Warrendale* and *Home for Life* attempt to get at the nature of life within institutions: the Warrendale treatment center for disturbed children outside Toronto, the Drexel Home for the aged in Chicago. Both were made, as far as I can tell, with that special kind of stubborn honesty which is obligatory if one is to use the cinema to capture the ambiguities of real human situations. Neither film is an exposé, neither is an advertisement of the institution. Both are troubling, inconclusive, far from reassuring. They are, in short, attempts to document the human condition, in a sense very remote from that of Grierson's "dramatization of actuality."

Warrendale is more exciting than *Home for Life*, since it contains scenes of children flailing about and screaming, and it will perhaps seem more harrowing to some people. We are more accustomed to seeing the old—even the postwar one-class, one-age suburbs have mouldered down into relatively normal communities. Their crotchetiness, their touchy pride, their terrible sense of dislocation from the world and from their families, are a routinely tragic side of American life, to which we normally respond by putting them away. *Home for Life* shows what this looks like from the old person's side. By following two people at some length, it captures the relations between the woman, her children's family, and her roommate, and between the man and his former life. The staff is also portrayed in some psychological detail; and here, as in *Warrendale*, the picture is not the uniformly would-be flattering one of the sponsored film.

In fact, in the opening episode of *Warrendale* a girl refuses to get up, and the head resident, Terry, forces the situation into what Warrendale terminology calls a "holding session"—physical, personal, warmly involved restraint, permitting hostile emotions to be worked off. To the viewer, this has the feel of a mistaken strategy, and one initially mistrusts the film: is it advocating this as characteristic staff behavior? But then in a staff counseling meeting Terry and the supervising psychiatrist discuss the episode; Terry may or may not grasp what else she might have done; a remark by Walter, who is apparently the operating head of the

staff, about the over-all relation between Terry and the girl, goes undiscussed. So we realize that this is in fact the thick of battle: in the midst of the delicate, tenuous, yet immensely important nuances of relationships between staff and children. It is only later in the film that the theoretical function of the holding sessions is made explicit. And later still, we begin to grasp the nature of Terry's difficulties in dealing with the children, and see that her mistake here was a characteristic one.

The children in Warrendale are seriously disturbed but reachable. The staff partly live in (eight staff for twelve children, in each house). Obviously a great deal of money is being spent, and the children in speech and manners seem to be middle-class. As institutional staff go, the people here are sensitive and dedicated. Warrendale, like the Drexel Home, is an institution in which "everything possible" is being done to ease the residents' long-drawn fights for life. Yet the struggle is clearly in doubt; one girl who has lived in Warrendale for two years despairs, in a tearful conversation with Terry that we witness at length, of ever winning through. The children are sad, wily (especially a superbly sensitive and intelligent boy, Tony, whose use of a four-letter word has ostensibly kept the film off CBC television), and lovable.

The film, like the rites of the institution, makes clear the basic situation: the children are there because they were *not* loved, were not brought up warmly. They must be enabled to grow up anew: going back to bottles at bedtime, much cuddling, and above all the constant, year-after-year warmth of a person who does in fact love them.

Can love be provided through institutions? *Home for Life* implicitly raises this issue, but one senses a foregone negative. *Warrendale* is a more anguishing confrontation with the problem, and is not quick with an answer. For the answer seems to be inevitably more a personal than a social one. Walter has a quick, instinctive contact with the children; he is a father to them without having to force anything, and they love him easily. But he is too busy with over-all responsibilities to be around much. Terry has a good deal of basic warmth and (slightly overstressed, hence suspicious?) loyalty, but she is not as perceptive, is more doubtful of herself, and her contacts are never entirely relaxed. Another staff member, with beard and glasses, has trouble making himself felt by the children, and almost seems to fear them; one senses his commitment is limited, and that he will not remain.

The dilemma brought home by *Warrendale* is thus a far-reaching one for our society: as natural parenthood declines in quality under the atomizing pressures of modern life, it is harder and harder to find substitute parents who can cope with the strains of healing the disturbed children our families produce. And in institutions without the resources, dedication, or intelligent and humane guidance of Warrendale, an ominous pattern is well established: a turn from the hope of healing, through the slow rebuilding of lives, to emotional confinement—above all, the repression of symptoms through drugs. Warrendale, a brave eddy in this vast downward vortex, can only suggest that the spiral is not yet inescapable, at least for a few with luck and money.

Warrendale and *Home for Life* utilize the portable zoom-lens camera and its accompanying tape-recorder. Both are made by men who spent a long time with their subjects, and learned to wait, unobtrusively and patiently, to catch crucial moments—staying near the action, but not in it. In the actual crisis which came to form the climax of *Warrendale* (the cook, who meant a great deal to the children, as lay persons in institutions often do, suddenly dies) the film-makers were not turned away but were asked to continue their filming: a great compliment to their tact and commitment.

The hurly-burly of life in Warrendale compelled more camera activity than was required for the slow-moving old people in *Home for Life;* but Temaner and Quinn have often capitalized on this very slowness of their subjects to add to the upsetting quality of their film—as for instance in the terrible physical examination of the old man.

"Truth without indictment" is the slogan Temaner and Quinn adopted for *Home for Life*. They consider their goal is "to pursue and develop cinematic social inquiry through the making of films about critical social issues," and they are now at work on a film about an inner-city school. Because of their concern about issues, their views on *cinéma-vérité* are less passive than those of some film-makers. "We were after a film as close to having a plot and characters as possible without our staging anything or changing the meaning of footage by editing. . . . In addition to having to learn all we could about the general problems of old age . . . we also had to look for people who could be 'characters' in the film; places that could be 'locations'; and interactions that could be 'scenes.' " This essentially Flahertian method is not without hazards, of course: chiefly that the mental set of "having chosen" influences the attitude during shooting, whereas a cameraman who is shooting more or less everything that happens can more nearly take the attitude of a neutral recorder. ("More nearly," because of course the act of pointing the camera and pushing the button is in itself an act of selection, as everyone from Arnheim to Godard has emphasized.) Temaner and Quinn thought of themselves as researcher-film-makers. They mixed their exploratory interviewing with shooting and editing, and built the film up gradually over a long period, rather than the customary shoot-first-and-edit-later. This allowed them to winnow down, from the complex and extensive life of the home, to what seemed crucial elements, and to discard other things—sometimes only after filming them—which had initially seemed promising. Despite their concern for form, however, the film definitely retains the feel of a document.

It is worth noting that films exploring institutions are, like the few good ethnographic films, extremely important for their bearing on academic disciplines. To put it as crassly as possible, film material instantly undermines flatulent "theorizing" and jargon. The experience of watching *Warrendale* or *Home for Life*, compared with the experience of reading psychological or sociological journals, will inevitably be a stimulating challenge to fields whose intellectual life is so largely carried on through woolly abstractions conceived at an undue distance from their supposed subject-matter. Because film material of this kind is irremediably concrete, it poses urgent intellectual and practical problems. The people and practices in *Warrendale* will provide, for students and professionals both, a number of substantial dubieties and a stimulus for observation and discussion; *Home for Life* has already had effects on geriatric practices. Such films then have the great virtue of being exact opposites of the ordinary "educational" films which waste our children's classroom time: they do not present a capsule version of accepted doctrine in some field, but rather challenge doctrine by confronting it with the real world. The outcome, I think, will be an enrichment and provocation, throughout the lifetimes of the films, which could not be achieved through any amount of pure talk. Films are pseudo-experiences, to be sure; but they can be useful substitutes for personal training and observation because they can be seen repeatedly and discussed in teaching situations; and they have the immense advantage over tape-recordings that they bring to bear a wide range of nonverbal communication.

Phyllis and Terry is not about an institution as such, but about two New York Negro teenagers and their own small personal society in the streets. In a sense it is an ethnographic film too—and of a kind that will surely become more common as anthropologists, who have run out of "primitive" cultures, turn their attention upon our own culture and subcultures. Slum talk, manners, and meanings are indeed foreign to the inhabitants of the white middle-class culture—and poor sound-recording adds its own difficulties to this film. But the girls come through the culture-barrier very strongly: the Marners have gotten them to discuss their lives as they wander about living them. The scenes are on stoops, sidewalks, playgrounds, and in that crucial New York institution, the candy-store. The girls are of course unlettered, but they are bright, lively, and sensitive. They

know the score, which is something like 72-6 against them; what they are too young to realize is that the game is already into the second half. Their street-kid toughness can cope bravely with the immediate surroundings —boys, dope, families. But they have no way of rising above these surroundings, either mentally or socially. *Phyllis and Terry* is a document of what it means to be trapped within a caste, so that your dreams are wildly out of touch with reality. The film has the same sadness, the same sense of persistent frustration, that Edgar Morin brought out in Jean Rouch's *Chronique d'un été* by asking Parisians whether they were happy.

These three films, disparate as they are, show how the cinema can become a mirror of our world. For film can have an honesty which is not permitted by the managers of the world-wide electronic "village": you will not see these films on the tube along with our officially approved wars, politicians, and commercials. Outside the neat middle-class patterns of the "electronic implosion," the world continues to go its way: people swear, and croak in wheelchairs, and know themselves degraded. But to show such things on a TV set in a nice living-room behind a neat suburban lawn would be called muck-raking; it would offend sponsors. It is still up to film-makers to perform this act of conscience: to show it like it is.

—Ernest Callenbach

As we go to press another feature-length *cinéma-vérité* portrait of an institution has appeared: *Titicut Follies*, by Frederick Wiseman and John Marshall (Distribution: Cinema 16–Grove Press). This harrowing film powerfully brings home the meaning of confinement in institutions with few humane pretensions; unlike the three discussed above, it inevitably "indicts," since what it shows would bring about immediate investigation and wholesale reforms in any decent society. At the very least, legal action from outside should be inspired by the film, to rectify the intolerably flagrant bias documented in the scene of a "paranoiac" 's hearing. But what will evidently be officially investigated is how the film-makers managed to get inside to do their shooting.—E.C.

ONCE THERE WAS A WAR
(Portrait of a Boy)

Director: Palle Kjaerulff-Schmidt. Script: Klaus Rifbjerg. Camera: Claus Loof. Nordisk.

The real war in this low-keyed movie is the struggle of a young boy, Tim, living in Copenhagen during World War II, to grow up. The German occupation is not much more than a backdrop for the few months of his life the film traces; yet it is still a factor that subtly reaches into the lives of all the characters—in an everyday, undramatic, yet quietly upsetting way. The Germans are portrayed as enemies certainly, but human ones, not beasts that shoot down passersby at street corners. (Early in the film, Tim and his friend Markus bicycle to a German installation and stare at the sentry, hardly older than they are.) But the destruction caused by the war is hinted at, through misfortunes heard about—peripheral, involving strangers, discussed only by the grown-ups among themselves, never in front of the children. When these secret horrors hit close to home, they so upset the parents that they become exaggerated and harsh in their responses toward the uninitiated Tim. Thus in one scene Tim bursts into the room, full of some recent adolescent experience, just as his parents have heard of a friend being shot through the door of his house; "They were not even sure it was he." Yet so delicate is the balance that Kjaerulff-Schmidt has achieved between the boy's momentary triumphs and despairs and the unsettled, dangerous conditions outside the "safe" family circle, that each gives an ironic perspective to the other. The episodes of Tim's life, which are seen with humor, tenderness, and sometimes pathos, are built up with a brilliant use of short, naturalistic glimpses—reminiscent perhaps of Truffaut's *Les Mistons*. The outside world with its unexplained upheavals and dangers provides a context which is felt constantly but is never melodramatic.

There is no story-line as such, but several threads develop and interweave: Tim's life at home with the family; his friendship with Markus, who is more of a doer, less of a

know the score, which is something like 72-6 against them; what they are too young to realize is that the game is already into the second half. Their street-kid toughness can cope bravely with the immediate surroundings —boys, dope, families. But they have no way of rising above these surroundings, either mentally or socially. *Phyllis and Terry* is a document of what it means to be trapped within a caste, so that your dreams are wildly out of touch with reality. The film has the same sadness, the same sense of persistent frustration, that Edgar Morin brought out in Jean Rouch's *Chronique d'un été* by asking Parisians whether they were happy.

These three films, disparate as they are, show how the cinema can become a mirror of our world. For film can have an honesty which is not permitted by the managers of the world-wide electronic "village": you will not see these films on the tube along with our officially approved wars, politicians, and commercials. Outside the neat middle-class patterns of the "electronic implosion," the world continues to go its way: people swear, and croak in wheelchairs, and know themselves degraded. But to show such things on a TV set in a nice living-room behind a neat suburban lawn would be called muck-raking; it would offend sponsors. It is still up to film-makers to perform this act of conscience: to show it like it is.

—Ernest Callenbach

As we go to press another feature-length *cinéma-vérité* portrait of an institution has appeared: *Titicut Follies*, by Frederick Wiseman and John Marshall (Distribution: Cinema 16–Grove Press). This harrowing film powerfully brings home the meaning of confinement in institutions with few humane pretensions; unlike the three discussed above, it inevitably "indicts," since what it shows would bring about immediate investigation and wholesale reforms in any decent society. At the very least, legal action from outside should be inspired by the film, to rectify the intolerably flagrant bias documented in the scene of a "paranoiac" 's hearing. But what will evidently be officially investigated is how the film-makers managed to get inside to do their shooting.—E.C.

ONCE THERE WAS A WAR
(Portrait of a Boy)

Director: Palle Kjaerulff-Schmidt. Script: Klaus Rifbjerg. Camera: Claus Loof. Nordisk.

The real war in this low-keyed movie is the struggle of a young boy, Tim, living in Copenhagen during World War II, to grow up. The German occupation is not much more than a backdrop for the few months of his life the film traces; yet it is still a factor that subtly reaches into the lives of all the characters—in an everyday, undramatic, yet quietly upsetting way. The Germans are portrayed as enemies certainly, but human ones, not beasts that shoot down passersby at street corners. (Early in the film, Tim and his friend Markus bicycle to a German installation and stare at the sentry, hardly older than they are.) But the destruction caused by the war is hinted at, through misfortunes heard about—peripheral, involving strangers, discussed only by the grown-ups among themselves, never in front of the children. When these secret horrors hit close to home, they so upset the parents that they become exaggerated and harsh in their responses toward the uninitiated Tim. Thus in one scene Tim bursts into the room, full of some recent adolescent experience, just as his parents have heard of a friend being shot through the door of his house; "They were not even sure it was he." Yet so delicate is the balance that Kjaerulff-Schmidt has achieved between the boy's momentary triumphs and despairs and the unsettled, dangerous conditions outside the "safe" family circle, that each gives an ironic perspective to the other. The episodes of Tim's life, which are seen with humor, tenderness, and sometimes pathos, are built up with a brilliant use of short, naturalistic glimpses—reminiscent perhaps of Truffaut's *Les Mistons*. The outside world with its unexplained upheavals and dangers provides a context which is felt constantly but is never melodramatic.

There is no story-line as such, but several threads develop and interweave: Tim's life at home with the family; his friendship with Markus, who is more of a doer, less of a

ONCE THERE WAS A WAR

dreamer; his life at school and conflicts with teachers. What mainly ties the film together is Tim's secret longing and puppy-love for Lis, the friend of his oldest sister Kate—an unattainable grown-up—and his attempts to find his way through the mysterious barriers to adulthood. He begins to see, yet cannot quite see, "what it's all about." And with him, we peek into the lives of his sisters and their friends, almost like a hidden camera unheeded among their partying. There is a strong documentary quality to the film, with its own kind of poetry. In fact, the first stills of Tim's house, which open the film, are of Rifbjerg's own childhood home; Rifbjerg told me that he and Kjaerulff-Schmidt used their own experiences as a starting point for the film; although the material is not autobiographical they were both adolescents during the war years.

The apparently artless creation of real people moving in an everyday world is helped by the fact that Ole Busck, who plays Tim, is unknown. An adolescent himself, he reveals all the usual conflicting emotions, complexes, and dreams. His struggle to maneuver and balance his bicycle through the puddles in the opening scene hints at the struggles to come. The way he picks up his bicycle after falling, almost pulling it up under him, making it part of himself and his push through the street, is symbolic of his quest for adulthood; the bicycle is his "horse," winged with his youthful zest and curiosity. His intense malleable face, like those of the rest of the capable cast, conveys much that dialogue could not say.

Tim lies in wait to bump into Lis "accidentally." To her he is a mere child; she is not aware that he is in love with her. Yvonne Ingdal plays Lis with just the right blending of ingenue and tease. At the sisters' parties when the parents are away, Tim is more or less chaperone to the girls. Then he has a chance to watch the dancing and necking while he winds up the phonograph. The music, here wartime dance tunes by the Danish pianist Leo Mathisen, has an excruciatingly accurate period flavor. One tune, "To be or not to be," is virtually Tim's theme: "to be" is to be able to dance and flirt with the girls, something not within Tim's reach except in dreams.

Dreams are Tim's method of achieving the impossible—becoming a hero, making love to Lis, or working off his fears of death. These dreams are the weakest part of the film, sometimes because the visual transitions to them are not smooth or believable, sometimes because the content is too fantasy-like in contrast with the reality of the rest of the film. In his hero dream, in which Tim is the leader of the resistance and speaks with Churchill on the radio, it takes some time before one realizes this is a dream, not an actual happening; in the nightmare sequence in which he sees parents and sisters killed in the cellar and undergoes his own death, the macabre surrealism is too abrupt a break with the naturalistic day-world of Tim.

Of the two dreams gratifying his longing for Lis, the first deals beautifully with his imagining of her acceptance of him as a man; and the transition to this dream is the most successful, because we first see him in his room, fondling a belt of hers. His real-life romantic climax occurs when Lis actually does ask him out to a movie she wants to see—at a time when her regular boyfriend will not take her (he is evidently involved in the resistance, but may also be ready to leave her). Tim's joy is complete when patriots enter the theater and stop the musical on the screen to show a satire of Hitler's goose-stepping troops, who are made to do the Lambeth Walk by film printed backwards and forwards in dance rhythm. As the audience howls, Tim is able to squeeze Lis's hand.

But this moment does not last. A second, rather Cocteau-like dream, after a party where Lis ignores him for an older suitor, is a mock-scary scene of come-hither sex and repulsion, which leaves Tim again confused and disgusted at the mysteries of adult love and sex. The jump into this dream is again awkward, and the film-makers here as elsewhere have adopted clumsy titles on the screen to set off the dream sequence.

When *Once There Was a War* opened in Copenhagen, one critic commented that it has a mood-filled density only found before, in Danish cinema, in the work of Carl Dreyer. The team of Rifbjerg and Kjaerulff-Schmidt (previously responsible for *Weekend* and *Two*) has been compared with Schlesinger, Forman, and Olmi. In any event, this is an impressive film, with a delicate, understated strength.

—Tove Neville

Postscript: After the above went to press, another film relevant to the war has come to our attention: *The Edge*, written and directed by Robert Kramer. An astonishing feat of realistic casting, this low-budget independent feature follows the upheaval in a group of not-so-young New York radicals when one of them decides, in view of the ineffectiveness of political protest, to assassinate the president—even though he knows it will change nothing. The film is not fully successful, although it is an impressive demonstration of the technical finesse possible on a minute budget: the acting of a number of the principals is weak; the script gives the characters an unnaturally monotonous grimness which makes them lose individuality; and although the characters are preoccupied with political issues, they never actually discuss them, although the dilemma the film sketches is inevitably a political and social as well as personal one: if the war cannot be stopped, what then? But the dialogue is aptly intelligent, the relations between the characters touchingly serious; and the structure of sequences overlapping dialogue is a strong one, although most individual scenes are not worked out with sufficient visual force.—E.C.

Books

PRIVATE SCREENINGS
Views of the Cinema of the Sixties

By John Simon. (New York; Macmillan, 1967. $6.95)

At first glance, Simon would seem to be the very model of a critic: hard-working, full of detail and erudite allusions to literature, concerned for the upholding of civilized standards in a levelling world. His arguments are carefully structured, and if his ironies are sometimes heavy, well, criticism may still be thought a serious business.

Why then do so few film people take Simon seriously? Is it merely that he is a hard critic who too monotonously gives negative judgments? I think not. Shaw was also harsh, yet a love of the theater shines through his blackest denunciations of incompetence and venality. In Simon's case, however, his weekly confrontations with films seem mostly to have developed his spleen; they have evidently seldom been relieved by viewings of films he respects. And in practice it turns out that the films to which he gives reasonably good marks are things like *Dear John, Alfie, Lawrence of Arabia, Sundays and Cybele, The Collector,* while he writes off as abominations *The Exterminating Angel,*

But this moment does not last. A second, rather Cocteau-like dream, after a party where Lis ignores him for an older suitor, is a mock-scary scene of come-hither sex and repulsion, which leaves Tim again confused and disgusted at the mysteries of adult love and sex. The jump into this dream is again awkward, and the film-makers here as elsewhere have adopted clumsy titles on the screen to set off the dream sequence.

When *Once There Was a War* opened in Copenhagen, one critic commented that it has a mood-filled density only found before, in Danish cinema, in the work of Carl Dreyer. The team of Rifbjerg and Kjaerulff-Schmidt (previously responsible for *Weekend* and *Two*) has been compared with Schlesinger, Forman, and Olmi. In any event, this is an impressive film, with a delicate, understated strength.

—Tove Neville

Postscript: After the above went to press, another film relevant to the war has come to our attention: *The Edge*, written and directed by Robert Kramer. An astonishing feat of realistic casting, this low-budget independent feature follows the upheaval in a group of not-so-young New York radicals when one of them decides, in view of the ineffectiveness of political protest, to assassinate the president—even though he knows it will change nothing. The film is not fully successful, although it is an impressive demonstration of the technical finesse possible on a minute budget: the acting of a number of the principals is weak; the script gives the characters an unnaturally monotonous grimness which makes them lose individuality; and although the characters are preoccupied with political issues, they never actually discuss them, although the dilemma the film sketches is inevitably a political and social as well as personal one: if the war cannot be stopped, what then? But the dialogue is aptly intelligent, the relations between the characters touchingly serious; and the structure of sequences overlapping dialogue is a strong one, although most individual scenes are not worked out with sufficient visual force.—E.C.

Books

PRIVATE SCREENINGS
Views of the Cinema of the Sixties

By John Simon. (New York; Macmillan, 1967. $6.95)

At first glance, Simon would seem to be the very model of a critic: hard-working, full of detail and erudite allusions to literature, concerned for the upholding of civilized standards in a levelling world. His arguments are carefully structured, and if his ironies are sometimes heavy, well, criticism may still be thought a serious business.

Why then do so few film people take Simon seriously? Is it merely that he is a hard critic who too monotonously gives negative judgments? I think not. Shaw was also harsh, yet a love of the theater shines through his blackest denunciations of incompetence and venality. In Simon's case, however, his weekly confrontations with films seem mostly to have developed his spleen; they have evidently seldom been relieved by viewings of films he respects. And in practice it turns out that the films to which he gives reasonably good marks are things like *Dear John, Alfie, Lawrence of Arabia, Sundays and Cybele, The Collector,* while he writes off as abominations *The Exterminating Angel,*

But this moment does not last. A second, rather Cocteau-like dream, after a party where Lis ignores him for an older suitor, is a mock-scary scene of come-hither sex and repulsion, which leaves Tim again confused and disgusted at the mysteries of adult love and sex. The jump into this dream is again awkward, and the film-makers here as elsewhere have adopted clumsy titles on the screen to set off the dream sequence.

When *Once There Was a War* opened in Copenhagen, one critic commented that it has a mood-filled density only found before, in Danish cinema, in the work of Carl Dreyer. The team of Rifbjerg and Kjaerulff-Schmidt (previously responsible for *Weekend* and *Two*) has been compared with Schlesinger, Forman, and Olmi. In any event, this is an impressive film, with a delicate, understated strength.

—Tove Neville

Postscript: After the above went to press, another film relevant to the war has come to our attention: *The Edge*, written and directed by Robert Kramer. An astonishing feat of realistic casting, this low-budget independent feature follows the upheaval in a group of not-so-young New York radicals when one of them decides, in view of the ineffectiveness of political protest, to assassinate the president—even though he knows it will change nothing. The film is not fully successful, although it is an impressive demonstration of the technical finesse possible on a minute budget: the acting of a number of the principals is weak; the script gives the characters an unnaturally monotonous grimness which makes them lose individuality; and although the characters are preoccupied with political issues, they never actually discuss them, although the dilemma the film sketches is inevitably a political and social as well as personal one: if the war cannot be stopped, what then? But the dialogue is aptly intelligent, the relations between the characters touchingly serious; and the structure of sequences overlapping dialogue is a strong one, although most individual scenes are not worked out with sufficient visual force.—E.C.

Books

PRIVATE SCREENINGS
Views of the Cinema of the Sixties

By John Simon. (New York; Macmillan, 1967. $6.95)

At first glance, Simon would seem to be the very model of a critic: hard-working, full of detail and erudite allusions to literature, concerned for the upholding of civilized standards in a levelling world. His arguments are carefully structured, and if his ironies are sometimes heavy, well, criticism may still be thought a serious business.

Why then do so few film people take Simon seriously? Is it merely that he is a hard critic who too monotonously gives negative judgments? I think not. Shaw was also harsh, yet a love of the theater shines through his blackest denunciations of incompetence and venality. In Simon's case, however, his weekly confrontations with films seem mostly to have developed his spleen; they have evidently seldom been relieved by viewings of films he respects. And in practice it turns out that the films to which he gives reasonably good marks are things like *Dear John, Alfie, Lawrence of Arabia, Sundays and Cybele, The Collector,* while he writes off as abominations *The Exterminating Angel,*

This Sporting Life, 8½. Evidently, then, although the intricate chopping machine of Simonian criticism grinds rather fine, it also grinds at least as erratically as other models. And there is a curious lack of perspective in the weekly columns; we would like to see the relative triumphs and the relative catastrophes of current fare placed among films of the past which had pleased our critic at film society or revival house; by contrast he is full enough of elegant references to the literary past—in at least four languages, including the Hungarian.

As if to rebut this charge, Simon has prefaced his weekly writings with chapters titled "A Critical Credo" and "Favorites." In the first he lays out the responsibilities of a critic as he sees them. Comparing the underdeveloped state of film as an art, and the critical discipline that "even if only in related fields, has acquired a vast tradition and imposing expertise and sophistication," he concludes that "The main thing the critic can do while waiting for the day when it will be possible to limit oneself to writing serious criticism about serious films for serious publications is, with every means at his command, to help bring about that day." Is this candid? In "Favorites" Simon tries to make it appear so, by writing about films he respects—an unexceptionable lot, *Naked Night, Forbidden Games, Children of Paradise, La Règle du Jeu, I Vitelloni, L'Avventura, Seven Samurai, Kane,* and—a film which suffers severely on repeated viewing—*Kanal.* Yet what he has to say about these supposed masterworks amounts to about a page for each, and it is by no means the best writing in the book.

Well, is *this* serious? Ultimately, one concludes that there is something slippery about Simon, too much unacknowledged about his feelings. He *likes* to write at length, and with all his energy, about films he despises; he gives shorter shrift, almost always, to films he rather approves. But an honest critic keeps spitefulness in the open, where the reader can take its measure and even enjoy it, as is sometimes the case with Pauline Kael. Simon thinks of himself as a schoolteacher, and writes of the movie industry as needing the rod. But surely if schoolmasterly beatings are to be administered, the first thing is to admit you enjoy it.

The basic reason why Simon has not attained a devoted following thus becomes clearer: despite his learnedness, his cogency, his undeniably snappy style, the man has insufficient feeling for the art. What makes the reader impatient is the disproportion between Simon's complex cogitative machinery and the modest cognitive foundation of observations and insights upon which it unsteadily rests. Simon impresses us by the force of his arguments, never by his perceptions—he never surprises us into realizing something we had not noticed about a film.

There is also an extraneous yet not irrelevant reason why Simon has not gained wide respect: that his writing has mostly appeared in the *New Leader,* the organ of what might be called the CIA left. It is to the credit of the journal that it employed a regular film critic. But the readers it offered him, chiefly ex-radicals firmly enlisted in our government's cold war, cannot have been a very stimulating audience; and readers who find the politely blueblooded liberalism of the *New Republic* an acceptable price for reading Miss Kael balk at laying out their own cash for the *New Leader.* (It is apparent, incidentally, that Simon has never trimmed his political views for his editors; on such a crucial case as *To Die in Madrid,* he forbears the obvious opportunity to lean heavily on the political oversimplifications of the film. At this point it is certainly not easy to make a factual film about the Spanish Civil War that is not embarrassing either to Communists or to historians.)

In the end, you begin perversely to read Simon for his *un*reasonableness. The mere thought of Jean-Luc Godard is enough to throw him into a frenzy; and wrecking Simon's even-breathing style is no mean achievement. Godard even drives him to a furious vulgarity which is nearly endearing: "About the only place where Godard's position might be comparable to that of [Stravinsky, Picasso, Joyce and Eliot] is on the toilet seat. But Godard, alas, also expels his works from that position." He writes of Godard's "puerile, irresponsible, indeed criminal appetites," and sternly disap-

proves of Anna Karina. Someday, I myself suspect, Godard's case will turn out like Wagner's: attacked at first for irresponsible anarchy, he will one day be seen as almost humdrum in his regularity; what now seems his "anti-logic" will seem as tiresome as the "logic" it is constantly poised against. But Simon's unconsciousness of such a possibility (as of Godard's persistent misanthropy) verges on the sublime.

But despite his weaknesses, Simon is not a critic who can be dismissed. He deserves to be read widely and carefully, for often his views have an important cultural bearing; although he writes mostly about the general attitudes expressed by films rather than about their texture or style, much of what he says will provoke re-examination of too easily espoused attitudes. We can only hope that someday he will come across a good film that genuinely engrosses him and leads him to bring his considerable literary gifts into a more intimate relation with his subject.—ERNEST CALLENBACH

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE AMERICAN UNDERGROUND FILM

By Sheldon Renan. (New York: Dutton, 1967. $2.25; $2.70 in Canada)

In an area where, all too often, promotion masquerades as criticism, Renan has written a sensible and serviceable guide-book, focused on the most significant talents. His approach is biographical and descriptive, rather than analytical, and every reader will have some quarrels with his rather cursory comments on individual films. But his general discussion of the nature and range of underground films is catholic and generous; thankfully, Renan leans toward the factual rather than the dogmatic. He provides an introductory defense of the independent film that will make sense even to the totally uninitiated square reader; he sketches its historical background in Europe and America. There are also chapters on the "stars" of the underground film, the institutions and publications relevant to it, and on certain contemporary new directions being taken by film-makers. An appendix lists sources for films in distribution, and there is an index.

In sum, this is not a book that will provide critical distinctions, except implicitly; that is something to be done in another book. But Renan has compiled and presented intelligently an impressive amount of useful information; his book is essential reading for anyone interested in the independent film—which as he properly notes is today definitely peeping above the ground.—E.C.

THE FILMS OF LAUREL AND HARDY

By William K. Everson. (New York: Citadel, 1967. $7.95)

A useful compendium of information about a substantial and very uneven body of work—contains credits, casts, synopses, and brief critical assessments. Everson does not blink the undeniable cinematic feebleness of much of the L&H canon, but he puts a good case for the psychological side of their work. If *Two Tars* and *Big Business* indeed represent the "apotheosis" of Laurel & Hardy, however, then surely it is grotesque to rank them anywhere in the same league as Keaton or Chaplin or Lloyd. In fact, when a whole generation of television children now equate slovenly slapstick with L&H, it becomes increasingly necessary to emphasize the immense superiority of Keaton, especially, in story structure. ingenuity of invention, visual economy and beauty, and utilization of the camera for comic effect—matters in which, as a few close comparisons will show, Laurel & Hardy were barely competent. The great heritage of the American screen comedy can well be broadened to include lesser men; but there is no excuse for Everson's careless remark that *Two Tars* is "about the funniest and most representative" of all Laurel & Hardy films. It *is* a very funny film, but it is one of the handful of genuine high points in a welter of distinctly second-rate film-making. What L&H achieved on the level of character was interesting enough not to need false claims or exaggerated praise.—E.C.

LISTINGS

Landscape of Contemporary Cinema. By Leon Lewis and William David Sherman. (Buffalo: Spectrum Press, 1967. $1.50) A mosaic of short notes on films, film-makers, and performers who have (in the authors' vocabulary) turned them on; the essays are stimulating, and luckily less hip than the authors imagine.

proves of Anna Karina. Someday, I myself suspect, Godard's case will turn out like Wagner's: attacked at first for irresponsible anarchy, he will one day be seen as almost humdrum in his regularity; what now seems his "anti-logic" will seem as tiresome as the "logic" it is constantly poised against. But Simon's unconsciousness of such a possibility (as of Godard's persistent misanthropy) verges on the sublime.

But despite his weaknesses, Simon is not a critic who can be dismissed. He deserves to be read widely and carefully, for often his views have an important cultural bearing; although he writes mostly about the general attitudes expressed by films rather than about their texture or style, much of what he says will provoke re-examination of too easily espoused attitudes. We can only hope that someday he will come across a good film that genuinely engrosses him and leads him to bring his considerable literary gifts into a more intimate relation with his subject.—ERNEST CALLENBACH

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE AMERICAN UNDERGROUND FILM

By Sheldon Renan. (New York: Dutton, 1967. $2.25; $2.70 in Canada)

In an area where, all too often, promotion masquerades as criticism, Renan has written a sensible and serviceable guide-book, focused on the most significant talents. His approach is biographical and descriptive, rather than analytical, and every reader will have some quarrels with his rather cursory comments on individual films. But his general discussion of the nature and range of underground films is catholic and generous; thankfully, Renan leans toward the factual rather than the dogmatic. He provides an introductory defense of the independent film that will make sense even to the totally uninitiated square reader; he sketches its historical background in Europe and America. There are also chapters on the "stars" of the underground film, the institutions and publications relevant to it, and on certain contemporary new directions being taken by film-makers. An appendix lists sources for films in distribution, and there is an index.

In sum, this is not a book that will provide critical distinctions, except implicitly; that is something to be done in another book. But Renan has compiled and presented intelligently an impressive amount of useful information; his book is essential reading for anyone interested in the independent film—which as he properly notes is today definitely peeping above the ground.—E.C.

THE FILMS OF LAUREL AND HARDY

By William K. Everson. (New York: Citadel, 1967. $7.95)

A useful compendium of information about a substantial and very uneven body of work—contains credits, casts, synopses, and brief critical assessments. Everson does not blink the undeniable cinematic feebleness of much of the L&H canon, but he puts a good case for the psychological side of their work. If *Two Tars* and *Big Business* indeed represent the "apotheosis" of Laurel & Hardy, however, then surely it is grotesque to rank them anywhere in the same league as Keaton or Chaplin or Lloyd. In fact, when a whole generation of television children now equate slovenly slapstick with L&H, it becomes increasingly necessary to emphasize the immense superiority of Keaton, especially, in story structure. ingenuity of invention, visual economy and beauty, and utilization of the camera for comic effect—matters in which, as a few close comparisons will show, Laurel & Hardy were barely competent. The great heritage of the American screen comedy can well be broadened to include lesser men; but there is no excuse for Everson's careless remark that *Two Tars* is "about the funniest and most representative" of all Laurel & Hardy films. It *is* a very funny film, but it is one of the handful of genuine high points in a welter of distinctly second-rate film-making. What L&H achieved on the level of character was interesting enough not to need false claims or exaggerated praise.—E.C.

LISTINGS

Landscape of Contemporary Cinema. By Leon Lewis and William David Sherman. (Buffalo: Spectrum Press, 1967. $1.50) A mosaic of short notes on films, film-makers, and performers who have (in the authors' vocabulary) turned them on; the essays are stimulating, and luckily less hip than the authors imagine.

proves of Anna Karina. Someday, I myself suspect, Godard's case will turn out like Wagner's: attacked at first for irresponsible anarchy, he will one day be seen as almost humdrum in his regularity; what now seems his "anti-logic" will seem as tiresome as the "logic" it is constantly poised against. But Simon's unconsciousness of such a possibility (as of Godard's persistent misanthropy) verges on the sublime.

But despite his weaknesses, Simon is not a critic who can be dismissed. He deserves to be read widely and carefully, for often his views have an important cultural bearing; although he writes mostly about the general attitudes expressed by films rather than about their texture or style, much of what he says will provoke re-examination of too easily espoused attitudes. We can only hope that someday he will come across a good film that genuinely engrosses him and leads him to bring his considerable literary gifts into a more intimate relation with his subject.—ERNEST CALLENBACH

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE AMERICAN UNDERGROUND FILM

By Sheldon Renan. (New York: Dutton, 1967. $2.25; $2.70 in Canada)

In an area where, all too often, promotion masquerades as criticism, Renan has written a sensible and serviceable guide-book, focused on the most significant talents. His approach is biographical and descriptive, rather than analytical, and every reader will have some quarrels with his rather cursory comments on individual films. But his general discussion of the nature and range of underground films is catholic and generous; thankfully, Renan leans toward the factual rather than the dogmatic. He provides an introductory defense of the independent film that will make sense even to the totally uninitiated square reader; he sketches its historical background in Europe and America. There are also chapters on the "stars" of the underground film, the institutions and publications relevant to it, and on certain contemporary new directions being taken by film-makers. An appendix lists sources for films in distribution, and there is an index.

In sum, this is not a book that will provide critical distinctions, except implicitly; that is something to be done in another book. But Renan has compiled and presented intelligently an impressive amount of useful information; his book is essential reading for anyone interested in the independent film—which as he properly notes is today definitely peeping above the ground.—E.C.

THE FILMS OF LAUREL AND HARDY

By William K. Everson. (New York: Citadel, 1967. $7.95)

A useful compendium of information about a substantial and very uneven body of work—contains credits, casts, synopses, and brief critical assessments. Everson does not blink the undeniable cinematic feebleness of much of the L&H canon, but he puts a good case for the psychological side of their work. If *Two Tars* and *Big Business* indeed represent the "apotheosis" of Laurel & Hardy, however, then surely it is grotesque to rank them anywhere in the same league as Keaton or Chaplin or Lloyd. In fact, when a whole generation of television children now equate slovenly slapstick with L&H, it becomes increasingly necessary to emphasize the immense superiority of Keaton, especially, in story structure. ingenuity of invention, visual economy and beauty, and utilization of the camera for comic effect—matters in which, as a few close comparisons will show, Laurel & Hardy were barely competent. The great heritage of the American screen comedy can well be broadened to include lesser men; but there is no excuse for Everson's careless remark that *Two Tars* is "about the funniest and most representative" of all Laurel & Hardy films. It *is* a very funny film, but it is one of the handful of genuine high points in a welter of distinctly second-rate film-making. What L&H achieved on the level of character was interesting enough not to need false claims or exaggerated praise.—E.C.

LISTINGS

Landscape of Contemporary Cinema. By Leon Lewis and William David Sherman. (Buffalo: Spectrum Press, 1967. $1.50) A mosaic of short notes on films, film-makers, and performers who have (in the authors' vocabulary) turned them on; the essays are stimulating, and luckily less hip than the authors imagine.

The Technique of the Motion Picture Camera. By H. Mario Raimondo Souto. (New York: Hastings House, 1967. $14.50) A clearly written and well-illustrated guide to current cameras—includes a general description of all commonly used models, and detailed instructions for many. Coverage of 35mm and 16mm is comprehensive (even to Russian cameras) but 8mm is confined to a tantalizing note saying that 16mm manufacturers must "bring their cameras into line with these latest 8mm advances."

PERIODICALS

Film Digest, published by the WEA Film Study Group at 52 Margaret Street, Sydney, NSW, Australia, is a small but well established journal, featuring scathing attacks on film industry outrages, thorough articles such as Charles Higham on Welles (in No. 22), and brief reviews. A$3.00 in the Commonwealth, A$3.30 elsewhere.

Harbinger, whose first issue contains several essays on and a complete filmography of the films of Bruce Baillie, is available for 50c an issue (no subscriptions) from P. O. Box 7817, Austin, Texas 78712.

Short Notices

Watching **The Chelsea Girls** is like listening in on a very long phone conversation. It's mildly titillating—you keep wondering whether something isn't bound to happen, and when you're ready to give up, the scene and characters change so you begin wondering all over again. It's also dubious—as if the people talking know you're listening, and are thus putting on a somewhat special show for your benefit. The movie exploits the voyeuristic element inherent in all cinema, and like Warhol's *Sleep* and *Empire* it is probably a healthy slap in the face with the dead herring of photographic "realism"; but it shrinks from going the whole way into a genuinely candid, totally eavesdropping form —the ultimate documentary solution toward which we seem to be lurching. Several of the characters, despite their incessant role-playing, are interesting, and you wish Warhol had taken the trouble (or had the talent?) to show them in depth—which we know is possible, since many *cinéma-vérité* films have done it with less outré people. But the best place to see *The Chelsea Girls* would really be on your TV set (if Warhol's friends were only permitted on the family medium) so you could talk, smoke, drink, doze, shoot, or whatever, and take them at their own pace. Warhol has kindly provided a second screen image, to which you can let your attention wander when the main image gets too lackadaisical, but even that cool gesture isn't enough to chill the medium below tepid. Clearly a case of mixed-up media; but the advertising is hot enough for any movie.—E. C.

Face Junk, a film by Richard Bartlett, a student at Boston University, illustrates the power of the movie close-up more vividly than any film I know. The film runs about 12 minutes, and Bartlett shows us nothing but a woman's face, from varying distances. We watch the woman putting make-up on her face, picking her teeth, pulling at her eyelashes, as a breathy female voice intones about the soulful nature of a woman's beauty. After a few minutes of this monologue, the camera moves in much closer to the face and observes some of these cosmetic operations in detail. The woman struggles with a stubborn eyelash, and in gigantic close-up we watch the puckering of her skin as she pulls and pulls at it with a tweezer. Then she rubs lipstick over her lips, again and again. Finally (by this time her face *is* the entire screen) she puts a long, cylindrical white object into her mouth; a moment later a creamy substance dribbles from between her lips onto her chin. The mouth, of course, magnified grotesquely, detached from all normal coordinates, is more than a mouth—the white object inserted into it suggests intercourse clearly enough, and in its drooling the mouth also becomes an anus. Much of the horror and fascination of the film comes from this indistinguishability of mouth, vagina, anus. The effect on the audience was uncontainable, almost literally hysterical laughter—laughter that must be partly a defense against painful humiliation of beauty and sexuality, and partly a delighted response to this humiliation. The film is very Swiftian, or to put it another way, you might say that it acts out an anal fantasy; by destroying civilized, respectable talk of beauty with a visual emphasis on the pores, the hairs, the dirtiest operations of human flesh, the film re-enacts the infant's desire to smear his faeces on pastel-colored bathroom walls. And we all respond; *Face Junk* makes an audience helpless. It seems to

The Technique of the Motion Picture Camera. By H. Mario Raimondo Souto. (New York: Hastings House, 1967. $14.50) A clearly written and well-illustrated guide to current cameras—includes a general description of all commonly used models, and detailed instructions for many. Coverage of 35mm and 16mm is comprehensive (even to Russian cameras) but 8mm is confined to a tantalizing note saying that 16mm manufacturers must "bring their cameras into line with these latest 8mm advances."

PERIODICALS

Film Digest, published by the WEA Film Study Group at 52 Margaret Street, Sydney, NSW, Australia, is a small but well established journal, featuring scathing attacks on film industry outrages, thorough articles such as Charles Higham on Welles (in No. 22), and brief reviews. A$3.00 in the Commonwealth, A$3.30 elsewhere.

Harbinger, whose first issue contains several essays on and a complete filmography of the films of Bruce Baillie, is available for 50c an issue (no subscriptions) from P. O. Box 7817, Austin, Texas 78712.

Short Notices

Watching **The Chelsea Girls** is like listening in on a very long phone conversation. It's mildly titillating—you keep wondering whether something isn't bound to happen, and when you're ready to give up, the scene and characters change so you begin wondering all over again. It's also dubious—as if the people talking know you're listening, and are thus putting on a somewhat special show for your benefit. The movie exploits the voyeuristic element inherent in all cinema, and like Warhol's *Sleep* and *Empire* it is probably a healthy slap in the face with the dead herring of photographic "realism"; but it shrinks from going the whole way into a genuinely candid, totally eavesdropping form —the ultimate documentary solution toward which we seem to be lurching. Several of the characters, despite their incessant role-playing, are interesting, and you wish Warhol had taken the trouble (or had the talent?) to show them in depth—which we know is possible, since many *cinéma-vérité* films have done it with less outré people. But the best place to see *The Chelsea Girls* would really be on your TV set (if Warhol's friends were only permitted on the family medium) so you could talk, smoke, drink, doze, shoot, or whatever, and take them at their own pace. Warhol has kindly provided a second screen image, to which you can let your attention wander when the main image gets too lackadaisical, but even that cool gesture isn't enough to chill the medium below tepid. Clearly a case of mixed-up media; but the advertising is hot enough for any movie.—E. C.

Face Junk, a film by Richard Bartlett, a student at Boston University, illustrates the power of the movie close-up more vividly than any film I know. The film runs about 12 minutes, and Bartlett shows us nothing but a woman's face, from varying distances. We watch the woman putting make-up on her face, picking her teeth, pulling at her eyelashes, as a breathy female voice intones about the soulful nature of a woman's beauty. After a few minutes of this monologue, the camera moves in much closer to the face and observes some of these cosmetic operations in detail. The woman struggles with a stubborn eyelash, and in gigantic close-up we watch the puckering of her skin as she pulls and pulls at it with a tweezer. Then she rubs lipstick over her lips, again and again. Finally (by this time her face *is* the entire screen) she puts a long, cylindrical white object into her mouth; a moment later a creamy substance dribbles from between her lips onto her chin. The mouth, of course, magnified grotesquely, detached from all normal coordinates, is more than a mouth—the white object inserted into it suggests intercourse clearly enough, and in its drooling the mouth also becomes an anus. Much of the horror and fascination of the film comes from this indistinguishability of mouth, vagina, anus. The effect on the audience was uncontainable, almost literally hysterical laughter—laughter that must be partly a defense against painful humiliation of beauty and sexuality, and partly a delighted response to this humiliation. The film is very Swiftian, or to put it another way, you might say that it acts out an anal fantasy; by destroying civilized, respectable talk of beauty with a visual emphasis on the pores, the hairs, the dirtiest operations of human flesh, the film re-enacts the infant's desire to smear his faeces on pastel-colored bathroom walls. And we all respond; *Face Junk* makes an audience helpless. It seems to

The Technique of the Motion Picture Camera. By H. Mario Raimondo Souto. (New York: Hastings House, 1967. $14.50) A clearly written and well-illustrated guide to current cameras—includes a general description of all commonly used models, and detailed instructions for many. Coverage of 35mm and 16mm is comprehensive (even to Russian cameras) but 8mm is confined to a tantalizing note saying that 16mm manufacturers must "bring their cameras into line with these latest 8mm advances."

PERIODICALS

Film Digest, published by the WEA Film Study Group at 52 Margaret Street, Sydney, NSW, Australia, is a small but well established journal, featuring scathing attacks on film industry outrages, thorough articles such as Charles Higham on Welles (in No. 22), and brief reviews. A$3.00 in the Commonwealth, A$3.30 elsewhere.

Harbinger, whose first issue contains several essays on and a complete filmography of the films of Bruce Baillie, is available for 50c an issue (no subscriptions) from P. O. Box 7817, Austin, Texas 78712.

Short Notices

Watching **The Chelsea Girls** is like listening in on a very long phone conversation. It's mildly titillating—you keep wondering whether something isn't bound to happen, and when you're ready to give up, the scene and characters change so you begin wondering all over again. It's also dubious—as if the people talking know you're listening, and are thus putting on a somewhat special show for your benefit. The movie exploits the voyeuristic element inherent in all cinema, and like Warhol's *Sleep* and *Empire* it is probably a healthy slap in the face with the dead herring of photographic "realism"; but it shrinks from going the whole way into a genuinely candid, totally eavesdropping form —the ultimate documentary solution toward which we seem to be lurching. Several of the characters, despite their incessant role-playing, are interesting, and you wish Warhol had taken the trouble (or had the talent?) to show them in depth—which we know is possible, since many *cinéma-vérité* films have done it with less outré people. But the best place to see *The Chelsea Girls* would really be on your TV set (if Warhol's friends were only permitted on the family medium) so you could talk, smoke, drink, doze, shoot, or whatever, and take them at their own pace. Warhol has kindly provided a second screen image, to which you can let your attention wander when the main image gets too lackadaisical, but even that cool gesture isn't enough to chill the medium below tepid. Clearly a case of mixed-up media; but the advertising is hot enough for any movie.—E. C.

Face Junk, a film by Richard Bartlett, a student at Boston University, illustrates the power of the movie close-up more vividly than any film I know. The film runs about 12 minutes, and Bartlett shows us nothing but a woman's face, from varying distances. We watch the woman putting make-up on her face, picking her teeth, pulling at her eyelashes, as a breathy female voice intones about the soulful nature of a woman's beauty. After a few minutes of this monologue, the camera moves in much closer to the face and observes some of these cosmetic operations in detail. The woman struggles with a stubborn eyelash, and in gigantic close-up we watch the puckering of her skin as she pulls and pulls at it with a tweezer. Then she rubs lipstick over her lips, again and again. Finally (by this time her face *is* the entire screen) she puts a long, cylindrical white object into her mouth; a moment later a creamy substance dribbles from between her lips onto her chin. The mouth, of course, magnified grotesquely, detached from all normal coordinates, is more than a mouth—the white object inserted into it suggests intercourse clearly enough, and in its drooling the mouth also becomes an anus. Much of the horror and fascination of the film comes from this indistinguishability of mouth, vagina, anus. The effect on the audience was uncontainable, almost literally hysterical laughter—laughter that must be partly a defense against painful humiliation of beauty and sexuality, and partly a delighted response to this humiliation. The film is very Swiftian, or to put it another way, you might say that it acts out an anal fantasy; by destroying civilized, respectable talk of beauty with a visual emphasis on the pores, the hairs, the dirtiest operations of human flesh, the film re-enacts the infant's desire to smear his faeces on pastel-colored bathroom walls. And we all respond; *Face Junk* makes an audience helpless. It seems to

me that film is the only medium that can work with such cruel emotional effectiveness. A painting and a photograph can, in related ways, present any object for our consideration, but the object is frozen, dead; then too, though some paintings may be as large as a movie screen, we see them in a well-lighted museum from a much greater psychological distance than in the darkened movie theater. In the live theater we are also in the dark and our eye is focused on a limited amount of space, and things move, but we can never get any closer to anything than the safe distance between auditorium and stage. Nothing can be magnified. Films move us in close on the most embarrassing detail of flesh, and then force us to watch the flesh quiver. The most shocking twitch absorbs almost all of the space our eye can take in; a seductive, hideous mouth can overwhelm us, tyrannize over us, and maintain its intensity for several minutes. Some people identify montage as the quintessential quality of film, but *Face Junk* reminds us that the concentration of the camera's eye is as crucial a part of its psychological impact as its mobility. Bergman, for example, has always placed a great deal of emphasis on the close-up; and the image at the start of *Persona,* of a boy placing his hand on a giant female face on a screen, suggests that Bergman understands clearly the fascination of the magnified face, even if he hasn't been willing to experiment quite as radically as the creator of *Face Junk.* —STEPHEN FARBER

Far from the Madding Crowd is a nice bland pudding of a movie, undistinguished by any great moments or performances, but oddly enjoyable just the same.. Like a fat, slightly soporific novel, the film proceeds at a leisurely nineteenth-century pace. The hours tick by, and the crises of burning barley ricks, lambing time, and harvest home orgies seem strangely appealing after years of hyped-up movie fare. Director John Schlesinger seems to be at home in the Hardy country, and the camera meanders over Dorset pastures and downs, and up mean flinty village streets. Richard MacDonald has designed a production that is far from his more elaborate Losey concoctions, and with a nice feeling for the patterns of nineteenth-century folk art, like the decorative circus backdrops and the seaside busker's paintings. However, the main appeal of the film lies in its evocation of nature, and the tenderness with which a vanished rural life is observed and recorded. The flowers look real, and so do the local faces. Like the literary movies of the thirties, such as *David Copperfield* and *Pride and Prejudice,* this film offers us the pleasure of recasting fiction and the knowledge that each character will, after all, come to a suitable end.—MARGOT S. KERNAN

Games. Curtis Harrington must have fallen in love with *Diablolique* years ago, because he borrows shamelessly from it for his new film. He uses the same three characters, but his version of their relationships is more cynical: the husband lives openly off his wife's money and the other woman is his "business associate" rather than his mistress. He also uses the same plot twist—a simulated death—although he introduces a fourth character who does the "simulating" for a mere $500. He abuses this gimmick badly by revealing it toward the middle of the film in an impatient effort to scare us out of our wits. Harrington's direction is no compensation. He uses all the paraphernalia of the conventional spookfest: ominous silences that are punctuated by sudden noises (in this case, the neighbor's cat knocks over a flowerpot), sudden jolts that come as quickly as they go (the heroine finds a trail of blood in the bathroom and, when she returns to check on it, she finds the floor spic and span), bloodcurdling screams, close-ups of turning door-knobs, doors that begin to open slowly, stirring curtains, lights out, and empty houses in foul weather for horrifying climaxes. Harrington swamps his action in a pop-art decor to give the film an up-to-the-moment look and often shoots through fuzzy filters to establish an atmosphere of muted density, and he's more interesting in these areas than in his direction. Harrington insists that his thriller is "highly contemporary in theme" and perhaps he's trying to tell us that people aren't capable of compassion for each other, but can and will do anything to guarantee their own satisfaction; but that's an essential malaise that another thriller, *Double Indemnity,* explored more skillfully back in 1944.—RAYMOND BANACKI

In the Heat of the Night is a grim drama set in blood-curdling Mississippi, where most of the residents are sweaty, thick-headed bigots. So skillful is director Norman Jewison's re-creation of this chilling atmosphere that we are tingly and edgy throughout, partly in concern for the safety of the hero (Sidney Poitier), and partly at the unsettling realization that such moronic rednecks actually exist. Poitier, a Northern Negro homicide expert just passing through, is pushed into helping the unsophisticated local police chief and ace bigot (Rod Steiger) solve the murder of the town's lead-

me that film is the only medium that can work with such cruel emotional effectiveness. A painting and a photograph can, in related ways, present any object for our consideration, but the object is frozen, dead; then too, though some paintings may be as large as a movie screen, we see them in a well-lighted museum from a much greater psychological distance than in the darkened movie theater. In the live theater we are also in the dark and our eye is focused on a limited amount of space, and things move, but we can never get any closer to anything than the safe distance between auditorium and stage. Nothing can be magnified. Films move us in close on the most embarrassing detail of flesh, and then force us to watch the flesh quiver. The most shocking twitch absorbs almost all of the space our eye can take in; a seductive, hideous mouth can overwhelm us, tyrannize over us, and maintain its intensity for several minutes. Some people identify montage as the quintessential quality of film, but *Face Junk* reminds us that the concentration of the camera's eye is as crucial a part of its psychological impact as its mobility. Bergman, for example, has always placed a great deal of emphasis on the close-up; and the image at the start of *Persona,* of a boy placing his hand on a giant female face on a screen, suggests that Bergman understands clearly the fascination of the magnified face, even if he hasn't been willing to experiment quite as radically as the creator of *Face Junk.* —STEPHEN FARBER

Far from the Madding Crowd is a nice bland pudding of a movie, undistinguished by any great moments or performances, but oddly enjoyable just the same.. Like a fat, slightly soporific novel, the film proceeds at a leisurely nineteenth-century pace. The hours tick by, and the crises of burning barley ricks, lambing time, and harvest home orgies seem strangely appealing after years of hyped-up movie fare. Director John Schlesinger seems to be at home in the Hardy country, and the camera meanders over Dorset pastures and downs, and up mean flinty village streets. Richard MacDonald has designed a production that is far from his more elaborate Losey concoctions, and with a nice feeling for the patterns of nineteenth-century folk art, like the decorative circus backdrops and the seaside busker's paintings. However, the main appeal of the film lies in its evocation of nature, and the tenderness with which a vanished rural life is observed and recorded. The flowers look real, and so do the local faces. Like the literary movies of the thirties, such as *David Copperfield* and *Pride and Prejudice,* this film offers us the pleasure of recasting fiction and the knowledge that each character will, after all, come to a suitable end.—MARGOT S. KERNAN

Games. Curtis Harrington must have fallen in love with *Diablolique* years ago, because he borrows shamelessly from it for his new film. He uses the same three characters, but his version of their relationships is more cynical: the husband lives openly off his wife's money and the other woman is his "business associate" rather than his mistress. He also uses the same plot twist—a simulated death—although he introduces a fourth character who does the "simulating" for a mere $500. He abuses this gimmick badly by revealing it toward the middle of the film in an impatient effort to scare us out of our wits. Harrington's direction is no compensation. He uses all the paraphernalia of the conventional spookfest: ominous silences that are punctuated by sudden noises (in this case, the neighbor's cat knocks over a flowerpot), sudden jolts that come as quickly as they go (the heroine finds a trail of blood in the bathroom and, when she returns to check on it, she finds the floor spic and span), bloodcurdling screams, close-ups of turning door-knobs, doors that begin to open slowly, stirring curtains, lights out, and empty houses in foul weather for horrifying climaxes. Harrington swamps his action in a pop-art decor to give the film an up-to-the-moment look and often shoots through fuzzy filters to establish an atmosphere of muted density, and he's more interesting in these areas than in his direction. Harrington insists that his thriller is "highly contemporary in theme" and perhaps he's trying to tell us that people aren't capable of compassion for each other, but can and will do anything to guarantee their own satisfaction; but that's an essential malaise that another thriller, *Double Indemnity,* explored more skillfully back in 1944.—RAYMOND BANACKI

In the Heat of the Night is a grim drama set in blood-curdling Mississippi, where most of the residents are sweaty, thick-headed bigots. So skillful is director Norman Jewison's re-creation of this chilling atmosphere that we are tingly and edgy throughout, partly in concern for the safety of the hero (Sidney Poitier), and partly at the unsettling realization that such moronic rednecks actually exist. Poitier, a Northern Negro homicide expert just passing through, is pushed into helping the unsophisticated local police chief and ace bigot (Rod Steiger) solve the murder of the town's lead-

me that film is the only medium that can work with such cruel emotional effectiveness. A painting and a photograph can, in related ways, present any object for our consideration, but the object is frozen, dead; then too, though some paintings may be as large as a movie screen, we see them in a well-lighted museum from a much greater psychological distance than in the darkened movie theater. In the live theater we are also in the dark and our eye is focused on a limited amount of space, and things move, but we can never get any closer to anything than the safe distance between auditorium and stage. Nothing can be magnified. Films move us in close on the most embarrassing detail of flesh, and then force us to watch the flesh quiver. The most shocking twitch absorbs almost all of the space our eye can take in; a seductive, hideous mouth can overwhelm us, tyrannize over us, and maintain its intensity for several minutes. Some people identify montage as the quintessential quality of film, but *Face Junk* reminds us that the concentration of the camera's eye is as crucial a part of its psychological impact as its mobility. Bergman, for example, has always placed a great deal of emphasis on the close-up; and the image at the start of *Persona,* of a boy placing his hand on a giant female face on a screen, suggests that Bergman understands clearly the fascination of the magnified face, even if he hasn't been willing to experiment quite as radically as the creator of *Face Junk.* —STEPHEN FARBER

Far from the Madding Crowd is a nice bland pudding of a movie, undistinguished by any great moments or performances, but oddly enjoyable just the same.. Like a fat, slightly soporific novel, the film proceeds at a leisurely nineteenth-century pace. The hours tick by, and the crises of burning barley ricks, lambing time, and harvest home orgies seem strangely appealing after years of hyped-up movie fare. Director John Schlesinger seems to be at home in the Hardy country, and the camera meanders over Dorset pastures and downs, and up mean flinty village streets. Richard MacDonald has designed a production that is far from his more elaborate Losey concoctions, and with a nice feeling for the patterns of nineteenth-century folk art, like the decorative circus backdrops and the seaside busker's paintings. However, the main appeal of the film lies in its evocation of nature, and the tenderness with which a vanished rural life is observed and recorded. The flowers look real, and so do the local faces. Like the literary movies of the thirties, such as *David Copperfield* and *Pride and Prejudice,* this film offers us the pleasure of recasting fiction and the knowledge that each character will, after all, come to a suitable end.—MARGOT S. KERNAN

Games. Curtis Harrington must have fallen in love with *Diablolique* years ago, because he borrows shamelessly from it for his new film. He uses the same three characters, but his version of their relationships is more cynical: the husband lives openly off his wife's money and the other woman is his "business associate" rather than his mistress. He also uses the same plot twist—a simulated death—although he introduces a fourth character who does the "simulating" for a mere $500. He abuses this gimmick badly by revealing it toward the middle of the film in an impatient effort to scare us out of our wits. Harrington's direction is no compensation. He uses all the paraphernalia of the conventional spookfest: ominous silences that are punctuated by sudden noises (in this case, the neighbor's cat knocks over a flowerpot), sudden jolts that come as quickly as they go (the heroine finds a trail of blood in the bathroom and, when she returns to check on it, she finds the floor spic and span), bloodcurdling screams, close-ups of turning door-knobs, doors that begin to open slowly, stirring curtains, lights out, and empty houses in foul weather for horrifying climaxes. Harrington swamps his action in a pop-art decor to give the film an up-to-the-moment look and often shoots through fuzzy filters to establish an atmosphere of muted density, and he's more interesting in these areas than in his direction. Harrington insists that his thriller is "highly contemporary in theme" and perhaps he's trying to tell us that people aren't capable of compassion for each other, but can and will do anything to guarantee their own satisfaction; but that's an essential malaise that another thriller, *Double Indemnity,* explored more skillfully back in 1944.—RAYMOND BANACKI

In the Heat of the Night is a grim drama set in blood-curdling Mississippi, where most of the residents are sweaty, thick-headed bigots. So skillful is director Norman Jewison's re-creation of this chilling atmosphere that we are tingly and edgy throughout, partly in concern for the safety of the hero (Sidney Poitier), and partly at the unsettling realization that such moronic rednecks actually exist. Poitier, a Northern Negro homicide expert just passing through, is pushed into helping the unsophisticated local police chief and ace bigot (Rod Steiger) solve the murder of the town's lead-

me that film is the only medium that can work with such cruel emotional effectiveness. A painting and a photograph can, in related ways, present any object for our consideration, but the object is frozen, dead; then too, though some paintings may be as large as a movie screen, we see them in a well-lighted museum from a much greater psychological distance than in the darkened movie theater. In the live theater we are also in the dark and our eye is focused on a limited amount of space, and things move, but we can never get any closer to anything than the safe distance between auditorium and stage. Nothing can be magnified. Films move us in close on the most embarrassing detail of flesh, and then force us to watch the flesh quiver. The most shocking twitch absorbs almost all of the space our eye can take in; a seductive, hideous mouth can overwhelm us, tyrannize over us, and maintain its intensity for several minutes. Some people identify montage as the quintessential quality of film, but *Face Junk* reminds us that the concentration of the camera's eye is as crucial a part of its psychological impact as its mobility. Bergman, for example, has always placed a great deal of emphasis on the close-up; and the image at the start of *Persona,* of a boy placing his hand on a giant female face on a screen, suggests that Bergman understands clearly the fascination of the magnified face, even if he hasn't been willing to experiment quite as radically as the creator of *Face Junk.* —STEPHEN FARBER

Far from the Madding Crowd is a nice bland pudding of a movie, undistinguished by any great moments or performances, but oddly enjoyable just the same.. Like a fat, slightly soporific novel, the film proceeds at a leisurely nineteenth-century pace. The hours tick by, and the crises of burning barley ricks, lambing time, and harvest home orgies seem strangely appealing after years of hyped-up movie fare. Director John Schlesinger seems to be at home in the Hardy country, and the camera meanders over Dorset pastures and downs, and up mean flinty village streets. Richard MacDonald has designed a production that is far from his more elaborate Losey concoctions, and with a nice feeling for the patterns of nineteenth-century folk art, like the decorative circus backdrops and the seaside busker's paintings. However, the main appeal of the film lies in its evocation of nature, and the tenderness with which a vanished rural life is observed and recorded. The flowers look real, and so do the local faces. Like the literary movies of the thirties, such as *David Copperfield* and *Pride and Prejudice,* this film offers us the pleasure of recasting fiction and the knowledge that each character will, after all, come to a suitable end.—MARGOT S. KERNAN

Games. Curtis Harrington must have fallen in love with *Diablolique* years ago, because he borrows shamelessly from it for his new film. He uses the same three characters, but his version of their relationships is more cynical: the husband lives openly off his wife's money and the other woman is his "business associate" rather than his mistress. He also uses the same plot twist—a simulated death—although he introduces a fourth character who does the "simulating" for a mere $500. He abuses this gimmick badly by revealing it toward the middle of the film in an impatient effort to scare us out of our wits. Harrington's direction is no compensation. He uses all the paraphernalia of the conventional spookfest: ominous silences that are punctuated by sudden noises (in this case, the neighbor's cat knocks over a flowerpot), sudden jolts that come as quickly as they go (the heroine finds a trail of blood in the bathroom and, when she returns to check on it, she finds the floor spic and span), bloodcurdling screams, close-ups of turning door-knobs, doors that begin to open slowly, stirring curtains, lights out, and empty houses in foul weather for horrifying climaxes. Harrington swamps his action in a pop-art decor to give the film an up-to-the-moment look and often shoots through fuzzy filters to establish an atmosphere of muted density, and he's more interesting in these areas than in his direction. Harrington insists that his thriller is "highly contemporary in theme" and perhaps he's trying to tell us that people aren't capable of compassion for each other, but can and will do anything to guarantee their own satisfaction; but that's an essential malaise that another thriller, *Double Indemnity,* explored more skillfully back in 1944.—RAYMOND BANACKI

In the Heat of the Night is a grim drama set in blood-curdling Mississippi, where most of the residents are sweaty, thick-headed bigots. So skillful is director Norman Jewison's re-creation of this chilling atmosphere that we are tingly and edgy throughout, partly in concern for the safety of the hero (Sidney Poitier), and partly at the unsettling realization that such moronic rednecks actually exist. Poitier, a Northern Negro homicide expert just passing through, is pushed into helping the unsophisticated local police chief and ace bigot (Rod Steiger) solve the murder of the town's lead-

ing citizen. The core of the film is the gritty conflict between these two. They are exciting to watch as they ambivalently work together, Steiger relying on Poitier's police skills, and Poitier relying on Steiger for protection from the local rabble. Of course, the forced contact chips some of the hostility away, and they develop a certain affection and respect for each other. Though the cream-puff ending is disappointing, Poitier's role should alert us what to expect. Jewison and writer Stirling Silliphant, perhaps overcome with liberal enthusiasm, shroud him in perfection. Poitier, once again, is a hero's hero—unmercifully noble, brilliant, and with courage and patience seeping from every pore. Since he has been portraying the same character for years, he is a whiz at expressing frustration, exploding in anger, etc. Yet the Poitier character seems to fit better in the explosive South than in a London school for mod hoodlums or in a desert full of nuns. Steiger, however, is unquestionably magnificent. A menacing though comical figure, with a bloated belly, bursting jowls, and machine-gun speech, he displays his remarkable versatility. The terrifying effectiveness of the supporting cast is chiefly responsible for the film's raw, Mississippi flavor. Lee Grant, however, contributes an affected, actressy performance that is loathsome. The murky color and Quincy Jones' jazz score effectively emphasize the grimness.

—Dennis Hunt

King of Hearts is crushed by its own heartless weight of whimsy, and it is a sorry thing compared to the earlier, delightful films of Philippe de Broca. Set in World War I, it sends Scots infantryman Alan Bates into a French village to defuse a time-bomb the Germans have left behind. The inhabitants have fled, and been replaced by the residents of the local lunatic asylum. The "crazy" people enjoy their harmless but tedious role-playing, Bates is confounded at length, and finally the point emerges (surprise, surprise!) that the lunatics are at least no less sane than the soldiers, who all slaughter each other in a pitched battle in the town square. There are pretty costumes and a few reasonably juicy cameo roles, but the film lacks any style and sense of movement, probably because it is so distant from the emotional complications de Broca cares about. Bates is not as bad as you'd expect after *Zorba the Greek,* but he is not a gifted comic; he can roll his eyes, trot in a funny way, and look harassed, but that's hardly enough to supply the film with the personal force de Broca has failed to give it. De Broca even dares a painfully shabby imitation of a silent-film falling routine (clock on tower to flagpole to gutter which swings out); it reminds you how very very good the old masters were, when a passably talented modern director like de Broca flubs so shamefully in trying to do their stuff.—E. C.

Kokon, though only 9 minutes long, an extraordinary moodpiece, again by a new Dutch filmmaker: Jan Oonk. A young man grieves over the death of his sweetheart. The coffin is carried into a remote, baroque cemetery, but the depths of agony are shown to us with a strictly Italianate, lyric horror. The memory of the youth's love is given hideous form; a cadaverous, veiled figure of the decaying beloved who walks with him, who is, somehow, a part of his body, gradually overcoming his senses. Oonk uses color and sound (by Tonino Cacciotolo) in an experimental way: reds and violets sway and fuse across the images, the sounds are atonal, the giant close-ups of the youth and his captor are poetically held for visual effect, to emphasize the bizarre, romantic splendor of a Poe-like reverie. *Kokon* is an evocation of the sweet melancholy of profound grief, but with more than a hint of menace, it subtly envisions the death of a young man's soul. Another splendid talent to watch in the future: Jan Oonk.—Albert Johnson

Made in Italy. The Italian cinema may have given the world Antonioni and Fellini, but it has also produced enough quickie westerns, musclemen epics, and sex comedies to rival Hollywood as the capital of celluloid pap. The latest import to be unloaded here is entitled, appropriately enough, *Made in Italy,* in case there is some confusion over its national origin. The film is a collection of miscellaneous sketches meant to depict humorous aspects of Italian mores. Each of the episodes revolves around a weak joke, incapable of sustaining a one-liner, much less a story. One sketch describes Anna Magnani leading her family across a busy street. It is funny if you think crossing a road is a hilarious experience. In another sketch, Virna Lisi announces to her lover that her rich old husband has finally died. Before the lover has a chance to grasp the news, she adds that, weak girl that she is, she has decided to marry another wealthy lecher. The best story is a realistic description of a harrassed Nino Manfredi trying to get an identity card from a bureaucratic city government. Fortunately, the director, apparently sensing the audience's limited patience, has made the sequences mercifully short. The result is that

ing citizen. The core of the film is the gritty conflict between these two. They are exciting to watch as they ambivalently work together, Steiger relying on Poitier's police skills, and Poitier relying on Steiger for protection from the local rabble. Of course, the forced contact chips some of the hostility away, and they develop a certain affection and respect for each other. Though the cream-puff ending is disappointing, Poitier's role should alert us what to expect. Jewison and writer Stirling Silliphant, perhaps overcome with liberal enthusiasm, shroud him in perfection. Poitier, once again, is a hero's hero—unmercifully noble, brilliant, and with courage and patience seeping from every pore. Since he has been portraying the same character for years, he is a whiz at expressing frustration, exploding in anger, etc. Yet the Poitier character seems to fit better in the explosive South than in a London school for mod hoodlums or in a desert full of nuns. Steiger, however, is unquestionably magnificent. A menacing though comical figure, with a bloated belly, bursting jowls, and machine-gun speech, he displays his remarkable versatility. The terrifying effectiveness of the supporting cast is chiefly responsible for the film's raw, Mississippi flavor. Lee Grant, however, contributes an affected, actressy performance that is loathsome. The murky color and Quincy Jones' jazz score effectively emphasize the grimness.

—Dennis Hunt

King of Hearts is crushed by its own heartless weight of whimsy, and it is a sorry thing compared to the earlier, delightful films of Philippe de Broca. Set in World War I, it sends Scots infantryman Alan Bates into a French village to defuse a time-bomb the Germans have left behind. The inhabitants have fled, and been replaced by the residents of the local lunatic asylum. The "crazy" people enjoy their harmless but tedious role-playing, Bates is confounded at length, and finally the point emerges (surprise, surprise!) that the lunatics are at least no less sane than the soldiers, who all slaughter each other in a pitched battle in the town square. There are pretty costumes and a few reasonably juicy cameo roles, but the film lacks any style and sense of movement, probably because it is so distant from the emotional complications de Broca cares about. Bates is not as bad as you'd expect after *Zorba the Greek,* but he is not a gifted comic; he can roll his eyes, trot in a funny way, and look harassed, but that's hardly enough to supply the film with the personal force de Broca has failed to give it. De Broca even dares a painfully shabby imitation of a silent-film falling routine (clock on tower to flagpole to gutter which swings out); it reminds you how very very good the old masters were, when a passably talented modern director like de Broca flubs so shamefully in trying to do their stuff.—E. C.

Kokon, though only 9 minutes long, an extraordinary moodpiece, again by a new Dutch filmmaker: Jan Oonk. A young man grieves over the death of his sweetheart. The coffin is carried into a remote, baroque cemetery, but the depths of agony are shown to us with a strictly Italianate, lyric horror. The memory of the youth's love is given hideous form; a cadaverous, veiled figure of the decaying beloved who walks with him, who is, somehow, a part of his body, gradually overcoming his senses. Oonk uses color and sound (by Tonino Cacciotolo) in an experimental way: reds and violets sway and fuse across the images, the sounds are atonal, the giant close-ups of the youth and his captor are poetically held for visual effect, to emphasize the bizarre, romantic splendor of a Poe-like reverie. *Kokon* is an evocation of the sweet melancholy of profound grief, but with more than a hint of menace, it subtly envisions the death of a young man's soul. Another splendid talent to watch in the future: Jan Oonk.—Albert Johnson

Made in Italy. The Italian cinema may have given the world Antonioni and Fellini, but it has also produced enough quickie westerns, musclemen epics, and sex comedies to rival Hollywood as the capital of celluloid pap. The latest import to be unloaded here is entitled, appropriately enough, *Made in Italy,* in case there is some confusion over its national origin. The film is a collection of miscellaneous sketches meant to depict humorous aspects of Italian mores. Each of the episodes revolves around a weak joke, incapable of sustaining a one-liner, much less a story. One sketch describes Anna Magnani leading her family across a busy street. It is funny if you think crossing a road is a hilarious experience. In another sketch, Virna Lisi announces to her lover that her rich old husband has finally died. Before the lover has a chance to grasp the news, she adds that, weak girl that she is, she has decided to marry another wealthy lecher. The best story is a realistic description of a harrassed Nino Manfredi trying to get an identity card from a bureaucratic city government. Fortunately, the director, apparently sensing the audience's limited patience, has made the sequences mercifully short. The result is that

ing citizen. The core of the film is the gritty conflict between these two. They are exciting to watch as they ambivalently work together, Steiger relying on Poitier's police skills, and Poitier relying on Steiger for protection from the local rabble. Of course, the forced contact chips some of the hostility away, and they develop a certain affection and respect for each other. Though the cream-puff ending is disappointing, Poitier's role should alert us what to expect. Jewison and writer Stirling Silliphant, perhaps overcome with liberal enthusiasm, shroud him in perfection. Poitier, once again, is a hero's hero—unmercifully noble, brilliant, and with courage and patience seeping from every pore. Since he has been portraying the same character for years, he is a whiz at expressing frustration, exploding in anger, etc. Yet the Poitier character seems to fit better in the explosive South than in a London school for mod hoodlums or in a desert full of nuns. Steiger, however, is unquestionably magnificent. A menacing though comical figure, with a bloated belly, bursting jowls, and machine-gun speech, he displays his remarkable versatility. The terrifying effectiveness of the supporting cast is chiefly responsible for the film's raw, Mississippi flavor. Lee Grant, however, contributes an affected, actressy performance that is loathsome. The murky color and Quincy Jones' jazz score effectively emphasize the grimness.

—Dennis Hunt

King of Hearts is crushed by its own heartless weight of whimsy, and it is a sorry thing compared to the earlier, delightful films of Philippe de Broca. Set in World War I, it sends Scots infantryman Alan Bates into a French village to defuse a time-bomb the Germans have left behind. The inhabitants have fled, and been replaced by the residents of the local lunatic asylum. The "crazy" people enjoy their harmless but tedious role-playing, Bates is confounded at length, and finally the point emerges (surprise, surprise!) that the lunatics are at least no less sane than the soldiers, who all slaughter each other in a pitched battle in the town square. There are pretty costumes and a few reasonably juicy cameo roles, but the film lacks any style and sense of movement, probably because it is so distant from the emotional complications de Broca cares about. Bates is not as bad as you'd expect after *Zorba the Greek,* but he is not a gifted comic; he can roll his eyes, trot in a funny way, and look harassed, but that's hardly enough to supply the film with the personal force de Broca has failed to give it. De Broca even dares a painfully shabby imitation of a silent-film falling routine (clock on tower to flagpole to gutter which swings out); it reminds you how very very good the old masters were, when a passably talented modern director like de Broca flubs so shamefully in trying to do their stuff.—E. C.

Kokon, though only 9 minutes long, an extraordinary moodpiece, again by a new Dutch filmmaker: Jan Oonk. A young man grieves over the death of his sweetheart. The coffin is carried into a remote, baroque cemetery, but the depths of agony are shown to us with a strictly Italianate, lyric horror. The memory of the youth's love is given hideous form; a cadaverous, veiled figure of the decaying beloved who walks with him, who is, somehow, a part of his body, gradually overcoming his senses. Oonk uses color and sound (by Tonino Cacciotolo) in an experimental way: reds and violets sway and fuse across the images, the sounds are atonal, the giant close-ups of the youth and his captor are poetically held for visual effect, to emphasize the bizarre, romantic splendor of a Poe-like reverie. *Kokon* is an evocation of the sweet melancholy of profound grief, but with more than a hint of menace, it subtly envisions the death of a young man's soul. Another splendid talent to watch in the future: Jan Oonk.—Albert Johnson

Made in Italy. The Italian cinema may have given the world Antonioni and Fellini, but it has also produced enough quickie westerns, musclemen epics, and sex comedies to rival Hollywood as the capital of celluloid pap. The latest import to be unloaded here is entitled, appropriately enough, *Made in Italy,* in case there is some confusion over its national origin. The film is a collection of miscellaneous sketches meant to depict humorous aspects of Italian mores. Each of the episodes revolves around a weak joke, incapable of sustaining a one-liner, much less a story. One sketch describes Anna Magnani leading her family across a busy street. It is funny if you think crossing a road is a hilarious experience. In another sketch, Virna Lisi announces to her lover that her rich old husband has finally died. Before the lover has a chance to grasp the news, she adds that, weak girl that she is, she has decided to marry another wealthy lecher. The best story is a realistic description of a harrassed Nino Manfredi trying to get an identity card from a bureaucratic city government. Fortunately, the director, apparently sensing the audience's limited patience, has made the sequences mercifully short. The result is that

ing citizen. The core of the film is the gritty conflict between these two. They are exciting to watch as they ambivalently work together, Steiger relying on Poitier's police skills, and Poitier relying on Steiger for protection from the local rabble. Of course, the forced contact chips some of the hostility away, and they develop a certain affection and respect for each other. Though the cream-puff ending is disappointing, Poitier's role should alert us what to expect. Jewison and writer Stirling Silliphant, perhaps overcome with liberal enthusiasm, shroud him in perfection. Poitier, once again, is a hero's hero—unmercifully noble, brilliant, and with courage and patience seeping from every pore. Since he has been portraying the same character for years, he is a whiz at expressing frustration, exploding in anger, etc. Yet the Poitier character seems to fit better in the explosive South than in a London school for mod hoodlums or in a desert full of nuns. Steiger, however, is unquestionably magnificent. A menacing though comical figure, with a bloated belly, bursting jowls, and machine-gun speech, he displays his remarkable versatility. The terrifying effectiveness of the supporting cast is chiefly responsible for the film's raw, Mississippi flavor. Lee Grant, however, contributes an affected, actressy performance that is loathsome. The murky color and Quincy Jones' jazz score effectively emphasize the grimness.

—Dennis Hunt

King of Hearts is crushed by its own heartless weight of whimsy, and it is a sorry thing compared to the earlier, delightful films of Philippe de Broca. Set in World War I, it sends Scots infantryman Alan Bates into a French village to defuse a time-bomb the Germans have left behind. The inhabitants have fled, and been replaced by the residents of the local lunatic asylum. The "crazy" people enjoy their harmless but tedious role-playing, Bates is confounded at length, and finally the point emerges (surprise, surprise!) that the lunatics are at least no less sane than the soldiers, who all slaughter each other in a pitched battle in the town square. There are pretty costumes and a few reasonably juicy cameo roles, but the film lacks any style and sense of movement, probably because it is so distant from the emotional complications de Broca cares about. Bates is not as bad as you'd expect after *Zorba the Greek,* but he is not a gifted comic; he can roll his eyes, trot in a funny way, and look harassed, but that's hardly enough to supply the film with the personal force de Broca has failed to give it. De Broca even dares a painfully shabby imitation of a silent-film falling routine (clock on tower to flagpole to gutter which swings out); it reminds you how very very good the old masters were, when a passably talented modern director like de Broca flubs so shamefully in trying to do their stuff.—E. C.

Kokon, though only 9 minutes long, an extraordinary moodpiece, again by a new Dutch filmmaker: Jan Oonk. A young man grieves over the death of his sweetheart. The coffin is carried into a remote, baroque cemetery, but the depths of agony are shown to us with a strictly Italianate, lyric horror. The memory of the youth's love is given hideous form; a cadaverous, veiled figure of the decaying beloved who walks with him, who is, somehow, a part of his body, gradually overcoming his senses. Oonk uses color and sound (by Tonino Cacciotolo) in an experimental way: reds and violets sway and fuse across the images, the sounds are atonal, the giant close-ups of the youth and his captor are poetically held for visual effect, to emphasize the bizarre, romantic splendor of a Poe-like reverie. *Kokon* is an evocation of the sweet melancholy of profound grief, but with more than a hint of menace, it subtly envisions the death of a young man's soul. Another splendid talent to watch in the future: Jan Oonk.—Albert Johnson

Made in Italy. The Italian cinema may have given the world Antonioni and Fellini, but it has also produced enough quickie westerns, musclemen epics, and sex comedies to rival Hollywood as the capital of celluloid pap. The latest import to be unloaded here is entitled, appropriately enough, *Made in Italy,* in case there is some confusion over its national origin. The film is a collection of miscellaneous sketches meant to depict humorous aspects of Italian mores. Each of the episodes revolves around a weak joke, incapable of sustaining a one-liner, much less a story. One sketch describes Anna Magnani leading her family across a busy street. It is funny if you think crossing a road is a hilarious experience. In another sketch, Virna Lisi announces to her lover that her rich old husband has finally died. Before the lover has a chance to grasp the news, she adds that, weak girl that she is, she has decided to marry another wealthy lecher. The best story is a realistic description of a harrassed Nino Manfredi trying to get an identity card from a bureaucratic city government. Fortunately, the director, apparently sensing the audience's limited patience, has made the sequences mercifully short. The result is that

Made in Italy is too fast-paced to be boring. But when it is over one is left with the feeling of having seen, not so much a complete film, as a dozen or so left-over scenes from various Italian comedies which wound up on the film editor's floor.

—ALEX CRAMER

The Mummy's Shroud. "Violence is as American as cherry pie," says H. Rap Brown. No better demonstration of just how American than in the British horror films made specifically for saturation distribution in this country by Hammer-Seven Arts. Most of the imagination that went into John Gilling's script and direction for this "pathetic plod through Pharaohland" seems to have been spent on devising successively more repulsive ways for the mummy (a rather cheaply made-up creation when stood alongside our own Lon Chaney, Jr.) to do in his victims: André Morell's head is crushed in the vice of the mummy's stone hands, an amateur photographer is bathed in his own acid, Michael Ripper is hurled from a high window to be dashed on the pavement below, John Phillips's head is rammed into a stone wall, and so on. And the mummy, responding ultimately to the "sacred words of life and death," crumbles himself to bits before our very eyes. In glorious DeLuxe Color. What ever happened to the old idea that the best screen horror is left unseen? It's forgotten here. Which is rather sad, since Gilling, who also made the superior *The Reptile* for Hammer, handles his actors remarkably well. Phillips (a kind of Anglicized LBJ in more ways than one) and Ripper are particularly good. And Catherine Lacey's toothless old soothsayer should prove a balm for those who mourn the passing of Maria Ouspenskaya.—DAN BATES

Point Blank is a rather oddly intellectualized sort of Lee Marvin vehicle, particularly when set beside his pre-Oscar *The Killers,* in which he was noticeably less gentle with Angie Dickinson and more directly responsible for the sudden accumulation of corpses surrounding him by film's end. Director John Boorman, who won a small ardent following with the (limited) release in this country a few years ago of his Dave Clark Five vehicle, *Having a Wild Weekend,* stages some scenes à la *Marienbad,* with Marvin staring musingly off into space while another character drones beside him about things more normally said (in movies) with more outward display of emotion. The ending, with Marvin disappearing friendless and totally betrayed into the shadows of Alcatraz, presumably never to emerge again, is strangely satisfying-dissatisfying in a way that, after the under-rated Dave Clark Five film, is shaping up to be uniquely Boorman. His peculiarly sardonic view adds up to something more enlightening than the viewer drawn out for some blazing movie action is likely to expect. Or care for. Boorman compensates (if compensation is requisite, and I'm not so sure it is) with good narrative sense despite certain needless complications, such as the pre-titles sequence in which a flashback revelation comes within three minutes of the "mystery" it is intended to clear up, and by attaining an admirable balance of visual, as well as verbal, eloquence. That vast Los Angeles open drainage system hasn't been so well put to use since Gordon Douglas' *Them!*

—DAN BATES

Reflections in a Golden Eye. It sounded great. Strange passions under the liveoaks. Leave the children at home! However, John Huston's adaptation of the Carson McCullers novel sinks into boredom very fast. Part of the problem certainly lies with the original book. The McCullers brand of Southern decadence lacks the Mr. Showmanship flamboyance of Tennessee Williams, and the tepid, Major-loves-Private plot might have happened just as easily at Ford Ord. One superlative performance stands out: that of Brien Keith as Elizabeth Taylor's lover and Brando's superior officer. Keith has great masculine presence, and the intelligence and control to get beneath the surface of a rather pedestrian role. Though always watchable, Brando's performance is so ornately detailed that we lose him under a welter of mannerisms. Montgomery Clift, for whom the part was originally intended, might have made the role of the AC-DC Major an interesting study in self-delusion. However, John Huston is doing nice things with color: using bleached-out Technicolor to give a range of sepias with one highlight color visible. Filming in Italy, cameraman Aldo Tonti gets some eerie images in the early-morning pine woods, with a Gustave Doré light filtering through the trees. Given a more vital story, Huston might have made this style work, and it would be interesting to see what he could do with some of the early Faulkner novels, such as *Sartoris* or *The Hamlet,* filmed in the tonalities of Brady and Daguerre.

—MARGOT S. KERNAN

A Sunday on the Island of Grand Jatte, or, Seven Authors in Search of a Reader is undoubtedly the work of a great Dutch talent, one of those film

Made in Italy is too fast-paced to be boring. But when it is over one is left with the feeling of having seen, not so much a complete film, as a dozen or so left-over scenes from various Italian comedies which wound up on the film editor's floor.

—ALEX CRAMER

The Mummy's Shroud. "Violence is as American as cherry pie," says H. Rap Brown. No better demonstration of just how American than in the British horror films made specifically for saturation distribution in this country by Hammer-Seven Arts. Most of the imagination that went into John Gilling's script and direction for this "pathetic plod through Pharaohland" seems to have been spent on devising successively more repulsive ways for the mummy (a rather cheaply made-up creation when stood alongside our own Lon Chaney, Jr.) to do in his victims: André Morell's head is crushed in the vice of the mummy's stone hands, an amateur photographer is bathed in his own acid, Michael Ripper is hurled from a high window to be dashed on the pavement below, John Phillips's head is rammed into a stone wall, and so on. And the mummy, responding ultimately to the "sacred words of life and death," crumbles himself to bits before our very eyes. In glorious DeLuxe Color. What ever happened to the old idea that the best screen horror is left unseen? It's forgotten here. Which is rather sad, since Gilling, who also made the superior *The Reptile* for Hammer, handles his actors remarkably well. Phillips (a kind of Anglicized LBJ in more ways than one) and Ripper are particularly good. And Catherine Lacey's toothless old soothsayer should prove a balm for those who mourn the passing of Maria Ouspenskaya.—DAN BATES

Point Blank is a rather oddly intellectualized sort of Lee Marvin vehicle, particularly when set beside his pre-Oscar *The Killers,* in which he was noticeably less gentle with Angie Dickinson and more directly responsible for the sudden accumulation of corpses surrounding him by film's end. Director John Boorman, who won a small ardent following with the (limited) release in this country a few years ago of his Dave Clark Five vehicle, *Having a Wild Weekend,* stages some scenes à la *Marienbad,* with Marvin staring musingly off into space while another character drones beside him about things more normally said (in movies) with more outward display of emotion. The ending, with Marvin disappearing friendless and totally betrayed into the shadows of Alcatraz, presumably never to emerge again, is strangely satisfying-dissatisfying in a way that, after the under-rated Dave Clark Five film, is shaping up to be uniquely Boorman. His peculiarly sardonic view adds up to something more enlightening than the viewer drawn out for some blazing movie action is likely to expect. Or care for. Boorman compensates (if compensation is requisite, and I'm not so sure it is) with good narrative sense despite certain needless complications, such as the pre-titles sequence in which a flashback revelation comes within three minutes of the "mystery" it is intended to clear up, and by attaining an admirable balance of visual, as well as verbal, eloquence. That vast Los Angeles open drainage system hasn't been so well put to use since Gordon Douglas' *Them!*

—DAN BATES

Reflections in a Golden Eye. It sounded great. Strange passions under the liveoaks. Leave the children at home! However, John Huston's adaptation of the Carson McCullers novel sinks into boredom very fast. Part of the problem certainly lies with the original book. The McCullers brand of Southern decadence lacks the Mr. Showmanship flamboyance of Tennessee Williams, and the tepid, Major-loves-Private plot might have happened just as easily at Ford Ord. One superlative performance stands out: that of Brien Keith as Elizabeth Taylor's lover and Brando's superior officer. Keith has great masculine presence, and the intelligence and control to get beneath the surface of a rather pedestrian role. Though always watchable, Brando's performance is so ornately detailed that we lose him under a welter of mannerisms. Montgomery Clift, for whom the part was originally intended, might have made the role of the AC-DC Major an interesting study in self-delusion. However, John Huston is doing nice things with color: using bleached-out Technicolor to give a range of sepias with one highlight color visible. Filming in Italy, cameraman Aldo Tonti gets some eerie images in the early-morning pine woods, with a Gustave Doré light filtering through the trees. Given a more vital story, Huston might have made this style work, and it would be interesting to see what he could do with some of the early Faulkner novels, such as *Sartoris* or *The Hamlet,* filmed in the tonalities of Brady and Daguerre.

—MARGOT S. KERNAN

A Sunday on the Island of Grand Jatte, or, Seven Authors in Search of a Reader is undoubtedly the work of a great Dutch talent, one of those film

Made in Italy is too fast-paced to be boring. But when it is over one is left with the feeling of having seen, not so much a complete film, as a dozen or so left-over scenes from various Italian comedies which wound up on the film editor's floor.

—ALEX CRAMER

The Mummy's Shroud. "Violence is as American as cherry pie," says H. Rap Brown. No better demonstration of just how American than in the British horror films made specifically for saturation distribution in this country by Hammer-Seven Arts. Most of the imagination that went into John Gilling's script and direction for this "pathetic plod through Pharaohland" seems to have been spent on devising successively more repulsive ways for the mummy (a rather cheaply made-up creation when stood alongside our own Lon Chaney, Jr.) to do in his victims: André Morell's head is crushed in the vice of the mummy's stone hands, an amateur photographer is bathed in his own acid, Michael Ripper is hurled from a high window to be dashed on the pavement below, John Phillips's head is rammed into a stone wall, and so on. And the mummy, responding ultimately to the "sacred words of life and death," crumbles himself to bits before our very eyes. In glorious DeLuxe Color. What ever happened to the old idea that the best screen horror is left unseen? It's forgotten here. Which is rather sad, since Gilling, who also made the superior *The Reptile* for Hammer, handles his actors remarkably well. Phillips (a kind of Anglicized LBJ in more ways than one) and Ripper are particularly good. And Catherine Lacey's toothless old soothsayer should prove a balm for those who mourn the passing of Maria Ouspenskaya.—DAN BATES

Point Blank is a rather oddly intellectualized sort of Lee Marvin vehicle, particularly when set beside his pre-Oscar *The Killers,* in which he was noticeably less gentle with Angie Dickinson and more directly responsible for the sudden accumulation of corpses surrounding him by film's end. Director John Boorman, who won a small ardent following with the (limited) release in this country a few years ago of his Dave Clark Five vehicle, *Having a Wild Weekend,* stages some scenes à la *Marienbad,* with Marvin staring musingly off into space while another character drones beside him about things more normally said (in movies) with more outward display of emotion. The ending, with Marvin disappearing friendless and totally betrayed into the shadows of Alcatraz, presumably never to emerge again, is strangely satisfying-dissatisfying in a way that, after the under-rated Dave Clark Five film, is shaping up to be uniquely Boorman. His peculiarly sardonic view adds up to something more enlightening than the viewer drawn out for some blazing movie action is likely to expect. Or care for. Boorman compensates (if compensation is requisite, and I'm not so sure it is) with good narrative sense despite certain needless complications, such as the pre-titles sequence in which a flashback revelation comes within three minutes of the "mystery" it is intended to clear up, and by attaining an admirable balance of visual, as well as verbal, eloquence. That vast Los Angeles open drainage system hasn't been so well put to use since Gordon Douglas' *Them!*

—DAN BATES

Reflections in a Golden Eye. It sounded great. Strange passions under the liveoaks. Leave the children at home! However, John Huston's adaptation of the Carson McCullers novel sinks into boredom very fast. Part of the problem certainly lies with the original book. The McCullers brand of Southern decadence lacks the Mr. Showmanship flamboyance of Tennessee Williams, and the tepid, Major-loves-Private plot might have happened just as easily at Ford Ord. One superlative performance stands out: that of Brien Keith as Elizabeth Taylor's lover and Brando's superior officer. Keith has great masculine presence, and the intelligence and control to get beneath the surface of a rather pedestrian role. Though always watchable, Brando's performance is so ornately detailed that we lose him under a welter of mannerisms. Montgomery Clift, for whom the part was originally intended, might have made the role of the AC-DC Major an interesting study in self-delusion. However, John Huston is doing nice things with color: using bleached-out Technicolor to give a range of sepias with one highlight color visible. Filming in Italy, cameraman Aldo Tonti gets some eerie images in the early-morning pine woods, with a Gustave Doré light filtering through the trees. Given a more vital story, Huston might have made this style work, and it would be interesting to see what he could do with some of the early Faulkner novels, such as *Sartoris* or *The Hamlet,* filmed in the tonalities of Brady and Daguerre.

—MARGOT S. KERNAN

A Sunday on the Island of Grand Jatte, or, Seven Authors in Search of a Reader is undoubtedly the work of a great Dutch talent, one of those film

Made in Italy is too fast-paced to be boring. But when it is over one is left with the feeling of having seen, not so much a complete film, as a dozen or so left-over scenes from various Italian comedies which wound up on the film editor's floor.

—ALEX CRAMER

The Mummy's Shroud. "Violence is as American as cherry pie," says H. Rap Brown. No better demonstration of just how American than in the British horror films made specifically for saturation distribution in this country by Hammer-Seven Arts. Most of the imagination that went into John Gilling's script and direction for this "pathetic plod through Pharaohland" seems to have been spent on devising successively more repulsive ways for the mummy (a rather cheaply made-up creation when stood alongside our own Lon Chaney, Jr.) to do in his victims: André Morell's head is crushed in the vice of the mummy's stone hands, an amateur photographer is bathed in his own acid, Michael Ripper is hurled from a high window to be dashed on the pavement below, John Phillips's head is rammed into a stone wall, and so on. And the mummy, responding ultimately to the "sacred words of life and death," crumbles himself to bits before our very eyes. In glorious DeLuxe Color. What ever happened to the old idea that the best screen horror is left unseen? It's forgotten here. Which is rather sad, since Gilling, who also made the superior *The Reptile* for Hammer, handles his actors remarkably well. Phillips (a kind of Anglicized LBJ in more ways than one) and Ripper are particularly good. And Catherine Lacey's toothless old soothsayer should prove a balm for those who mourn the passing of Maria Ouspenskaya.—DAN BATES

Point Blank is a rather oddly intellectualized sort of Lee Marvin vehicle, particularly when set beside his pre-Oscar *The Killers,* in which he was noticeably less gentle with Angie Dickinson and more directly responsible for the sudden accumulation of corpses surrounding him by film's end. Director John Boorman, who won a small ardent following with the (limited) release in this country a few years ago of his Dave Clark Five vehicle, *Having a Wild Weekend,* stages some scenes à la *Marienbad,* with Marvin staring musingly off into space while another character drones beside him about things more normally said (in movies) with more outward display of emotion. The ending, with Marvin disappearing friendless and totally betrayed into the shadows of Alcatraz, presumably never to emerge again, is strangely satisfying-dissatisfying in a way that, after the under-rated Dave Clark Five film, is shaping up to be uniquely Boorman. His peculiarly sardonic view adds up to something more enlightening than the viewer drawn out for some blazing movie action is likely to expect. Or care for. Boorman compensates (if compensation is requisite, and I'm not so sure it is) with good narrative sense despite certain needless complications, such as the pre-titles sequence in which a flashback revelation comes within three minutes of the "mystery" it is intended to clear up, and by attaining an admirable balance of visual, as well as verbal, eloquence. That vast Los Angeles open drainage system hasn't been so well put to use since Gordon Douglas' *Them!*

—DAN BATES

Reflections in a Golden Eye. It sounded great. Strange passions under the liveoaks. Leave the children at home! However, John Huston's adaptation of the Carson McCullers novel sinks into boredom very fast. Part of the problem certainly lies with the original book. The McCullers brand of Southern decadence lacks the Mr. Showmanship flamboyance of Tennessee Williams, and the tepid, Major-loves-Private plot might have happened just as easily at Ford Ord. One superlative performance stands out: that of Brien Keith as Elizabeth Taylor's lover and Brando's superior officer. Keith has great masculine presence, and the intelligence and control to get beneath the surface of a rather pedestrian role. Though always watchable, Brando's performance is so ornately detailed that we lose him under a welter of mannerisms. Montgomery Clift, for whom the part was originally intended, might have made the role of the AC-DC Major an interesting study in self-delusion. However, John Huston is doing nice things with color: using bleached-out Technicolor to give a range of sepias with one highlight color visible. Filming in Italy, cameraman Aldo Tonti gets some eerie images in the early-morning pine woods, with a Gustave Doré light filtering through the trees. Given a more vital story, Huston might have made this style work, and it would be interesting to see what he could do with some of the early Faulkner novels, such as *Sartoris* or *The Hamlet,* filmed in the tonalities of Brady and Daguerre.

—MARGOT S. KERNAN

A Sunday on the Island of Grand Jatte, or, Seven Authors in Search of a Reader is undoubtedly the work of a great Dutch talent, one of those film

Made in Italy is too fast-paced to be boring. But when it is over one is left with the feeling of having seen, not so much a complete film, as a dozen or so left-over scenes from various Italian comedies which wound up on the film editor's floor.

—ALEX CRAMER

The Mummy's Shroud. "Violence is as American as cherry pie," says H. Rap Brown. No better demonstration of just how American than in the British horror films made specifically for saturation distribution in this country by Hammer-Seven Arts. Most of the imagination that went into John Gilling's script and direction for this "pathetic plod through Pharaohland" seems to have been spent on devising successively more repulsive ways for the mummy (a rather cheaply made-up creation when stood alongside our own Lon Chaney, Jr.) to do in his victims: André Morell's head is crushed in the vice of the mummy's stone hands, an amateur photographer is bathed in his own acid, Michael Ripper is hurled from a high window to be dashed on the pavement below, John Phillips's head is rammed into a stone wall, and so on. And the mummy, responding ultimately to the "sacred words of life and death," crumbles himself to bits before our very eyes. In glorious DeLuxe Color. What ever happened to the old idea that the best screen horror is left unseen? It's forgotten here. Which is rather sad, since Gilling, who also made the superior *The Reptile* for Hammer, handles his actors remarkably well. Phillips (a kind of Anglicized LBJ in more ways than one) and Ripper are particularly good. And Catherine Lacey's toothless old soothsayer should prove a balm for those who mourn the passing of Maria Ouspenskaya.—DAN BATES

Point Blank is a rather oddly intellectualized sort of Lee Marvin vehicle, particularly when set beside his pre-Oscar *The Killers,* in which he was noticeably less gentle with Angie Dickinson and more directly responsible for the sudden accumulation of corpses surrounding him by film's end. Director John Boorman, who won a small ardent following with the (limited) release in this country a few years ago of his Dave Clark Five vehicle, *Having a Wild Weekend,* stages some scenes à la *Marienbad,* with Marvin staring musingly off into space while another character drones beside him about things more normally said (in movies) with more outward display of emotion. The ending, with Marvin disappearing friendless and totally betrayed into the shadows of Alcatraz, presumably never to emerge again, is strangely satisfying-dissatisfying in a way that, after the under-rated Dave Clark Five film, is shaping up to be uniquely Boorman. His peculiarly sardonic view adds up to something more enlightening than the viewer drawn out for some blazing movie action is likely to expect. Or care for. Boorman compensates (if compensation is requisite, and I'm not so sure it is) with good narrative sense despite certain needless complications, such as the pre-titles sequence in which a flashback revelation comes within three minutes of the "mystery" it is intended to clear up, and by attaining an admirable balance of visual, as well as verbal, eloquence. That vast Los Angeles open drainage system hasn't been so well put to use since Gordon Douglas' *Them!*

—DAN BATES

Reflections in a Golden Eye. It sounded great. Strange passions under the liveoaks. Leave the children at home! However, John Huston's adaptation of the Carson McCullers novel sinks into boredom very fast. Part of the problem certainly lies with the original book. The McCullers brand of Southern decadence lacks the Mr. Showmanship flamboyance of Tennessee Williams, and the tepid, Major-loves-Private plot might have happened just as easily at Ford Ord. One superlative performance stands out: that of Brien Keith as Elizabeth Taylor's lover and Brando's superior officer. Keith has great masculine presence, and the intelligence and control to get beneath the surface of a rather pedestrian role. Though always watchable, Brando's performance is so ornately detailed that we lose him under a welter of mannerisms. Montgomery Clift, for whom the part was originally intended, might have made the role of the AC-DC Major an interesting study in self-delusion. However, John Huston is doing nice things with color: using bleached-out Technicolor to give a range of sepias with one highlight color visible. Filming in Italy, cameraman Aldo Tonti gets some eerie images in the early-morning pine woods, with a Gustave Doré light filtering through the trees. Given a more vital story, Huston might have made this style work, and it would be interesting to see what he could do with some of the early Faulkner novels, such as *Sartoris* or *The Hamlet,* filmed in the tonalities of Brady and Daguerre.

—MARGOT S. KERNAN

A Sunday on the Island of Grand Jatte, or, Seven Authors in Search of a Reader is undoubtedly the work of a great Dutch talent, one of those film

creations that establishes a reputation, at once original, memorable and technically brilliant. Inspired by the frozen delicacy and immutability of the figures in Seurat's painting, and the mocking ambiguities of Pirandello's plays, Frans Weisz has brought this quality of human mystery into the contemporary world. On a summery afternoon, the characters in the park are pursued by the watchful authors (as well as ourselves)—the literary creators carefully *observe* life but find it impossible to capture. The camera holds every nuance of visual lyricism in the imagery; the broad sweep of lawns, a sudden rainfall, with the characters racing into the luxurious warmth of a castle, raising the drawbridge against the somber writers, who peer intently through the windowpanes. The film (to be seen many times) is a metaphoric work; the interplay between creative literature and life is visualized in short vignettes, like a remembered dream. The writers retire to their libraries, typewriters click—a youth, symbolic of a reader's freedom, his inquisitiveness undaunted (even by the promise of a coquette's smile), steals a book and joyously devours its contents: Life's intellectual roundabout of knowledge, stolen by creators and reclaimed by new life, a new generation. . . . Robert Heppener's musical score intensifies the elegiac quality of this small masterpiece, and we can only wait with hopefulness for Weisz's first feature, now in production.—ALBERT JOHNSON

The Tiger and The Pussycat is a perfect example of an interesting script that is destroyed by its production and direction. The screenplay, by two Italians, is a serio-comic depiction of a married man's uncontrollable desire for a teen-age bitch, but the producer and director seem to be working under orders to make it look playful and bland and they seem to have obeyed these orders with a vengeance. The explanation might lie in the fact that Mario Cecchi Gori, the producer, and Dino Risi, the director who proved himself a memorable surveyor of manners and morals in *The Easy Life,* have made this film for Joseph E. Levine. Levine is guilty of applying a straitjacket to Mario *(The Organizer)* Monicelli when he directed *Casanova 70* for him. Vittorio Gassman manages, however, an unforgettable realization of the aging lover, but Ann-Margret, who is too old for the teen bitch, plays her with a hot pants vulgarity that could make you vomit.—RAYMOND BANACKI

The Trip is Roger Corman's groovy drama of Peter Fonda's expanding consciousness. There's too much to praise in the movie: the subtle poetry of Fonda's sincere-bearded guide alluding to the Beatles' "Turn off your mind, relax and float downstream—this is thorazine"; the convincing realism of the gelatin of the capsule in which Fonda droops his acid; the astounding clarity of long-shots of a smog-free Los Angeles; the originality of such gems of dialogue as "You're really getting into some beautiful stuff, man"; the kick of seeing Hollywood extras join Bruce Conner in passing a joint in 35mm widescreen; beautiful stoned starlets, and Susan Strasberg too, writhing ecstatically in paisleyed passion; and most of all, special psychedelic visual effects by Charlatan Productions, Inc.: a virtual anthology of techniques drawn from the most daring experiments of the underground film of three years ago. The film is of course not flawless. One scene, in a laundromat, is insufficiently groovy; its misplaced humanity is a real drag. The cameraman has also erred in photographing one shot, of Fonda sliding out of frame on a sand-dune, in a jarringly sensitive manner. At several moments in the film, the music fails to reflect the general tone of the work. However, on balance we must credit *The Trip* as an astonishing achievement: a full-length film on LSD seen exclusively through Hollywood's plastic bag.—SEU DO NIM

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK, contd.

he writes for *National Review* and other publications. STEPHEN FARBER is now studying films at UCLA. DENNIS HUNT is a student at Berkeley. WILLIAM JOHNSON is British by origin, and formerly lived in Paris. MARGOT KERNAN now lives in Washington, D.C. MAX KOZLOFF is an art critic whose writing appears in *Artforum* and other journals. TOVE NEVILLE is a poet and science writer; after living in Berkeley, she is now in Denmark. GRAHAM PETRIE is British, and teaches at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. SU DO NIM is a Vietnamese acid-head now resident in Berkeley. JAN ZALMAN is a Czech critic who has been actively concerned with the Czechoslovak film industry for many years.

creations that establishes a reputation, at once original, memorable and technically brilliant. Inspired by the frozen delicacy and immutability of the figures in Seurat's painting, and the mocking ambiguities of Pirandello's plays, Frans Weisz has brought this quality of human mystery into the contemporary world. On a summery afternoon, the characters in the park are pursued by the watchful authors (as well as ourselves)—the literary creators carefully *observe* life but find it impossible to capture. The camera holds every nuance of visual lyricism in the imagery; the broad sweep of lawns, a sudden rainfall, with the characters racing into the luxurious warmth of a castle, raising the drawbridge against the somber writers, who peer intently through the windowpanes. The film (to be seen many times) is a metaphoric work; the interplay between creative literature and life is visualized in short vignettes, like a remembered dream. The writers retire to their libraries, typewriters click—a youth, symbolic of a reader's freedom, his inquisitiveness undaunted (even by the promise of a coquette's smile), steals a book and joyously devours its contents: Life's intellectual roundabout of knowledge, stolen by creators and reclaimed by new life, a new generation. . . . Robert Heppener's musical score intensifies the elegiac quality of this small masterpiece, and we can only wait with hopefulness for Weisz's first feature, now in production.—ALBERT JOHNSON

The Tiger and The Pussycat is a perfect example of an interesting script that is destroyed by its production and direction. The screenplay, by two Italians, is a serio-comic depiction of a married man's uncontrollable desire for a teen-age bitch, but the producer and director seem to be working under orders to make it look playful and bland and they seem to have obeyed these orders with a vengeance. The explanation might lie in the fact that Mario Cecchi Gori, the producer, and Dino Risi, the director who proved himself a memorable surveyor of manners and morals in *The Easy Life,* have made this film for Joseph E. Levine. Levine is guilty of applying a straitjacket to Mario *(The Organizer)* Monicelli when he directed *Casanova 70* for him. Vittorio Gassman manages, however, an unforgettable realization of the aging lover, but Ann-Margret, who is too old for the teen bitch, plays her with a hot pants vulgarity that could make you vomit.—RAYMOND BANACKI

The Trip is Roger Corman's groovy drama of Peter Fonda's expanding consciousness. There's too much to praise in the movie: the subtle poetry of Fonda's sincere-bearded guide alluding to the Beatles' "Turn off your mind, relax and float downstream—this is thorazine"; the convincing realism of the gelatin of the capsule in which Fonda droops his acid; the astounding clarity of long-shots of a smog-free Los Angeles; the originality of such gems of dialogue as "You're really getting into some beautiful stuff, man"; the kick of seeing Hollywood extras join Bruce Conner in passing a joint in 35mm widescreen; beautiful stoned starlets, and Susan Strasberg too, writhing ecstatically in paisleyed passion; and most of all, special psychedelic visual effects by Charlatan Productions, Inc.: a virtual anthology of techniques drawn from the most daring experiments of the underground film of three years ago. The film is of course not flawless. One scene, in a laundromat, is insufficiently groovy; its misplaced humanity is a real drag. The cameraman has also erred in photographing one shot, of Fonda sliding out of frame on a sand-dune, in a jarringly sensitive manner. At several moments in the film, the music fails to reflect the general tone of the work. However, on balance we must credit *The Trip* as an astonishing achievement: a full-length film on LSD seen exclusively through Hollywood's plastic bag.—SEU DO NIM

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK, contd.

he writes for *National Review* and other publications. STEPHEN FARBER is now studying films at UCLA. DENNIS HUNT is a student at Berkeley. WILLIAM JOHNSON is British by origin, and formerly lived in Paris. MARGOT KERNAN now lives in Washington, D.C. MAX KOZLOFF is an art critic whose writing appears in *Artforum* and other journals. TOVE NEVILLE is a poet and science writer; after living in Berkeley, she is now in Denmark. GRAHAM PETRIE is British, and teaches at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. SU DO NIM is a Vietnamese acid-head now resident in Berkeley. JAN ZALMAN is a Czech critic who has been actively concerned with the Czechoslovak film industry for many years.

creations that establishes a reputation, at once original, memorable and technically brilliant. Inspired by the frozen delicacy and immutability of the figures in Seurat's painting, and the mocking ambiguities of Pirandello's plays, Frans Weisz has brought this quality of human mystery into the contemporary world. On a summery afternoon, the characters in the park are pursued by the watchful authors (as well as ourselves)—the literary creators carefully *observe* life but find it impossible to capture. The camera holds every nuance of visual lyricism in the imagery; the broad sweep of lawns, a sudden rainfall, with the characters racing into the luxurious warmth of a castle, raising the drawbridge against the somber writers, who peer intently through the windowpanes. The film (to be seen many times) is a metaphoric work; the interplay between creative literature and life is visualized in short vignettes, like a remembered dream. The writers retire to their libraries, typewriters click—a youth, symbolic of a reader's freedom, his inquisitiveness undaunted (even by the promise of a coquette's smile), steals a book and joyously devours its contents: Life's intellectual roundabout of knowledge, stolen by creators and reclaimed by new life, a new generation. . . . Robert Heppener's musical score intensifies the elegiac quality of this small masterpiece, and we can only wait with hopefulness for Weisz's first feature, now in production.—ALBERT JOHNSON

The Tiger and The Pussycat is a perfect example of an interesting script that is destroyed by its production and direction. The screenplay, by two Italians, is a serio-comic depiction of a married man's uncontrollable desire for a teen-age bitch, but the producer and director seem to be working under orders to make it look playful and bland and they seem to have obeyed these orders with a vengeance. The explanation might lie in the fact that Mario Cecchi Gori, the producer, and Dino Risi, the director who proved himself a memorable surveyor of manners and morals in *The Easy Life,* have made this film for Joseph E. Levine. Levine is guilty of applying a straitjacket to Mario *(The Organizer)* Monicelli when he directed *Casanova 70* for him. Vittorio Gassman manages, however, an unforgettable realization of the aging lover, but Ann-Margret, who is too old for the teen bitch, plays her with a hot pants vulgarity that could make you vomit.—RAYMOND BANACKI

The Trip is Roger Corman's groovy drama of Peter Fonda's expanding consciousness. There's too much to praise in the movie: the subtle poetry of Fonda's sincere-bearded guide alluding to the Beatles' "Turn off your mind, relax and float downstream—this is thorazine"; the convincing realism of the gelatin of the capsule in which Fonda droops his acid; the astounding clarity of long-shots of a smog-free Los Angeles; the originality of such gems of dialogue as "You're really getting into some beautiful stuff, man"; the kick of seeing Hollywood extras join Bruce Conner in passing a joint in 35mm widescreen; beautiful stoned starlets, and Susan Strasberg too, writhing ecstatically in paisleyed passion; and most of all, special psychedelic visual effects by Charlatan Productions, Inc.: a virtual anthology of techniques drawn from the most daring experiments of the underground film of three years ago. The film is of course not flawless. One scene, in a laundromat, is insufficiently groovy; its misplaced humanity is a real drag. The cameraman has also erred in photographing one shot, of Fonda sliding out of frame on a sand-dune, in a jarringly sensitive manner. At several moments in the film, the music fails to reflect the general tone of the work. However, on balance we must credit *The Trip* as an astonishing achievement: a full-length film on LSD seen exclusively through Hollywood's plastic bag.—SEU DO NIM

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK, contd.

he writes for *National Review* and other publications. STEPHEN FARBER is now studying films at UCLA. DENNIS HUNT is a student at Berkeley. WILLIAM JOHNSON is British by origin, and formerly lived in Paris. MARGOT KERNAN now lives in Washington, D.C. MAX KOZLOFF is an art critic whose writing appears in *Artforum* and other journals. TOVE NEVILLE is a poet and science writer; after living in Berkeley, she is now in Denmark. GRAHAM PETRIE is British, and teaches at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. SU DO NIM is a Vietnamese acid-head now resident in Berkeley. JAN ZALMAN is a Czech critic who has been actively concerned with the Czechoslovak film industry for many years.

Discriminating Moviegoers Film Makers
Students of the Cinema TV Craftsmen

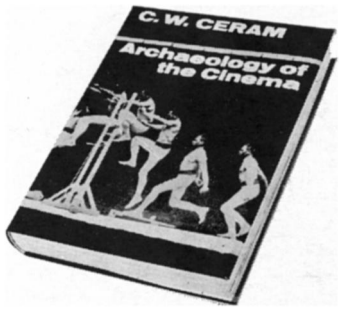
FILM & TELEVISION BOOK CLUB

is your personalized book service

Each month we will make available to you, at substantial savings, the best and most authoritative books on film, television and other communication arts. You will also receive the monthly **Viewfinder** which will describe all books offered.

Become a CHARTER MEMBER now, make your first selection among the books listed below and receive FREE C. W. Ceram's **Archaeology of the Cinema,** a classic work widely acclaimed in the press: "A captivating account of cinema's early years" **Back Stage.** "Not only a valuable reference work, but a definitive work on the subject" Herman G. Weinberg **Film Culture.** "Scholarly, documented and most attractive" **Film News.**

Make your first selection and return the coupon below. If you want to save shipping costs, enclose your check. Your free copy of **Archaeology of the Cinema** and the selection of your choice will be sent to you by return post.



---------- Fill Out and Mail Today ----------

ftbc

Film & television Book club, inc.

250 West 57th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019

FQ 1

Please enroll me as a CHARTER MEMBER. Send me the book(s) I have checked below and my FREE BOOK. Forthcoming selections will be described to me in the monthly **Viewfinder** and I may decline any book by simply returning the printed form always provided. I agree to buy as few as four additional selections (or alternates) during the membership year at the reduced Member's price (plus a small shipping charge) and I may resign anytime thereafter.

☐ **THE ART OF THE FILM** by Ernest Lindgren. "Comprehensive and factual . . . The best single work."
List Price $7.50 **Member's Price $5.95**

☐ **SCREEN WORLD 1967** edited by John Willis. "The film fan's annual gold mine."
List Price $7.50 **Member's Price $5.95**

☐ **MOTION PICTURE EMPIRE** by Gertrude Jobes. "The checkered history of the American film industry."
List Price $10.00 **Member's Price $7.95**

☐ **DOCUMENTARY IN AMERICAN TELEVISION** by A. William Bluem. "A well-rounded picture of a medium."
List Price $8.95 **Member's Price $6.95**

☐ **BEHIND THE SCREEN** by Kenneth Macgowan. "A definitive contribution . . . The classic work of its kind."
List Price $12.50 **Member's Price $7.95**

☐ **THE TECHNIQUE OF SPECIAL EFFECTS CINEMATOGRAPHY** by Raymond Fielding. "Comprehensive and factual treatise."
List Price $15.00 **Member's Price $11.95**

Name_____
(Please Print)

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

I enclose $_____ (You pay all the shipping costs)

☐ Bill my account (I will pay all shipping costs)

The surprise comedy hit of the New York Film Festival.

"A FASCINATING FILM ...keen mocking humor."
— Bosley Crowther, N. Y. Times

"AMUSINGLY FRESH AND NICELY CRAZY ...endearing charm ...a wildly comic fable."
— Frances Herridge, N. Y. Post

"DELIGHTFUL ...the whole show is wonderfully fey."
— Time Magazine

AWARDS
TOTO
Special Prize Winner
CANNES FILM FESTIVAL
•
GOLDEN GLOBE AWARD

THE HAWKS AND THE SPARROWS
(UCCELLACCI E UCCELLINI)

Written and Directed by **PIER PAOLO PASOLINI**

Starring the inimitable **TOTO**

Also starring NINETTO DAVOLI **AND THE WORLD'S ONLY TALKING CROW**

Produced by ALFREDO BINI

Released by BRANDON FILMS, INC.

Theatrical Distribution 1967/Non Theatrical Distribution 1968

BRANDON FILMS, Inc., Dept. F Q , 221 West 57 Street, New York 10019