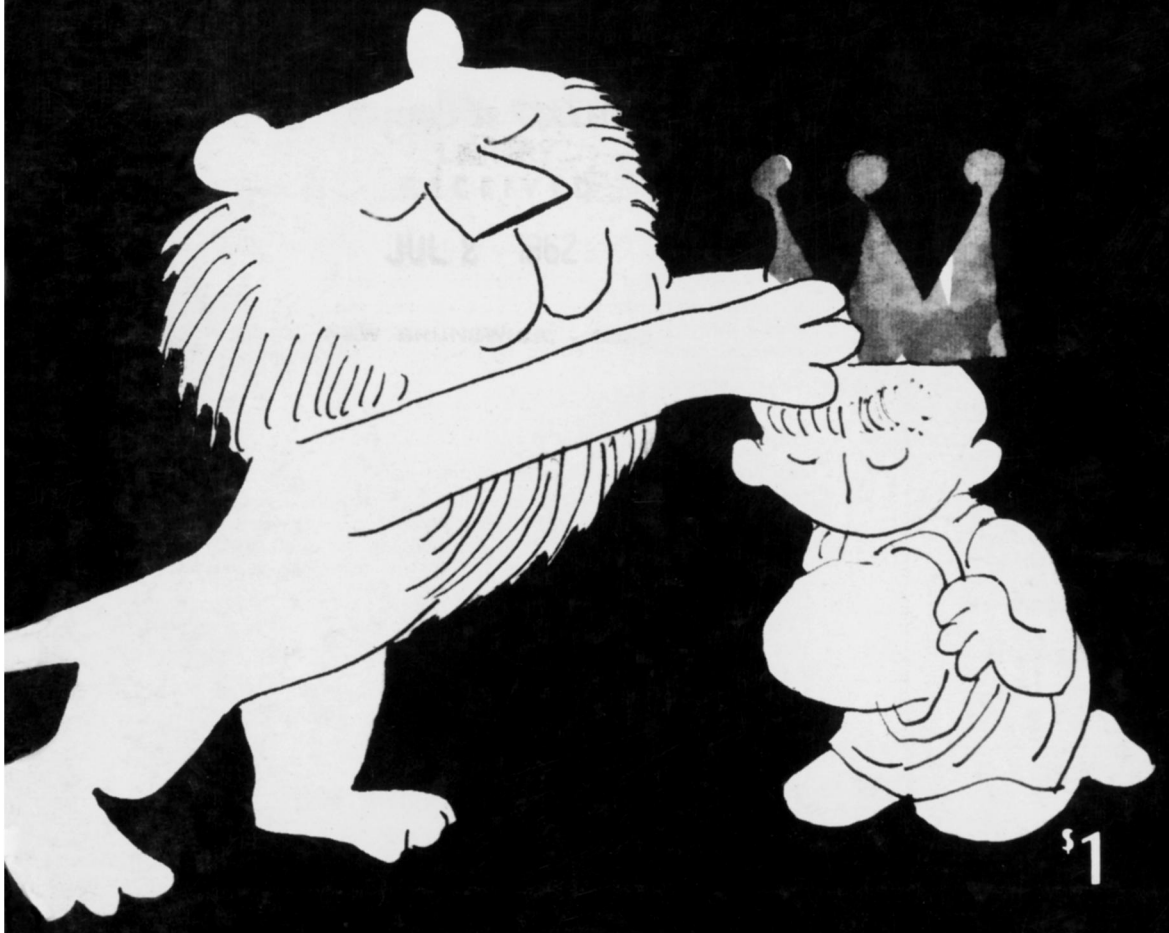
FILM
QUARTERLY

INDEX TO VOLUME XV

Titles of films and books reviewed appear in *italics*. First reference number indicates volume number as it will be included in future cumulative indexes; second indicates issue number; third indicates page. Topics are also indexed. A cumulative index, available to subscribers, exists for Volumes XII and XIII; it is hoped that a five-year cumulative index can be prepared with the completion of Volume XVI.

SUMMER 1962

FILM QUARTERLY



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BRITISH

Another Sky (GAVIN LAMBERT)

The story involves an English governess overcome by the spell of Marrakech in Morocco, who loses her heart to a native street musician whose interest in her is purely mercenary. 83 minutes.

". . . exhibits an awareness of the complexities of human emotion, whose crossed-depths are never more inextricably bewildering than in the encounters of Europeans and Asians."

—IMAGERY

"Work of Art . . . a haunting, luminescent, mysterious and lyrical work of film art, filled with subtle insights."

—AMOS VOGEL, CINEMA 16

The Kitchen (1961, JAMES HILL)

Arnold Wesker's play has been brilliantly adapted by Sidney Cole. A microcosmic view of our tortured world of turmoil. The personnel of this polyglot kitchen are the people of the world. 74 minutes.

"One of the year's 10 Best"

—TIME MAGAZINE

We Are The Lambeth Boys (KARL REISZ)

Grand Prix. Venice Festival Winners. 50 minutes.

An outstanding documentary which captures the character of life today among city adolescents. The "Lambeth Boys" are a group of teenagers whose leisure activities center around a youth club in South London.

AMERICAN

Sunday (DAN DRASIN)

San Francisco Festival Winner. 16 minutes.

One of the most fascinating and thought-provoking films to come from New American Cinema movement; acclaimed everywhere it has been shown! Photographed one Sunday afternoon in April, 1961, during a demonstration protesting a police ban on folk-singing in New York City's Washington Square Park.

"The feeling of the picture seems so exactly right . . . it is a wonderfully shocking example of almost everything, namely how little you can make a good picture for, if you have talent."

—ARCHER WINSTEN, NEW YORK POST

FRENCH

The Italian Straw Hat (SILENT, 1927)

(Un Chapeau de Paille d'Italie). 76 minutes.

René Clair's "brilliant comedy in bitter satire of French middle-class life and realized with a high degree of intelligence and cinematic skill."

—ROTHA

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FILM QUARTERLY

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Editor's Notebook

Cinema 16 vs. Macdonald

Manners in film criticism are normally rather too mild for my taste; it is rare to see critics writing with much vehemence. What is needed is not vehemence alone, of course, but a kind of principled mutual criticism, so that ideas can be seriously compared and tastes expounded through the give and take of attack and defense. We could all use more "correspondence and controversy."

There is nothing wrong on this level with the sweeping attack on Cinema 16 made by Dwight Macdonald in the April *Esquire*. Cinema 16 has been attacked before, and will be attacked again. Its role as a showcase for offbeat films makes it an easy scapegoat, especially in the culturally feud-ridden New York area; and its livid advertising copy makes it an easy mark for Macdonald's stylistic sharpshooting—which has brought down much bigger game, like *By Love Possessed.*

It may be news to some of *Esquire's* 850,000 readers that many of the films presented by Cinema 16 are bad; it is certainly not news to Amos Vogel of Cinema 16, or to anyone else who follows film events with attention. Vogel's showings encompass a broad range in subjects and a broad range in appeal and quality—from the very esoteric to the incipiently popular, from the very bad to the very good. His "experimental" offerings may on the whole be among the worst; but they are far from the dominant note in Cinema 16 programming, which has included work by Antonioni, Bresson, Cassavetes, Clarke, Franju, Munk, Torre Nilsson, Ozu, Reisz, Richardson, Sucksdorff, and a variety of "classic" film-makers.

Macdonald's feeling is that Cinema 16, by showing films avowedly outside the normal commercial channels, and plugging them as unusual, is somehow playing a pretentious game. One is forced to conclude that he does not yet understand the extreme deficiencies of our present film distribution—or else that it is simply more fun to attack one's friends than one's enemies. The situation in which Cinema 16 exists is this: neither the importers, distributors, exhibitors, museums, unversities nor critics are doing jobs that give any ground for complacency. Time lags are frightful; information and publicity is dismal; conditions of exhibition are chichi or backbreaking; faddishness is rampant; institutional support is nil; critical coverage is erratic and spotty. We have one regular serious magazine; we do not yet have an American Film Institute; our museums must pinch pennies; censors are still troublesome.

In such a situation Cinema 16 is a positive beacon of enlightenment—compared, say, to such a force for constriction and dullness as Bosley Crowther in the *New York Times.* (*There* is a real target for Macdonald to zero in on!) Vogel imports interesting films and shows them; he seeks out films made by new American film-makers and shows them. Lots of them are, needless to say, as "commercial" in intent as any Macdonald might prefer; none of the men in the list above, I'm sure, want to lose money. Macdonald exaggerates the distinction between commercial and noncommercial films (even distribution guarantees don't mean much); consequently he doesn't realize that Cinema 16, and other organizations like it, are needed precisely to show films that are still regarded as noncommercial but *oughtn't* to be. And indeed, often enough films first shown at Cinema 16 or universities go on to get release. If Macdonald is against all such films, I don't see where he is going, except maybe out there with Sidney Lumet.

As for the "experimenters," or the young film-makers of whose unimaginative *Weltschmerz* Macdonald makes rightful fun, they are the only ones we have who are working outside the sponsored film or Hollywood; they are not yet very good, but they are part of our cultural scene, like our painters and composers and playwrights—who do not present a terribly inspiring picture either, of the world

or of themselves. (For that matter, there's a good deal of *Angst* in *Esquire* and the *New Yorker* these days, along with Macdonald.) But it seems to me that they deserve *serious* attacks if we are to expect anything better of them.

In a narrowly publicity-conscious sense, Cinema 16 may profit by Macdonald's jibes. But what it needs most of all, and what we need, and what Macdonald is in a position to give if he feels like it, is sensible criticism of its films when they are interestingly good or maddeningly bad. (It is hard to tell from his April column how many Macdonald sees—one would guess not many, or he would have spent less time on the advertising copy.) How excellent if we could rely on him, when they came along on Cinema 16 programs, to distinguish *Night and Fog* or *Children Who Draw* from the routine or phony; to notice such extroardinary apparitions as *Two Men and a Wardrobe;* or to give his powers of analysis and polemic a good workout on a fine scientific short—a valuable commodity these days—perhaps even one with such an unchic title as *In Quest of the Tubercle Bacillus.* He might end up doing a program note.

I don't, incidentally, find it comprehensible that Macdonald, who likes to ridicule letters he receives from readers, has failed to run an abbreviated version of a reply from Vogel, as he reportedly promised to do. This ought to be beneath an old polemicist of Macdonald's caliber; and it will be interpreted in the film world as an admission of bad reporting and critical ill-temper.

Periodicals

Two serious journals dealing with television have just begun publication. The problem they face is overwhelming: how to cope with a mass medium that is gargantuan beyond any other, and yet even more ephemeral than the film?

Contrast, The Television Quarterly, takes a fundamentally critical approach. Published by the British Film Institute (81 Dean Street, London W.I.; American distributor Eastern News, 306 West 11th Street, New York 14, N. Y.; $3.00 per year, 75¢ per issue) it is a companion journal to *Sight and Sound* and shares its elegant design and printing. The articles focus primarily on series shows or personalities, rather than individual programs: journalist Tim Hewat, documentarist Denis Mitchell, comedian Tony Hancock. Also in the second issue are an article on design in television (a crashing bore), some gossip about trends ("America has found something new to do in bed, a supine pursuit that offends no moral or social codes . . ."), and articles on censorship and the handling of news. The policy, which is carried out with a fairly high level of sophistication though no body of experienced TV critics yet seems to exist, is to deal with items worth attention in themselves, and let the sociology fall where it may.

Television Quarterly, the journal of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (54 West 40th Street, New York 18, N. Y.; $5.00 per year and $1.50 per copy in U.S. and Canada; $5.50 and $1.65 elsewhere) takes a basically sociological and political-science approach, and it is much duller. The first issue, for February, 1962, contains articles on government and TV, documentary forms in TV, advertising and rating problems, a chapter from a book called *Television and the Teaching of English,* book reviews, and assorted controversial quotes. The quality varies, from Burton Benjamin's informative if not very detailed survey of the "heritage" of television documentary, to W. Theodore Pierson's comically disingenuous "constitutional" defense of the industry

against the recent timid pressure of the FCC. He is worried that a Minow among the sharks will "result only in conformed stereotyped formats by broadcasters throughout the country, in place of the highly diverse formats that diversified selection and competition can and will bring about." This latter astounding euphoria, however, does not contaminate the rest of the journal, which is making an effort, in an indirect way, to remain in touch with the "challenge," as the phrase goes, which TV offers. An editorial announcement states that "In this time and temper it is difficult to ascertain where 'a serious look' at television ought first to be directed." The British, who lack our peculiar dubieties in these matters, already have the answer: look at what comes out of the set.

World Screen is published twice yearly by the International Film and Television Council, a federation of international organizations concerned in one way or another with film and TV. Single issue 70¢, double issues $1.40; 26, Av. de Segur, Paris 7e, France. The most recent copy, for April & September, 1961, contains articles on problems of film and television production and a great amount of information about the vast morass of organizational activities in the field; much of this work is important for the improvement of international distribution. There is also a section on "Films to Note," listing films given awards at the various festivals.

Wanted: Reviewers for Foreign Books

The literature of the cinema in foreign languages is already immense, and growing rapidly; to English-speaking readers it is very little known. We hope to help remedy this situation by printing more reviews and abstracts. The books themselves do get into this country, on a reliable basis, through the Farmington Plan collection at the University of Southern California Library, from which they may be borrowed by normal interlibrary loan procedures.

In a forthcoming issue on film scholarship, we will survey the Farmington collection—and the holdings of various other American libraries with important numbers of film books. But we need the help of persons who can read French, German, Italian, Dutch, Danish, Russian, Polish, Czech, and sometimes even more exotic languages, so that we can call upon them for reviews and abstracts of interesting works. Such services will be paid for, since the reviews and abstracts will be highly compressed, at more than our usual per-word rates. Interested readers are invited to send their names, addresses, and indications of their facility with their various languages, to *FQ*.

THE STATE OF FILM SCHOLARSHIP

In the *Film Who's Who* (which has international and historical pretentions, and for the most part is, I must say, handy), published by Politiken in Copenhagen, there is no entry for, among others: D.W. Griffith, Thomas Ince, Buster Keaton, Robert Wiene, F. W. Murnau, Falconetti (star of Denmark's greatest film!), or Mauritz Stiller.—VERNON YOUNG

[We plan to make "The State of Film Scholarship" a regular feature of *Film Quarterly*, and readers are invited to submit choice items.—ED.]

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Edward L. Kingsley, 1914-1962

Although the distributor has never been a particularly favored figure among film enthusiasts, the untimely death of Ed Kingsley last February must affect us all. Few men have done so much to advance the cause of foreign films in this country; no one has done more. He combined a deep love of films with a thorough knowledge of their commercial side. He knew better than most how to build an audience for a picture and make it go. But what made him extraordinary among his confreres was his willingness to bring in pictures that he suspected (often rightly) would never make a dime. He fought—and paid heavily—for the right to show *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, ending triumphantly with a Supreme Court decision that notably liberalized restrictions on films; and he fought local censors, judges, and police who sought to harass exhibition of his pictures. In the fifteen years during which he functioned as an importer and distributor, the market expanded beyond his fondest dreams. Much of that growth must be attributed directly to his initiative, taste, and idealism.—ARTHUR KNIGHT

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ARTHUR B. FRIEDMAN

Interview with Harold Lloyd

During the past several years, the tape-recording of interviews with persons who lived through important events has become a widespread practice. Mr. Friedman has been extending this recording of "oral history" to the especially ephemeral world of entertainment; his conversation with Harold Lloyd was one of a long series. We present below excerpts from this interview which bear primarily on the atmosphere and working methods of the years when American screen comedy was at its height. It is easy to feel a certain nostalgia toward that period, with its free-and-easy creative élan. And this may not be pointless nostalgia. For, however tightly organized, script-bound, or rule-bound, routine production is today, there are also film-makers trying to get back to the more spontaneous use of the camera as a directly controlled instrument—as the French say, the "camera-stylo," with which one might "write" films as one writes a story or poem: Rossellini with his offhand shooting methods, Godard with his determinedly haphazard ones; the improvisation of "Shadows," the informal, candid documentaries of Leacock. With the spontaneity of Keaton, Chaplin, and Lloyd went endless work and a kind of freewheeling perfectionism, as one sees by watching "out-takes" of difficult scenes shot over and over again. But these masters of American comedy exploited the possibilities of their working conditions to make films of such suppleness and intensity of personal vision that they seem likely to last forever. From both their films and their ways of making them, we have much to learn.

Mr. Lloyd, in getting an idea for a film when you wanted to make a movie, how did you go about it? What kind of writers did you have with you? Where did you get your ideas? How did you get into production?

Well, as to the writers, we didn't exactly call them writers in those days. They were called idea men, or gag men. Not having dialogue at that time, it was business, comedy business, that was all-important. So I kept a staff of from three to sometimes seven or eight. We paid these men very good salaries. I think we paid one man about eight hundred dollars a week. We never had a script in those days. We'd get an idea and the idea was developed more or less piecemeal. Now I'd take the idea men, and I'd work with them in a room. I'd come in and work with them in the morning or sometimes in the afternoon. They'd throw ideas at me and then it was up to me to choose the ones that I thought would be most appropriate or the ones that belonged to the particular film we were

From HAROLD LLOYD'S WORLD OF COMEDY *(the new car sequence from* HOT WATER*). Other parts of the film are drawn from* SAFETY LAST, THE FRESHMAN, WHY WORRY, GIRL SHY, PROFESSOR BEWARE, MOVIE CRAZY, *and* FEET FIRST. *Released in New York in June.*


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doing. Then I'd send them out, maybe all to work separately, or I'd send them out in pairs, or break them up into different groups. And then each day they would come in with an idea. Maybe one fellow would come up with the suggestion and the suggestion itself may not have been exceptionally good, but if it had an idea it was up to us to recognize that idea and then the whole group of us started to work and develop that particular one.

Now were these ideas gags or what?

These were mostly gags, but remember our early stories. The gags were the important thing, and the story was sort of secondary.

When you started to think about creating a film, for example, did you look for a series of gags that might be strung together or was there some central idea around which the gags would evolve?

I think I'd better illustrate that with a picture, and let's take a picture that is quite well known—*Safety Last.* It probably met with as much acclaim, I think, as any picture we did. Here's how the birth of that story took place. I was in Los Angeles walking up Seventh Street and I saw this tremendous crowd gathered around a building, the Brockman Building. Upon inquiring I found out that a "human spider" was going to scale the side of that building. That naturally intrigues anyone, to see a feat of that kind performed. So I stayed around for awhile and pretty soon a rather young fellow came out and was introduced and there was a certain amount of commercialism attached to it at first. Without too much ado he started at the bottom of the building and started to climb up the side of this building. Well, it had such a terrific impact on me that when he got to about the third or fourth floor I couldn't watch him any more. My heart was in my throat and so I started walking on up the street. I walked about a block up the street; but, of course, I kept looking back all the time to see if he was still there. Finally I went around the corner. Silly as it is, I stood around the corner so I wouldn't watch him all the time, but every once in a while I'd stick my head around the corner and see how he was progressing. I just couldn't believe that he could make that whole climb, but he did. After he finished it and arrived at the top, he rode a bicycle around the edge of it and then stood on the edge over the corner of it on a little projection they had there. Well, it was a tremendous feat as far as daring and fortitude is concerned. So I went back, went into the building, got up on the roof and met the young man, gave him my address and told him to come out. At that time I was with the Hal Roach Studios, and I told him to come out and visit Hal Roach and myself. He name was Bill Struthers.

He did come out and we put him on salary at that time although we didn't know just what we were going to do. I said that idea intrigues me, if it will do that to me, it certainly must be going to do that to an audience if we do it with the same effect you performed it. So we put him under contract and then we started to work out what was the most effective way to bring this climb on. Then we sat down with the writers and they worked out a little basic plot—that this boy was to come from a small town and was going to send for his sweetheart as soon as he made good; he gets a position in a department store and writes back to her that he is one of the executives of the store and it will only be a matter of time before he will send for her. In fact, he is just one of the clerks in one of the departments there. Well, she gets impatient and comes on. He finds out that she is coming and he knows that he's got to get some money. He devises with a pal of his who is a steeple-jack, one of these iron grid workers. He arranges for this sensational climb—this fellow climbs all over the buildings anyway in this picture. They talk the manager into it, saying that it's a great advertising exploitation feat. That was the basic idea of the plot that we had. With that to go on, it was embellished; there was your clothes rack, but the clothes were the pieces of business that either made the picture good or made it just an ordinary comedy. So we had to devise these gags. Now we didn't just get them all at once, because we would

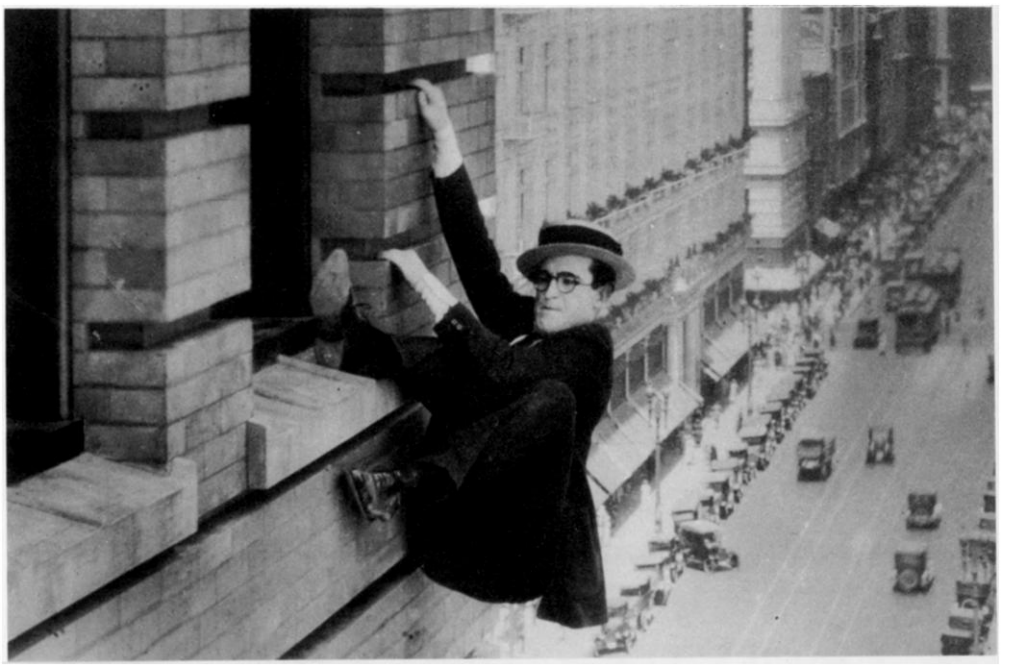
work out a sequence or series of sequences and then we would shoot those. Then we would suspend action and come back and work some more. We kept changing our story as we went along and we found out that it worked better to go along a certain story-direction or idea line and then we would change it, so that would naturally change other things. Our whole story was very, very pliable.

In fact, on many of them we did the finish first. I think we did the finish on *Safety Last* first, we photographed that first. We had an idea how we were going to do the first part of it but we weren't sure. We did the climb to start with. And of course when we finished the climb we were gratified with it because it looked like it had what we were trying for, then we had tremendous enthusiasm to go back and get a beginning and a middle for it, and work up to the climb.

We tried that in *The Freshman* which had a football game for the finish. Well, we worked about two days on the football game but we just couldn't engender that enthusiasm or that feeling we should have had in that football game so we gave it up. Then we went back and started from the beginning. But in *The Freshman* all we started with was a one-line theme and that was that. The boy had a great desire to go to college and be the most popular man in the school. We felt he would get off on the wrong foot and as his father stated as he left, they would either break his heart or his neck and they almost did both. But that was the whole theme: that the boy wanted to be the most popular boy in the whole school and the difficulties and troubles that ensued from that.

Now you mention a theme here. Is it true that for all of your films you had some kind of a basic theme or thread in the same way?

Yes, oh yes, you had to have one and the more it was really working for you the more chance you had to get a good picture. When I say something working for you, let me take this example again, the climb that we did in *Safety Last*. Now here is what can work for you besides local business and gags. This pal of mine, the steeple-jack was to make the climb. He had gotten into a little trouble with one of the local policemen there and even though his picture was printed so that he was going to do the climb without the face showing, the policeman recognized the clothes. When the climb was to start, the policeman was there because he had grievances against this particular character and was going to arrest him, which would



The famous human-fly sequence from Lloyd's best-known picture, SAFETY LAST (1923).

ruin our climb. We saw the policeman standing there; and he said, "I can't go out there until we get rid of the policeman." So I made several efforts to get rid of the policeman without too much success.

Finally, my friend said, "Look, here's what we'll do—you go out and pretend that you are the mystery man and are going to make the climb. You just climb up to the first floor," he said, "and then for a moment you slip into the window. I'll change and put on your coat and hat and I'll go the rest of the way." Well, that was all right, except that I was scared to death to even climb to the first floor. I said, "I can't climb up to that first floor, I'll break my neck." But he finally talked me into it. I go out and I'm introduced with all the fanfare, and climb to the first floor; but while I'm climbing from the ground to the first floor, the cop happens to see him peeking around the corner and takes after him. He runs into the building and the policeman is after him. By the time I reach the first floor, he manages to open the door long enough to see me at the window and say you've got to make one more floor until I ditch this cop. I look at him in amazement. My God, I managed to make the first floor; making the second floor is just unheard of but I go ahead, expecting to be killed at any moment. And, of course, that continues during the whole climb. He doesn't ditch this cop, but everytime you see this little interjection coming in, "Go one more floor until I ditch this cop." In the last scene we see the policeman chasing him over to the roofs of the adjoining buildings and in a little time, coming out, he says, "You've got to keep going 'til I ditch the cop."

Now that's what I mean by something working for you, because all the time they thought I would be relieved or that I wouldn't go one more floor, and that makes all the other business much stronger because you've got something that is anticipated—"when will the other fellow help him out?" Now then, the same thing applies with a major story. The more interesting that you can make your character, the better. I don't mean that he has to be eccentric but he's got to be a personality, not just the ordinary run. When he gets into difficulties, someone can envision that there is going to be fun here and think that he won't act like the normal person. When he gets into that trouble, what is he going to do? Then right away there is anticipation of what's going to happen with the trouble.

With comedy, trouble is one of the great ingredients because there are so many variations to it. You take the newspapers. What is mainly printed in newspapers?—Grief and trouble. I'd say 75 per cent of it, and maybe that's an understatement. Or listen to a news commentator on television or radio. I think they do that because people somehow get a feeling—well, *they* are all right now. Someone else is in trouble and everyone has enough complexities in life. It makes them feel a little better if somebody else is having difficulties too. In a picture if everything is happy and you're going along you won't run into any particular difficulties. But if you get yourself into a situation where you are liable to be killed, you're going to be sent to jail, you're going to lose all your money, you're going to be beat up, or innumerable things, right away you think "how's the man going to get out of it?" So it's the getting out of it, the surmounting it, the overcoming of obstacles that gives you the opportunity to create comedy.

When you were thinking of gags or pieces of business with the men who worked for you, the idea or gag men, what made you throw some gags away and keep others? What was it that made you judge that the audience would share your feeling?

Well, I think several things. Eventually as I went along it became experience, it was a certain amount of basic study, it was your own intuition, your own feeling toward what you thought was funny and what you didn't. In other words, I used to call it picking the wheat out of the chaff. We had one gag man who really gave me as many fine ideas as any idea man had ever given me, but I would say that only about one out of twenty of the ideas he

gave me were good, the other nineteen were very mediocre. Later on when I stopped working, I tried to send him to other people and they would say, what are you trying to do, he's the worst man I've ever talked to. Well, they wanted every idea to be good. I recognized that every once in a while he would come out with a little gem. And that one idea was worth all the poor ones that he'd throw at me. But you had to rely upon your own judgment to recognize that particular idea and I think that was one of my fortes in the comedy field. Whether it came through experience or was just a feeling for comedy that I had, I don't know. But I don't say that I didn't let a lot of very good business go by. I had fairly good success from the standpoint of laughter, either they gave me so many I couldn't miss or my judgment proved to be pretty good.

Certainly it was the latter. And I'd like to ask this. You had a good deal of training, as you described it earlier on this recording, in stock companies in the theater and you had varied training in the motion pictures playing all kinds of things. This included different comedy characters until you developed the "glass character," as you refer to the Harold Lloyd most of the world has known for these many years. This was a training ground for you that, I suppose, permitted you to judge ideas for your own use in terms of the essence of your own character. Do you suppose that any of these things can be learned through an organized process? For an example, could a student go through some kind of university training in a department such as we have, in which some of these basic things could be handed down?

I don't think that you can pinpoint it to that degree. I think that a man to achieve real success or popularity has got to have a bent for it to start with. Then the studying of it, the observing, and the trial and error will bring him out and make him either great or just ordinary. But I can envision a great many individuals who just don't have a funny bone in their body; and I think those men could study forever and they would find that they

Harold Lloyd in THE FRESHMAN (1925).

had chosen the wrong profession. You might get someone who has a fair knowledge of comedy and with a great deal of diligent work and concentration he might make himself a very fine comedian. I think they should have a feeling for it. But underneath it all, I do think that to rise above the ordinary strata of comedy you've got to be a student of comedy and know what basic ideas you're trying to project in the comedy line and the humorous end. In other words, you'll find a lot of people, both men and women, who in the ordinary walk of life are very funny and very amusing to their friends in a party. People laugh at them and say, "Oh, you should be on the stage." Well, you take that particular person (I don't say there aren't exceptions to the rule) you take that particular person and they are very sad sometimes when they get out in front of an audience. The audience just doesn't seem to catch the quality that the intimate group has found. When they get up there and have got to have a routine, when they've got to have a whole act, then it becomes another thing. They seem to tighten up.

Or you take the reverse: sometimes your best comedians, who have probably scored on the vaudeville stage, in musical comedy, in pictures, television, it doesn't make any difference what medium you use—sometimes those people, when you meet them off stage, you would never suspect they are funny men. They just don't let

go, they don't seem to have the desire for it. Maybe it's like a lot of people who like to dress up, like to go to masquerades, or like to go out on Hallowe'en like kids do. In other words, they like to become another personality from what they are, to express themselves in different ways. Well, actors are expressing themselves in different ways all the time. So you'll find that a great many actors have had enough of that and when they are in ordinary life they just don't feel funny or they don't want to act funny.

I wonder if you could sum up what you believe the essence of your comedy was, the essence of the comedy character that you created and maintained over a number of years.

The character that I finally devised could be your nextdoor neighbor. He was just a young man who wore glasses. He kind of thought a little out of the normal group, though. In a great many of the stories that we devised it looked like he never had a chance to succeed or he couldn't overcome what appeared to be insurmountable obstacles. But he had great concentration and determination; and regardless of how hopeless a situation looked, he just seemed to keep going ahead and succeeded in the end. Now with all that, he had to be a character that you liked, so you had a sympathy for him, but at the same time he struck you as an odd, amusing, pathetic type of character. You not only laughed at him but you laughed with him. And of course, to go into the basic ideas of comedy there, they seem to be unending.

It has occurred to me that the character that you created and maintained over all these years was perhaps a nearer reflection to our country's personality during these years than any other performer had achieved. The same brash quality, the success with the hope—it seems to me that there was a very close correlation between the character that you created and the personality of our country, particularly during those days. Would you say that was true?

Well, there have been several articles printed that stated very similar points. I think as I said before that he is the fellow you see walking down the street, that you pass all the time. He wears ordinary clothes, he wears glasses as really his only distinguishing mark. It's his attitude towards things, it's the difficulties that he gets into and how he surmounts them, that makes the comedy out of it. Otherwise, he isn't what you might call a comic character and I didn't try to devise a lot of eccentricities like so many other comedians. He was just an ordinary boy that you liked. You were interested in his problems because his problems were ones that you might have gotten into yourself.

These ordinary qualities are one of the elements that perhaps gave it its universal quality.

Of course, in doing something one person does it one way, another person another way. In fact, if you took the same situation and the same piece of business and let ten different people do it, all ten of them would do it in a little different individual way. You'd find that one person seems to have a flare to bring out a certain quality that maybe the rest of them don't. For instance, I'm thinking of some present characters—you take George Gobel, for example. He has a completely individual style. The same thing with Gleason. You could give that same material to scores of others (this is more or less in the dialogue end of it) and they wouldn't begin to present it with the same character or individuality that these two gentlemen do.

Do you have any plans for more film work?

Yes, I'm working on one right now: *Harold Lloyd's Festival of Comedy.* This is going to start before there was any color naturally or sound, and of course, no wide screen. In fact, many of the people who will be viewing it hadn't been born when it happened. It isn't going to be a story in the sense of a beginning, a middle, and a finish; it's going to be highlights taken from a great many of the Harold Lloyd comedies that have been seen and, I think, enjoyed by millions of people practically in every country in the world. (I think laughter is the universal language.) Now this is going to

begin in the late 'teens, go through the roaring 'twenties and into the late 'thirties—a span of about twenty years. As I say, we're going to start it with a two-reeler and carry it on through. I got the idea for doing this because my son, who is now around about twenty-four, was not born when I made all these comedies, but he's run the biggest majority of them. He hasn't seen them all and he's gotten such a kick out of them; and he said, "Why don't you pass this on to the generation that I belong to. I think that you're keeping them all bottled up." It was really because of that that we started. It's still in a rough state but it's been received exceptionally well. In fact, it gets more laughs than any film we put together.

In working on this festival of Harold Lloyd comedies, have you come upon one film that seems to be your favorite?

I have three favorites—*Grandma's Boy, Safety Last,* and *The Freshman.* They are all entirely different.

I've noticed that your comedies seem to be based on adventure and suspense, danger, and as you mentioned, light romance. This was particularly true in the silent films that were marked with unusual success. Did the advent of sound pose any particular problems for you or change your comedy style?

Yes, I think it did to a certain degree. It required our more or less having a definite story. This was much more necessary when you put dialogue into it. Before, we could say what came to our minds in the silent days and it was the pantomime, the action that was paramount. The audience couldn't read your lips. But when dialogue came into it, it meant that you really had to sit down and work out some normal, everyday dialogue that was fitting. That demanded more of a story and a little different type of procedure. Though the first one that I made was silent and only later was adapted to sound. We didn't have too much difficulty putting sound into it, but I think if we had had more competent dialogue writers at that time, we could have made that phase of it infinitely better. In fact, to carry on with that line of thought, I believe that comedies with dialogue tend to rely, especially in the early days of sound, entirely on words. Too much so. The pantomime began to more or less disappear. Recently they have been coming back to it. But for a long time, in one period it was all quips, wisecracks, little verbal-comedy sayings; the visual had practically disappeared from it. Now many are coming back with it; for instance, Skelton does a tremendous amount of pantomime now, Jack Benny is very clever at putting it in his television show. Gleason has been doing it very well, and Danny Kaye. There's a great many of them now. And I think they are very wise because it was becoming a lost art for a while. They are beginning to come to the conclusion now, that you don't have to talk every moment that the film is running. We don't do that in real life. Just because you are doing business, it isn't necessary to have dialogue to accompany it. Stevens, a very fine director, is one who exemplifies that in some of the fine pictures he has done. He's had long stretches of film with no dialogue in it at all. There's something real and natural. Ford's another one who has done it. But for a long period people thought they had to talk all the time.

As GRANDMA'S BOY (1922).

RICHARD DYER MacCANN

Independence, with a Vengeance

In our last issue we presented a discussion about the creative situation in Hollywood, with a variety of viewpoints represented—from the established professionals like Zinnemann to the struggling outsiders like Mackenzie. Continuing our exploration of the problems and potentialities of the film in present-day America, we present below an article based on years of experience in Hollywood reporting; it attempts to assess the prevailing practices by which films are initiated in Hollywood, and to indicate possible developments that may give promise for the future.

Independent production has been hailed as a kind of cure-all for what ails Hollywood, both artistically and commercially. It has been praised as a source of new freedom, new talent, and new ideas. But the departure from the old studio system is more apparent than real. And when independence does have some independence about it, the films that emerge are as likely to appeal to the lowest common denominator of taste as they did in the old days.

Independent production, like the pay-TV of the future, is only as good as the people involved in it and the financial arrangements surrounding it.

Independence of one kind or another is no novelty in the movie industry. Rebellion against monopoly began in the first years of the silents, when Adolph Zukor (later a monopolist in his own way) defied the Motion Picture Patents Company. United Artists, from its beginning in 1919, represented actors and directors who wanted to be free of "front office interference" in selecting stories. Cecil B. DeMille, Samuel Goldwyn, David O. Selznick, and Stanley Kramer are only the most famous of the intractables who have insisted on their own way of working. The Society of Independent Motion Picture Producers was, until 1958, an active organization on the Hollywood scene; its decline to a nominal entity, without an executive director, is one of the paradoxes of the television era.

The most recent pattern of independent operation stemmed in part from the rebirth of United Artists in 1951, under Arthur Krim and Robert Benjamin. These vigorous young lawyers and their able vice-president Max Youngstein (also a lawyer) took over the basic notion of autonomous responsibility for production, already characteristic of United Artists. They added a freewheeling willingness to take on a variety of products, good and bad, to keep up their volume of distribution. They realized that part of what ailed the major companies was overhead—that is, the cost of maintaining big stages and back lots and expensive specialized staffs. They also realized that large tax advantages could be offered to film-makers who were willing to organize independent corporations and give up the security of studio salaries. They reminded their partners-in-independence that no studio "czar" would look at their rushes and tell them how to make their pictures. They had, at the right moment, the profitable assistance of Sam Spiegel and John Huston, who made *The African Queen*, and Stanley Kramer and Fred Zinnemann, who made *High Noon*. They trans-

formed a dying organization into a money-making enterprise within two years.

Hollywood is always impressed by success, and UA was just about the only encouraging sign on the horizon in the early days of TV. Perhaps the answer was to have no actual investment in sound stages or in other real estate devoted to production. Perhaps the best thing, after all, was to have an office and a telephone, seek money, buy stories, negotiate with stars, and (when production was imminent) rent somebody else's real estate.

At the same time, TV competition began to force new policies in the major companies. The realization finally dawned that the place of the theatrical film in American life was changing. This conviction grew as widescreen systems won favor and theaters continued to disappear. Hollywood observers and even some Hollywood spokesmen began to predict that the motion picture made for theaters would eventually find its place as a special event, located on the consumer's calendar somewhere between the rarity of a legitimate stage production and the omnipresence of TV. Fewer and "better" pictures were to be the answer to competition. (*Around the World in 80 Days* later became a favorite example.)

The familiar system of production in major studios began to break down. Top actors and directors were comfortably drawing their salaries, while fewer and fewer properties were being okayed for production. As the studios cut down production plans, they also began to cut back on contract lists. This applied to lesser-known and lower-paid people, too. No longer would there be a long-term pattern of training youngsters by putting them in minor roles in second-string films. There weren't any second-string films, at least judging by the budgets. The youngsters would have to get their experience in television.

The major stars, presumably, were rich enough and highpriced enough not to care about long-term contracts any more. One by one, they vanished from the major lots, some of them agreeing to come back for one or two pictures a year. But because the stars were now free to negotiate, they began to cost a great deal more.

They knew what they were doing, and so did their agents. Already James Stewart had shown how far a freelance actor could go in a deal with a major studio if he gambled on his box-office power. For his role in *Winchester 73* his agent demanded—and got for him—50 per cent of the net profits. Danny Kaye reportedly got $250,000 and 10 per cent of the profits for his appearance in *White Christmas*.

For those at the top, freelancing had irresistible charms. Clark Gable could hardly wait to be free of his 12-year-old contract at Metro. Paul Newman signed a seven-year deal with Warners and within two years regretted it bitterly. Marilyn Monroe caught the fever of independence and managed to have her way.

As actors' earnings rose into higher brackets, tax lawyers advised new administrative arrangements. If the stars set up their own companies, much of their income could be listed under capital gains, rather than as personal salaries, and they could keep a lot more of what they got. They could go looking for scripts like anybody else, and after that, hire a director, a crew, and a sound stage. They could release through United Artists or through any major company.

The agent became the key man in many production decisions. The three top talent agencies (William Morris, Music Corporation of America, and Famous Artists) had long been diversified—that is, instead of devoting themselves exclusively to actors or writers, they had set up separate but coördinated departments for actors, writers, directors, producers. Now it was more obvious than ever that combination was the clue to success. Instead of offering a script (or a writer) to a studio which already had a contract list of actors, or offering an actor to a studio well staffed with writers, the agency would offer a combination—a "package." This usually consisted of a writer and his script, one or two stars, and even a director. Sometimes the "package" was already an independent cor-

poration. The studio would have to take it or leave it.

All the studio could offer in exchange was (1) a physical plant and some technical departments, (2) a sales apparatus for distributing films to theaters, and (3) a familiarity with the mysteries of procuring money. All of these advantages could eventually be replaced by a hustling independent company, now that the stars—the main lever for extracting money—were available for independent deals. Harold Hecht and Burt Lancaster, the first and most notable of the agent-actor combinations, proved this by becoming within two years a production team with a substantial list of critical and box office successes behind them.

The new role of the talent agent has had two very significant effects. In the first place, it has helped to make everything cost more. Because his job is to get more money for his clients and his own fee is proportionally based on the money his clients get, the agent is normally quite unconcerned with the total cost of a picture.

The price of a client is a matter of almost magical manipulation of opinions and impressions. The difference between a star salary of $100,000 per picture and $150,000 per picture is impossible to explain rationally. John Wayne and William Holden were promised by the producers of *The Horse Soldiers* a guarantee of $750,000 apiece. There is nothing reasonable about such a figure. If Elizabeth Taylor gets $1,000,000 for appearing as Cleopatra, the picture may make enough money to pay such a fee in the long run, but it is based in the first instance on finely charged emotion and calculated bluff. Sometimes, of course, the bluff is based primarily on the emotions of the star, who reads the trade papers like everyone else and doesn't want to be left behind in the salary spiral. From Mary Pickford to Cary Grant, there have always been stars with a knack for getting and keeping money. But it's up to the agent to make the arrangements.

The agent is a poker player. He is expected to think along a single track, one transaction at a time, pointing toward the largest possible stack of chips—from which he periodically withdraws his own ten per cent. The agent is therefore concerned with the over-all management of a picture only when his client has a profit participation, and even then his primary interest is in protecting the price of his client for the next picture. He has little interest in a five-year plan.

This is the second effect of the expanded role of talent agents: long-range plans, either for talent or for a program of pictures, have become rare and almost accidental. In the old days, under the major studio system, a hard-fisted paternal character like L. B. Mayer or Harry Cohn could plan a developing career for new young stars or directors because he had them under contract. Independence is different, far more insecure for the individual with talent. The agent's role has become all-important.

The agent, however, is not necessarily a producer. He has power over individual actors and writers, but that power may be fleeting, for an artist can change his agent. He must exercise his power quickly when the actor needs a job. He has the power of ideas, of preparing "packages" for independents, but these are usually "one-shot deals." Although there are many responsible agents who are smart enough to worry about their clients' long-term interests, the agent—by nature and by function—is not a responsible film-maker. It is not his business to worry about whether the box-office receipts will cover costs and profits. He may have time to think, between phone calls, "Jimmy Smith has been in too many westerns lately. We ought to put him with Hitchcock, or maybe he's ready for a musical for a change." He does not have time—nor is he in a position—to think about his actor's development as part of a program of production.

A troubled actor, eager for quick approval, is even less likely to be a long-range planner. Restive under the old paternalism of the studio executives, he often felt he wanted to run his own life. But now the independent, "incorporated" actor is forced to make day-to-day deci-

sions for immediate profit, based on his own or his agent's estimate of the script at hand and what the audience presumably wants at the moment. He naturally tends to accept roles which give him immediate big opportunities rather than solid development.

What happens when an agent actually turns into a producer, with direct responsibility for a film or a series of films? This paradox has bothered Hollywood for nearly ten years. The agent-producer represents the performer or writer or director, on the one hand, as a salesman for an employee's service. On the other hand, he is joining with the future employee in a new role as an employer. He sells somebody to himself and pockets a fee for it.

This anomalous relationship was actually encouraged by the Screen Actors Guild through a special waiver in its contract with the Artists' Managers Guild in 1954. It all started with TV films. The uncharted land rush of TV film-making seemed to demand that MCA and other talent agencies be unleashed to roam free and wild—"packaging" as they went. When the Actors Guild finally announced, in 1961, that actors' agents could not be permitted, after June, 1962, to be actors' employers too, many of the agent-producers decided to stop being agents and took up producing full time. The major executives at MCA moved over to the former subsidiary company, Revue Productions, where the profits are many times larger. Nobody can tell which of these middle-men will survive the metamorphosis into creative decision-makers.

It is fruitless to try to generalize about the baffling variety of types and conditions "independence" assumes in Hollywood. Every contract—annual or per-picture—is a little different. At one extreme, a producer may have no more autonomy than before he signed a new deal with the studio; he sits at the same desk and looks over the same scripts sent to him by the story department, but he gets proportionately more money if the picture he makes makes more money. At the other extreme is the producer who buys an option on a script himself and persuades both the banks and the stars to have faith in him. The range of arrangements between the extremes is wide enough to keep a small army of lawyers alert and busy. But it is clear that many producers are still only as free as their production-distribution deal lets them be.

Obviously there were plenty of disadvantages under the centralized control of the old studio system. The staff producer had to film the stories the company executives bought. He had to work within the limits of tolerance of the executive in charge of production. He might be hemmed in by the veterans in the art department or the cutting rooms. He had to use players on contract at the studio, and he had no control over advertising or publicity. But even within the traditional system, a well-known director like William Wyler or George Stevens had considerable freedom to maneuver, to accept or reject distasteful projects.

An independent may think he is freer, but he will shortly discover that his hands are tied in new ways. In the first place, United Artists is no longer so very different from any of the so-called major studios. The producer or director is reasonably free once his subject or script is accepted, but increasingly the range of acceptable subjects is limited to the usual costly, presold projects. In the second place, his chances of producing a work of art are actually diminished by the unique, unforeseen pressures of independence.

For the struggling producer who is at least half-free—a man who is not himself an actor or an agent and who likes to think he has long-range plans for a program of stories—independence sometimes becomes almost intolerable. He sees his present script as having a certain balance and point of view. But in order to get the people he wants, he must compromise among many "free" agents and owners. The actor and the actor's agent will disagree with the producer and with each other on the lines and the action in the "big scene." The director will insist upon handling the ending a different way.

The distributor (when the producer finally does sign a contract) is likely to be, after all, a major company, and several studio executives will get into the act before negotiations are over. The producer's proud epic will be changed drastically in the editing room. It will then be sold as the lower half of a double bill in 300 situations simultaneously, with no appropriations for advance publicity. By this time, "independence" has become a misnomer and a mockery.

The universal fear of the box office also faced the staff producer in the studio, but for the independent it is more immediate, more ever-present, and far more intense. The long, thin line of independents is made up of men who are all trying bravely to think like studios. But they haven't the defense in depth to act like studios. Each producer is right up there on the firing line, with his one picture, on which everything depends. He may have his money for this one, but he's got to make it back—and big—or he won't get it next time. If he isn't a rugged individual, he won't survive. Being an artist has little to do with it.

So what is the safest thing for him to do? According to the advertising writers, the subjects with the broadest attention-getting appeal are sex and violence. His first picture, then, will probably be a western or a crime picture, just to be safe—something like *Little Caesar* or *Asphalt Jungle* or *Stagecoach,* only cheaper. He has to deliver a winner the first time. He can't say to himself: "I've got four pictures going and the one I'm not sure of will be paid for by the others." He can't even say: "I'm not sure which one I'm not sure of, but surely one of the four will be a winner:" His program, if any, is spaced out into the dim future.

Then, the second time around, if he has succeeded well enough to stay on the merry-go-round, he decides to do the same thing over again, just to be safe.

If he isn't a little careless, he may go on doing this forever. If he is careful, he may decide that there is never quite enough money to go out on a limb and do that wonderful story he has been holding in reserve.

The effect of independence on the themes chosen by younger theatrical film-makers is spread on the record at the Production Code Administration. According to Geoffrey Shurlock, the first film by a new independent company, time after time, is a story of violence. Stanley Kubrick was careful to begin his Hollywood career with *The Killing.* Even Sam Goldwyn, Jr., who might be expected to feel secure, started producing films, as it happened, with *Man With a Gun.* Hecht-Lancaster could not undertake *Marty* until after they were already a major independent, with some westerns nicely stacked up in the till. The fact that *Marty* made a tremendous amount of money in comparison to its inconsiderable cost has made no difference in the traditional way of thinking. *Marty* is still called a "fluke."

There has been sporadic talk of a "new wave" of young film-makers in America, as a result of all the talk about the "nouvelle vague" in France. Most of the talk is based on wishful thinking. Perhaps somebody with polished skills and untarnished vision will emerge from the smokescreen of the "exploitation pictures" that accompanied the rise of independence in 1956-1959—from the among the people who worked on pictures like *Born Reckless, City of Fear, Cry Tough, The Fearmakers, Go, Johnny, Go, High School Big Shot, Riot in Juvenile Prison, Speed Crazy, Teen Age Thunder, Vice Raid,* and *Gang War.* It seems more likely that this particular wave will drift into the formulas of TV film-making or vanish altogether.

The young men the eastern critics have been trying to discover seem to consist of Leslie Stevens, who made the sex shocker, *Private Property,* and John Cassavetes, who did a nonscripted picture called *Shadows,* with the possible addition of Robert Radnitz, who began his producing in highly unorthodox manner with the old-fashioned childhood story, *The Dog of Flanders.* More promising, perhaps, is the fact that Denis and Terry Sanders, graduates of UCLA's theater arts department, managed to finish a picture for United Artists called

War Hunt, and Irvin Kershner, an alumnus of the USC Cinema Department, was signed in 1962 to direct low-budget pictures for the Mirisch Company.

But one or two low-budget films don't make a wave. What brilliant beginners need is the protection of a tolerant system and a stimulating environment. They need guidance within freedom—and freedom not only from excessive paternalism but also from the paralyzing red tape of multiple ownership of each project.

The financial environment is all against the experimental newcomer. Theater men say they need "product," but except for horror and crime stories, they usually shy away from pictures without established stars—and stars are by far the biggest element of cost. Every other major cost is going steadily up. The guilds and unions press for new advantages every year. Since the International Alliance of Theatrical and Stage Employees contains both the theatrical projectionists and the production unions, a nonunion picture has little chance of being shown in an American theater. While the shortage of product makes this rule much less binding now, it certainly acts to prevent the making of low-budget independent films. Perhaps the best and cheapest way for a young American producer or director to be "discovered" is to shoot a 16-millimeter film in South America without professional actors and win a prize at a European film festival.

In France, the 30 or 40 new young directors (some of them not so young) have been fortified by a decade of talk and criticism, led by the late editor-critic, André Bazin; they have learned their motion picture history at the film showings of the Cinémathèque in Paris. There is no such concentrated intellectual activity going on in the United States among present and future film-makers. Until the film companies, the film museums, and the university film departments get together in some new way, there will be no such groundwork for creativity in this country.

There is almost no long-term investment in young people in Hollywood. Independent producers are sometimes willing to take on a bright young production assistant, and such a beginner can "get in" somewhat more easily to work on an independent film, because budgets and supervision are not as rigid outside the studios. But a young man has to be very bright and agile to know where to go after that first job. For the rest, Hollywood seems to be depending on its second generation. Sons of executives, like Plato Skouras and Richard Zanuck, or sons of directors, like George Stevens, Jr., happen to be wise and decent and promising young men. But there is hardly a rebel among them.

The big-money system of independent bargaining has been no great breath of fresh air, no wide open door to the expression of individuality by directors suddenly freed of studio trammels. There are few new directors at all, except those trained in the remarkable freedom of the early days of live television—men like Delbert Mann, Sidney Lumet, John Frankenheimer, or Robert Mulligan—or one or two who have found their way to the occasional feature opportunity through local live and syndicated film TV, like Irvin Kershner.

The current kind of costly independence has freed a few top producer-directors to do almost as they please. It has bought Otto Preminger a ticket to the Michigan woods for *Anatomy of a Murder* and to Israel for *Exodus.* It has restored Billy Wilder to the pleasures of comedy. It finally gave William Wyler the chance to make *The Friendly Persuasion.* It sent Sam Spiegel to the waterfront and the river Kwai and gave other opportunities to Elia Kazan and David Lean. These are no small gains. We can be pleased with them without at the same time being misled into calling the situation either a universal revolution of freedom or the best pattern for all movie-making everywhere from now on.

Can we detect, after all, any infallible and overwhelming differences between independent and studio productions over the last few years? Was *Marty* really so much better than *East of Eden,* for example? Was *The Pride and the*

Passion better than *Ben-Hur?* Was *Patterns* so much more honest or outspoken than *Executive Suite?* Was *Pork Chop Hill* a better war picture than *Battleground?* Was *Some Like It Hot* funnier than *Born Yesterday?*

Of course it is impossible to find a basis for comparison for films so widely separated in time. But if any close critical analysis were possible, relating motion pictures to their time and to their system of production, I doubt very much whether the Hollywood films of the last five years would appear to be of outstanding quality as compared with the years before that. Nor do I think the strictly studio films would suffer drastically in contrast. There would probably be, as the social scientists say, no statistically reliable difference. (Of course there are no statistically reliable critics in the first place.)

The freedom of the independent is sometimes defended as having broken down some of the restrictions of the Production Code. Certainly we can find in recent pictures more casualness in the use of words and far more explicitness in sexual relationships. But this cannot be primarily attributed to any special system of production. It is a reflection of the temper of the times, the competition of television, and the example of foreign films.

The narcotics issue, to be sure, was first brought up by an independent. Preminger's achievement was a mixed blessing, at best, but was *The Man With the Golden Arm* so much better than the studio film, *A Hatful of Rain*—or even *The Lost Weekend,* an earlier studio production which dealt with the problems of alcoholism?

Independence has always been an important source of path-breaking ideas and leadership in Hollywood. The credit for whatever is good among the films of the last five years must go to the stubbornly creative men who have learned to work with the new system and fight its limitations, just as they coped with the problems of the wide screen. They have continued to search for stories of quality; they have held onto high standards of talent and production. Strong and artistic individuals will make fine pictures, whatever the production system.

But this latest kind of independence puts a premium on toughness, not talent. Some of the best potential contributors to the film medium, however, are not strong enough to make their contributions by themselves. They need the right kind of paternalism—the right kind of faith in their special potentialities—the kind of guidance the executive producer system sometimes gives. If there are to be future Thomas Wolfes of the screen, they will need more than one Maxwell Perkins to discipline and guide them.

Art is achieved in the first instance only by individuals. Its carry-over into the completed complexity of a motion picture can happen only with the help of many other individuals and groups who have accepted the intentions of the artists who started the process. Only great art, conceived by writers and realized by directors, can light the spark that catches the heart and achieves the chain reaction of critical and box-office success so fervently desired by movie-makers and public alike.

A production system is valuable only so far as it makes that miracle of communication happen. The producer may be independent; he may be on a studio staff or an executive in charge of other producers. He may be a silent partner or an active participant in the writing and directing processes. But he is a superfluous and irrelevant figure—a mere financial cog or a frustrated bundle of will power—unless he is strong enough and patient enough to provide real freedom for the art of film-making, unless he takes the opportunity and has the ability to discover, pursue, protect, encourage, chasten, and reward the talent that lights the spark.

It is time for Hollywood to take another look at the advantages and disadvantages of independent production. It is time to think whether the development of a few strong centers of responsibility for programs of films might not be a revitalizing factor. The flight to foreign shores and the frantic preoccupation with presold best-sellers—both of them dominant trends

in Hollywood today—stem from the compulsion to make every single film a "blockbuster." This compulsion, so characteristic of the independent's insecurity, might be tempered and balanced if the executive producer role were to reappear—for instance, if pay-TV arrives. Its immediate demand for quantity production ("Every year," Jerry Wald predicts, "365 brand-new stories!") might require executive producers who could quickly find and cultivate new writers and directors. Like the Irving Thalberg period in the transition to sound or the Fred Coe period when transcontinental TV brought "intimate drama" into the living room, the very haste of pay-TV to fill new needs may avoid for a while the dullness of conformity to some imagined audience taste—may avoid the bureaucracy of decision-making which cramps the artists with conformity. But unless there are strong centers of creative leadership and some financial centralization, here and there, that dares to continue supporting programs of varied themes and appeals, the excitement of a new distribution system will soon decline into the same old sameness—the conformity that widespread fear of the public always induces.

Every studio still has a chief of production, but such men are primarily negotiators, occupied with contracts, agents, and the crises of worldwide production. They have little time for the slow processes of artistic leadership or the encouragement of reluctant talent. There is a hint of a possible future pattern in the Mirisch Company, with its partnership arrangements involving Fred Zinnemann, William Wyler, Billy Wilder, and Robert Wise. Stanley Kramer has recently undertaken several films using younger directors. John Houseman manages to keep at least two film projects going at once at MGM. But the creative executive can have only limited freedom or power as long as the present kind of "independence" dominates the Hollywood scene.

PAULINE KAEL

The Innocents, and What Passes for Experience

REMARKS ON MOVIE CRITICS AND SOME RECENT MOVIES

[The following article is drawn from radio broadcasts on KPFA and its associated FM stations, somewhat revised for publication.]

I. MOVIE CRITICS

"For me films are primarily a diversion. If I want to think, I read."

—CHAIRMAN OF THE JURY AT THE 1961 CANNES FILM FESTIVAL

"I do not care for movies very much and I rarely see them . . .—to me, rather unimportant —subject . . ."

—LETTER, SERVING AS INTRODUCTION TO *Agee on Film*

"The ability to take all that nonsense seriously was what made Warshow the remarkable critic of film that he is."

—INTRODUCTION TO ROBERT WARSHOW'S *The Immediate Experience*

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This careless condescension would be almost inconceivable if these gentlemen—Jean Giono,

W. H. Auden, Lionel Trilling—were judging novels or poetry or introducing a volume of literary or dramatic criticism. Movies are still treated as if they were in their nickelodeon period, still regarded as a mere "popular" entertainment—even though some of the greatest motion pictures have never been popular, and if they are not championed by perceptive critics will not reach *any* audience. The attitude that movies are just a pastime has helped to save them from academic dry rot: "appreciation" courses have killed off interest in music, painting, and literature, but movies, ignored by teachers as a Saturday afternoon vice, are one of the few arts an American can respond to.

American film critics all too often also treat movies as a child's vice, and their casual, indifferent, irresponsible criticism is supposed to be somehow "sophisticated." Like the famous writers above, they know "better" than to consider movies as an art. (Unlike Giono, when I want to think, I just think—I don't read; and when I write, it's about something I'm interested in.) For a half-century some of the greatest creative artists have been working in films, and their works have been left, for the most part, to the judgment of almost incredibly uninformed newspaper reviewers, and magazine critics who seem to think that contempt for the medium is the basic prerequisite for writing about it. There's not much point in citing the great works of the past which needed defenders and didn't find them: one would have to discuss virtually every great director who ever worked in films. A specialized audience for motion picture art has finally developed, but there are almost no critics to guide them, and the daily paper reviewers, who have been coasting for years—summarizing plots, rephrasing publicity handouts, and interviewing starlets—are often positively hostile when confronted with works that make some demands on their intelligence and background. Unable to cope with the new or difficult, they denounce it as incoherent or badly made or incomprehensible or deliberate fraud, and, finally, as not "entertainment"—by which they mean that it isn't a mass-medium type of movie.

In the year of *L'Avventura* and *Breathless,* the New York Film Critics Circle selects *West Side Story.* Isn't it about time for the newspapers to have two sets of movie critics—one to supply cornmeal gush for simpletons and advertisers, and the other to discuss the motion pictures that have some content worth discussion? All art is entertainment—it is simply a matter of how developed your tastes are: the more developed, the more entertainment you find in art. And the critics who reject the finest films as not entertainment are defending their own limitations, their disqualifications as critics.

II. THE INNOCENTS

When you see *The Innocents,** you think how amazing that this crew of film-makers could take such familiar material and make it so fresh. Then you read the reviews and discover that this material, far from being familiar to movie critics, is incomprehensible to them. They don't even *get* it. From Paine Knickerbocker in the *San Francisco Chronicle* you will discover that *The Innocents* "is dominated by the idea that two children—a brother and his sister—may be developing very unhealthy attitudes toward one another" and that it deals with "their incestuous love for one another." (As a friend remarked, "Now we know why Miles was sent down from school: that sinister business is all solved—he'd snuck his sister into the dormitory.") If you read Bosley Crowther in the *New York Times,* you will find a new enigma: the children ". . . are played with glibness and social precocity, but it is difficult to grasp whether their manners are actually adult or the figments of the governess' mind." If you look at *Show Business Illustrated,* you may have this illumination: "What unnatural, hypnotic hold have Quint and Miss Jessel over the children? What was their relationship with these otherworldly tots?

*Producer and director: Jack Clayton. Screenplay by Truman Capote and William Archibald and John Mortimer, based on "The Turn of the Screw" by Henry James. Photography: Freddie Francis. Cinemascope.

Homosexuality has been one of the favorite guesses among those who have had a go at the James riddle." (Maybe . . . but not in relation to "The Turn of the Screw"!) In *The Observer*, you will find Penelope Gilliatt, the most erratically brilliant of modern film critics, at low ebb: "In the book, the governess is vaguely attracted to the uncle who hires her; Jack Clayton, born after Freud, shows that she's really in love with one of the children. . . ." And the stuffily rationalistic John Coleman of *The New Statesman* says: "Perhaps the children . . . *are* possessed; and, on these perhapses, intelligent interest dissipates."

Don't let these new developments in Jamesian scholarship keep you away from the movie—which is closer to Henry James than you might think from the reviews. It's a "fun" movie—with all the pleasures of elegance and literacy. The little girl's song by Paul Dehn before the titles and then the hands with the titles are marvelous; from the very first scene, we know these people know what they're doing and we can relax. It's going to be all right: there may be mistakes, but they won't be vulgar or stupid mistakes. The presence of Michael Redgrave and Deborah Kerr is wonderfully reassuring: when they speak, the nuances are all there, and just the right note of suppressed hysteria in the voices. The house and the park are magnificent—so magnificent they're rather unreal (unreal in a way that's right for "The Turn of the Screw"). I don't know where this photographer Freddie Francis sprang from. You may recall that in the last year just about every time a British movie is something to look at, it turns out to be his (*Room at the Top, Sons and Lovers, Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*—in each case with a different director), and what he has done for *The Innocents* seems at times almost more inspired than the work of Jack Clayton, the director; Georges Auric, the composer; and William Archibald, Truman Capote, and John Mortimer, the scenarists. It's always difficult in a movie to judge who should get the credit, who the blame. In this case, it is simply a matter of trying to judge who should get the *most* credit.

"That little wet tear . . ."

Who, for example, thought of using those curiously frozen, indistinct long shots of Miss Jessel's ghost? We peer at these images with the governess's eyes, and we are transfixed by their beauty. They're like the memory of an old photograph; we retain a definite impression even though it's impossible to describe what was in it. And did we even see it or did we just hear about it and think we saw it? Or did we only see something like it?

And who thought of the marvelous shot of Deborah Kerr with her long hair floating as she kisses the boy, so that as her frightened lips draw back in confusion, we see the hairs hanging below her chin like the sparse beard of an old Chinese?

The Innocents is not a great movie, but it's a very good one, and maybe Deborah Kerr's performance should really be called great. The story isn't told quite clearly enough: the elegant setting and our story sense lead us to expect a stately plot line, but instead of moving in a clear developmental rhythm, the plot advances through sudden leaps, as if the film-makers have concentrated on the virtuoso possibilities of the material. There is a beautiful montage sequence, exquisite in itself, but too long and elaborate to advance the story; what is even worse, the sequence comes too fast upon us; and the abrupt developments and some noisy,

easy effects tend to disturb the pleasures of analyzing what is going on. Perhaps the problem is simply that, reading the novel, we can set the book down, smile and enjoy thinking it over, and then take it up again. Here we are rushed along without time for reflection.

It's probably the combination of a rather jerky rhythm in the film with our missing reader's pauses for reflection that slightly (but only slightly) interferes with our enjoyment of the possible interpretive levels of the material—the game the film-makers and the original author play, of suggesting that the apparitions the governess sees may have some horribly unspecified kind of control over the children, or may be evidence of the intensifying monomania of the governess who has terrifyingly absolute power over them. The fun of it all is the deliberate mystification—represented in the film by the tear that the ghost of Miss Jessel drops. All else can be more or less comprised within the system of the repressed governess's madness; but not that little wet tear, that little pearl of ambiguity.

People love to be scared by ghost stories; James intensifies this pleasure by allowing us to scare ourselves—we perceive the ghosts in terms of what most frightens us. What is really beautiful about *The Innocents* is that almost everything is at the right *distance*. The children are so impersonal that we are not anxious about them: their fates are never quite real. It is all a game of a ghost story: we know that in this cultivated domain the ghosts wouldn't dream of doing anything so vulgar as themselves impinging on the action. James was a man of taste, and the film-makers, even when they fail as artists, remain gentlemen: the movie may not be up to James, but it doesn't violate his code. Whatever happens in *The Innocents* happens because of fear—that's what's so marvelous about it. And the fascination in this kind of ghost story is that the horrors cannot be resolved.

It is the unreality of *The Innocents*—the distance—which makes the whole concept work. The further away the ghosts are, the more truly ghostly. Close scenes, like the dialogues between the governess and the housekeeper (which have the all-too-carefully-placed middleclass sounds of radio—they go at each other with all the conspiratorial finesse of veterans of *John's Other Wife*), even the close scenes between the governess and the children—are too familiar. We listen attentively to the arch patterns in the speech, the loaded remarks, and we assent: yes, they're really getting it—the overtones, the suggestions are good, they're excitingly well done. But the *mystery*—that comes when the camera pulls away and we half-see something in the distance, or it comes when Miles recites a poem that seems so remote and strange for a child to recite that our perspectives on age and understanding become blurred and confused. The landscape with the ghost of Miss Jessel—was it perhaps after all not a photograph we remember, but the work of some painter whose name we can't recall, though we seem to remember something else by him so much like this landscape, or is it all just a mirage from the summer heat? This Miss Jessel is not merely the best ghost I've ever seen, she is the only one who has the qualities I associate with ghostliness—that is to say, not only the governess but *we, the audience,* think we have seen her before. (Quint is less successful: it's understandable that he should be conceived more physically as a sexual, almost animal force, but he looms up as the familiar bestial menacing type out of horror films. His first appearance on the bell-tower is by far the best: there, dim and indistinct, he puzzles us. We're sure we saw something but we can't describe what.)

The dialogue has, at times, the same beauty and ambiguity as the images. I assume that Truman Capote, who is one of the finest prose stylists—as distinguished from writers—this country has ever produced, is responsible for some of these phrases. And the boy who plays Miles, a child named Martin Stephens, is superb, not only visually, but in his poised and delicate enunciation of lines that are so beautiful they communicate a sense of the terror

latent in such beauty. He is a true creature of Henry James—the writer with his children who are too beautiful to live. This beauty is what makes *The Innocents* the best ghost movie I've ever seen: the beauty raises our terror to a higher plane than the simple fears of most ghost stories. It is the great virtue of the men who made this movie that they perceive the qualities of the Jamesian method: we are not simply being tricked, we are carried to a level where trickery—that is to say, master craftsmanship—is art.

I don't know why so many of the critics have been so remarkably unenthusiastic about *The Innocents*. Stanley Kauffmann wrote in *The New Republic*, "In his famous essay *The Ambiguity of Henry James*, Edmund Wilson advanced the possibility that the story is a sexual allegory, the ghosts being figments imagined by the repressed governess. If this is the case, it is doubly Freudian because James created the allegory unconsciously." Henry James, the most *conscious* craftsman in American literature, writing an *unconscious allegory!* "Now we are engaged in a small civil war, testing whether that notion can long endure. . . . The film will not settle this controversy, but it does settle that there is only one way in which James' story can be well dramatized: not for stage or television or screen but as a radio play. This is for two reasons. The ghosts are much less effective when seen than when described; and a radio play can confine itself to the highlights, as James does."

I don't think that anybody who tries to put a great work of literature on the screen stands much of a chance of reproducing its *greatness* in another medium and probably much of its richness will be lost, but there is an irresistible and certainly not-to-be-condemned desire to visualize works we love. It is perhaps testimony to the love of literature that we want to cast a beautiful actress as Eustacia Vye or Dorothea Brooke, that we can't help conceiving a film version of *The Confidence Man*. We may squirm when we see the work we love on the screen but surely we must recognize that someone else has been carried away by *his* love. And in the case of *The Innocents*, we don't have to squirm: "The Turn of the Screw" was not *that* great, and this is no simplification or vulgarization. It is an interpretation of a literary work that honors its sources.

One can understand, if not be very sympathetic toward, the purist monotony that Shakespeare is for the stage, Henry James for the printed page. (Suggested parlor game: try to think of five good movies *not* adapted or derived from any other medium.) But Kauffmann's suggestion that radio is the only possible medium is positively freakish.

Brendan Gill dismisses the movie for *The New Yorker* audience with a paragraph—"the story," he informs us, "isn't intrinsically pictorial." Well, I'm not sure just what story *is* intrinsically pictorial; nor am I convinced that the motion picture is just a pictorial medium. The story is a suspense story; and there is a fairly solid tradition by now that the movies are pretty good at handling suspense. And if we think of a story that seems to be pictorial, like say, *The Return of the Native*, does that necessarily mean its pictorial qualities would be easy to transfer to the screen? Possibly a film version, by substituting its own pictorial qualities, would wreck Hardy far more than it can endanger a melodramatist like James, whose dialogue and method are so highly dramatic. Surely it all depends on who does it, and how.

Time magazine, in a semi-complimentary review of the film, raises what I guess can fairly be called theological objections. If I were religious I think I would cry blasphemy and sacrilege at the way *Time* rams God and Satan into its movie reviews. "Henry James once deplored *The Turn of the Screw* as a shameless potboiler. There is irony in the confession. For in this little novel the creative flame that boils the pot rushed up from black abysses of religion seldom plumbed in this author's insuperably civil art. Though the book is known to schoolboys [what schoolboys?] merely as a grand ghost story, it is experienced by mature readers as a demonological document of shud-

dery profundity. [Mature readers are evidently those who can make hell-fire with only *Time* to burn.] Some of that profundity is sacrificed to saleability in this film . . ." and so forth. I am afraid these "black abysses of religion" are just a big hole *Time* is digging, filling it in with every important picture no matter what its culture or tradition—thus the Japanese film *Ikiru* becomes "the Calvary of a common man" and *The Five-Day Lover* becomes, of all things, a study of religious "desperation."

Time, having discovered these black abysses, next suggests that the film-makers don't understand the nature of evil and horror in Henry James: "The film is seriously flawed by a fundamental misconception that arises from a fundamental disagreement among students of the novel. Some say the ghosts are irreally real; others say they are hysterical fantasies developed by the governess, who has repressed a passion for her employer. . . . But the men who wrote this picture, Truman Capote and Playwright Archibald, unhappily press hard, much harder than James did, for the psychiatric interpretation. They have obviously failed to perceive that in suggesting a normal, everyday basis for the ghastly phenomena, they must inevitably relieve the spectator of his nameless horror of what happens."

Now, this is a failure to appreciate both the subtlety in James and the subtlety in the film: the movie (and James) do not suggest a "normal everyday basis" for the ghastly phenomena: they suggest that ghastly phenomena may be hidden in the normal everyday—for there is nothing *more* frightening than evil and horror *there.* And it is this level, this possibility in the novel that makes it, like other James works, so fascinating to the modern reader. It is the evil in the governess's singlemindedness, her insistence, her determination; it is the destructive power of *her* innocence that makes the story great. I don't see why *Time* and so many of the other reviews call this a "psychiatric interpretation" as if it were a new-fangled modern way to read James—invented presumably by Edmund Wilson. Pick up almost any story by James—*Portrait of a Lady* or *Madame de Mauves*—and you find yourself caught up in the destructive elements in virtue, and you are frequently told the story by a narrator whose interpretation of the material is, precisely, an exposure of himself. You read James because of the intellectual pleasure of speculating about what is really going on. "The Turn of the Screw" is not any different in method: what made it a "potboiler" in James's terms was simply the use of spooks rather than the more conventional "influences" of his other work—the heiresses and villains and social climbers who try to possess your soul, marry you for money, or drain your energy. However you interpret either "The Turn of the Screw" or *The Innocents,* the theme is the abiding Jamesian theme: the corruption of innocence. And the trickery is Jamesian—not letting you be sure whether the children are innocents who are corrupted by the servants who once had control over them, or whether they are destroyed by the innocent who now controls them (in her idealism, she may expect children to be so innocent that she regards actual children as corrupt).

The evidence that the screenwriters *haven't* slanted it is that the critics who complain of slanting are all complaining of different slants. Some of the reviewers have made a good deal of fuss about the supposedly "Freudian" perspective or slant imposed on the material by having the child Miles kiss the governess on the mouth—I don't see how this slants the material in any direction. I once worked as a governess for six weeks and I've never been so mauled in my life: the ten-year old would trap me in corners demanding kisses. I don't see that this proves that the child was corrupt or possessed by an adult spirit, or that I, who got almost as nervous about it as the governess in *The Innocents,* was hysterical. Both interpretations are possible.

Unless *Time* is suggesting that every housewife keeps a set of hallucinations next to the mixmaster. I don't see how the spectator is relieved of his horror by the possibility that the

source of the evil is in the governess's tortured Puritan mind. That kind of evil is not what is usually meant by "normal everyday." For whether the children see the ghosts or not, the governess certainly *does* see them, and her forcing Miles to confront the ghost kills him. Is there really more horror in this confrontation if Miles actually sees a ghost than if he dies from fear of *her*? A good strong, determined woman, so tortured by fears and visions that all her passion goes into making others look her fear in the face, is about as complexly dreadful a demon as any horror story can encompass.

Deborah Kerr's performance is in the grand manner—as modulated and controlled, and yet as flamboyant, as almost anything you'll see on the stage. And it's a tribute to Miss Kerr's beauty and dramatic powers that, after twenty years in the movies—years of constant overexposure—she is more exciting than ever. Perhaps she *is* a demon.

As for the reviewers who have kept people away from the movie—perhaps the title includes them?

III. A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

I wouldn't have thought *A View from the Bridge** was worth much discussion, but it has gotten such very-important-picture treatment from the press (including Dwight Macdonald!) that I think maybe I should say a few unkind words. *A View from the Bridge* is an attempt to make a neorealist Greek tragedy about a longshoreman in Brooklyn. Eddie Carbone (Raf Vallone) neglects his wife (Maureen Stapleton) because he's in love—although he doesn't know it—with his wife's 18-year-old niece. He helps two of his wife's cousins enter the country illegally, but when one of them (Jean Sorel) makes love to the niece, he accuses him of being homosexual, and then betrays both men to the immigration department.

*Producer: Paul Graetz. Director: Sidney Lumet. Screenplay by Norman Rosten, from the play by Arthur Miller. Photography: Michael Kelber. Music: Maurice Le Roux.

The audience—what there is of it—often brings a special cachet of good will toward these slum-set or—to judge by appearances—proletarian dramas. It is supposed to be a more important effort than, say, a story of incest in a middle-class family, and the audience—which, for a film like this, tends to be a liberal, educated audience—respects the *good will* of the author and those involved in the project. The converse is that the critic who says "But it isn't any good!" is regarded as a snob who doesn't care about the best interests of the proletarians—and certainly a snob toward the honest, hard-working movie-makers who *do* care.

Miller's intention is to create tragedy: but what we see is a man behaving so insanely and stupidly that we keep wondering why he isn't put away or treated. We keep wondering why his wife doesn't have him locked up or why the lawyer—played by Morris Carnovsky in his full rich tones of pear-shaped passion (he seems to be playing Arthur Miller as an old man)—doesn't send him to a doctor? They all just wait for the disaster; we can only assume they don't want to disturb the tragic inevitability.

We get the feeling of inevitability simply because we see the mechanics of what Miller is trying to do, and we get the feeling of tragedy simply because the atmosphere is so obviously ominous we know it's all going to end badly. We all know what Miller is trying to do: he seems incapable of keeping a secret. It's not so much a drama unfolding as a sentence that's been passed on the audience. What looks like and, for some people, passes for tragic inevitability is just poor playwriting.

We begin to wonder why we're being put through all this when nothing good can come of it—no poetry, no deepening awareness. The problem is right at the center of Miller's conception: in some peculiarly muddled democratic way he is trying to make a tragic hero out of a common man. But a hero cannot be a common man: he must have greater aspirations, ambitions, drives, or dreams than other men. What does Eddie Carbone *want*? He wants his wife's niece. According to the press sheets on

A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

the film, he is "a man blindly obsessed with an unnatural passion for his wife's niece." Well, what's so unnatural about it? You'll note that even the incest theme is fake—the girl is his *wife's* niece. When you think of the number of uncles who make passes at their own nieces, you begin to see how absurd this "unnatural passion" theme is. Presumably the norm for Eddie—what would be "natural"—would be that after 20 years he should still be physically attracted only to his wife. Well, the wife we see is Maureen Stapleton in a wrapper, biting her lips like a rabbit working on a carrot—carrying naturalism to those extremes of Actor's Studio perfection in which the people on stage and screen seem not only like the people next door but like the people next door when they're discussing crabgrass or the lack of rainfall. A man would have to be blindly obsessed to want her at all. When, behaving like Arthur Miller's official view of a good normal wife, she asks her husband why he doesn't want to go to bed with her, you fairly want to cry out for him—"Because you're so damned unattractive." You will notice that dramatists who write about proletarian characters often have this view of a good normal healthy marriage in which a man is supposed to have a good normal healthy desire for even his fat dull wife. There's something peculiarly condescending and sanctimonious about this view of the common man: he's supposed to be happy and settled and content with so much less than a more complex or uncommon man asks of life. The play is written in the old sentimental proletarian tradition in which the working man is good and monogamous and the rich are corrupt and lascivious; Miller has much in common with Wilde's Algernon Moncrieff: "Really, if the lower orders don't set us a good example, what on earth is the use of them?"

I think that *A View from the Bridge,* like so many other proletarian-slanted works, will be a success only with critics and liberal intellectuals and not with the mass movie audience. Knickerbocker of *The San Francisco Chronicle,* for example, writes about "the corrosive effect of the poverty" on all the characters, though I would guess that Eddie Carbone's take-home pay is higher than Knickerbocker's. Many well-meaning people will accept all Arthur Miller's heavy breathing about good working men, will perhaps accept even Eddie's insane behavior as tragedy.

In this liberal's version of the noble-savage concept, the working man is romanticized at the same time that he is patronized. (Miller compounds this confusion by projecting middle-class family values on the Carbones. The norms of behavior are so bewilderingly confused among recent immigrant groups that the noble savage, particularly a Sicilian noble savage, is likely to have morals and quirks that would make a liberal writer blush.) How did these writers ever get so far from working men that they can romanticize them, and how did they get to view themselves as so different that they can patronize them? The waterfront worker may not be so very different from Arthur Miller—you see a lot of them with women who look like Marilyn Monroe.

There's also an ironic twist to Miller's liberal sentimentality: whenever you run into a *workingman* who views working people as simple and good and views educated people as complex and corrupt, you've got the beginnings of a reactionary, fascist mentality.

A View from the Bridge has a couple of good performances—Raf Vallone is a powerful, commanding presence, and he's a marvellous image

(a sort of urban man with a hoe) and Raymond Pellegrin is very good. The movie, despite the little preview trailer with Lumet and Miller, which suggested almost a documentary approach to Brooklyn, was made in France in two versions—French and English. As Stanley Kauffmann pointed out, Vallone's English, enunciated with difficulty, is completely wrong for the role of Eddie: Arthur Miller specializes in a kind of colloquial speech which sounds ridiculous on the tongue of a man who is obviously struggling to pronounce a foreign language. Perhaps the idioms are so familiar, Miller thinks they're universal.

There is, in the structure of the work, an even more serious error. Eddie, in order to discredit the niece's suitor, accuses him of being homosexual, and at one point, in order to degrade the boy in the niece's eyes, kisses him. The accusation is supposed to be without foundation: the boy is supposed to be completely straight. Why, then, this particular accusation? The charge is specious and irrelevant unless Eddie has some suppressed homosexual drive which makes him accuse others. Where does the charge come from if not from the character of one or the other? (As Eddie keeps saying, "something isn't right.") In having both accused and accuser innocent, Miller is left with a loose motive that has no relationship to anybody's character: it doesn't belong in the play at all. And the kiss—which would have a kind of dramatic horror if Eddie was attempting to degrade the boy by revealing what he himself experienced as degradation—*has* no meaning: it's just embarrassing. It has its irony, however: after all these years of tabus, we finally get two men kissing on the screen and neither of them is even supposed to be enjoying it. You'd think there were no homosexuals in America, only heterosexuals falsely accused. (If I may indulge in a little game of psychologizing, I would say that, given the character of Eddie as a man unconsciously in love with his niece, he would probably be delighted if he thought the boy was homosexual, because he would then have no real competition for the girl.)

Those are my unkind words on *A View from the Bridge*, except to add that Sidney Lumet doesn't do a very good job of direction, and that, in particular, his handling of the crowd in the street toward the end of the film is oppressively clumsy.

Miller seems to want to love his worker-stereotypes; Lillian Hellman hates her upper-class stereotypes. William Wyler's production of *The Children's Hour* is such a portentous, lugubrious dirge (that seems to be part of the funeral of Hollywood movie-making) that I developed a rather perverse sympathy for the rich old lady villainess—I thought the schoolteachers treated her abominably. Where I come from, if somebody, particularly an older person, says "I've been wrong, I'm sorry, what can I do to make amends?" you take the hand they hold out to you. I've never understood Lillian Hellman-land, where rich people are never forgiven for their errors. But then, has Miss Hellman even recognized hers? I can't help thinking she wouldn't waste any sympathy on sexual deviation among the rich. Aren't we supposed to feel sorry for these girls because they're so hardworking, and because, after all, they don't *do* anything—the Lesbianism is all in the mind (I always thought this was why Lesbians needed sympathy—that there isn't much they *can* do).

There has been some commiseration with Wyler about the studio hacking out the center of the film: that's a bit like complaining that a corpse has had a vital organ removed. Who cares? I'm not sure the material of *The Children's Hour* would work even if you camped it up and played it for laughs; I certainly don't know what else you could do with it.

IV. CANNED AMERICANA

The ordinary commercial movie these days is full of sex and sadism, but it is precisely at the level on which sex and sadism have some meaning in relation to character and behavior, at the level on which they function as elements in a

work of art, that the critics and audiences get confused and draw back in a holier-than-thou revulsion, and a real or pretended lack of comprehension.

The commercial movie tells the audience how to react: when a character is lascivious or incestuous or brutal or masochistic or whatever is fashionable for the season, the movie nudges us each time he is exhibiting his characteristics. The desired audience responses are built into the structure of the film: we know we are supposed to recoil with horror from the decadent upper classes of *Spartacus,* just as we know that we are supposed to be revolted by the racism of the bullying officer Krupke in *West Side Story.* All the work of responding is done for us. We may reject the built-in responses—particularly in comedies where the prodding and pushing for a laugh is often so crude that when we do laugh, we hate ourselves for it. And it's relatively easy to reject the romantic responses that are built-in: the heroine and her girl friends, the whole cast may swoon when Robert Wagner appears, yet we in the audience may groan.

But even when we disassociate ourselves from the built-in responses, even when we refuse to go along with what is expected of us, we are never in doubt about what *is* expected, because we have been cued every step of the way. In *West Side Story* we are never in any doubt or confusion about how we should react to each character and action: it is perhaps a measure of its distance from *Romeo and Juliet* that those threads in each character that provided ambiguities, complexities, layers of motives—the threads that made the texture interesting—have been removed. In Shakespeare, Romeo was so much in love with love that he shifted his feeling from the fair Rosaline to Juliet with scarcely a pause to catch his breath. In *West Side Story,* when Tony sees Maria, it's true love—unmistakably signaled as the first, the last, the only.

And I would like to suggest that audiences who have come to depend on these cues and prods are becoming helpless to respond without them, and that this may help to account for the audience confusion about movies like *The Cousins, Breathless, Kagi, L'Avventura, The Five-Day Lover.* Audiences at art houses often seem so locked in self-consciousness and uncertainty that they are busy being respectful even at comedies. Is it possible that they can't just relax and roll with the punch? Of course, the films sometimes hit below the belt, but are audiences as incapable as the critics of admitting that they possess a target? This reluctance of audiences to expose themselves, this stuffy, prissy trying to keep an intelligent face is, I suspect, closing off some of the few genuine dramatic experiences that are possible these days, especially the new forms of satire and comedy—the comedy that grows out of carrying people's most deeply felt conflicts too far, both raising them and reducing them to the human horror stockpile.

The characters in new films are not what we used to call characters at all: they are bundles of drives reacting in sentimental ways if it is simple popular moviemaking *(Lover Come Back),* in grotesque ways if it's more complex popular moviemaking like *Elmer Gantry,* or *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof,* or *Suddenly Last Summer,* or *Splendor in the Grass,* or *All Fall Down,* or they are masses of sensations reacting in extremely arbitrary ways if it is chic French movie-making—like *The Lovers* or *Purple Noon.* In older films, characters were fighting their impulses, trying to subordinate their drives to their aspirations; they were capable of ideas and ideals. Now, the Freudianized writers produce creatures like those in *The Mark* or *Splendor in the Grass;* we are told more about them than they know themselves, and they are shown as smart, or as gaining insight, when they discover what we already know—their sexual desires, their fears and anxieties. The only figures in the movies who could be called characters are more exactly caricatures—the father as played by Pat Hingle in *Splendor in the Grass,* the mother as played by Una Merkel in *Summer and Smoke,* and—dare I say it—the analyst as played by Rod Steiger, in *The Mark.*

Perhaps in modern terms, character *is* a caricature. The only person who gives any sense of character to *All Fall Down,* is the mother, played by Angela Lansbury—and once again, it's a howling caricature. And yet the moments when she really moves us (and Angela Lansbury is at times extraordinarily moving, reminiscent of Bette Davis at her best) are when she steps free of the caricature and becomes a character. This makes me wonder a little if perhaps one of the reasons why character is disappearing is that audiences don't want to respond or feel. It's much easier to laugh at or feel superior to a caricature than feel with a character. For isn't the essence, the defining quality of a caricature that it tells us how to react? It is a character with the responses built in.

Even the best American movie of 1961, *The Hustler,* is written in what is generally described as a "pungent" style. That is to say, the dialogue comes out of the thirties and borrows heavily from Clifford Odets. A character does not ask a simple question like "Are you his manager?" He asks, "Are you his manager? his friend? his stooge?" And there's a tortured, crippled girl who speaks the truth: she's sort of a female practitioner of the Socratic method who is continually drinking her hemlock.

It's interesting to see the uses to which Hemingway can be put. Here a basic masculine story—the test of what a man's got inside him—is set in a poolroom. But where Hemingway would cut out all extraneous material, thereby raising this simple, unadorned test to the level of myth, Robert Rossen and his associates surround the test with a couple of hours of mythological chitchat. They keep ringing the bell of heavy overtones, and though, as audience, we keep salivating, after a while it's hard to work up enough juice to wet the popcorn.

All Fall Down is deep in William Inge territory—homespun and Gothic—that strange area of nostalgic Americana where the familiar is the Freudian grosteque. It's also a peculiar kind of fantasy in which hideous lecherous women paw handsome young men (schoolteachers seems to be the worst offenders)—and the one girl who might seem attractive disqualifies herself by becoming pathetically pregnant. The movie turns out to be the portrait of the writer as an adolescent (Brandon de Wilde plays the part) who grows up—"matures"—when he learns that the older brother he idolizes (played by Warren Beatty) is an empty wreck. Does *anybody* really grow up the way this boy grows up? He learns the truth, squares his shoulders, and walks out into the bright sunlight as Alex North's music rises and swells in victory. How many movies have pulled this damned visual homily on us, this synthetic growing-into-a-man, as if it happened all at once and forever, this transition to self-knowledge and adulthood? Suggested party game: ask your friends to tell about the summer they grew up. The one who tells the best lie has a promising career ahead as a Hollywood screenwriter.

There's supposed to be something on fire inside Alma, the heroine of *Summer and Smoke,*

ALL FALL DOWN: *Echo reveals her pregnancy to Berry-Berry.*

but from Geraldine Page's performance and Peter Glenville's direction, t'ain't smoke that rises, just wispy little old tired ideas goin' to rejoin the Holy Ghost. There's nothing on fire in the movie. The movie looks artistic, but it's the opposite of art: it dulls the senses. There are many ways in which a performance can go wrong. Geraldine Page may have discovered a new one: she's technically so careful, so studied, so perfect in a way that she's a bore—all delicate shadings and no surprises. Who wants to see a performance that's so meticulously worked-out and worked-over, it's finished, it's dead? Besides, Miss Page's lonely, inhibited spinster, Alma, is rather an unfortunate mixture of Julie Harris and Zasu Pitts. She doesn't have what might make us *care*.

The subject matter of *Summer and Smoke* is a little anecdote about two people, a preacher's daughter who represents spirit and a doctor's son who represents flesh. Each influences the other and so they wind up exchanging roles: she becomes a loose woman and he becomes a dedicated, selfless man. It's a little *QED* sort of plot stretched out for two hours of overcomposed photography and decomposed characters. There's one of those hypocritical preachers who looks left over from a stock company of *Rain;* stage Mexicans flash their gleaming teeth; Thomas Gomez turns up once more, sweating and shouting; and Rita Moreno—who is always described as fiery and tigerish—comes on like a parody of Carmen Jones. Her dance of inflamed jealously is lethally funny, but in this context of what are called poignant emotions you become too dispirited to laugh. And there's the ingenue or overgrown infant, Pamela Tiffin, with a face as soft and dimply as a baby's bottom—and just as expressive. Couldn't the stork take her back?

Sometimes Tennessee Williams seems to think with the mind of Stanley Kowalski. If Alma is being spiritual and skittish and old-maidish when she screams at a cock-fight, carry me back to old virginity.

V. THE DAY THE EARTH CAUGHT FIRE

I mentioned on the last broadcast that I had been disappointed in *The Day the Earth Caught Fire,** and that I would discuss it on this broadcast, and I received an extraordinary communication from a man who says he would "like to dissuade me" from an unfavorable review. He cautions me that I should not apply the same standards to science fiction that I would to *The Seventh Seal* or *L'Avventura*—and I can only assure him that I had not *intended* to. I have read his communication carefully and I cannot disagree that *The Day the Earth Caught Fire* attempts to accomplish a worthy purpose. I hope that he—and you—will not think I am anxious for nuclear war or avid to see the world go off its axis if I say that, worthy purpose or no, *The Day the Earth Caught Fire* is not a very good movie. And perhaps I can make this a little stronger by saying that precisely because its avowed aims are so high, it should be a better movie: artists who want to save the world should not make the world seem so banal. It rather takes the gloss off things, don't you think?

In bookstores you can buy a paperback of *The Day the Earth Caught Fire* and on the jacket you'll see the blurb: "The book of the movie that the *Saturday Review* calls even greater than *On the Beach.*" This is the kind of greatness, isn't it, that dwarfs our poor powers of speech or analysis? It is the greatness not of art but of calamity. The film is, I suppose, better than *On the Beach,* but I shall always be grateful to Stanley Kramer for either intentionally or unintentionally including that beautiful moment when Gregory Peck, after spurning Ava Gardner's advances, returns to find her in a wheat field, and asks, "Is your invitation to spread a little fertilizer still open?"

After seeing *The Day the Earth Caught Fire* I was so puzzled by the ecstatic reviews that I did a bit of research. There had to be some reason why Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., wrote a think piece with such glowing embers as "Life

*Produced and directed by Val Guest. Screenplay by Val Guest and Wolf Mankowitz. Photography: Harry Waxman. Music: Stanley Black.

today is filled with tragic choices" (one of them was his decision to become a film reviewer), and why this film was being treated so seriously. As science fiction it isn't nearly so amusing as, say, *The Time Machine,* and as drama it doesn't exist. As science fiction the film is really a bit of a cheat, for it employs stock disaster footage—subtly but completely wrong for the final catastrophe: we expect something more mind-shattering than familiar newsreel horrors of fire and flood and famine. I think I found a partial answer in *Variety:*

PITCH TO INTELLECTUALS & WORRYERS FOR U'S USA-USSR EXPLOSION PIC

A sort of nuclear question hangs over Universal —how to sell the public (domestic market) on a downbeat picture dealing with the No. 1 issue of the day?

Film is the British "Day the Earth Caught Fire," which cost U $350,000 for western hemisphere rights. Yarn depicts Soviet-U.S. simultaneous test explosions at either pole which get the planet off its axis and out of its orbit, headed for the sun and extinction. The horror is left unresolved at fadeout.

Anxiety in the U echelons is not whether the pic can turn a nice profit—they're convinced it can, obviously—but the shrewdest policy for tapping revenue. As a first step toward solution, but as part of the total effort in any case, the distrib is wooing the so-called opinion-makers per one of the most intensive pre-release screening schedules ever to engage a major company. Slated over a nine-week period, the showings are being aimed almost exclusively for the intelligentsia—scientists, diplomats, religionists, labor leaders, and such.

VI. WEST SIDE STORY

Sex is the great leveler, taste the great divider. I have premonitions of the beginning of the end when a man who seems charming or at least remotely possible starts talking about movies. When he says, "I saw a great picture a couple years ago—I wonder what you thought of it?" I start looking for the nearest exit. His great picture generally turns out to be *He Who Must Die* or something else that I detested—frequently a socially conscious problem picture of the Stanley Kramer variety. Boobs on the make always try to impress with their high level of seriousness (wise guys, with their contempt for all seriousness).

It's experiences like this that drive women into the arms of truckdrivers—and, as this is America, the truckdrivers all too often come up with the same kind of status-seeking tastes: they want to know what you thought of *Black Orpheus* or *Never on Sunday* or something else you'd much rather forget.

When a really attractive Easterner said to me, "I don't generally like musicals, but have you seen *West Side Story*? It's really great," I felt a kind of gnawing discomfort. I *love* musicals and so I couldn't help being suspicious of the greatness of a musical that would be so overwhelming to somebody who *didn't* like musicals. The gentleman's remark correlated with other expressions of taste—the various encounters in offices and on trains and planes with men who would put on solemn faces as they said "I don't ordinarily go for poetry but have you read *This is My Beloved*?"

I had an uneasy feeling that maybe it would be better if I *didn't* go to see *West Side Story*—but, if you're driven to seek the truth, you're driven. I had to learn if this man and I were really as close as he suggested or as far apart as I feared. Well, it's a great musical for people who don't like musicals.

You will notice that nobody says *West Side Story* is a good movie; they say it's great—they accept the terms on which it is presented. It aims to be so much more than a "mere" musical like *Singin' in the Rain* (just about the best Hollywood musical of all time) that it is concerned with nothing so basic to the form as lightness, grace, proportion, diversion, comedy. It is not concerned with the musical form as a showcase for star performers in their best routines; it aspires to present the ballet of our times—our conflicts presented in music and dance. And, according to most of the critics, it succeeds. My anxiety as I entered the theater

For credits, see review elsewhere in this issue.

was not allayed by a huge blow-up of Bosley Crowther's review proclaiming the film a "cinematic masterpiece."

West Side Story begins with a blast of stereophonic music that had me clutching my head. Is the audience so impressed by science and technique, and by the highly advertised new developments that they accept this jolting series of distorted sounds gratefully—on the assumption, perhaps, that because it's so unlike ordinary sound, it must be *better?* Everything about *West Side Story* is supposed to stun you with its newness, its size, the wonders of its photography, editing, choreography, music. It's nothing so simple as a musical, it's a piece of cinematic technology.

Consider the feat: first you take Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and remove all that cumbersome poetry; then you make the Montagues and Capulets really important and modern by turning them into rival street gangs of native-born and Puerto Ricans. (You get rid of the parents, of course; America is a *young* country—and who wants to be bothered by the squabbles of older people?) There is Jerome Robbins to convert the street rumbles into modern ballet—though he turns out to be too slow and painstaking for high-powered movie-making and the co-director Robert Wise takes over. (May I remind you of some of Robert Wise's previous credits—the names may be construed as symbolic: *So Big, Executive Suite, Somebody Up There Likes Me, I Want to Live.*) The writers include Arthur Laurents, Ernest Lehman, and, for the lyrics, Stephen Sondheim. The music is said to be by Leonard Bernstein. (Bernstein's father at a recent banquet honoring his 70th birthday: "You don't expect your child to be a Moses, a Maimonides, a Leonard Bernstein." No, indeed, nor when you criticize Bernstein's music do you expect people to jump in outrage as if you were demeaning Moses or Maimonides.) Surely, only Saul Bass could provide the titles for such a production, as the credits include more consultants and assistants, production designers, sound men, editors, special effects men, and so forth than you might believe possible—until you see the result. Is it his much-vaunted ingeniousness or a hidden streak of cynicism—a neat comment on all this technology—that he turns the credits into graffiti?

The irony of this hyped-up, slam-bang production is that those involved apparently don't really believe that beauty and romance *can* be expressed in modern rhythms—for whenever their Romeo and Juliet enter the scene, the dialogue becomes painfully old-fashioned and mawkish, the dancing turns to simpering, sickly romantic ballet, and sugary old stars hover in the sky. When true love enters the film, Bernstein abandons Gershwin and begins to echo Richard Rodgers, Rudolf Friml, and Victor Herbert. There's even a heavenly choir. When the fruity, toothsome Romeo-Tony meets his Juliet-Maria, everything becomes gauzy and dreamy and he murmurs "Have we met before?" That's my favorite piece of synthetic mysticism since the great exchange in *Black Orpheus*: "My name is Orpheus." "My name is Eurydice." "Then we must be in love." When Tony, floating on the clouds of romance (Richard Beymer unfortunately doesn't look as if he *could* walk) is asked, "What have you been taking tonight?" he answers, "A trip to the moon." Match *that* for lyric eloquence! (You'd have to go back to *Golden Boy.*)

When Tony stabs Maria's brother and your mind fills in with "O, I am fortune's fool," the expensive scriptwriters come up with a brilliant exclamation for him. "Maria!" he cries. Do not let this exquisite simplicity mislead you—for they do not call the name "'Maria" lightly. She is no mere girl like Juliet—she has the wisdom of all women, she is the mother of us all. And that is why, no doubt, they depart from Shakespeare's plot at the end: suffering Maria survives. And, of course, the appeal to the Catholic audience—which might otherwise become uneasy as both gangs are probably Catholic—is thereby assured. *West Side Story* plays the game in every conceivable way: it makes a strong appeal to youth by expressing the exuberant, frustrated desires of youth in the ugly,

constricted city life, but it finally betrays this youth by representing the good characters as innocent and sweet, and making the others seem rather comic and foolish. They're like Dead End kids dancing—and without much improvement in the humor of the Dead End kids.

How can so many critics have fallen for all this frenzied hokum—about as original as, say, *South Pacific* at home—and with a score so derivative that, as we left the theater, and overheard some young man exclaiming "I could listen to that music forever," my little daughter answered "We *have* been listening to it forever." (At his father's banquet, Bernstein recalled that at his debut when he was 13 he had played variations of a song "in the manner of Chopin, Liszt and Gershwin. Now I will play it in the manner of Bernstein." How, I wonder?) Perhaps the clue is in the bigness, and in the pretensions that are part of the bigness. Arthur Knight in *The Saturday Review* called it "A triumphant work of art"; Stanley Kauffmann in *The New Republic* says "The best film musical ever made. . . . When the film begins, and the Jets move down the streets of the West Side (studio settings faultlessly blended with location shots), as they mold swagger into ballet, we know that we are not seeing dance numbers, we are seeing street gangs for the first time *as they really are*—only we have not been able to perceive it for ourselves. . . . It is Robbins' vision—of city life expressed in stylized movement that sometimes flowers into dance and song—that lifts this picture high. If a time-capsule is about to be buried anywhere, this film ought to be included, so that possible future generations can know how an artist of ours made our most congenial theatrical form respond to some of the beauty in our time and to the humanity in some of its ugliness." A candidate for a time-capsule is surely no ordinary multimillion-dollar spectacle. Hasn't Kauffmann, along with a lot of other people, fallen victim to the show of grandeur and importance? If there is anything great in the American musical tradition—and I think there is—it's in the light satire, the high spirits, the giddy romance, the low comedy, and the unpretentiously stylized dancing of men like Fred Astaire and the younger Gene Kelly. There's more beauty there—and a lot more humanity—than in all this jet-propelled ballet. Nothing in *West Side Story* gave me the pleasure of an honest routine like Donald O'Connor's "Make 'Em Laugh" number in *Singin' in the Rain* or almost any old Astaire and Rogers movie.

Despite Kauffmann's feeling that "we are seeing street gangs for the first time *as they really are*," I wonder how the actual street gangs feel about the racial composition of the movie's gangs. For, of course, the Puerto Ricans are *not* Puerto Ricans and the only real difference between these two gangs of what I am tempted to call ballerinas—is that one group has faces and hair darkened, and the other group has gone wild for glittering yellow hair dye; and their stale exuberance, though magnified by the camera to epic proportions, suggests no social tensions more world-shaking than the desperation of young dancers to get ahead—even at the risk of physical injury. They're about as human as the Munchkins in *The Wizard of Oz*. Maria, the sweet virgin fresh from Puerto Rico, is the most machine-tooled of Hollywood ingenues—clever little Natalie Wood. Like the new Princess telephone, so ingeniously constructed that it transcends its function: it makes communication superfluous (it seem to be designed so that teenagers can read advertising slogans at each other), Natalie Wood is the newly-constructed love-goddess: so perfectly banal she destroys all thoughts of love. In his great silent film *Metropolis*, Fritz Lang had a robot woman named the false Maria: she had more spontaneity than Natalie Wood's Maria.

I had a sense of foreboding when I saw that Friar Lawrence had become a kindly old Jewish pharmacist called "Doc," but I was hardly prepared for his ultimate wisdom—"You kids make this world lousy! When will you stop?" These words Bosley Crowther tells us "should be heard by thoughtful people—sympathetic people—all over the land." Why, I wonder?

What *is* there in this message that has anything to *do* with thought? These message movies dealing with Negro and white, or Puerto Rican and white, like to get a little extra increment of virtue—unearned—by tossing in a sweet, kindly, harmless old Jew full of prophetic cant. (Presumably, Jews should not be discriminated against because they are so philosophic and impotent.) The film-makers wouldn't dream of having a young, pushing, aggressive Jew in the film—just as they don't dare to differentiate or characterize the racial backgrounds of the white gang. (Only sweet, reformed Tony can be identified as a Pole.) Yet this is a movie that pretends to deal with racial tensions. The lyrics keep telling us this is what it's about and the critics seem to accept the authors' word for it.

"But," counter the enthusiasts for the film, "surely you must admit the dancing is great." No, it isn't—it's trying so hard to be great it isn't even good. Those impressive, widely admired opening shots of New York from the air overload the story with values and importance—technological and sociological. The Romeo and Juliet story could, of course, be set anywhere, but *West Side Story* wrings the last drop of spurious importance out of the setting, which dominates the enfeebled love story. The dancing is also designed to be urgent and important: it is supposed to be the lyric poetry of the streets, with all the jagged rhythms of modern tensions. The bigger the leap the more, I suppose, the dancer is expressing—on the theory that America is a big, athletic country. Who would have thought that Busby Berkeley's amusing old geometric patterns and aerial views would come back *this* way? Add social ideas to geometry, and you have the new, *West Side Story* concept of dance. And just as the American middle classes thought they were being daring and accepting jazz when they listened to the adaptations and arrangements of big orchestras that gave jazz themes the familiar thick, sweet sludge of bad symphonic music, and thought that jazz was being elevated and honored as an art when Louis Armstrong played with the lagging, dragging New York Philharmonic (under Leonard Bernstein), they now think that American dancing is elevated to the status of art by all this arranging and exaggerating—by being turned into the familiar "high" art of ballet. The movements are so huge and sudden, so portentously "alive" they're always near explosion point. The dancing is obviously trying to say something, to *glorify* certain kinds of movement. And looking at all those boys in blue jeans doing their calisthenic choreography, Americans say, "Why it's like ballet . . . it's art, it's really great!" What is lost is not merely the rhythm, the feel, the unpretentious movements of American dancing at its best—but its basic emotion, which, as in jazz music, is the contempt for respectability. The possibilities of dance as an expressive medium are not expanded in *West Side Story;* they're contracted. I would guess that in a few decades the dances in *West Side Story* will look as much like hilariously limited, dated period pieces as Busby Berkeley's "Remember the Forgotten Man" number in *Gold Diggers of 1933.*

After *West Side Story* was deluged with Academy Awards as the best movie of 1961, Murray Schumach reported in the *New York Times* that "there seemed to be general agreement that one reason" it won "was that its choreography, music, and direction were devoted to the serious theme of the brotherhood of man." A few weeks ago, in a talk with a Hollywood director, when I expressed surprise at the historical novel he had undertaken to film, he explained that the "idea" of the book appealed to him because it was really about "the brotherhood of man." I averted my eyes in embarrassment and hoped that my face wasn't breaking into a crooked grin. It's a great conversation closer—the "brotherhood of man." Some suggested new "serious" themes for big movies: the sisterhood of women, "no man is an island," the inevitability of death, the continuity of man and nature, "God is All."

Sometimes, when I read film critics, I think I can do without brothers.

Films of the Quarter

Pauline Kael

At the moment, San Francisco is so far behind New York on the new foreign films that I'd better limit myself to American movies. That *seems* sensible and plausible. Who would suspect that it's really a dirty joke? Only those who have been going to American movies. And who *does* go to American movies? Perhaps our movies aren't much worse than they were, say, five years ago, but in these years we have seen the work of Bergman and Fellini and Kurosawa, and then the new English directors, and then Antonioni, Godard, Ichikawa, Truffaut, Chabrol; after these, our movies are more humiliating than ever. Perhaps the greatest service Hollywood could do the nation would be to stop exporting them: our films are turning us into fortune's fool. Things have reached such a pass that Richard Griffith hails Roger Kay's *Cabinet of Caligari* as "an independent work of art, and one of the most strikingly original uses of the medium that I have seen in a lifetime of looking at movies." (Is Griffith revealing new talent as a comedian or does he have cataracts in his eyes as well as in his prose?)

It is impossible to discuss a new good American film, so I suggest a symbolical choice for the film of the quarter—*Sweet Bird of Youth*, the saga of Chance Wayne and his girl friend, Heavenly—the creation of our greatest living playwright at his worst, and the directorial achievement of the new master of the "audacious." Richard Brooks can make a gigantic machine out of a sickly little bird—a reverse image of what happens in Bergman's *Through a Glass Darkly*, where the mad heroine confuses a helicopter with God, and so thinks God a spider. Brooks isn't confused; like De Mille, he knows who God is. And the reversal is complete: the god of the box-office *is* a spider.

Stanley Kauffmann

The three outstanding films of the quarter ending April 30th were all of extraordinary quality, all finally unsatisfactory. *Through a Glass Darkly* contained, as usual, many brilliant Bergman promises, fewer fulfillments. At the start of a Bergman film I always feel I am on the edge of a large experience; at the end I sit telling the rosary of its virtues, trying to understand its shortcomings. Here the excellent "chamber" playing of Björnstrand, von Sydow, and Harriet Andersson; the exquisite and exquisitely apt photography; the delicately rigorous editing, all seemed worthier of a more cogent script. From Bergman screenplays I sometimes get the "*New Yorker* short story" feeling: *viz.*, "only you lesser clods would ask that this be organically and thematically clear."

Truffaut's *Jules and Jim* is the work of a man with imagination, spirit, and (as yet) no style, bursting at us with everything he knows, still unused to the fact that he *is* a director, *has* talent, and can just calm down and make films. The prewar section has Colette charm, the second part twists off into a neurotic Strindbergian conclusion, neither convincingly prepared nor convincingly abrupt and unprepared —simply disconnected. About Resnais' *Last Year at Marienbad* too much has already been written; I note here only that it is a generally amusing artistic game.

A Taste of Honey was insecurely directed by Tony Richardson but contained more of merit than one expects from him; at least he evoked a moving performance from a Finney-type female named Rita Tushingham. Satyajit Ray's *Devi* would be moderately interesting if condensed by a third; the rub between old and new India has been better dramatized by him before and doubtless will be again. Jerzy Kawalerowicz' *Joan of the Angels?* also needed

someone less in love with each shot to edit it, but this medieval tale contains some beautiful balletic effects of a group of possessed nuns.

Among American fims, the fresh family scenes of John Frankenheimer's *All Fall Down* almost compensated for the trite unsexiness of the sex episodes. Roger Corman's *The Intruder* was a contrived and essentially inutile film about Southern racism but had some good filmmaking in it and some chilling location shots.

As for Jean Dasque's delightful 12-minute *Play Ball*, I'm glad that limited space keeps me from succumbing to clichés about French comic invention and pastry-puff dexterity.

Gavin Lambert

Viridiana. I should begin by saying that for me Luis Buñuel is the most original, exciting, and genial director making films today. But what is it about him that makes Establishment critics so nervous?—the preparatory clearing of the throat, "I would like to dismiss his films, but . . . ," followed by unwilling recognition of his "talent" and disapproval of his "obsessions." (It goes hand in hand, by the way, with finding the Harper's Bazaar surface of *Marienbad* "beautiful" and *Through a Glass Darkly* "profound"—but that's another story.) The answer, I suppose, is that Buñuel is a richly subversive artist, appalled by and opposed to organized society—which he sees, through its various institutions (church, state, bourgeoisie), as a kind of insidious legalized thuggery, persecuting, smothering or crippling the individual, and which inspires him to a passion as scathing as that of his compatriots Goya or (in *Guernica*) Picasso.

Viridiana is basically a parable. A timid young ex-novitiate inherits her uncle's estate, and—out of a vague sense of guilt, because she feels indirectly responsible for his death—turns it into a sanctuary for the poor and derelict. The beggars (a marvelously vital group of grotesques not unlike the outcasts in *L'Age d'Or*) finally repay her by staging an orgy during her absence, and making The Last Supper an event for ribald parody. The poor girl, shocked and repelled, turns away from her guilty idea of "doing good" to face a fact about herself—the real object of her love is not an ideal but her handsome young cousin. This insistence on the "spontaneous self," which Buñuel celebrates in all his work, is in some ways reminiscent of D. H. Lawrence. (*"Is love of humanity the same as real, warm, individual love? Nonsense. It is the moonshine of our warm day, a hateful reflection. . . . Is idealism the same as creation? Rubbish!"*) A major film by a major artist, *Viridiana* is basically "realistic" with stunning surrealist interjections, like the rest of Buñuel's work since *L'Age d'Or*. If one can praise it too highly, it's only because one can perhaps praise *El* and *Nazarin* even more.

There is something to be said about and for a recent British movie, *Victim*. A work of art it is not, a kind of landmark it is. As opposed to the powerful private world of Genet's *Chant d'Amour* (which has only been screened in private), it makes a conscious public gesture, a plea for a more sensible attitude toward homosexuality. Too much (and finally ludicrous) melodrama, some evasion in the central character—a successful lawyer with "tendencies" he's never done anything about or with—but the boldness of the undertaking and very decent handling of the scenes with the boy driven to suicide, deserve a salute.

Dwight Macdonald

This quarter I enjoyed seven films, an extraordinary number which testifies to the fact that, as is no secret, more interesting work is being done in the movies these days than in, say, the novel or the theater.

Three are ambitious and important. Truffaut's *Jules and Jim* I admired the most as a whole. It is a more complex work than *The*

Four Hundred Blows and also a less harmonious and "finished" one; it combines farce, sentiment and tragic melodrama more successfully than *Shoot the Pianist* did, though the joints still show through; Truffaut's technical virtuosity and emotional spontaneity here are applied to a major theme for the first time and the result is exhilarating. Resnais' *Last Year at Marienbad* I didn't like as much as *Hiroshima, Mon Amour* because I was unable to make any affective connection with the story; its general outline is clear enough but each scene crossed me up; I could never tell whether I was in the past, present, future, or conditional tense, which was exactly what was intended by Resnais and his script-writer, Alain Robbe-Grillet, whose "objectivist" novels I find equally unsatisfying; but I can't remember a film of more sustained visual delight; I saw it three times in a week and the last time I enjoyed it even more than the first time although I didn't understand it, emotionally or intellectually, any better than the first. Antonioni's *La Notte* has some sequences as good as anything in cinema —the scene with the nymphomaniac in the hospital, the final episode on the millionaire's golf course—but as a whole I enjoyed it less than *L'Avventura,* not so much because it was a reprise of the theme that obsesses Antonioni, the inability of the man incapable of love to satisfy the emotional demands of his woman, as because its dramatic form was less tense and more diffuse.

The remaining four seemed to me minor but good. *Through a Glass Darkly* I thought Bergman's best since *Naked Night* and *Wild Strawberries;* the first half hour was superb, with its depiction of an unhappy family vacation on a lonely island; then the Bergmanian melodramatics set in, and had it not been for the performance of Harriet Andersson in the difficult, really impossible, role of a woman going mad, I should have lost interest. Tony Richardson has made a good movie out of Shelagh Delaney's excellent play, *A Taste of Honey;* much better than the botch he did of the John Osborne play, *The Entertainer.* In *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance,* John Ford has done a nostalgic recapitulation of the Western myth he has so long been celebrating; all the virtues of the classic Western are here; a worthy coda to a not unworthy career. A young Italian director named De Seta has made *The Bandits of Orgosolo,* which won the documentary film award at last year's Venice festival and also the Flaherty award here and which, I think, deserved both. It is a story, beautifully severe in acting and photography and plot, of poverty in Sardinia; like Flaherty's *Nanook,* it records a primitive style of life, determined by the brute struggle for existence, which has an austere nobility. And like Flaherty, De Seta has made a moving drama precisely by not compromising with the simple reality of his subject. I hope some importer will pick it up for American showing.

Jonas Mekas

I will start with the most neglected film of the quarter, *The Gordeyef Family,* by Mark Donskoi. It was not even properly reviewed when it opened in New York. But I went to see it four times, and the next time it plays, I will go again. The craft and the poetry of this Old Master is a pure joy.

And here are the others I liked: *Viridiana* (a masterpiece), *The Testament of Orpheus* (Cocteau could match his wit with GBS), *Last Year at Marienbad* (over-rated, but great), *Jules et Jim* (under-rated, but a masterpiece), *Night and Fog* (Resnais' best film to date), *Bandits of Orgosolo* (will go into the annals of cinema as one of the great documentaries), and a re-release of *Zero de Conduite* (a masterpiece) and *L'Atalante* (great, but slightly faded). What a list! A chapter of film history in itself.

I have missed too many Hollywood releases. I have seen neither the new Ford nor the new Hawks. Frankenheimer in *All Fall Down* returns to his origins, to the style of *The Young Strangers,* where his real strength remains.

From the independently produced films, I liked *Strangers in the City*, by Ricky Carrier, a gory but very well made first film, shot in New York on an unbelievably low budget, in Cinema-Scope. One should not be misled by its melodramatic plot. The beauty of this film is in its use of cinema and in its open, unrestrained emotion. It is in the class of *The Burglar*.

A television film (produced by NBC), *Police Emergency*, by Irving Gitlin, is another surprise from New York. Without any usual journalistic detours, camera follows two emergency-force cops through the brutal jungle of New York's night life, the neon-light poetry of death, misery, suicide. The film is brilliantly acted, photographed, and edited.

Vernon Zimmerman may be the most talented newcomer to the American cinema in a long time. His two films, *Lemon Hearts* and *To L.A. With Lust* demonstrate his immense talent for the comedy and poetry of the absurd. Taylor Mead (of *The Flower Thief*, who is also the star of *Lemon Hearts*) establishes himself as the first authentic star of the new American cinema (unless we start our count with Ben Carruthers).

SHAME of the quarter goes to the State Department for destroying the *Film Loops* made for the Brussels World Fair by Shirley Clarke, Willard Van Dyke, Don Pennebaker, and other film-makers. I should really call it a CRIME.

MOVIE MYSTERY

I saw you in the movies once,
Starring with Tom Mix.
You were nine and twenty.
I was turning six.

You danced the Charleston when next
I saw you on the screen.
You were nine and twenty.
I was seventeen.

The talkies came, and I was thrilled
To hear you laugh and cry.
You were nine and twenty.
Funny—so was I.

I don't quite know what happened then,
But somewhere down the line
I passed you up. I'm—uh—thirty-one,
And you're still twenty-nine.

—Lilyn E. Carlton

Books Received

A MASS COMMUNICATIONS DICTIONARY

Edited by Howard Boone Jacobson. (New York: Philosophical Library, 1961. $6.00)

The annotations for film terms are by Gloria Waldron; they will be useful only on the most elementary level and some are actually misleading ("*Cells* [sic]: The individual frames used in animation.") Students should stick to the glossary in Spottiswoode's *Film and Its Techniques*.

INGMAR BERGMAN

By Peter Cowie. A "Motion" Monograph. 23 Summerfield Road, Loughton, Essex, England. 41 pages. $1.00.

A comprehensive, sound, but not brilliant analysis of Bergman's films through *The Devil's Eye*. Bibliography. Since the British Film Institute "Index" series no longer appears, it is to be hoped that similarly useful *Motion* monographs can continue to be published; this one is certainly up to the level of most of the BFI Indexes, though it is, unfortunately, lithographed from typewriter composition.

Film Reviews

FILMS FROM NEW YORK

[In the following reviews we survey some of the films recently produced in New York. These do not, it bears insisting, constitute a "school" in any sense except having been made outside the usual channels of film financing—which is perhaps the most workable definition of "Hollywood" that can be given these days, though an ironic one since film finance has been controlled from New York since the studio reorganizations of the 'thirties. (The French New Wave, as is now clear to everybody, was not a school in any usual sense, either.)

The reviews are not intended to cover the entire current film-making scene in New York. Some New York work has been dealt with in earlier issues of *Film Quarterly,* and more will be discussed in the future. But these films seem worth discussion at this point, even though some of them have not secured release as yet. In the case of *The Connection,* as in that of *West Side Story* elsewhere in this issue, we present two divergent views in hopes of illuminating as fully as possible various questions of taste, style, and structure.—ED.]

THE CONNECTION

Directed by Shirley Clarke. Produced by Shirley Clarke and Lewis Allen. Script by Jack Gelber. With Warren Finnerty, William Redfield, Jerome Raphael, Barbara Winchester, and others. With the jazz quartet of Freddie Redd.

PRO . . .

Like *War Hunt* [reviewed elswhere in this issue], *The Connection* is a film of some importance; both stem from our current dilemmas in the age of the concentration camp and the closed mind, of wailing and washing of brains. *The Connection* (most ironic of titles and not at all what E. M. Forster had in mind with his "Only Connect") presents a complete cut-off from life; *War Hunt* involves still our moral implication, but only by an appalling assertion of the neuroses which can arise from war.

The Connection is brutally simple in its approach. Its characters have opted out. They have nothing whatever to do with us or anyone. In Gelber's conception of these heroin addicts there can be no compassion left. Shirley Clarke has rightly kept to this conception, even though it means that the film cannot stand comparison with Rogosin's *On The Bowery,* or, for that matter, Kurosawa's *The Lower Depths,* in which pity and terror are not left entirely out of count.

We are shown, in fact, a documentary crew of two persons who are making a film about what you see when you lift up a stone. The obscenely negative meanderings of the dope-fiends waiting for, and finally receiving, a fix, are analyzed like one of those Nature films which so often give small children nightmares.

That it is so successful is in large measure due to the fact that Clarke and Gelber, in adapting the play for the screen, have been able to eliminate the physical interposition of the director of the film between audience and actors. Instead, the audience is now inside the camera itself, and sees everything through the lens as it is deployed by Jim Dunn and his cameraman, J. J. Burden. This is much more than a subtle difference; Shirley Clarke tips us right over the edge as Dunn tries a fix himself, with disastrous and scatalogical results.

In a way Dunn's downfall may be the last straw for weaker spectators, who, having taken it up to this point, become sickened beyond endurance when they find themselves entering the hangover beyond the hangover.

Yet this is *the* point—the *only* point, I daresay—of the film; and very brilliantly Shirley Clarke and her cast have brought it off. It is the anticlimactic moment *after* the Black Mass,

something which no one I know of (except perhaps de Sade) has ever managed to elaborate. And Black Mass there certainly is, with the arrival of Cowboy (clad in white samite, etc.) and a Virgin long in the tooth called Sister Salvation. (Out of an almost impeccable cast these two, played by Carl Lee and Barbara Winchester, are really outstanding.) It is the measure of Shirley Clarke's surety of touch that the film doesn't run down into nothingness after this moment of revelation, when the fixes are at last available and the zombies troop one by one to the john, oblivious of the urgent claims of the Salvation Army's bladder (a thorn in the flesh if ever there was one).

The technique of *The Connection* is superb—a single set of enormous and solid shabbiness, lighting absolutely right (and this must have been less than easy to achieve), and the double participation of the ranging camera—participation documentary-wise combined with the forced participation of us, the audience. If someone trips over the tripod leg we get the jolt direct. Nothing is seen from the outside.

Thus, unlike *Vitelloni*, where we observe the aimlessness and frittering from the sidelines, *The Connection* makes us so much part of itself that we really are fixed. The needle and its results are as sickening and as ultimately meaningless to us as to Ernie, Solly, Sam and, in particular, Leach (Warren Finnerty is hideously effective in this part) who, God help him, is the landlord of this particular Hades and almost—but only almost—becomes human when he remembers this fact.

Was Shirley Clarke (aside from proving herself an exceedingly gifted film-maker) justified in rubbing our noses in—to be polite—this human detritus, and in exploring so remorselessly the hinterland of the point of no return? I think so. Where life, however low, still against all probabilities exists, it is worthy of a measure of attention. And here attention is drawn to an active rejection of life, to suicide without suicide. Any film made with such power and such dexterity is certainly worthy of note. All that is missing is poetry. But that *The Connection* is compulsive, impressive, and masterly I have no doubt. I should hate to have to view it more than twice.—Basil Wright

. . . CON

In the present context of the new local and foreign-made films it is tempting to look for more significance in *The Connection* than it can on its own merits sustain. The éclat of its success with Cannes audiences was at least partly spurious; it is less likely to be so here. The French—like the British, who drove Jack Gelber's play from the boards when it was produced in London recently—thought, in all bad faith, that they were seeing real American junkies. Donald Richie reports in *The Nation* the comment of a Cannes spectator that "it was a brave picture for America to have made." What is truly brave, from the standpoint of American audiences, and could lead to as dangerous a response as European gullibility, is the repeated use of a common four-letter word never spoken before in an American film. Shirley Clarke, as Donald Richie also reports, thinks rather that it would be brave of any censor to object.

But, that the Europeans had wrong reasons does not mean they were wrong. The extent to which we can believe in the actuality of events, and not merely in their verisimilitude, is certainly the test of *The Connection*. If it doesn't impress us as an honestly played-out psychodrama in which crucial revelations are at stake, it becomes an ingenious hoax to which our sympathies attach only at a level of execution and performance. In the theater *The Connection* was helped by the arcana of heroin and the intensity of jazz. These help it in the film, but an at least equal dosage of unexceptional acting and Saroyanesque conceit works even more powerfully in the film to keep the spell at bay. Because the cinema is now passing through its Pirandello phase, *The Connection* is being cited as an example of what movies can do to baffle

our perceptions creatively. It is not a good one.

The Connection, unfortunately, doesn't fool you as a living record. In fact, for the first few minutes you think it isn't going to work at all. By mid-film, however, it has succeeded in posing a visual paradox that anyone who understands how movies are made can appreciate; and of course the more you understand the more there is to appreciate. But the paradox of a *staged* documentary is surely a thin one for a movie. If most of the criticisms one can make of the film can also be made of the play, it is because *The Connection* remains theater. Gelber's film script maintains exactly the same pact with reality that was formed in his play. The result is that the film is less effective than the play, less immediate, and less immediately emotional and strange. What ought to have taken us to the heart of the Kracauerian dilemma takes us instead around and around in a maze of technical wonders.

Of Mrs. Clarke's contribution it must be said at once and with admiration that I have seen what she has attempted to do with the full length of Gelber's play succeed only once, and that briefly, in one or two shots from Welles's "March of Time" newsreel in *Citizen Kane.* Gelber's adaptation consists of combining the characters of his producer and playwright in the single character of a film director. One of the photographers of the stage play becomes the director's assistant, and it is by means of his omnipresent and voracious camera that the play "becomes" a film. But because the entire action of the play is cast into or against conventions of stage time and stage place, it is only like changing the frame around a picture. The effects are not phony, but they are not the effects of a real film either. They do not stay in your mind. In this, *The Connection* is a bit like *Pull My Daisy* and *Shadows,* two other American non-movies. The makers are having a go at film-making, but they have not the gift of seizing the imaginative mind of the spectator and pacing it through a pattern of events that will have the shape of film. A second visit to these films reveals nothing you did not notice

Three scenes from THE CONNECTION.

before; it is all over the first time. I am not now speaking of content, or even technique, because if technique is camera-handling, lighting, cutting and sound manipulation, Mrs. Clarke knows all about it. My point is that these films are uncreated. They do not occupy space in time. That is really the only rule for the "well-made film" that *The Connection* should have observed, and it is a rule I think Mrs. Clarke has that gift for, which is very like the gift of a dancer, but she does not show it here. Her film is like a "Play of the Week" done for television, an imaginative technical reduction of a preconceived entity.

The moral point of *The Connection*, of course, is that it can *not* exist as a film. A leader to the film announces that we are being presented with the footage obtained by one Jim Dunn, whom we meet in succeeding reels when he steps in front of the camera, and whom we see undergo the realization that his whole project for a film about drug addicts comes to nothing in the face of the enormous uncapturable realities of addiction itself. "That's the way it is, that's the way it really is," is a reiterated line. "It" refers not only to heroin, but to life and the despair of life. Gelber wishes to crack the illusion that we can invade the private world of desperate and resigned men with the equanimity of voyeurs from the safe real world of jobs, families, vitamins, and mental health. In fact, the film says, we are all hooked on something; in fact, the two worlds are the same. As Cowboy, the "connection," puts it: ". . . what's wrong with day jobs? Or being square? Man, I haven't anything against them. There are lousy hipsters and lousy squares." When the equation is thus set up there is no such thing as alien misery, no way and no reason to capture it for an audience —no theater or film big enough. The intentions of art becme fatuous presumptions against the condition of man.

These are the meanings of *The Connection,* as I understand them. I have already suggested that the film does not really prove itself as a film; and the fact that its sophisticated makers have contrived a brilliant surface of broken takes, blurs, blocked views and wobbly pans, and a soundtrack of overlapped levels—as a testament to the fact that you can't *make* that scene, man—does not excuse them from creating a progression of events that moves and pulls its weight in our minds as a true film does. Our world and the world of the junky may be the same, as Mr. Gelber believes, but the world of theater and the world of film aren't.

A closely related point that should be made about the morality of Gelber's approach is the fact that Jim Dunn, the "director," is a boob, the butt of most of the film's humor. He is oddly like the character played by Jules Dassin in *Never On Sunday,* except that Dassin really was the director of the film. In the end he takes a fix along with the junkies, and becomes ill and knows that both he and his film are inadequate. It takes the shock of heroin to tell him what his "subject" is really about. "That's the way it really is," he says in his stupor, and comprehension dawns at last. For those in the audience who are not as stupid as Jim Dunn this has disturbing implications. If Jim Dunn has not hitherto known the way it "really" is, then certainly Mr. Gelber has known it all along. Therefore the distasteful possibility arises that somebody behind the camera feels he can afford to play off the pretensions of middleman Dunn for laughs and for what depths of irony the film can claim. The impression would be that Mr. Gelber and Mrs. Clarke were working unforgivably far beneath themselves were it not for the "cameraman." He is a Negro (we see him once or twice and hear him frequently) and his name is J. J. Burden, as in White Man's. I am not sure whether Gelber means to convince us that the undoing of Dunn is foreseen by Burden and gleefully recorded by him, or that Burden is himself corrupt and shares Dunn's complacency. It doesn't matter which interpretation you pick because either ingeniously serves to cover the author and absolve him from any responsibility, so to speak, for the rather monstrous shape the film has taken. It is all pre-arranged,

just as it was on the stage, except that as a film *The Connection* no longer has its power of quasi-discovery: there is no "here and now" in the film.

In Gelber's play all the machinery of play-producing seemed to be opened to our gaze, and so the stage was possessed by the unforeseen, as we are in life. (A stage, any stage, is always thus possessed, if only because we are there.) But if you are going to play this game in a film, then you must play it for keeps. "J. J. Burden" cannot be taken seriously as the camera-eye, he is only an invention, somebody's surrogate, an ingenious mental calculation that opens the doors of perception into a hall of mirrors and then slams them in our faces. If *The Connection* is to succeed as a human and not a mental experience, it must persuade us that we are involved in the consequences of an act committed in the real world—not the world of realism, but the world we re-enter when we leave the movie theater. I am making the terrible suggestion that Mr. Gelber and Mrs. Clarke, if they are really serious about experimenting with the way it "really" is, should have come into the film themselves. If they had done so, and followed out their own emotions with truth and unforced logic, we should have had a film that was a film. I will hazard that it would have been a film with very different philosophical conclusions from the play, and perhaps not like the play at all. The very least it could have been is something completely undreamed of. The most that can be said of it now, and it is being said with shameless enthusiasm on all sides, is: "It's not *really* real."—ARLENE CROCE

OF STARS AND MEN

Of Stars and Men is the first animated feature of John and Faith Hubley; it is based on the book of the same name by Harlow Shapley. As a film, it makes two breakthroughs at once—one old, one new. The old breakthrough, which has to be proven anew each time, is that an educational film can also be an entertainment film. The new breakthrough is that low-budget, independent work can rival the big studios in animation as well as live action.

Of Stars and Men has a sense of integrity about its art, its music, and its scientific content that the Disney films have seldom approached. Mother Nature's dripping paintbrush makes no appearance here. And when the Hubleys take artistic license with scientific concept, they do it with taste. They respect their materials and use them honestly and imaginatively. A look into their background will indicate why.

John Hubley's credits read like a history of animation in America, ranging from *Snow White* to *Dumbo* for Disney, and *Brotherhood of Man* to *Gerald McBoing Boing,* for UPA. Then, together with Faith, he made shorts such as *Adventures of *, Tender Game,* and *Moonbird* through his own Storyboard, Inc. Still, a short is a short and even if it gets an Academy Award it may need to be subsidized by TV-spot profits.

"We decided since we're putting all that effort into short films, we might as well make the stretch for a feature," Hubley said when I interviewed him in New York. He pointed out that a 63-minute film was not necessarily six times as much work as a 10-minute film. In fact, the actual production schedule on *Of Stars and Men* required only six people and 22 weeks. That alone is enough to make a few buildings full of animators in Hollywood feel silly, but the budget figures would probably make a few business managers incredulous. Of course, the Hubleys put in most of the overtime themselves, in months of pre-planning, fund-raising, storyboarding, inking, and painting.

As their apartment attests, they are artists first, and businessmen second. Art-work by every member of the family can be found in hall, kitchen, living room, and I imagine, bedrooms and bath. A central feature of the large living room is a stage of 2 by 4's, plywood, curtains, and photofloods for family plays. (The two oldest children, Mark and Hampy, have

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As their apartment attests, they are artists first, and businessmen second. Art-work by every member of the family can be found in hall, kitchen, living room, and I imagine, bedrooms and bath. A central feature of the large living room is a stage of 2 by 4's, plywood, curtains, and photofloods for family plays. (The two oldest children, Mark and Hampy, have

been the voices, of course, in recent films including *Of Stars and Men.*) An Academy Award acts as a bookend in the corner and a 16mm projector stays set up behind the grand piano. Faith is practicing her cello in the bedroom while we talk.

"We took about six months to raise some money but to no avail, so we decided to just plunge in. . . . As it progressed we would work all day and then at night—about two nights a week—we would have run-throughs, the storyboard, rushes, part of the tracks . . . and in that way we were able to pick up investments as we went along. It's not easy." Hubley's financial methods sound familiar, no doubt, but few film-makers have dared to carry on simultaneous production and fund-raising this completely.

Neither have many animators dared to tackle a book spanning the areas of space, time, matter, energy, and life. However, Harlow Shapley contributed not only his book, but a great deal of help in the process of adapting it to the visual equivalents of animation. I asked Hubley if there hadn't been a few conflicts nevertheless between scientific accuracy and artistic imagination. ". . . Only once, after Dr. Shapley makes the point that statistically, at least, there is the possibility of a hundred million planets able to support life. We had thought of going into a sequence trying to visualize life on some of these other planets and doing it as a kind of satire on science fiction. . . . He (Shapley) thought it would be a mistake to do that and we finally agreed. It would have been a little too flippant, a little too out of context."

Although some people may have wished for more "facts," the bouyancy and beauty of the film more than compensate for any lack of charts or figures. It may be argued, in fact, that this film will interest more people more seriously in science than any number of textbook films. Perhaps, as in the Canadian Film Board's *Universe,* the elements of mystery and awe make the difference. Live photography and animation create their own kinds of mystery but in both of these films it is very effective.

The baroque music score for *Of Stars and Men* adds to this feeling and is intentionally different from the standard "space music." As Hubley said, "There has been a tendency to develop a mood of fright which the music contributes to. . . . It's a part of the 'science fiction' fiction." The musical director was Walter Trampler.

While the ears have this rare treat of unadulterated, non-background music, the eyes get their fill too. Perhaps some people lump all "modern" animation together just as they do all "modern" painting and sculpture and furniture, etc. But there are many distinctions to be made, even in the animation of the last five years. Television, especially, in its screen limitations and its production pressures, has had great impact on the medium. Just by consuming animation at a pace never before demanded, TV has lowered standards generally. The ideas get thinner and thinner while the inklines get thicker and thicker. The movement is held to a minimum and dialogue pushed to the maximum.

Even with the "new look" in some theater cartoons, the animated film still suffers from the effects of the production-line approach. Any one frame on the screen may contain the artwork or influence of six or eight people—often at odds with each other stylistically. In the last decade this has shown up primarily between character and background, since these are usually executed by separate groups. And so, funny little men in eleven colors and flowing lines have been laid over bold, angular backgrounds time and time again. As Hubley said, ". . . It's always been schizophrenic . . . in early Disney shorts, the backgrounds used to be watercolors, seventeenth-century style . . . we try for the same graphic style for character and background."

This is why the visual impact of Hubley's films has become so strong. Any one frame looks like the work of one artist. The feeling for color, for texture, for line quality is unified and consistent. Only a few short bits in *Of Stars*

and Men seemed to be out of the over-all style. And the imaginative use of superimposure, optical diffusion, and reticulation made unorthodox painting and inking techniques possible. To get the line quality that paper gives (and acetate doesn't) the artists animate with ink on paper, then surround the character with black, and these are shot as supers making the character a white shape against the colored background.

When I asked Hubley to comment on the "mystique" of animation often found in Europe, he said, "I'm ambivalent. On the one hand, I don't like to separate the media. I think you should have the whole keyboard of the film at your disposal . . . and that we should break down the barriers . . . on the other hand, photography, in the dramatic form, may be reaching a plateau—visually—while animation has much more potential."—JOHN KORTY

GUNS OF THE TREES

Directed by Jonas Mekas, assisted by Adolfas Mekas, Edouard de Laurot, Sheldon Rochlin, Charles Silver, Harrison Starr, Dan Drasin. Poetry interludes: Allen Ginsberg. Score: Lucia Dlugoszewski. Folk songs: Sara and Caither Wiley and Tom Sankey.

GOTT (as it has become familiarly known) is sophomoric, Symbolic, stiff; it is technically clumsy. But it is an instructive failure, and it is worth some serious examination.

The film is a kind of essay which happens to be couched in film terms. (Mekas is a poet as well as critic.) Though the voice of Ginsberg is heard intermittently, it also has characters who talk. Mekas has said that it is an angry film, a kind of protest, a meditation. I cannot guess whether it will prove effective as a protest; the audience I saw it with became slightly restive. But to my mind it is not artistically effective.

The fundamental problem is that Mekas has avoided human relationships. He looks down on the ordinary story film, and I do not mean to accuse him of failing to present a coherent story. But he has presented people in juxtaposition without being able to show them dealing with each other. They, and the film itself, are almost exclusively concerned with ideas: that the warfare state is evil, that industrial society produces ugliness, that life is filled with hypocrisy and the giving in to hypocrisy. These ideas are oversimple but well enough; many of us share them; they are among the social platitudes of our time—which possibly makes them available themes. But in *GOTT* they become the strings which pull the puppets; and no idea by itself is good enough for that. Mouths open and words issue from them; people look at things; they walk about. But there is only one scene in the film which really "plays," where one feels the reality of the human contact, and not the working out of a somewhat jejune thesis: that in which Ben and the man from the bar go out into the street, pass the vault in the bank window, and wander on.

Partly this absence of interconnected life must stem from using non-actors. Only Ben (Carruthers—an actor of some experience, notably in *Shadows*) has enough presence, enough vividness in his movements and looks, to make us want to watch him. But I think it is also a lack of imagination and of engagement with the people. Frances (Frances Stillman), the girl who commits suicide, has a conventionally pretty face with a faint sullenness; she woodenly mouths the fatuous dialogue ("Why must I live with pain?" "What is life?") but underneath there seems to be a real person of some intriguing qualities; yet the film persistently snubs and drowns this. Gregory (Adolfas Mekas), with his elegantly handsome face, also stiffly prates; in a moment when he is silent one senses life there—the unexpected, the ambiguous—but almost always he is visibly *performing*, and performing badly. Carruthers is not given much to do, but he can simply stand and look hesitant, and one feels this almost impetuous hesitation; he can look serious and one feels that he is a person of seriousness; whereas with Adolfas one feels he is a serious person engaged in a difficult pretense of trying to look

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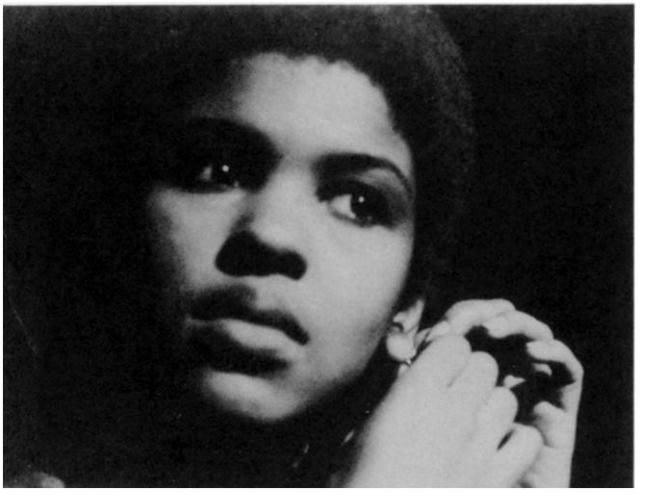
serious. Argus (Argus Speare Juilliard) is evidently supposed to be a kind of life-force, and once or twice this comes through for an instant; but like the others she is made to say words that she would never have spoken, to express attitudes shamefully simple and lacking in nuance. The Negro couple, hence, does *not* come through as more vivid and warm than the white.

Now the attitude taken by the film itself (partly through Ginsberg's commentary and partly through the words of the characters) is that this is a horrid world and it is somebody's fault. (Ginsberg once, toward the end, equates the "you" who thinks a change of presidents will make a significant change, with himself.) Yet in this world, surrounded by rubble, are a few genuine human beings.

Let us face it: things are far worse than that. The alienation is internal as well as external; all men live in some kind of real world and it gets to them; there is no place to hide. But Mekas can point the camera accusingly at heaps of rusted auto engines, as if the enemy is just out there. Or he cuts in footage of the folk-singing riot in Washington Square to show that the youth are oppressed (for some mistaken reason, he puts a wailing baby on the soundtrack all through this, and it somehow becomes the film's voice—and one resents it: Crybaby!) He puts the sound track of the Glenn orbital flight on, to show that the country is obsessed with rockets. But all this is kindergarten politics; we learn it from Philip Wylie, or from freshman year at college. We *know* it; a film must make us *see* or *feel* it in some new way, or we will find it dull or stupid. (Talk, even Ginsberg's which is not bad, is cheap in films. A single word, with a certain intonation, may have an enormous significance; an ideological declaration, especially if thrown out by inexperienced actors in an artificial context, is extremely hard to give screen life.)

Argus in GUNS OF THE TREES.



The words in *GOTT* are highly formal, which in itself is neither good nor bad. (The film as a whole is formal, with unorthodox devices of cutting such as a blank white screen to separate scenes.) But they are high-flown and smug, and they are spoken woodenly, accentuating the put-up-job aspects of the film. One thinks, inevitably, of the lucidity of a new-waver, or the die-cut patterns of Hollywood dialogue, or the quiet desperate poetry of Antonioni.

And one is not helped much by the visual aspects of the film, which is full of pans (though the camera is otherwise stationary, except when in a car) and portentous switches from dull lighting in the Gregory/Frances scenes to bright lighting in the Ben/Argus scenes. The lighting in general is uncertain and flat; once, when Frances asks help from a doubting priest, it goes to Bergman-like high-drama style, and then flat again.

Mekas has incorporated some scenes that are in various ways remarkable. At the beginning and end, and I think once in between, we find ourselves in an immense cabbage field with two grotesquely made-up men, each carrying some kind of businessman's case; one uproots a cabbage and foists in on the other; they wander off, laughing insanely. No doubt they are intended as the tragicomic masks of squaredom. This level of expression never relates to anything else in the film, and it has an old-fashioned Experimental look to it; but in a way it works. Again, later in the film Ben and Gregory are standing near the river in the rain; a boat passes; they talk desultorily. We cannot

hear what they say but it looks interesting and one wishes to hear that, instead of the script's inanities. The scene has no evident function in the argument of the film, but it has a certain small stubborn reality of its own.

Now what are we to make of *Guns of the Trees*? It is proper, first, to state roundly that Jonas Mekas has been a force for needful unrest on the American film scene; one hopes that his *Film Culture* will soon appear again, as a regular focus for film-makers and film-goers who hope to break down the doors, smash the idols, and breathe on the fires of personal, free-swinging expression.

But it must be admitted that *GOTT* is a failure of expression. (Most first films are; it is unfair to a new director who has achieved previous notice as a critic to expect him to produce an ever-living masterpiece the first time he gets hold of a camera.) And in a somewhat foreboding way: for the film seems entrapped in the very desiccation it claims to attack. Perhaps "it is no accident that" the film averts its eye from the realities of its people: the small, human, emotional realities of their looks, gestures, expressions, postures, the resonances of the way they really speak. The film is concerned to make a case. But this is something one does when one cannot do anything else—either from a lack of understanding in some way, or lack of feeling, or perhaps patience. It betokens the attitude of the efficient society: the actors are fed to the roles concocted for them, even if they are not the right actors, or even if no actors would be right.

Didacticism has its own special entrapments and deceptions: one thinks one is expounding a truth—something else, however, shows through. The film-maker of talent is a man who has a special gift for sensing what is showing through, and coming to terms with it and growing and working with it. The conditions of low-budget production put an even greater premium on this, since resources are stretched so thin. (*GOTT* was scrounged together over a period of several years through devotion, ingenuity, and poverty; it is astounding that it got finished at all.) The director can prepare his script from the life he knows; he can try to utilize that life as directly and honestly as possible in the film, shaping it but not doing violence to it. Unless he has perception and a film-maker's eye, his film will not work even so; but surely this is the approach that must be tried.

It is inevitably a hazardous and experimental process. (We might, for instance, find 8mm tests of prospective actors a useful step, now that 8mm sound cameras exist; for there is a mysterious barrier in film that some personalities cross and others cannot.) The film-maker will have to hunt people who are like the figures he imagines; and he will also have to arrange his film to utilize the people he can find. A great director like Renoir offers precedent in less straitened circumstances: he will make quite extensive changes to accommodate and exploit the actors. This may seem unexpected humbleness; it is for us a necessary strategy of art. You cannot make the camera lie beyond certain limits; you may manipulate sites and orientations, you may compress or dilate continuity, and so on; you cannot make an inexperienced actor who is feeling expansive look hopelessly depressed, no matter what you make him say. And this is not merely a matter of "learning to handle actors," as in the usual problem of the switch from documentary to feature production. It is a question of developing a coherent and viable style.

—Ernest Callenbach

SUNDAY

A Harvard student named Dan Drasin happened to be in New York on the weekend of the so-called "folk-singing riot" in Washington Square; he also happened to have a camera and portable tape-recorder along. The result of his candid filming and recording of the "riot" is a charming, skillful, and sometimes moving little film. It is utterly impromptu: rough and haphazard in the shooting, tinny in the recording, entirely hand-held. Yet it has a kind of direct

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vividness that one misses not only in *Guns of the Trees*, which uses some of its footage for its own metaphysical purposes, but also in *Language of Faces*. These kids are *alive*. (When *Sunday* was shown recently at the University of California, it was loudly cheered by an audience that included participants in a similar "riot"—the San Francisco city hall protest against the HUAC, later mythologized into the notorious *Operation Abolition*.) The cops, especially at first, seem rather kindly and bewildered, or at least reluctant to start swinging; there is none of the bloodiness of the San Francisco scene. Their debates with the folksingers' partisans get closer to the workings of American political life than the routine politicking of *Primary:* here is the bureaucratic machine faced with recalcitrant, defiant, and articulate individuals. The cops listen to the arguments; then the paddywagons come; but it is a hollow victory of force rather than logic, and such victories cost dearly.

There ought to be such films made all the time—short, cheap, personal; the technology exists. We need more young film-makers who know how to seize the moment when it comes, with Drasin's offhand ease.

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IN GENERAL RELEASE

TWO SWEDISH CASUALTIES

POJKEN I TRÄDET (The Boy in the Tree). An Arne Sucksdorff production. Minerva Film. 1961. Cinematography: Gunnar Fischer. With Tomas Bolme as Göte, and Anders Henrikson, Birgitta Petersson, Heinz Hopf.

SASOM I EN SPEGEL (In A Glass Darkly). Svensk Filmindustri. Direction: Ingmar Bergman. 1961. Script: Ingmar Bergman. Cinematography: Sven Nykvist. With Harriet Andersson as Karin; Gunnar Björnstrand as David; Max von Sydow as Martin; Lars Passgard as Fredrik alias "Minus."

These two films reveal their creators at respective points of danger, points from which there may well be no return. The crisis, though not exclusively Swedish, is common to Swedish artists in every medium: it is brought about by the will to portentousness, a result of anxiety becoming abstract for want of social nourishment.

That Sucksdorff's film is a poetic achievement requires immediate recognition: if the conclusion is inept it's because the premise is juvenile, but Sucksdorff is still, without question, the great film poet of the wild, and this should be a primary appreciation, not a postscript, as it has been in the Stockholm press and probably will be elsewhere. To say now that Sucksdorff's real subject is animals and birds, not people, is no discovery: in the case of this film it's not even sharply to the point. Sucksdorff's problem as an artist is not so much that he can't handle people as that he can't handle ideas. People are the vehicle of ideas but not the *sole* vehicle; a character in a film may be conceived and projected with initial vividness to serve what subsequently betrays itself as an inadequate paraphraseable meaning. The *life* in a film is not often equivalent to its total coherence, and while I agree it should be and the pointing out of the discrepancy is a critic's task, I also deplore the tendency of viewers not to *participate* in a film because they're only waiting to see how it adds up in terms agreeable to a logic on which they have already decided.

While you wait for *The Boy in the Tree* to "add up"—and it certainly doesn't—I don't see how you can fail to be compelled, first of all, by Sucksdorff's scoring for tempi—the narrative moves as if on runners—and of course by his genius for relating men to the outdoors, whatever else he can't relate them to. By his genius I don't mean simply his preternatural eye and his correspondingly acute lenses; I mean the way he can get *inside*, as it were, the envelope

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of nature, under the very skin of the air. He's sentient beyond all film-makers I can remember to the irresistibly questing light as it permeates the depths of a woodland or kindles the tips of grass-blades and the cupped blossoms of meadow flowers. In this film, where the ostensible subject is not nature, itself, there's naturally less of the microscopic intimacy by which his early short films were characterized—the pattern of a fern, the eye of a fox—and there's nothing so magical as the alarm-clock-in-the-snow of *The Great Adventure*. But there is a great freely-circling apprehension of space and movement, by day and by night, as his cameras (in Gunnar Fischer's obediently sensitive control) hunt the protagonists, inscribe crescents and parallels of direction in open or wooded tracts of country and out-stare the planetary gleam of a spotlight on a speeding car. In one slow movement the 16-year-old boy, Göte, freed at last from the constraints of all company but that of the landscape, walks across marsh and scrubland, scenting the signals of the wind, listening to the plaint of wheeling birds, reaching with quick wisdom into pockets of grass where eggs are hoarded: as he passes a tree he unconsciously caresses the fronds of a branch as if he were reassuringly squeezing the hand of a friend.

For the artist, the rewards of naïveté are often greater than those of his conscious intention. Sucksdorff's sermon confounds his earth-knowledge, indeed contradicts it. Such story as there is follows the climactic alienation of the boy from all human comfort, as the result of a trauma which is never clearly explained; he is seriously implicated in the illegal shooting of deer with two worthless young plunderers, experiences a change of heart and takes off into the countryside pursued by the pair who want the incriminating rifle he has taken along. (Their capture of him is unconvincing, since the vicious, effeminate leader who knocks him down and half-drowns him, before they tie him to a tree in a cruciform position, doesn't look as if he could beat his way out of a paper bag.) Göte, freed again after a night in the open, retreats once more; tracked by a hunter and his sister's country-gentleman employer he climbs a tree and there, in a preposterous anti-climax, the film ends with a tragedy not implicit in the preceding material. The old man's gentle taunting of the boy for his futile wish for freedom, futile because "nothing in the world is free," is not only a gratuitous conclusion but also a contradiction of the values which Sucksdorff has lovingly revealed in his images. It's difficult to understand how a "naturist" could with such banality translate his perceptions of the epic balances and cancellations of the natural world into a disbelief in "freedom" for man, unless he retains a quite adolescent disappointment with the fact that the destiny of anything alive is conditioned!

The pessimistic, cosmic judgment that separates itself from the context is a mark of the provincial insecurity which so much of Swedish expression betrays; partly it's a sign of the radical degeneration of the life-sense: the

Gunnar Fischer, cameraman, and Arne Sucksdorff (behind camera).

tragic sensation has to be imported, from the fear of not having said the big serious thing to the world *outside* Sweden which, in actuality, is too busily engaged with life and death to whimper defeat as sententiously as the Swedes, who are involved only in the spectator-sport of anxiety. The parable is an ancestral form, of permanent usage, but its moral can only be effective when arrived at inductively.

The opening of THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY.

Bergman's whole career has been a struggle, within a barren environment, to develop his own way of going, and there's no director of film I'd be more willing to let go his own way even if I can't myself follow him. And I can't, very far, in *Sasom i en Spegel* (the title is from *Corinthians* and in English should be *As in a Glass Darkly*), wherein he relinquishes, for my feeling, too much of the visible world. I have a good deal of respect for his personal compulsion to the oubliette in which he's confining himself after releasing, in the medieval fable of *The Virgin Spring*, as much legendary wonder and sensuous poetry as has ever been contained in a single film. The contemporary scene—if you can call it that—is now a subterfuge for a knotty, puritanic elimination of almost all sources save those of introspection and of, to my sense, a highly questionable passivity. My previous observation (in *FQ*, Spring, 1960) that the commandments and graces of *The Virgin Spring* were metaphorical seems less certain by reference to this movie. Its dismal (rather than tragic) situation ends with a conversation between father and 17-year-old son to the effect that the misery and sin of life can be alleviated by the knowledge that God exists, that He is Love and that this means *any kind of love whatsoever* — a convenient rationalization for the boy, who has committed incest with his older sister. (Between lunacy and waking she has assured him that God, in a vision, told her she must love her brother.) Since God in an alternate visitation becomes a spider it demands no easy assent to the father's conviction that He is nonetheless Love.

I'm not over-simplifying in order to treat the content with ridicule. There's no very coherent way to communicate the morbidly sincere drift of this film. I'm especially baffled by the *intruded* subject, that of faith, which does not really enter before the action itself has transpired. What one has been watching is the expected snapping of a mind, a lamentable fate observed naturalistically with no explanation of its origin, no expectation of a philosophic or theological answer. Karin (Harriet Andersson) is a cyclical incurable case; David, her father, has just found this out and it instigates soul-searching on his part, which elucidates his biography and subsequently confirms his belief in the actuality of her visions, but this is all verbalized; her husband, Martin, finds out nothing, and remains a featureless if sympathetic bystander; the boy, "Minus," sucked into the passion which is an aspect of Karin's lunacy, goes into the characteristic Swedish-film question, "What Is Life All About?" The urgency of this perennially impudent query can only take on anguished color from the questioner depicted and I fear that this stringy, undifferentiated young man is so uniquely uninteresting as to prevent one caring whether or not he is answered. (Sucks-

dorff's Tomas Bolme was a more believable suppliant.) He is answered—from the source, there's no doubt. The film fades on the close-up statement, "Father spoke to me!" in which the capital F clearly denotes more than the beginning of the sentence.

Apart from the incest scene—or rather, its inception and aftermath—which takes place in the wonderful oceanic womb-setting of a beached hulk, there's little that's cinematic in this movie, which could as well have been a play. Because to this objection I've already been answered by many *so-whats* I'll re-insist that the aesthetic self-sufficiency of an art is the unarguable principle of its impressive existence. I have a feeling that no matter what Bergman says elsewhere the movie is becoming a superogatory instrument for his unmapped inward-going purposes—he might say it more effectively through an even more abstract mode or another medium. *Sasom i en Spegel* is bonepared: a drab house, drab people, a stony seascape (the lugubrious Baltic that here looks grey even when the sun is shining on it), a few cello chords from Bach, seagull cries, a fantastically descending helicopter as *deus ex machina*: all very disciplined and renunciatory and carefully composed (sunset to sunset is the time cycle) and all an *Untergang*. As I said above, Bergman has his own way to go, which may well entail an absenting of himself from cinematic felicities. But I can't help noting the generic Swedish evasion. They question life not because they love it but because they're *unconnected* with it: it offers a bewildering plenitude to challenge the degeneracy of spirit to which their social neutralizing has brought them. The local critics love this film, because actually, no matter what else they may in passing admire, they're always relieved at the return of austerity, the elimination of movement and ornament, everything they disparage as "baroque"; and the rejection of all dangerous questions that might compel a social answer. To believe in nothing is to permit everything. If madness is unacceptable as a biological fault in a given social context, it's a relief to be told that it's divine and that God is Love.—VERNON YOUNG

WAR HUNT

Producer: Terry Sanders. Director: Denis Sanders. Screenplay: Stanford Whitmore. Photography: Ted McCord. Editing: John Hoffman. United Artists.

War Hunt was made as a straight Hollywood feature, starring John Saxon and presenting a newcomer, Robert Redford, of whom more will surely be heard; it was also made to a very tight budget and an even tighter shooting schedule (15 days, plus some subsequent second-unit work). *War Hunt* reflects something of these limitations, but not to any dangerous degree.

The war in question is the Korean one. The period is that in which the Panmunjon negotiations led to a cease-fire. As one of the soldiers remarks, "It's a funny kind of war"; and it is presented as such, with the propaganda loudspeakers booming words and music across no-man's-land, with desultory sniping by day and savage barrages and attacks by night.

Basically the story is told through the eyes of Loomis (Redford) who has been sent to the front line as a replacement. The opening sequences are quite a tour de force in that the Sanders brothers make us participate in his confusion and puzzlement without losing our own interest. I have not seen this so well done since the opening reels of Donskoy's *Gorki Trilogy*.

Then there emerges the sinister figure of Endore, whose pleasure it is to go out by night on solitary patrol, face blackened and moving like a cat. The information he brings back is of immense value, but it is not the real reason for his trips. He is a killer, and he uses a knife. His killings are ritual, and followed by a sinister dance around the corpse—the secret dance of a Rumpelstiltskin. Attached to Endore is a small orphaned Korean boy whose village has been wiped out by napalm ("It was a mistake," he tells Loomis).

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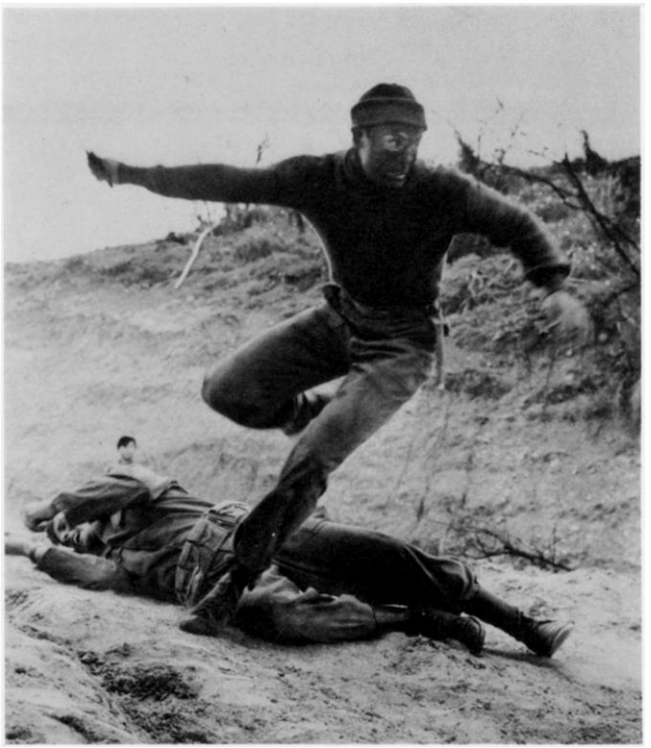

John Saxon in WAR HUNT.

Everyone is afraid of Endore ("I'm glad he's on *our* side," says someone) and none more so than Loomis who, nevertheless, is forced by conscience to try and rescue the boy from his clutches. He fails. But of course, with Endore everyone fails.

The cease-fire comes into operation. Endore ignores it, and this time he takes the boy with him into the darkness. Next day the military try to get him to come back. But there is a scuffle and he is shot. The boy runs off into the scarred landscape; and that is all.

It is a powerful and disturbing film. The psychopath Endore, wedded to war—war, that is, in its genuine connotation as the inflicter of death—wishes to prolong forever his murderous honeymoon. For him peace is the ultimate destroyer, and he cannot face it. Saxon's playing of this part is splendid, with a curious withdrawn quality which makes it all the more terrifying.

The contrast with Loomis is pointed with some deliberation. Loomis loves peace and cannot adjust in any way to war. In the midst of carnage he instinctively seeks civilization. When, during a night barrage (directed and photographed with a brilliant and savage intensity), he goes chicken and is rescued by Endore, he has no answer at all to Endore's "I *like* you this way." And when he reluctantly forces himself to a confrontation about the boy's future, there is a long moment of suspense, with Endore's knife-point at his throat, in which we hear nothing but heavy breathing and must wait and watch until—and this is a very fine dramatic stroke—nothing happens, but nothing. The climax is a stalemate.

The background of *War Hunt* is too sketchy. It is a short film as features go, and there is not enough time to develop the other characters—GIs, officers, etc.—to a sufficient degree. The very moving death of Fresno, just before the cease-fire comes into operation, would in fact mean much more if his character could previously have been built up in more detail. We do not know him well enough.

But these are minor points in relation to the major impact of the film. The Sanders have stuck to their main story and have pulled no punches. This is especially true in relation to the Korean boy, the real sacrificial victim of war. Here they give us an innocent who is being totally corrupted, and they rub our noses in the harsh logic of corruption. There are two key scenes. In the first the boy decapitates a wounded bird rather than hand it to Loomis. In the second, which is a deliberate sequel to the first, Endore hands him the knife, so that he, the child, may give the *coup de grace* to the enemy soldier, and thus become more surely lost than Miles was to Quint. There is something so inexpressibly sad about this scene that tears supersede horror.

Thus *War Hunt* is a haunting film, and none the less so for the grim authenticity of its combat scenes, and for the music by Bud Shanks, which is both scored and used with telling economy. In showing the breakdown of human communication it retains deep human sympathy. In the final sequence the Captain and

his unit try, helplessly and idiotically, to tempt Endore back with candy and a DSC. "Come back," says the Captain, "The war is over." And Endore replies "Which war?" Which?, indeed.—BASIL WRIGHT.

WEB OF PASSION

Producers: Robert and Raymond Hakim. Director: Claude Chabrol. Screenplay: Paul Gegauff, based on the novel "The Key to St. Nicholas Street," by Stanley Ellin. Photography: Henri Decae. Music: Paul Misraki. With Madeleine Robinson, Antonella Lualdi, Jean-Paul Belmondo, Jacques Dacqmine, Jeanne Valerie, Bernadette Lafont, Andre Jocelyn, Mario David.

THE HORROR CHAMBER OF DR. FAUSTUS

Director: Georges Franju. Producer: Jules Borkon. Script: Jean Redon. Adaptation: Boileau, Narcejoe, Jean Redon and Claude Sautet. Photography: Eugene Schufftan. With Pierre Brasseur, Alida Valli, Juliette Mayhiel, Edith Scob, Beatrice Altariba, Francois Guerin, Guardachi.

These films have both been playing on double bills, along with things like *Loves of Casanova* and *The Manster* ("Half man, half monster"). Their advertising campaigns have been as lurid as the titles ("incestuous son . . . steamheated maid . . ."). Not surprisingly, few people have realized that the first is Claude Chabrol's *A Double Tour*, and the second Georges Franju's *Les Yeux sans Visage*.

Both are remarkably stylish films. Chabrol here shows himself as a sort of cross between Hitchcock—always one of his deities—and Minnelli. (Which is the man, which the monster?) *A Double Tour* is one of those faintly nineteenth-century murder melodramas with existential and Christian overtones—a blend in which more or less anything is quite possible. It is in flamboyant, glorious color, which is moreover often surprisingly good, and it is a decor man's paradise; I can hardly wait till the IDHEC students get around to their *fiche filmographique* to have it all explicated. It is full of astonishing tours de force of camera-work—the camera prowls around like some disembodied Private Eye, and the lush greenery reminds you of what von Sternberg might have been like in Technicolor. There are two main sets: one an elaborate old house, one a cool modern house; the old one is inhabited by papa, mama, incestuous son, sultry daughter, and steamheated maid; the new one next door is inhabited by Leda, an Italian girl, supposedly an artistic type and supposedly beautiful. (It is one of the curious lapses in this film—it must be a lapse?—that she is actually plain; her mouth is hard; her acting nonexistent.) Into this dialectic springs Belmondo, having the time of his life and hamming it up marvelously. He gobbles the family's food; he offhandedly pursues the daughter; he tries to persuade the father to run off with Leda. (He is named Laszlo Kovacs—one of his aliases in *Breathless* —and he has a Hungarian buddy who descends with him upon the old house as the plot unwinds.) The murder of Leda is lovely Hitchcockerei: because the plot is set up with overlapping time-slices, à la *The Killing*, we have seen Leda lying dead on her lovely bright-blue carpet; then we must watch precisely how the son led up to it and did it. There is much *jeu de glace*, and shadows on shoji-like panels, and virtuoso camera movement. He strangles her to Mozart and she dies rather too quickly—I had expected the *Psycho*-tic worst; why is it that people die too easily in the movies and too hard in opera?

The melodrama turns out, of course, to be a morality play. The drunken, mannerless, cadging, emotionally brutal, seemingly irresponsible Belmondo is the ony real man in the lot. The father is a hopeless weakling; the mother an impossible witch; the daughter a sullen nonentity; the brother a mama's boy; Leda a vacuum encased (as she is killed, she wears a warm-orange shower-robe) in various beautiful clothes and empty phrases. At the end, when Belmondo and his buddy have found out who killed Leda, it is Belmondo alone who tells brother that he must bear the responsibility for the crime and turn himself in. To a lot of ponderous music, he does.

A Double Tour is not the wry and savage game of wits that Chabrol gave us in *The*

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The operation begins: LES YEUX SANS VISAGE.

Cousins; but it is an elegant and intelligent film, and fun as well.

Franju's film is probably the most horrific picture ever made: a horror film about plastic surgery. A famous surgeon, played with gruesome force by Brasseur, has disfigured his daughter's face in an auto crash; he, and his secretary-mistress whose face he had earlier restored, have murdered one girl and are involved in a ghoulish cat-and-mouse process of luring girls with similar faces to a Gothic mansion in the Paris suburbs. There, seizing the terrified girls, he anesthetizes them and removes their facial skin, attempting to graft it on to his daughter's ruined flesh. The operation fails, quickly or slowly, over and over. In the end he is caught. There is a plot, which sometimes strikes one as obvious or clumsy, but also somehow irrelevant: it is there only to organize things a little, and to help give us, slowly and subtly, the full realization of what enormities are taking place: horrific visions of cruelty and anguish: Brasseur's congealed brutality, the daughter's hopeless dependency and hate, the mistress's icy cunning, the terror of the girls when they awake in their nightmarish situation. The house itself is one of those ghastly apparitions of the set-designer's art; it must be real. The film is full of terrible surprises and mysteries: why the long row of dog-kennels in the basement, for instance?

In short, in *Les Yeux sans Visage* one knows one is in the power of a master, and it is virtually unbearable, especially a scene of the surgery itself. This is horrible enough in itself and would be difficult to watch even in a medical-instruction film; in this context, its awfulness is redoubled by the psychological surroundings, which even in *themselves* would be hard to take.

What then is wrong about the picture? For there *is* something wrong, even though it is a triumph of the genre. I suspect it is a certain romanticism; a romanticism of pain and perhaps sadism not unlike that which made *Blood of the Beasts* a curiously divided film. (In Franju's *La Première Nuit*, which may be seen on 16mm, there was still an unmixed romanticism of adolescent love—shot with impressive virtuosity in the Paris Metro stations and tunnels.) One senses something not quite serious about the film; yet this is not part of its moral strategy as in the case of *Psycho*. I shudder to think what the picture would have done if this slight detachedness, this demonic playfulness, were *not* there. But its presence is a defect, even though without it we might find ourselves utterly unhinged.

The picture has been skillfully dubbed into English. Why the title, I have no idea—except that it has been serving to lure large audiences of horror fans into the theaters, where they laugh it up a good deal. The laughter is, however, rather shaky compared to that for *The Manster*, and I conclude that Franju's monstrous and daring joke was not undertaken in vain: if horror pictures are a disease, this is surely the cure.—ERNEST CALLENBACH

IN GENERAL RELEASE

CLEAR SKIES

(Tchistoe Nebo) Director: Grigori Chukrai. Script: D. Khrabrovitsky. Camera: Sergei Puluianov. Music: Mikhail Ziv. With Nina Drobysheva, Evgueny Urbansky, N. Kuzmina, V. Koniaev.

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minor character in *Clear Skies*. The question unfortunately sums up the essence of Grigori Chukrai's latest effort, a love story laced with blatantly obvious anti-Stalinist sentiment. Chukrai has evidently fulfilled his quota; but his aim is less evident, or less evidently worthwhile. Surely it isn't art (with or without the capital). Surely too the aim isn't that of *Ballad of a Soldier,* which, while it bordered on sentimentality, was yet simple and moving, and refreshingly free of clichés—cinematic, moral, or political.

But in *Clear Skies* Chukrai crashes across the border of sentimentality. The film abounds in all manner of clichés. The story itself is an adolescent fantasy: Sasha, a young girl, falls in love with an aviator-hero, becomes pregnant by him, and then hears reports of his being shot down. After years of faithfulness to his memory she is rewarded: he returns, scarred and embittered, but alive and still in love with her. But for having got himself captured by the Germans, he has been thrown out of the Party, and it is only after Stalin's death that the verdict against him is changed and his medals restored. In the closing shot we see a jet plane, presumably piloted by our hero, slicing across the "clear skies."

But the story is awkwardly plotted. Irrelevant details are introduced, and relevant ones are omitted. At the beginning of the war, Sasha's sister goes away: where? why? We aren't told. Their father is drafted, but it isn't until long after the close of the war that we are told that he has died: how? when? Images appear and disappear with a similarly disconcerting abruptness: in the last third of the film, for example, we are suddenly given many views of the sea, which until then has never appeared. And so forth.

The actors, too, are disappointing. Nina Drobysheva, who plays Sasha, looks like any Hollywood (or Milwaukee or Miami Beach) teen-ager. She is coy instead of innocent, "cute" instead of fresh. And if she has any acting talent, it is buried under the inanities of the plot. The hero is played by Evgueny Urbansky, who had a good small part as the one-legged soldier in *Ballad.* Perhaps that is as much as we want to take of Evgueny Urbansky: there is a softness and self-pity in his face which I for one find unappealing. If we have to have aviator-heroes, let's at least have them look the part.

The dialogue of the film seems like a compilation of Hollywood's worst. "Times have changed," says someone. "I'll always be there for you," says Sasha's boy-next-door admirer, whom she rejects in favor of her memory of Alexei, the hero. The most amusing line, however, occurs in a scene between Sasha and her sister's wounded boy friend, whom Sasha is visiting in the hospital. "Take this notebook," says the boy. "I've jotted down here some thoughts about protons."

In harmony with the triteness of the dialogue is the triteness of the imagery: a ticking clock denotes the passage of time; in conjunction with a shot of a silent telephone, it indicates absence of the beloved. So does a calendar with crossed-off days. A gust of wind entering an empty school room follows the announcement of the outbreak of war. Giggles merging into meaningful glances indicate innocence turning into an awareness of passion. Where have we seen this before? Where not? Again, one sequence caps the others and deserves a fuller description. Alexei has appealed for reinstatement in the Party, but, in a courtroom dominated by a huge statue of Stalin, he is refused. Cut to scene of Sasha working a drill-press in assembly-line. Cut to Sasha and Alexei in their room, as Sasha's sister enters with news of Stalin's death. Cut to long sequence of ice breaking up and river starting to flow as music swells. Sasha again in factory, which is now automated: she is supervising the machines now, with the danger and dirt abolished.

The moral values implied in *Clear Skies* are strikingly similar to those of the typical Hollywood product. "Kissing without love is vulgar," says Sasha to Alexei. Two days later, however, she goes to bed with him—because, presum-

ably, she loves him. And, in typical *True Confessions* style, the one night of love yields its inevitable fruit: in this case, a startlingly homely child. (If real people were as fertile as movie people, the population really *would* explode.) Incongruously, though, Sasha and Alexei, though they live together on his return, do not get married. Why not? We get no explanation.

But a few virtues can be found in *Clear Skies,* although they are not saving virtues. First: the color. It isn't Technicolor, it lacks that harsh orange-grove brightness, nor yet is it anaemic, like so many of Technicolor's competitors. The film's color has a bluish cast which is in keeping with the predominantly wintry setting, and which, to me at least, was very pleasing. (One confusing effect was the blue-white flicker over the screen during the scene of Alexei's homecoming. I wondered if this was a defect in the print—or was it meant to denote a dream? But then it turned out that Alexei had indeed returned. One is left with the impression of a highly unsuccessful gimmick.) Further, some of the photography (by Sergei Poluianov) is striking, and reminiscent of that in *Ballad.* There are the high angles: soldiers marching, shot first from the feet, then from above, then above from a different angle—like the opening scene in *Ballad.* There are exquisite shots of the surfaces of water and snow, of boots crunching on frozen snow. Best of all is a scene at a railroad station. All the women of the town have gathered because they have heard that the train bearing their men-folk *might* stop at the station. We see the women passing a tiny round mirror from hand to hand, their peasant faces glowing in anticipation. Then the train roars by without stopping. The whole of this scene is shot flat, from the eye level of the women. Only later does the camera rise to show Sasha running hopelessly along the tracks.

But to what effect the technical proficiency? It makes us feel cheated, insulted; like the fancy box containing inferior candy, it belies its contents. The film is, in short, shallow and silly.—HARRIET R. POLT

WEST SIDE STORY

Directed by Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins. Production: Mirisch. Screenplay: Ernest Lehman. Choreography: Jerome Robbins. Music: Leonard Bernstein. With Natalie Wood, Richard Beymer, Russ Tamblyn, Rita Moreno, George Chakris.

One can only accept the merits of the film version of *West Side Story* with a touch of regret and belated satisfaction. The collaboration of composer Leonard Bernstein and dancer-choreographer Jerome Robbins goes back to 1944, and yet only now has the American cinema been blessed with the fruits of their labors. The film version of their stage musical, *On The Town* (1948), although a commercial success, was an artistic failure to all who were familiar with the original Bernstein-Robbins work, and if that film had adhered to the original, then some of the impact of *West Side Story* would be somewhat less jolting to the critics who have been beside themselves with praise.

This film should prove that the musical film has been in a deplorable state of affairs since 1957, when *Funny Face* came along with promises of a renaissance, and then faded like a celluloid comet. Now *West Side Story,* with every technical and artistic energy in Hollywood behind it, has re-established the *possibility* of such a renaissance by providing the screen world with authentic Robbins choreography and some new faces. The musical mixture of New York hoodlums and Shakespeare's Veronese lovers is well-known and one must now turn to the specific excellences and flaws of the present film version.

First of all, the dancing reawakens the lyric impulse in a spectator to such a high degree that one is surprised to realize that such a reaction has been dormant for a very long time on the screen. Not since one first beheld Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers dancing together has this impulse to leap *into* the film and become involved with every turn been aroused. In the prologue (danced on actual west-side Manhattan streets), the *Jets* declare their smug superiority in a masterful succession of choreographed, violent encounters with

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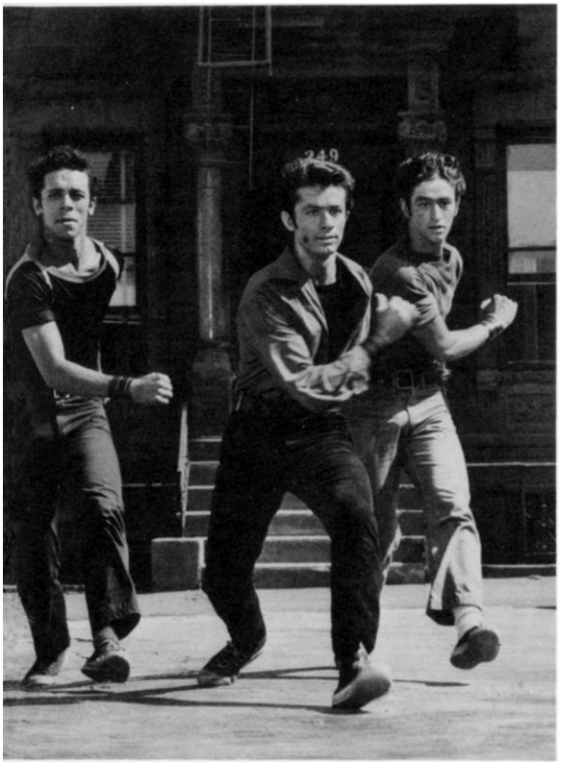

Jay Norman, George Chakiris, Eddie Verso in WEST SIDE STORY.

their Puerto Rican gang-adversaries, the *Sharks*. In each image, Robbins' genius is present and Daniel Fapp's photography, Thomas Stanford's editing and the Bernstein score merge here to create totally stunning cinema art.

Secondly, the entire film is beautifully "visualized." One is not entirely certain about the specific contribution of Saul Bass as "visual consultant" (his titles are, as usual, incomparable, and set the highly visual, artistic tone of the film before it begins), but the use of color and lighting indicates an incredible grasp of everything that a film image can do to an emotionally receptive audience. As the Puerto Rican heroine, Maria (Natalie Wood), twirls in a white petticoat, her revolving figure blurs into a myriad background of hazes which focus into a huge, red-walled gymnasium, where the *Jets* swing out in a jazz dance. Maria's first meeting with Tony (Richard Beymer) at this dance, disrupts the frenzy of a mambo contest between the two gangs and pulls silence over all except their own, gentle maneuverings; the other couples are barely discernible, with only the swan-arms of two girls flashing vaguely out of the darkness behind Maria and Tony.

Tony's serenata about Maria transports him, through song, out of the dance to the wet, cobblestoned streets and past giant, glasshouse walls, and one suspects that Boris Leven, the production designer, and Maurice Zuberano, his production artist, are very much responsible for the effectiveness of this and similar sequences that touch the visual imagination of the spectator during the progress of the film. Ernest Lehman's script stays very close to the original Arthur Laurents story although one does get a little closer to specific characterizations for the *Jets* and the *Sharks*, and the pungent irony in a number like *America* becomes sharper, more sarcastically in the critical-musical tradition of John Gay or Kurt Weill. In the role of Bernardo, the leader of the *Sharks*, George Chakiris brings out a certain haughty pride which is, interestingly enough, somewhat more intellectual than one might find in EspanHarlem or upper Amsterdam Avenue. With Rita Moreno as Anita, his girlfriend, Chakiris displays his undeniable abilities as an actor-dancer, and together, these two are choreographic magicians. Despite Lehman's intentions, however, both the *Jets* and the *Sharks* suffer from *theatricalism* when they are *not* dancing. As delinquents in the most dangerous sense of the term, they lack the substance of pure malice, and the dramatic side of *West Side Story* tends to fade after the realistic promise of the dance-prologue, done without dialogue. The neorealist musical is about to be born, whether Lehman or the producers of this film know it or not. In this film, there is a search for style, just as there was in its stage version.

The boys in the gangs are all fine dancers, but some of them already bear the mark of greatness. Russ Tamblyn is and always has been, since *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, a lyric hero without a place. He is the sort of

musical comedy performer who is capable of doing great work, and in this film he once more proves it. His portrayal of Riff, the *Jets'* leader, has the correct touch of raw hooliganism and boyishness that Jacob Riis or Edward Harrigan would have recognized as authentic, even back in their day, and now that Tamblyn has proven his worth (after *seven* years!) he should be teamed with Barrie Chase and make musical history. Tucker Smith, as "Ice," a character created for the film, also exhibits an innate flair for character-dance, and his rendition of *Cool*, one of the best numbers in the film, is a compelling statement of musical slang and tough musicality that remains vividly in the memory. Eliot Feld, David Winters, and Harvey Hohnecker also stand out among the *Jets*, and among the *Sharks*, Jose De Vega, Eddie Verso and Gus Trikonis seem to distinguish themselves from their glowering companions.

Natalie Wood and Richard Beymer give sincere performances as Maria and Tony, but the fact that their singing voices are excellently dubbed-in by other artists, tends to minimize any real contribution, for the emotional limits of their characters do not extend for more than two blocks in the neighborhood of Love and Frustration. Wood is always at her best when acting her age, so that she convinces one with her simulated Hispanic-accents and delicate beauty; Beymer is, perhaps, much too much of a "nice kid" to be involved with so much violence, and one would hardly expect to find Groton manners on Amsterdam Avenue. However, Beymer *is* an excellent juvenile and has a certain persuasive charm about him, so that even if one knows that he is not singing, he and Wood both *mouth* their arias with great passion. A grateful nod must be given to Sid Ramin and Irwin Kostal, who orchestrated the Bernstein score (with some additional but uncredited work by Associate Producer, Saul Chaplin), for they have enriched the sound of the music, and finally, but not least of all, a few words of approval for the director, Robert Wise.

Although he shares "co-direction" credits with Robbins, it is, without doubt, a film that bears Wise's touch—his astute eye for camera action and clean, artistic editing. The brutality of *West Side Story* (especially in the rumble-sequence and when the *Jets* attack Anita in the candy store) comes across best when the dances do not interfere with the dancers; the rumble stands by itself as the perfect mixture of dance and drama, and Wise has elicited cold-cut, incisive performances from Simon Oakland as a bigoted police lieutenant and Ned Glass as an exhausted, bereaved and disgusted storekeeper who watches the adolescent cycle of murder and depravity with horror and despair. Because of all the talent in the making of the film, *West Side Story*, the result is a lopsided masterpiece, but like the Pisan tower, it has taken hold and will endure.

—ALBERT JOHNSON

STUDS LONIGAN

Director: Irving Lerner. Producer and scripwriter: Philip Yordan. Based on the novel by James T. Farrell. Photography: Haskell Wexler. Music: Gerald Goldsmith.

In his introduction to the 1938 edition of the book, James T. Farrell wrote: "Had I written *Studs Lonigan* as a story of the slums, it would then have been easy for the reader falsely to place the motivation and causation of the story directly in immediate economic roots. Such a placing of motivation would have obscured one of the most important meanings which I wanted to inculcate into my story: my desire to reveal the concrete effects of spiritual poverty." A misreading of this frequently misread novel is not one of director Irving Lerner's mistakes, and it is somewhat ironic that his wise choice to treat the effects of spiritual poverty is so impaired by mistakes which are the property of his own medium.

Perhaps the most difficult problem of adapting *Studs Lonigan* to the screen is the re-creation of the spiritual flavor of Studs' time and place. In this director Lerner and producer-screenwriter Philip Yordan have almost suc-

musical comedy performer who is capable of doing great work, and in this film he once more proves it. His portrayal of Riff, the *Jets'* leader, has the correct touch of raw hooliganism and boyishness that Jacob Riis or Edward Harrigan would have recognized as authentic, even back in their day, and now that Tamblyn has proven his worth (after *seven* years!) he should be teamed with Barrie Chase and make musical history. Tucker Smith, as "Ice," a character created for the film, also exhibits an innate flair for character-dance, and his rendition of *Cool*, one of the best numbers in the film, is a compelling statement of musical slang and tough musicality that remains vividly in the memory. Eliot Feld, David Winters, and Harvey Hohnecker also stand out among the *Jets*, and among the *Sharks*, Jose De Vega, Eddie Verso and Gus Trikonis seem to distinguish themselves from their glowering companions.

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Perhaps the most difficult problem of adapting *Studs Lonigan* to the screen is the re-creation of the spiritual flavor of Studs' time and place. In this director Lerner and producer-screenwriter Philip Yordan have almost suc-

ceeded, by use of a technique seldom seen in American films anymore: stylization. That is, a delicate and controlled distortion of strongly realistic scenes, which here evokes the festering rancor, the undirected rage, the rootlessness of an entire South Side Chicago Irish-Catholic generation; it is an effect which visually resembles the paintings of Thomas Hart Benton. This stylization appears in the street scenes and in the poolroom and speakeasy sequences—brief scenes intercut with seemingly unrelated shots. Dialogue from one scene is superimposed on another and musical themes are set against each other in order to underline the violent, discordant pace of life. These devices are particularly useful in a situation where massive material must be compressed into a dramatic form without sacrificing fidelity.

However, Lerner's success is limited to the setting of scene, the evocation of the *milieu;* when he brings his characters to the center of the set the drama collapses, leaving an empty, immobilized form. Lerner and Yordan have focused Studs' tragedy on his inability to love anyone but the one girl who won't have him, but the sequences devoted to this theme—he haunts and is haunted by his childhood sweetheart, passes time with his former English teacher, and finally settles for the teacher's niece—are so misconceived and weakly executed that there is no real interaction between the characters and the social background. This is also the case in the scenes involving Studs' parents and the parish priest. Only when he is one of the gang, boozing, leering, prowling, shooting pool, does the film come alive and take on meaning, and it is the character of Studs himself that flaws these scenes.

Lerner's biggest error is the casting of Christopher Knight as Studs. A kind of Montgomery Clift with a D.A., Mr. Knight is handicapped, by (among other things) having a face so blessed with sensitivity that apparently he has never been called on to project that quality otherwise. He is so out of place among his pals (who are very well cast) that one wonders if he mightn't have wandered over to 58th and Prairie in search of the University of Chicago fine arts department. Mr. Knight would have had trouble even playing Danny O'Neill. Anyone who has seen Albert Finney in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* can imagine how this role might have been fulfilled. Other miscasting includes Helen Westcott as the high-school teacher—it is like Lana Tuner playing Jane Addams—and Katherine Squire as Studs' mother, who substitutes conventional bleeding-heart bewilderment for Catholic fanaticism.

This film has been criticized, not unexpectedly, for its preoccupation with violence and degradation, yet there is really very little of either in it and what there is is not rendered with enough force to convey the significance of sheer physical brutality, of the wildest racism, as important values in Studs' culture. Compared with Farrell's original, the Weary Reilly rape scene comes off as Bingo Night at the V.F.W. Nor is the Irish-Catholic religiosity that was such a determining factor in Studs' ruination much in evidence anywhere in the film.

The ending is a disaster. A kind, shrewd old priest, sent over from Central Casting, shows Studs the power of positive thinking and sends him off in high resolution to marry the girl he has knocked up. The worst part of all this is that Studs of *Judgment Day,* the complete "slob," never appears. It is as if he never really lost sight of his great expectations.

It is unfortunate that even on technical grounds Lerner's accomplishments are blurred by his mistakes. There seems to be little justification for the occasional use of interior monologue, though admittedly it helps to relieve the demands on Christopher Knight's resources. The frequency of rain in the film is uncanny—it must have set a record for both the Chicago *and* the Hollywood weather bureaus. Anytime a director must rely on rain scenes to establish and sustain the mood of a character, it's a pretty good indication that he has run out of ideas. All that can be said for director Lerner is that he had some to begin with.

—Lawrence Grauman, Jr.

Turn Off

Allow me to register a large dissent on the Spring issue's "Editor's Notebook," not so much in itself as of its kind; hardly the worst, only, at the time I write this, the most recent of its species. That species is, of course, the Great Debate on such issues as *Cahiers* and commitment which has lately filled the pages of the British film periodicals, until they have begun to resemble trade journals for movie critics. It is all of a character sufficiently embarrassing to be locked in a closet rather than publicly paraded, yet there it is, publicly paraded. In one corner, there is *Sight and Sound,* and commitment; in another (or is it the same?), *Definition,* with its simplistic intensification of this; taking on all comers are those intransigent rebels, on both sides of the Atlantic, out of (they think) *Cahiers du Cinéma,* which, regardless of what it actually is, is always made to sound like art for art's sake run amok. The net effect of all this deep thinking is really a bit like that of reading an attack on Aubrey Beardsley in an issue of *Masses and Mainstream* prepared especially for high school students. "Turn On! Turn On!"—yes, that's good; all we need is *more* narcotized film criticism; one thing I know we do not need is more programs and manifestos. I realize that, by this letter, I enter inescapably into the debate and its attendant foolishness; let me, then, go the distance, and say, as briefly as I can, what I think we do need: to be more intelligent; to write better, as though we thought that language might be as valid and significant a medium as the film; and to stop talking about ourselves, as though we had unique, important problems. To this end, I am presently readying a major document on the crisis, consisting of a title and no pages. I would like to call it, simply, "Shut Up," but, after the current fashion in such things, I suppose it shall have to be retitled "Shut Up! Shut Up!"

—William S. Pechter

Critical debates seem to be addictive as well as contagious. But I am not so worried by this as is Mr. Pechter. Behind the admittedly dreary spectacle there *are* issues which require debate if our film criticism is to become more intelligent, or more useful, and especially if it is to have more than an armchair relationship to our film-making. (Of the 12 pages in "Turn On! Turn On!" five are entirely taken up with movie-making.) Almost every critic who works seriously has an incipient Truffaut side and an incipient Warshow side, so to speak. The situation is much the same in literary criticism (which has known its dreary debates) and in any case I do not find it unfortunate. There *are* critics whose motives in writing are purely aesthetic or sociological, no doubt. But most critics write because they are concerned about the movies now, and about the shape of movies to come; they get caught up in debates in the wake of changes in film-making. The danger is that the debate may become too high a price for understanding of the changes. One might think that if critics were simply more intelligent this danger would vanish. But I suspect

that intelligence is a term for which vectors must be specified. It would be jolly if one did not face the nasty need of specification—if criticism were a highly formalized game like chess, where the directions were laid down by the rules. But it isn't; the rules, such as they are, must be constantly remade.—ED.

The Entertainers

Although I am in substantial agreement with the views expressed by Ian Cameron in his letter in your Winter issue, I cannot say the same about the arguments he uses to back his views. He says that the commercial cinema hasn't *such* a bad record regarding innovation. True. He says that a lot of self-conscious experimentation is inane. True. He argues from the overstretching of the term "art" to its uselessness. False. For one thing the conclusion doesn't follow; for a second he doesn't for a moment believe the word is useless; for a third the problem was long ago settled by Gavin Lambert: "All art is entertainment, but not all entertainment is art." Cameron must drop his pretense that the highbrow/lowbrow problem doesn't exist with regard to films. He knows very well that you will no more get a *mass* audience for something as disturbing as *L'Avventura* than you will get one for *Faust* or Proust although I am sure Cameron, like myself, would make sincere obeisance in the direction of all three.

Cameron, then, is both too lenient to Hollywood and too harsh on the experimentalists. We have all read *Picture* and we know what happened to Stroheim and Welles. We have all seen the films of Buñuel/Dali, Len Lye, Maya Deren, James Broughton, Norman McLaren, John Hubley, which could not have been made unless their creators had a touch of the *avant-garde* mentality.

Simply: one must avoid overcompensating one's prejudices.—IAN JARVIE

Entertainments

R. M. HODGENS

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1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business manager are:
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Editor: Ernest Callenbach, 2185 Acton Street, Berkeley 2.
Business Manager: Barnard Norris, 2318 Webster Street, Berkeley 5, California.

2. The owner is: The Regents of the University of California, Berkeley 4, California.

3. The known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

5. The average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed, through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the 12 months preceding the date shown above was: 3500.

[Signed] Barnard Norris, Business Manager

Sworn and subscribed before me this 5th day of October, 1961.

[Signed] Sally Hawkins
Notary Public, Alameda County, California

(My commission expires May 1, 1962.)

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5. The average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed, through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the 12 months preceding the date shown above was: 3500.

[Signed] Barnard Norris, Business Manager

Sworn and subscribed before me this 5th day of October, 1961.

[Signed] Sally Hawkins
Notary Public, Alameda County, California

(My commission expires May 1, 1962.)

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The Outsider concerns the life of Ira Hayes and has the usual defects of the biographical film, blundering along from the subject's enlistment, through many, many instances of the neglect and overattention he suffers, to his death due to alcohol, exposure, and (apparently) severe repression, all accompanied by a whining score that makes it seem even longer. Tony Curtis is not much like an Indian, but he does suffer well enough. Delbert Mann directed.

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