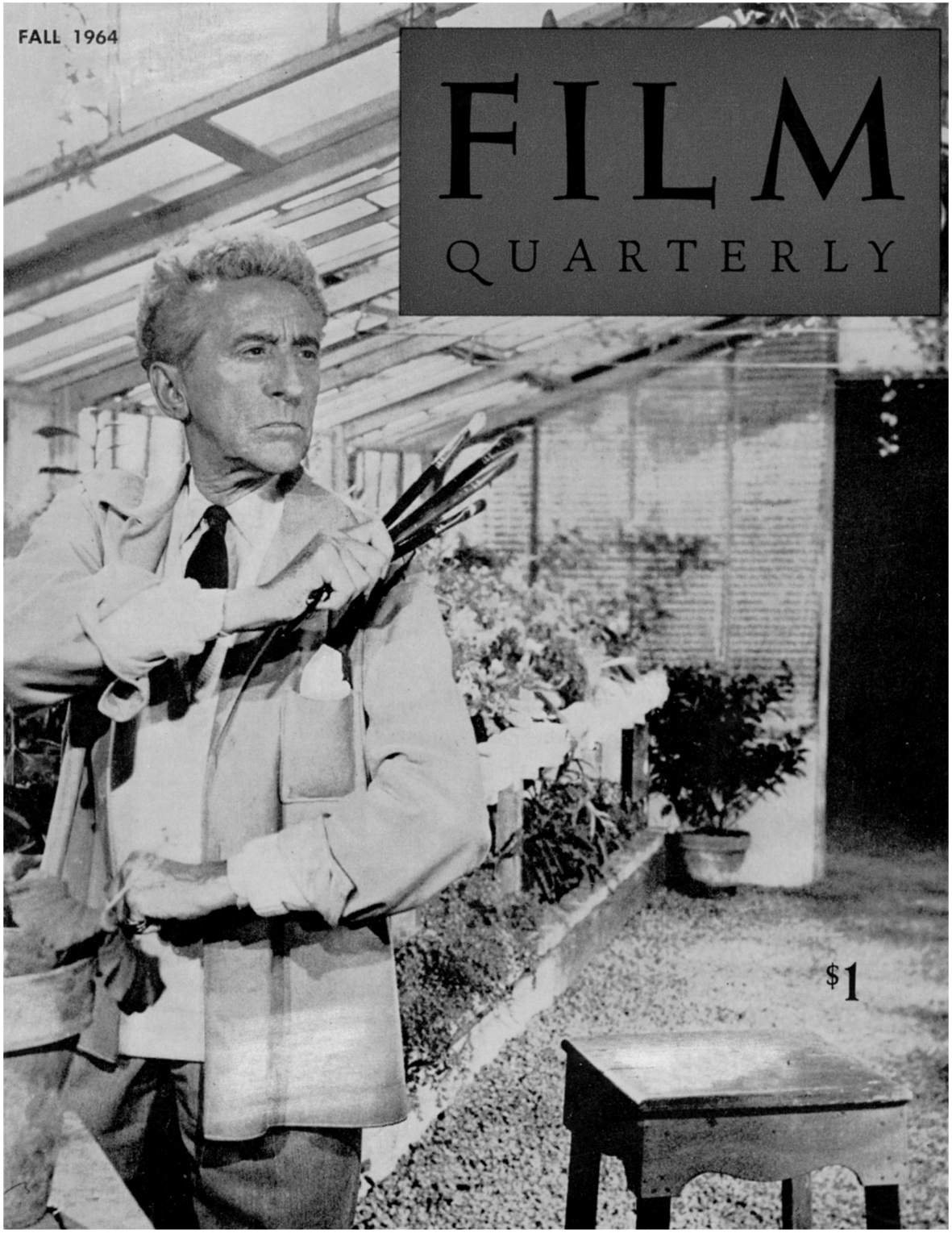
FALL 1964

FILM QUARTERLY



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(Two Timid People)
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ORDET (The Word)

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(Luci del Varieta)
I VITELLONI
THE WHITE SHEIK

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VOL. XVIII, No. 1 FALL, 1964

THE COVER: Jean Cocteau in *Testament of Orpheus.*

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Editor's Notebook

PAY TELEVISION?

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It is argued by the *proponents* of the measure: that according to the network presidents pay-TV's superior buying power for talent will enable it to snap up the best talent, and thus force the present networks into pay-television also; that it would hence deprive the mass audience of free TV; that there is no guarantee pay-TV programming would not also cater to the lowest common denominator of audience taste; that the recently initiated Subscription Television Inc. operation evades FCC regulation through using telephone wires rather than the public air; and that, once pay-TV was established, commercials would probably appear on it too. (These arguments paraphrased from materials supplied by Baus & Ross, a publicity firm associated with the Citizens Committee for Free TV and the California Crusade for Free Television.)

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infringement of both free speech and free competition; that home pay-TV will provide needed additional employment to actors, writers, directors, musicians, technicians, etc.; that the higher budgets and slower production pace of pay-TV programs will permit better performances; that pay-TV will supplement, not supplant existing television fare by subjecting it to a genuine competitive test; that no one can force the public to pay for something it doesn't want; that pay-TV would be a public benefit by providing added channels of communication; and that even the network presidents believe that competitive excellence, and not legal suppression, is the way to meet the challenge of pay-TV. (These arguments from the *Screen Actor* magazine and the Fair Trial for Pay TV Council, a group formed by the Hollywood talent guilds.)

It is additionally argued by the *operators* (STV, Inc., a firm headed by Pat Weaver, former head of NBC, and reportedly capitalized at some $20 million, now operating in Los Angeles and San Francisco): that the system will allow programming for less than maximum-mass audiences, and hence provide more varied and culturally valuable fare than existing programs; that the economics of the system will allow higher budgets than sponsored TV, and hence the potential for higher quality; that programming will be commercial-free and uninterrupted; and that, not being beholden to advertising sponsors, it will be able to pursue a freer policy than the present networks. (These arguments from STV brochures.)

A proper evaluation of these conflicting claims by the voter is, clearly, not an easy task. But huge sums in investment and revenue are of course at stake, as well as the social issues raised in the above arguments; and the result may well be tested in the courts no matter how the election goes. However, the outcome will nonetheless be a major determinant of whether pay-television will be tested in operation, and we urge all voters to study the issue with utmost care.

PERIODICALS

KINO is the new quarterly journal of the Cine Club of Calcutta—Satyajit Ray's group, and one of the lonely forces for cinematic enlightenment in India. Its first issue contains a vigorous article on India's virulent censorship, Ray's travel notes from Moscow, an article on the weakness of Indian film criticism, and various reviews. 50 cents per copy to U.S. readers—presumably $2.00 per year. Address: 62 Bentinck Street, Calcutta 1.

Cinema Nuovo, Via Valvassori Peroni, Milan, Italy, has begun publishing a Spanish-language edition for the increasing number of alert cinephiles in Latin America.

CONTRIBUTORS

LEE ATWELL lives in Los Angeles; he has studied film at USC. GINETTE BILLARD is the wife of Pierre Billard, editor of *Cinéma 64.* JACKSON BURGESS lives in Berkeley, and is a novelist. JOHN C. COCKS, JR. is a New Yorker who studies at Kenyon College. ALAN FERN is an art historian; he works at the Library of Congress. WILLIAM JOHNSON formerly wrote a film column for *Modern Photography.* JAMES PRICE has written on films for *The London Magazine* and other periodicals. MICHAEL ROEMER is a film-maker who was the movie critic for *The Reporter* for a time. JOHN SEELYE teaches English at the University of California, Berkeley. MARK SHIVAS has written for *Movie* and other journals. YALE UDOFF is story editor for ABC-TV in New York.

STAFF NOTES

Colin Young, who has been associated with this journal since its inception in a far more important way than his official title of Los Angeles Editor indicates, has been appointed head of the Motion Picture Section of the Theater Arts Department at UCLA. Student films from UCLA have been increasingly lively in recent years, and the department has undertaken interesting teaching innovations, such as the early use of 8mm film by students. We look forward to further exciting developments there, as

in the other film schools of the country, all of which seem to be attracting many new students.

About the time this issue appears, I will depart on a six-month cinematic grand tour of Europe, thanks to a leave of absence from the University. This will give me the long-anticipated chance to meet many persons in the film world with whom I've dealt only by mail; and it will, of course, generate many new projects that will later appear in the *Quarterly,* including a series of interviews. A sideline aim of the trip is to gather detailed case-histories bearing on the crucial cross-cultural problem of exactly how directors in Europe (Poland/Italy/France chiefly) maintain control over their work, compared to the Hollywood situation. Mail will be forwarded to me frequently, so the business of the magazine will proceed normally. Correspondence and manuscripts should continue to be sent to Berkeley. —E.C.

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JACKSON BURGESS

The "Anti-Militarism" of Stanley Kubrick

Of Stanley Kubrick's seven feature-length films, three, including two of the best, have been explicitly concerned with militarism and war. The most recent of these, *Dr. Strangelove,* has made Kubrick the darling of the Ban-the-Bomb movements, being widely taken as a satirical demolition of those who have "stopped worrying and learned to love the bomb." Yet *Dr. Strangelove* is a curiously and disturbingly ambiguous film. Edward Teller and General Curt LeMay are not its only targets, and if satire is aimed, as Swift insisted, at improvement, then this picture seems to urge the improvement of the earth by the extermination of mankind. It suggests that we are, indeed, going to blow ourselves up but it isn't very sad or shameful, or even very important.

Furthermore, *Paths of Glory,* which seems to me Kubrick's best film so far, does not so much attack militarism as take war as a fair specimen of human behavior—rather as *The Killing* calmly views a band of holdup men as typical professionals, trying to do their work despite the little human failings that plague us all.

Kubrick films are very bloody and cruel. For savage assault upon the viewer's nerves and hopes, there is little in modern film to match the protracted death-march in *Paths of Glory,* and the Kubrick canon includes also *Lolita,* with its murder shown lovingly and lengthily not once but twice; the explosive massacre in *The Killing;* the *Spartacus* blood-bath; and the unforgettable "thump" of the dying general's nose hitting the floor in *Fear and Desire.* This virtually sadistic treatment of the audience must be accounted for, along with the numerous ambiguities of *Strangelove,* if Kubrick's particular brand of anti-militarism, and its effect on his work, is to be understood. One must account, above all, for the generally gloomy tone of his work. *Killer's Kiss,* which is alone among his pictures in having a conventionally cheerful ending, was the one film over which Kubrick's control was severely limited.

I wish to examine the three "anti-war" pictures closely, with reference where it is helpful to the other films.

Chronologically, the three pictures are a skeleton of Kubrick's career: *Strangelove* is the most recent, *Paths of Glory* (1957) stands roughly in the middle, and *Fear and Desire* (1953) was his first full-length fiction film. *Fear and Desire* is a painfully amateurish picture. The script by Howard O. Sackler is embarrassingly banal—a virtually incomprehensible story tricked out with vague, adolescent pessimism masquerading as Deep Thought. The post-recorded sound is terrible: the sound level doesn't vary throughout, a character sounding exactly the same in an interior close-up as he does in an exterior medium-long shot, and all of them sounding muffled and at the same time elocutionary. The actors are inexperienced (although the screenplay might have challenged the most seasoned players) and production details have a painfully homemade quality not far above the *mise en scène* of a junior high school play.

The film is about four soldiers behind enemy lines during an unidentified war: two privates —one a callow boy and one a middle-aged family man—a tough sergeant, and the pilot of the transport whose crash they survived. The pilot is a college intellectual seeking "Meaning."

Under his leadership they make their way warily through the woods and at nightfall they attack and slaughter a small detachment of enemy soldiers whom they surprise peacefully eating supper in a shack. The next day they encounter a group of women. They hide, but one of them sees the men and they take her prisoner. She is tied to a tree, the youngest soldier is left to watch over her, and the rest proceed to the river where they hope to construct a raft that will bear them downstream to their own lines. In their absence the young soldier, demoralized by the earlier massacre, attempts to befriend the uncomprehending girl, then to convince her of his innocence. Frustrated by her terror and incomprehension, he releases her, then runs gibbering to the river, completely demented. The others have discovered, while building the raft, an enemy command post in a farm-house. There is a general at the post, and a light plane, and after some confusing debate about courses of safety, duty, or ambition, they evolve a plan to kill the general and escape with the plane. Their plan requires the sergeant to make a daring diversionary attack, which he sees as his chance for glory. The general is killed by the lieutenant, who then escapes in the plane with the second private. In safety, they await the sergeant, who arrives by raft with the first private, whom he has found babbling in the shallows. The lieutenant finds that it has all been meaningless; the private's madness, the sergeant's heroism, and his own murder of the general, have left them just where they started.

Cinematically, *Fear and Desire* shows some of the rag-bag quality one expects from a novice director who has studied his art: a couple of *Rashomon* shots, a Renoir shot. But on the whole it is surprisingly personal and original. Despite its several particular badnesses and its general fuzziness, the film has a striking purity and honesty and is unmistakably the product of a single man's striving. Its processes are governed by decisions of thought and feeling rather than by formulae or the counsels of caution. Its distribution was limited, as is inevitable for

KILLER'S KISS

a film made outside the normal commercial structure, but it attained a degree of fame, assisted by a respectful notice in the New York *Times* ("It augurs well for the comparative tyros who made it") and a patronizing and imperceptive *Time* review.

Fear and Desire was an honorable failure in a realm where failures often are even more reekingly corrupt than successes. Few directors who come up through the Hollywood mill (or any other film mill, for that matter) are ever allowed the chances to learn from honorable failure that are taken for granted in other arts, simply because of the money involved. A novelist's two or three floundering first efforts cost him four or five years and twenty dollars worth of paper, a novice painter spoils canvas after canvas with borrowed or stolen pigments, but a film director's baby steps cost a thousand dollars a minute—which means, in fact, that he isn't permitted any baby steps. Kubrick is unique among current American directors in having served a meaningful apprenticeship.

There is more to *Fear and Desire*, however, than mere rarity; a powerful and complex emotion is conveyed, and a vision of the vexing conflicts of virtue and authority and the uncertainty which swathes every moral choice. It is a vision of clarity (despite the vapidity of the lines assigned the lieutenant) and depth and dignity, and it is conveyed by means of image. This vision, in fact, is more effectively and simply

stated by one central shot from the film than by any possible paraphrase or declaration, and that is in the scene of the shooting of the general, who is the type of authority and age, by the lieutenant, the type of youth, rebellion and moral yearning. The wounded general drags himself on his belly to the door of the farmhouse—a slow, painful, suspenseful progress. He crawls out onto the porch, to the edge of the circle of light falling from within, and raises his head to confront his attackers. The lieutenant, standing in the darkness, raises his pistol, and the eyes of the two men meet. There is another agonizing hesitation, then the lieutenant fires and the general's head falls forward, his face striking the boards with a sickening thud. The confrontation of youth and age, rebellion and authority, moral striving and moral complacency, is given its particular point, however, by Kubrick's double-casting of the roles. The same actor, Kenneth Harp, plays both the lieutenant and the general. This is a rather painfully obvious way of suggesting the ambiguity of the types and the difficulty of decision, but at least it doesn't sentimentalize the point and it does, most importantly, render it visually. And this notion of a disturbing identity of the moral types, or an even more disturbing instability of the types, is the vision to be vividly realized three films later in *Paths of Glory*, and is the source of the despairing whoops of *Dr. Strangelove*.

It would be a mistake to derive a final evaluation of any director's career from consideration of one film—especially a bad early film which the director has all but disowned (as Kubrick has disowned *Fear and Desire*, mention of which seems to depress him). Nor do I wish to rest this discussion upon the fragile base of my reading of the single fact of Kubrick's double-casting of the lieutenant and the general. Nonetheless, the very badness of the film, its baldness, makes its basic images particularly accessible, and when those same images are re-created in later Kubrick films the vision of moral dubiety as man's tragic burden becomes more and more central to the director's work. I would note that never, from the beginning in *Fear and Desire* right through *Strangelove*, is Kubrick himself a victim of the ambiguity he portrays, nor does he practice that commonplace false irony which consists in giving a judgment with the right hand and taking it away with the left.

Fear and Desire was followed by *Killer's Kiss*, Kubrick's least interesting and least personal film—"least personal" in that it seems to have little of the characteristic flavor of his work, even though he did write, photograph, and edit the picture himself. It was his first effort for a major studio—United Artists—and on the evidence of the film itself Kubrick must have been under considerable constraint.

It was with his next, *The Killing*, that Kubrick achieved widespread attention and appreciation. Again the screenplay was Kubrick's own, and this time with a much greater stamp of originality. In form, Kubrick experimented with narration by means of overlapping story segments—the off-screen narrator keeps things straight while the picture backs up to view a piece of action for the second, third, or fourth time. Each "re-run" brings the story up to the point of the beginning of the horse-race during which a gang of holdup men intend to rob the cash-room of a race-track, and the track announcer's voice, grating from the loudspeakers, backgrounds various events to establish their simultaneity as Kubrick puts together his puzzle-plot, so that by the last time we view the fight at the bar we are reminded by the announcer of all the other things that are going on at this very moment. The substance of the film is a fairly conventional gangster story of the *Rififi* tradition: emphasizing the professional details of burglary and the everyday humanity of the crooks, with no moralizing. In keeping with the tradition, the crooks are undone (as required by the Production Code) not because they are wicked but because they are human—in *The Killing* it is a uxorious husband who spoils things.

Paths of Glory (1957) opens, as does *The Killing*, with an off-screen narrator's voice, but the narrator does not reappear and the structure of *Paths of Glory* is a brilliant advance over that of the earlier picture, achieving rhythm without repetition through recurrent images of men walking—suggested, perhaps, by the "paths" of the title. A company of soldiers marches past the camera at the opening of the film, their boots crunching in the gravel yard of the chateau with a sound which will come back before the film ends. Within the chateau the heels of the staff officers and orderlies ring crisply and hollowly, foreshadowing the "paths" of the doomed men at their trial. In one of the most brilliant sequences of the film, Colonel Dax (Kirk Douglas) takes a long, nightmarish walk down the trench where his men await the signal to attack, while the smoke thickens and the roar of the barrage builds up. The attack itself is a grotesque, shambling, crouching, stumbling walk to death. The men march disconsolately into the chateau grounds. The court martial is staged as a series of precise, geometrical drill-field maneuvers, with the heels on the hollow tile again ringing loud; and finally comes the interminable and nerve-shattering march to the execution, with the footsteps of the condemned men crunching away their last seconds of life.

None of these walks gets anybody anywhere: all the paths end in death or frustration, or simply getting back where you started from. At the end of the film, Colonel Dax calls for a respite—"Give the men a few more minutes, Sergeant,"—when he is reminded that they must be marching back to the front, but it is only a respite, and soon they'll all set off again on the treadmill walk to oblivion.

Against the futility of the paths of glory (or ambition, or justice, or duty) the film offers faint hope. After the execution, Dax is disgusted to find his men in a tavern tormenting a captive German girl who is being forced to sing for them, but their catcalls and whistles turn to tears as the weeping girl tremulously sings her song of a soldier's sweetheart. They understand that the song is about *them*, and

THE KILLING

briefly they feel at one with her, her sweetheart, and all doomed soldiers everywhere. This vision of the possibility of compassion is consoling, but scarcely redeeming, particularly in view of the following assurance that they *will* go back into the trenches, led by the good Colonel Dax.

One of the most powerful scenes in this powerful film—the famous "cockroach line"—casts a perplexingly ambiguous light upon the whole action. In the stable-prison the night before the execution, Corporal Paris cries, "Tomorrow, when I'm dead, that cockroach will be closer to my wife than I'll be," and Private Ferolles smashes the cockroach with his fist saying: "Now you're one up on the cockroach." By a brutal act of destruction, an illusion of power is achieved. Later on, the lives of the three soldiers are snuffed out as abruptly and brutally as was the cockroach's life, for the sake of General Mireau's illusion of power. Mireau himself is professionally destroyed by General Broulard for the sake of *his* power which, presumably, is another illusion. By extension, the war itself is a similar act of destruction in support of a similar human illusion and, perversely, we begin to see war as springing from the love of life—the love of one's own life. The love of life cannot be condemned, but here it is easily converted into envy or fear of the lives of others, and expressed as brutality, coldness, or cowardice.

This is nothing as comfortable and obvious as "anti-war." Warfare may be the worst possible expression of the love of life and compassion the best, but both spring, puzzlingly, from the same source and one is as likely as the other. Neither signifies much for long. Lear cried: "As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods!" while Kubrick seems to say: "As the cockroach to Ferolles, as Ferolles to Mireau, as Mireau to Broulard, are we to the gods!" In such a context, Colonel Dax's demands for justice become just another path to the grave. He

PATHS OF GLORY: *The attack.*

rages at the cynical and corrupt General Broulard (who is untouched by his contempt), and the monstrous Mireau is crushed, but the three innocent men are already dead and the troops are going back to war. The only feasible attitude seems to be the stoicism of the sergeant in command of the firing-squad, who counsels the condemned corporal to "die like a man. We'll all be joining you soon."

After *Paths of Glory* came Kubrick's wide-screen, cast-of-thousands, pseudo-historical spectacle, *Spartacus.* Although not a war-movie, it came with the best liberal credentials —screenplay by Dalton Trumbo from a Howard Fast novel. *Spartacus* had its moments (several thousand extras in Roman armor *are* exciting, no matter what kind of blah is sloshing around them) but was a rather ordinary specimen of its kind, i.e., an orgy of mutilation and brutality—lashings, gladiatorial combats, bleeding stumps of limbs, mounds of dead, crucifixions —followed by a church-of-your-choice inspirational message: "Spartacus, your son is free!" About all Kubrick added to the brew was homosexuality (powerful and touching in *The Killing,* but just plain excruciating in *Spartacus*) and a certain gritty believability of detail. In one scene, however, he did touch again upon the ambiguity of love and aggression. Spartacus and his friend David are forced by their captors to fight, the loser to die quickly by the sword, the winner to be crucified; each battles savagely to save the other from the cross. Spartacus finally disarms David, pins him in a grip like a lover's, looks into his face, says, "I love you, David," and stabs him in the heart. Here the moral and emotional ambiguity of the act is reinforced by a sexual ambiguity.

Lolita (1962) had a somewhat similar use of sexual irregularity at its very base. Humbert Humbert is the lover whose embrace is unnatural and destructive but whose love is nonetheless real, nonetheless anguished. *Lolita,* too, had its scene of slow, deliberate, ritualized violence—by now becoming almost a Kubrick hallmark—in the shooting of Quilty. *Lolita,* however, concerns itself with the act of love, rather than the act of violence (or, more strictly, of authority) upon which I wish to focus.

Dr. Strangelove marked, for readers of *Playboy, The Realist,* and the best-seller lists, the arrival upon the silver screen of the newest wave of American literary "rebellion," a spate of satirical novels preaching sexual liberation and hatred of authority: often very funny and telling, but sometimes suffering from a juvenile identification of sexual liberation with hatred of authority. Not *epâter,* but *foutre la bourgeoisie.* The assignment of the film to this school is based on the fact that one of its writers was Terry Southern, whose novel *The Magic Christian* is, along with Joseph Heller's *Catch-22,* holy writ of the New Satire. One result of this shaky attribution was a bland tendency to see *Dr. Strangelove* as making mincemeat of the military mind, the Birchers, the anti-fluoridationists, and all governments (which it does) and making the case for disengagement, sexual liberation, and philosophical anarchism (which it doesn't).

The figures of authority take it on the chin in *Dr. Strangelove,* all right. But at whose hands? The "rebels" who make fools of the top brass, the President, the Russian premier, and all who pretend to power and wisdom, are General Jack D. Ripper and Colonel "King" Kong, and the H-bomb holocaust with which the film closes is their act of rebellion. And the central authority-figure of the story is President Merkin Muffley, who, despite the gratuitous ridicule of his obscene name, is portrayed as a decent, sensible, likable, and humane man.

The curious thing about *Dr. Strangelove* as a satire is that General Ripper, Col. Kong, "Bat" Guano—the ones who effectively blow up the world—are shown not as incompetents or villains but as lovable lunatics, and when the fireballs unfold in the final frames and the girl begins to sing "We'll Meet Again" the picture has allied itself with their lunacy, leaving the viewer all by himself with no place to stand.

If General Ripper's sexual anxiety (he "with-

The War Room in DOCTOR STRANGELOVE

holds" his "essence") sets off the attack, General Turgidson's sexual easiness is certainly no help. He was in bed with his secretary when the attack was launched, which may be wholesome and natural but isn't vigilance. If Ripper's paranoia is the mainspring of the action, "King" Kong's cheerful, competent determination is the hairspring, and the gallantry of his youthful, interracial crew is a parody not of false gallantry but of the real thing. Conventional virtues are useless in the day of the B-57, the H-bomb, and fallout—but what other virtues have you got? And it isn't that ordinary virtues are inadequate to ordinary human vices, but rather that neither vices nor virtues, being human and passional, are much use in a world dominated by inhuman and passionless machines. *Dr. Strangelove* mocks not only militarism, Edward Teller, and the Pentagon, but all pretensions to moral judgment on the part of men (all of us) who have delivered their environment into the hands of totally amoral technological Science and their decisions (the very stuff of morality) to gamesmen aspiring through amorality to Science. The irrationality of Ripper is vastly to be preferred to the rationality of the Doomsday Machine. Dr. Strangelove himself (to my mind, the weakest conception in the film) has an artificial arm that keeps giving the Nazi salute. American and Russian exploitation of German scientists is the target, but so too is The Machine; Dr. Strangelove isn't a Nazi or anything else human—he's a man who has substituted a slide-rule for his brain and his heart, and a machine for his good right hand. The salute, and the cry of *"Mein Führer!"* aren't politics but habit, mechanical habit.

The world of Dr. Strangelove is peopled by men who have stopped worrying, i.e, thinking and feeling, and learned to love the bomb, i.e., The Machine.

Terry Southern himself, in a *Realist* interview, said that *Strangelove* was an attempt to "blast smugness . . . over a foolproof system which may not be." Certainly the film's *leitmotiv* is man vs. machine, in scene after scene, line after line—the inconsistency between man and his machines puzzles the R.A.F. officer (Peter Sellers) when he says of the Japanese: "They tortured me, the swines! Funny. They make marvelous cameras," and this idea is played over and over. And if the earlier Kubrick films return again and again to the dubiety and ambiguity of human moral choices, then *Strangelove* may be said to reject, with a rage almost holy, the most popular current evasion of moral choice, that is, the attempt to defend ourselves—with machines, statistics, and social "sciences"—

against the inevitable dubiety. One removes the element of uncertainty, for instance, from national defense, by building a Doomsday Machine. The Doomsday Machine is never pictured in the film, except in those fireballs at the end, but its representatives are omnipresent: the smoothly whirring computers in the room where Peter Sellers first notices something amiss; "King" Kong's bomber (or should the possessive be the other way around?); Dr. Strangelove's mechanical arm; the coke machine that spits in "Bat" Guano's face; the Big Board in the War Room; the telephones, radios, and radarscopes. These are the villains, but in the images of the film there are the repeated juxtapositions of Man—sloppy, incompetent, unreliable, but full of hope and courage—and Machine—beautiful, functional, absolutely reliable, but mindless and heartless. Kubrick is unmistakably on the side of man, silly and fallible as he is, and if *Dr. Strangelove* has a message I think it is that human fallibility is less likely to be fatal than pretensions to godlike infallibility, or abdication of moral responsibilities to "infallible," passionless, machines or machine-logic.

I think that what has drawn Kubrick to war as the subject-matter for three films is not antimilitarism, specifically, but a concern with public morality. The obsession with the disturbing imperfections of man, with the harrowing doubts which shadow every act of the will, is an obsession with the central question of political theory: Who should decide? War, whatever else it may be, is still the area in which public morality is most terribly and most dramatically tested. And this sense of the moral question as a public one accounts, too, for Kubrick's worst vice—his curious affection for off-screen narration, as in *Killer's Kiss, The Killing, Paths of Glory, Lolita,* and the beginning of *Dr. Strangelove.* The off-screen voice, distracting and annoying as it may sometimes be, imparts a ritualistic and documentary distance to the story, and also is the device by which Kubrick separates his own point of view from the blurred and uncertain ones he portrays. Perhaps he will find better ways to hold at arms' length (his own, and the audiences) the chaos he wants to depict.

The cruelty remains to be accounted for: those slow and austere movements toward violence in which the feeling of tension created by a savage passion under stiff, ritual restraints produces effects almost Japanese. Commonly, such a progress (the walk to the execution, the general dragging himself to the door, Humbert stalking Quilty) is treated with absolute naturalism—no score, close-in eye-level camera, "natural" sound effects, and full time-lapse. It takes us as long to get to those posts as it does Paris, Ferolles, and Renoir, and all we hear is the mumbling, the sobbing, the rattle of the drum, and the sound of the gravel underfoot. It is in these scenes that Kubrick leads his audiences as close as he can to that chaos of the emotions which he sees as the great terror, the great confusion upon which are erected the perilous structures of the human will. The tension of the approach is what man must endure; it is the price of his humanity.

But it is not alone the size and seriousness and complexity of Kubrick's moral vision which makes him the finest of living American directors, but his ability to express his vision in a coherent structure of images: the "paths" of *Paths of Glory,* the maddening machines of *Strangelove,* belong to the poetry of the film.

NEAL OXENHANDLER

On Cocteau

Jean Cocteau's film, **The Testament of Orpheus,** *is hardly reviewable in any ordinary sense. We present below, therefore, an informal commentary on the film and on the man, whose remarkable contributions to the medium have not previously been discussed in our pages.*

I met Cocteau in 1954, at Cannes, where he was president of the Film Festival. He was staying at the majestic Carlton, a marvel of Riviera rococo. As we entered the bar, the ripple of whispers that greeted him reminded me that celebrities live in a special fluid or medium like aquarium fish. They have forgotten how to breathe air and would probably die if forced to do so. Two martinis went to Cocteau's head and he spoke with great animation, moving nimbly through all the subjects of his repertoire, those obsessional themes and symbols that recur in his books: the poet as exile, discoverer and sacrificial victim; art as Pythagorean system or mathematical formula; the universe as infernal machine; etc. I didn't need to ask the questions I had prepared, for his brilliant monologue renewed itself inexhaustibly. As he was to say in *Testament of Orpheus:* "Poetry is a petrifying fountain"—a self-renewing statue hardened in the shapes of words.

As we entered the enormous dining room, we plunged once again into the fluid secreted by the looks of several hundred people. Cocteau was the celebrity of the day and half the people in that room wanted some favor or attention from him. I felt the extraordinary power of falsification, distortion, and even corruption inherent in those looks—which made Cocteau believe, in spite of his own self-defense manual, that the poet need not be an exile and a rebel. He has always known, of course, that the celebrity becomes a "sacred monster," a three-headed machine (like that he invented for *Testament of Orpheus*) that eats autographs and excretes fame.

It was a magnificent dinner. Cocteau consulted me on the menu, then ordered a superb wine and that rare and expensive fish called *loup de mer.* After dinner, we went to view a tedious Russian film. I left early, to catch the last bus back to Nice, and as I got up to go, he said, using the familiar *tu,* "I must see you again. Call me." When I called him, a few days later, he scarcely remembered my name and our second meeting was as awkward and painful as the first had been intimate. I did not see him a third time.

Cocteau's death, on October 11, 1963, was an event that he had been preparing for many years. The obsession with death has, of course, been a common literary theme in this century. Malraux and Camus forged voluntaristic affirmations of human dignity in the teeth of the judgment and annihilation each man must face; Gide attained a serene if hedonistic indifference to death; while Proust, in his own way, reinvented immortality. As for Cocteau, he has been less concerned with the annihilation of personality than in making sure the world accords him the proper rites. It is in this light that I view his last work, *Testament of Orpheus.* There had been films on Gide, Proust, and Picasso; but since Clouzot did not offer to

film the poet at work, Cocteau decided to produce his own *in memoriam.* This film shares a common purpose with everything that Cocteau has written in the last ten years: it patiently, seductively, didactically tells us what we are supposed to think about the master. It is like the stones inscribed with hieroglyphs the Pharaohs left in their tombs. *Testament* tries to carve a shape in that treacherous fluid secreted by the eyes and ears of the public. (Cocteau knows what a hopeless task this is. He ridicules his posthumous fame in the scene where a radio m.c. quizzes a child who gives correct but irrelevant answers.) In his later years, Cocteau was obsessed by what people did think, might think or ought to think about him. Thus François Périer, playing one of the judges in the trial scene of *Testament* says: "You are accused of being innocent," i.e., you are accused of not having committed the crimes people attributed to you.

The improvised, home-made, low-budget quality of *Testament* makes it an appealing film. In this respect it recalls *The Blood of a Poet.** It is a film made by Cocteau and his friends, in a few days, while sharing a Riviera vacation at Villa Santo Sospir, the home of Madame Alec Weisweiller at St.-Jean-Cap-Férrat. It recapitulates, from the opening cut of the original *Orpheus,* Cocteau's films, plays, and life; and since it is acted by Cocteau himself and by his friends, it represents a last effort by the poet to transform the flux of life into the stasis of art.

The eighteenth-century costume Cocteau wears as the film opens recalls that worn by the visitor to the poet's studio in *The Blood of a Poet.* There are many other echoes of that film: the execution of the poet, the viewing of the poet's death by blasé spectators from an opera box, the resuscitation of the dead poet by a suggestive sexual osmosis, the use of statues and drawings as well as film tricks such as printing sequences backwards, etc. The references to *Orpheus* are more obvious, since Maria Casarès, François Périer, Jean Marais, and Cocteau's "adopted son" Edouard appear here, as in the earlier film. The horse-headed figure is an avatar of the 1926 *Orpheus,* a play produced by the Pitoëffs. For a moment too we see Isolde, sailing over the waters of the bay, as she did in *The Eternal Return.* Jean Marais as Oedipus, blind and led by his child-like daughter, Antigone, appears not because the Oedipus figure has any special relevance here, within the narrative or symbolic context of the film, but because he appeared thus in *The Infernal Machine* and because this sightless hero, symbol of an horrific transgression, has been repeatedly drawn by Cocteau. We even see Cocteau in his academic robes as an Oxford doctor of letters.

In what was to me the most insightful moment of the film, Cocteau stands at his easel, carefully copying an hibiscus flower. But the drawing that emerges is not of the flower. It is Cocteau's own self-portrait. Cocteau plainly tells us that the film is an exercise in narcissism. It is the poet's effort to draw together all the persons, symbols, places, artifacts, events, and memories that compose his past, to give them objective life so that he may one last time see and know them and, in a way, love himself and his past. But he also wants to draw us into his filmed dream, to make us his accomplices and lovers.

After the trial scene, a drama created by glances and innuendos, through the genius of Maria Casarès, François Périer warns us that the judge's role is the hardest and most dangerous of all. Having, at least in my own mind, judged Cocteau as an exhibitionist, a narcissist, and an arrested adolescent, I take that warning to heart and would like to try for a moment to recapture what I felt when I first read him in 1948. He appeared to me as the high priest of a mystery (he calls poetry a priesthood in *Testament*). He made poetry an enigmatic world, opening (and it didn't seem paradoxical to me at the time nor does it now) onto the

* For analyses of Cocteau's films see my *Scandal and Parade: The Theater of Jean Cocteau* (Rutgers, 1957).

TESTAMENT OF ORPHEUS

spiritual, the transcendent, but also onto the erotic. Poetry was part dionysian and part apollonian, it was a key to the supernatural and to one's own inner being. I discovered, eventually, that we viewed neither human nor divine love the same way; but I was grateful to him for those early insights.

Cocteau's films may well prove to be his major creations. They allowed him to combine all his talents—for the word, the image, the dream. We must admire his ability to beat the system at its own game, to remain non-commercial, yet successful, making the films he wanted to make, insisting that films are not public but private, not mass media but archetypes and dreams, not entertainment but art. Wherever he is wandering now, in that Zone through which his imagination so often passed, that place of shadows where Caligari and Oedipus and Frankenstein and Faust greet each other and are carried along by the burning wind, unable to rest, I hope that he has found the solution to the puzzle he posed so often, the password for the Sphinx, the code to disarm the infernal machine. I remember the words of a theologian who said: Hell is to see yourself and think about yourself for all eternity.

But Cocteau was far more than a narcissist. There was something extremely primitive in his imagination, some desire to escape from history with its burden of mortality and suffering. He insists on the autonomy of imagination, on its ability to transcend the contingent, the temporal, the accidental. His incantations, spells and charms, the magic rituals that constantly reappear in his works (e.g., the witches' fire in *Testament* from which Cégèste's portrait emerges) are continuity rites like those practiced by shamans and witch-doctors in less sophisticated cultures. In all of Cocteau's works, death is constantly transformed into a myth of eternal beginning. The central theme of *Testament* is resurrection, and there are more floating and resurrected bodies in the film than in a séance.

Film is our contemporary magic. Eternity is the minds of other people where poets and their heroes lead a ghostly existence, dying to one mind only to regenerate in another, trembling between transmigrations, always ready, like wandering spirits, to renew their hold on the imagination. Cocteau met Flaubert's test for greatness. Great art, said Flaubert, is silent and incomprehensible and makes us dream.

MICHAEL ROEMER

The Surfaces of Reality

Critics and teachers have been puzzling over the nature of film ever since it first emerged from the peepshow arcades. But it has been rare for film-makers, especially American ones, to have the time or inclination to take a philosophical look at cinematic style. In the article below Mr. Roemer, who was formerly film critic for The Reporter *and has now — with Robert Young — completed his first feature,* Nothing but a Man, *considers some basic questions about film in the light of his own work.*

As Siegfried Kracauer effectively demonstrates, the camera photographs the skin; it cannot function like an X-ray machine and show us what is underneath. This does not mean, however, that the film-maker has no control over the surfaces rendered by his camera. On the contrary, he *chooses* his surfaces for their content, and through their careful selection and juxtaposition builds a structure of feeling and meaning that are the core of his work.

There are times in the history of the medium when story, treatment and performance drift so far into a studio never-never land that we cannot help but make a virtue of "pure" reality, as free from interference on the part of the film-maker as possible—even at the risk of creating something shapeless. This should not, however, obscure the fact that a film, like a poem or painting, is basically an artifact.

The assertion that film is nothing more than a documentary recording of reality undoubtedly stems from the fact that the medium must render all meaning in physical terms. This affinity for real surfaces, combined with great freedom of movement both in time and space, brings film closer than any other medium to our own random experience of life. Even the realistic playwright, who—until the advent of the camera—came closest to rendering the appearance of reality, is often forced in his structure to violate the very sense of life he is trying to create. But the film-maker can use the flexible resources at his command to approximate the actual fabric of reality. Moreover, he need not heighten his effects in order to communicate, for he can call on the same sensibilities in his audience that we use in life itself.

All of us bring to every situation, whether it be a business meeting or a love affair, a social and psychological awareness which helps us understand complex motivations and relationships. This kind of perception, much of it nonverbal and based on apparently insignificant clues, is not limited to the educated or gifted. We all depend on it for our understanding of other people and have become extremely proficient in the interpretation of subtle signs—a shading in the voice, an averted glance. This nuanced awareness, however, is not easily called upon by the arts, for it is predicated upon a far more immediate and total experience than can be provided by literature and the theater, with their dependence on the word, or by the visual arts—with their de-

pendence on the image. Only film renders experience with enough immediacy and totality to call into play the perceptual processes we employ in life itself.

The fact that film exercises this sort of perceptual capacity is, I believe, one of its chief appeals to us. It gives us practice in the delicate and always somewhat uncertain skill of finding out what is going on. As an extreme example, take these lines from *Marty*. They are spoken in a dance hall during the first encounter between a lonely man and a lonely girl. She says: "I'm twenty-nine years old. How old are you?" And he answers: "Thirty-six."

On the stage or the printed page these lines would fall ludicrously flat. But on the screen, when spoken by performers who can make every detail yield a wealth of meaning, they instantly convey—as they would in life itself—a complex web of feeling: the girl's fear that she might be too old for the man, her need to come right to the point, her relief when he turns out to be older, and finally a mutual delight that their relationship has crossed its first hurdle.

Film thrives on this kind of intimate detail, for the camera reports it so closely that nothing essential is lost to the eye or ear. The camera makes it possible to use the stuff of life itself, without amplification or overstatement and without any loss in dramatic value. What is achieved in a large action or an explicit moment on the stage can be rendered just as dramatically on the screen in small and *implicit* terms, for it is not the magnitude of a gesture that makes it dramatic but its meaning and intention.

This is *not* to say that the medium is most aptly used on the kind of everyday story told in *Marty*, or that low-key dialogue without conflict or strong feeling is always effective on the screen. I quote the scene merely as an example of the medium's capacity for finding meaning in the detail of everyday life and would like to suggest that out of such detail, out of the ordinary surfaces of life, the filmmaker can structure *any* kind of situation and story—lyrical or dramatic, historical or contemporary.

Like so many films that deal with the past, Dreyer's *Passion de Jeanne D'Arc* might well have been filled with violent action and theatrical confrontations. Instead the story is told in terms of mundane detail. Thus Jeanne is betrayed at a critical moment by a priest who averts his eyes when she turns to him for help. There is no call for anything more explicit. The betrayal is what matters, and the camera renders it far more credibly and forcefully in a mundane detail than it would be in a highly dramatized gesture.

In *Rashomon* and *The Seven Samurai* Kurosawa deals with events of the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries in the most everyday terms. He knows that our basic daily experience of reality has not changed much over the centuries: a war between bandits and samurai in a feudal Japanese village was as full of mud and rain, as gritty and as grotesque as a twentieth-century skirmish. Film at its best uses the language of ordinary experience—but uses it subtly and artfully.

In a contemporary setting, Bresson's *A Man Escaped* chronicles the efforts of a French resistance fighter to break out of a German prison. Much of the film takes place within the confines of a cell and the camera records how he painstakingly prepares his escape by fashioning tools out of spoons and rope out of blankets. It is all very ordinary and physical, but out of the grimy detail emerges a devout and heroic assertion of life and human freedom and of the need to preserve them in the face of all odds. In the hands of a sensitive filmmaker the ordinary moment becomes a channel for deep feeling and a sequence of apparently insignificant scenes is structured into a world of great complexity.

This use of ordinary surfaces requires great skill and discipline since the audience can sense every false move and movement, every false note in the dialogue, every unsubstantiated relationship. The very thing that works *for* the

film-maker if he can master it—reality—can quickly turn against him, so that the most ordinary moment becomes utterly unreal. Not surprisingly most directors avoid the challenge and set their stories in unfamiliar parts, among unusual people and in unusual circumstances.

Because most good films use the language of the commonplace, they tend to have an unassuming appearance, whereas films that make a large claim—that speak nobly and poetically about life, love and death—almost invariably prove to be hollow. A good film is concrete: it creates a sequence of objective situations, actual relationships between people, between people and their circumstances. Thus each moment becomes an objective correlative; that is, feeling (or meaning) rendered in actual, physical terms: objectified.

By contrast, most movies are a series of conventional communicative gestures, dialogues, and actions. Most movie-makers *play* on the feelings of their audience by setting up a sequence of incidents that have a proven effect. The events are not rendered; they are merely *cited.* The films do not use the vocabulary of actuality but rather a second-hand language that has proven effective in other films—a language that is changed only when the audience no longer responds.

This language of conventions gives most pictures the appearance of ludricrous unreality fifteen or twenty years after they have been acclaimed as masterpieces. The dramatic conventions of the 1940's are recognized as a system of hollow clichés by the sixties. When *The Best Years of Our Lives* was first shown, references to the war were enough to make an audience feel strongly about a situation or character without any substantiation whatever; there were feelings abroad which, when touched, produced the desired effect. By 1964 this is no longer true and the tissue of the film disintegrates.

Audiences can be "played" by a skillful movie-maker with a fair amount of predictability, so that even discriminating audiences are easily taken in. At the beginning of Bergman's *Wild Strawberries* Professor Borg dreams that he is on a deserted street with all its doors and windows shuttered tight. He looks up at a clock that has no hands and pulls out his own watch only to find that its hands are missing also. A man appears on the corner with his head averted; when he turns, he has no face and his body dissolves into a pool on the sidewalk. A glass hearse comes down the street and spills a coffin that opens. Borg approaches and discovers his own body in the coffin. The corpse comes to life and tries to pull him in.

The nightmare quality in this sequence is derivative. The deserted, shuttered street, the clock and watch without hands, the glass hearse, the faceless man are all conventions familiar to surrealist painting and literature. Bergman uses them skillfully and with conviction to produce an effect in the audience, but they are not true film images, derived from life and rendered in concrete, physical terms.

There is a similar nightmare in Dreyer's *Vampire.* A young man dreams that he has entered a room with an open coffin in it. He approaches and discovers that he himself is the corpse. The camera now assumes the point-of-view of the dead man: we look up at the ceiling. Voices approach and two carpenters appear in our field of vision. They close the coffin with a lid but we continue to look out through a small glass window. Talking indistinctly, they nail down the lid and plane the edges of the wood. The shavings fall onto the window. One of them has put a candle down on the glass and wax drips onto it. Then the coffin is lifted up and we pass close under the ceiling, through the doorway, beneath the sunlit roofs and the church steeple of a small town —out into the open sky.

Here the detail is concrete: an experience is rendered, not cited; the situation is objective and out of it emerges, very powerfully, the feeling that Dreyer is after: a farewell to life, a last confined look at the earth before the coffin is lowered into the grave. Once again we note that the unassuming detail can render a complex feeling (or meaning) which eludes

the more obviously ambitious but abstract statement.

Good film dialogue, too, has this concrete quality. Like the speech of everyday life, it does not tell you *directly* what is felt or meant. One might call it symptomatic dialogue: symptomatic because it is a surface manifestation of what is going on inside the person. The dialogue in most films is, of course, the opposite: a direct statement of feeling or meaning: "I love you"; "I am so happy"; "You are this"; "I am that." But just as the action should be a physical or surface correlative that permits the audience to discover for itself the implicit meaning, so the dialogue should be a *surface* that renders its content by implication—not directly. The two lines quoted from *Marty* are good film dialogue. In contrast, here is an incident from Bergman's *The Seventh Seal.*

Shortly before his death the knight Antonius Block shares a meal with a young couple in front of their covered wagon. "I shall always remember this moment," he says. "The silence, the twilight, the bowls of strawberries and milk, your faces in the evening light. Mikhael sleeping, Jof with his lyre. I'll try to remember what we have talked about. I'll carry this moment between my hands as carefully as if it were a bowl filled to the brim with fresh milk. And it will be an adequate sign—it will be enough for me."

Without this lengthy and explicit verbalization, one would have little insight into the feelings of Antonius Block. The situation itself does not communicate them and Bergman uses dialogue as a way of getting us to understand and feel something the film itself does not render. In Kurosawa's *Ikiru,* a petty official who is dying of cancer and trying desperately to give meaning to his life by pushing a playground project through the sterile bureaucracy, stops on his way home from work to look at the evening sky. "It's beautiful," he says to his companion, "but I have no time." Here the dialogue is part of the objective situation. No direct statement is needed since the man and his feelings are clear.

What is true for dialogue is equally true for performance. A good film performance is a carefully integrated sequence of concrete actions and reactions that render the feelings and thoughts of a character. It is not a system of hollow gestures that, like bad dialogue, *tell* the audience what is going on. Most film performances are drawn from the vast repertory of acting conventions. Conversely, the good film actor—whether trained in the Method or not—tries to render feelings through the use of surface correlatives. He is not concerned with the demonstration of feeling but with the symptom of feeling.

Chaplin's best work is continuously physical and concrete. If his performance in *The Gold Rush* had been generalized (or conventionalized) the scene in which he boils and eats his shoe would have become preposterous. He executes it, however, in the most careful physical detail. While the shoe is cooking, he pours water over it as if he were basting a bird. He carves and serves it with meticulous care, separating the uppers from the sole as though boning a fish. Then he winds the limp laces around his fork like spaghetti and sucks each nail as if it were a delicate chicken bone. Thus a totally incongruous moment is given an absolute, detailed physicality; the extraordinary is made ordinary, credible—and therefore funny.

It must be noted again that while the screen exceeds all other media in verisimilitude, its reality is nevertheless a *mode.* We appear to be looking at reality but are actually looking at a representation of it that may be as carefully structured as a still-life by Cézanne. The film-maker uses the surfaces of life itself—literal photographic images and accurately reproduced sounds. But the arrangement of these images and sounds is totally controlled. Each moment, each detail is carefully coordinated into the structure of the whole—just like the details in a painting or poem. By artfully controlling his images, the film-maker presents an unbroken realistic surface; he preserves the appearance of reality.

This means that he should at no time interpose himself between audience and action. He must be absent from the scene. An example of this is the use of the camera. In the standard film the camera is often editorial; the director uses it to *point out* to the audience what he wants them to see. Imagine a scene between husband and wife: we see them in a medium-shot, talking; then we cut to a close-up of the woman's hand and discover that she is slipping her wedding ring off and on. The director has made his point: we now know that she is unhappily married. But by artificially lifting the detail out of context and bringing it to our attention, the autonomous reality of the scene is violated and the audience becomes aware of the film-maker. Of course a good director may also be said to use the camera editorially—to point out what he wants us to see. But he never seems to be doing so; he preserves the appearance of an autonomous reality on the screen. The moment with the ring would have been incidental to the scene—for the camera must follow the action, not lead it.

Since the process of editing is an obvious and continued intrusion by the film-maker on the material, an editor tries to make most of his cuts in such a way that the cut itself will be obscured. In order to cut from a medium-shot to a close-up of a man, he will probably use a moment when the man rises from a chair or turns rapidly. At such a time the audience is watching the action and is unaware of the jump; once again, the effort is to preserve an apparently autonomous reality.

At the end of *Notti di Cabiria* the girl and the man she has just married are sitting in a restaurant. We see her from the back, talking. Then Fellini cuts to a shot from the front and we see that she has taken out a large wad of bank notes—her savings. We immediately realize, with something of a shock, that the man is after her money. If Fellini had actually *shown* us Cabiria taking the money out of her pocketbook, the moment would have become self-conscious and overloaded with meaning; we would have had too much time to get the point. By jumping the moment and confronting us suddenly with the money, Fellini renders the meaning *and* preserves the apparent autonomy of the situation.

Spontaneity, the sense that what is happening on the screen is happening for the first time and without plan or direction, is an essential factor in establishing a reality. It is also extremely difficult to achieve since a huge industry has sprung up around the medium, putting enormous financial and technical pressure on the moment before the camera. Years of routine and a high degree of established skill in every department of film-making all conspire against it. From writing and casting to the angles of the camera a monstrous if unintended predictability crushes all life. Even a strong director is often helpless against the machinery; and even location shooting, which should be a liberating force, turns into a dead-end when a huge crew descends on the place, seals it off hermetically and effectively turns it into a studio. The channels have been set up too long and too well; all vision is trapped into standardized imagery and the living moment cannot survive.

For this reason an almost improvised film—like *Shadows* or *Breathless*, made without great skill or art by relatively inexperienced people—can carry far greater conviction than the standard theatrical product. In spite of obvious flaws there is a spontaneity to the action that endows it with life. Of course the experienced director, working in freedom and under good conditions, can achieve spontaneity without relying on improvisation. Kurosawa shot parts of *The Seven Samurai* with several cameras; this made it unnecessary for the actors to repeat, and so deaden, the action with every shift in camera position. Chaplin, on the other hand, used to rehearse and shoot endlessly to achieve a perfect but seemingly effortless result. Both men were after the same thing: spontaneity—and with it, reality.

Our sense of reality is so delicately attuned that certain moments are better left off the

screen or the situation is destroyed. This is especially true for violence and death. When someone's head is cut off in a fiction film we know perfectly well that a trick is employed and unless a scene of this kind is handled with great care, it ends up being incredible or even funny. Similarly, when someone dies on the screen and remains in full view, many of us cannot resist watching for the slightest sign of life in the supposed corpse. We are pitting our own sense of reality against the movie-maker's; needless to say, *we* come out on top and the scene is destroyed.

In Dreyer's unproduced script on the life of Christ he describes the crucifixion by showing us the back of the cross, with the points of the nails splintering through the wood. On the screen these would be undeniably real nails going through real wood, and the authenticity of the moment would not be challenged. If, however, Dreyer had chosen to show us the cross from the front we would know absolutely that the nails going through the *flesh* are a deception—and the suffering figure would turn into a performer.

The nail splintering through the wood forces us to use our imagination—forces us to visualize what is happening on the other side of the cross. This involves us in a far deeper participation than could be achieved by the spurious horror of a nail going through the flesh of an actor.

There is something to be learned here about the entire process of perception in film. If we are explicitly told something, as we are in most pictures, we remain passive and essentially outsiders. If, however, we have to draw our *own* conclusions on the basis of evidence presented, as we do in life itself, we cannot help but participate. We become actively involved. When we are told something explicitly, we are in a sense deprived of the experience. It has been digested for us and we are merely informed of the results, or the meaning. But it is *experience* we are after, even if it remains vicarious experience.

This brings us to another characteristic of the medium—one that is profoundly related to our previous discussion. Although the experience of the motion picture audience remains essentially vicarious, film comes closer than any other medium to giving us the illusion of a *primary* experience. This has been studied by psychologists who have found that the dark theater, the bright hynotic screen, the continuous flow of images and sounds, and the large anonymous audience in which we are submerged all contribute to a suspension of self-awareness and a total immersion in the events on the screen.

Beyond this, however, the medium itself encourages the illusion of a primary participation. The camera can induce an almost physical response—so that when Chaplin sits on a hypodermic needle in the lair of a dope fiend, or when Dreyer's Jeanne d'Arc has her head shaved and some of the hair falls onto her lip, the sensation produced in us is almost physical. Moreover, this physical participation is not limited to sharp sensory detail; it extends to the realm of movement.

Most directors think of the screen as of a *picture frame* within which each shot is carefully composed. They emphasize the *pictorial* quality of film. But while the medium is visual, it is not pictorial in the conventional sense. A sequence of beautifully composed shots tends to leave the audience outside the frame—spectators who are continually aware of the director's fine eye for composition. A good director tries to eliminate this distance between audience and action, to destroy the screen as a picture frame, and to drag the audience *through* it into the reality of the scene. That is the function of the running shots in *Rashomon* and of the extraordinarily emphatic camerawork of Fellini, who leans subtly into every movement and propels us into the action kinesthetically. By contrast, we have the autonomous camera motion and stiff pictorial composition of most films.

Images of movement rather than beautifully composed shots are at the heart of the medium,

and significantly some of the most haunting moments in film derive their effect from motion. In Vigo's *L'Atalante,* a bride on her wedding night, still dressed in her white gown, walks along the deck of a moving barge. The barge moves forward, she is walking toward the stern, and the camera is set on the edge of the canal, so that there is a dark stationary line in the foreground. The combination of the silent forward gliding of the barge with the backward motion of the girl, whose gown and veil are streaming in the wind, has a profound emotional impact; it renders perfectly both her feelings and our own.

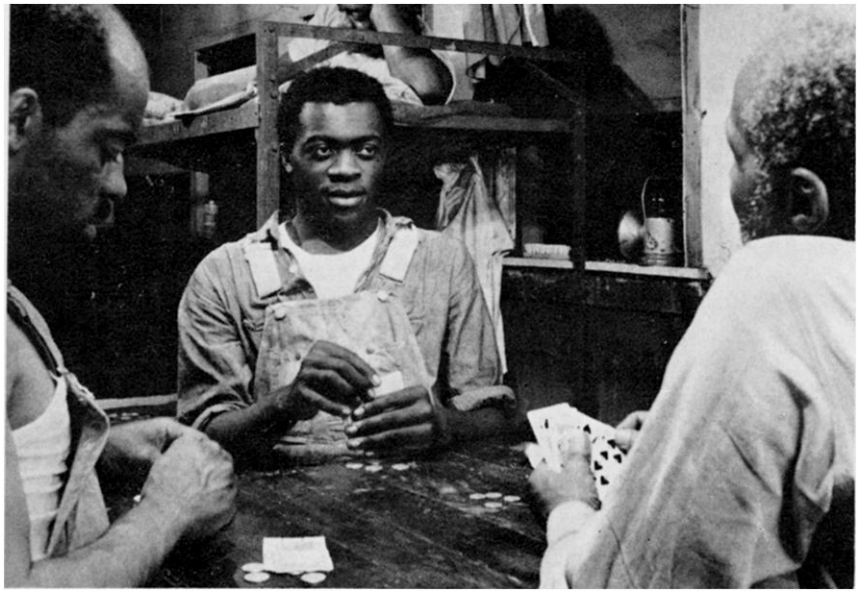
At the end of *Ikiru* the dying bureaucrat has succeeded in building the playground. It is a winter night; the camera moves slowly past a jungle-gym; beyond it we see the old man, swaying to and fro on a child's swing and singing to himself under the falling snow. The various components of this scene are hard to separate: the hoarse, cracked voice of the dying man; his happiness; the song itself. But the motion of the camera, the falling snow, and the slow movement of the swing certainly contribute to the extraordinary sense of peace and reconciliation that is communicated by the image.

A last example: in Dreyer's *Day of Wrath,* a witch is burned in a seventeenth-century town. We see her bound to the top rungs of a tall ladder. Then Dreyer cuts to a long-shot and side view: on the left a huge pile of faggots is burning; to the right soldiers are raising the ladder toward the fire by means of long poles. When it stands perpendicular, they topple it forward so that the woman falls screaming across the entire frame toward the flames. The falling arc described by the victim is rendered in coldly objective terms, from far away—but it transmits her terror completely and draws us relentlessly into the action.

Kurosawa has developed a way of staging that makes it hard for an audience to remain detached. On the theory that no one should be seen entirely from the back, many directors stage their scenes in a three-quarter view. As a result, no one is seen full-face: *we* look at the actors, but they look away. In *Rashomon* and *The Seven Samurai,* however, the actors either have their backs to camera or face us frontally. When they face us, they are all but looking at us—with only their eyes turned slightly left or right of lens to indicate that they are addressing each other and not us. Of course a face seen frontally is much more exposed than a three-quarter view, and far less likely to leave us detached.

Film can further strengthen the illusion of a primary experience by using a subjective point-of-view. In the ancient and Elizabethan theaters, while we remain in objective possession of the entire stage, the poetry and particularly the soliloquy can focus our attention on one person and shift it to his point-of-view. At any given moment the world can be seen through his eyes, subjectively. In the realistic theater, with its fidelity to the surfaces of everyday life, this has become difficult if not impossible. We *know* how Ibsen's Nora sees the world but except for rare moments do not *experience* it from her point-of-view. She cannot, as it were, reach out and envelop us in her vision—as Hamlet and Lear can.

On the screen it again becomes possible to shift from an objective vision of a person to a vision of what *he* sees. This is done continually, often with little understanding or control. We see a girl enter a room in an objective shot. Then the camera renders what *she* sees: there is a party and her husband is talking to another woman. The next moment might be objective again, or it might be seen from the husband's point-of-view. Montage makes it possible to shift from objective to subjective, or from one subjective point-of-view to another. Film can render a place, a person, or a situation not just as they are but in the context of the protagonist's experience—*as* his experience. A point-of-view can be so carefully articulated that we comprehend every object, every passing figure, every gesture and mood in terms of the protagonist. The medium thus extends the meaning of realistic surfaces be-



From the author's film NOTHING BUT A MAN.

yond their objective value; it renders them in their subjective context as well.

This brings us to an apparent paradox, for we have insisted throughout that film is at its best when rendering an objective situation. It is true, of course, that a moment can be rendered subjectively on the screen and still retain its objective reality. When the girl sees her husband talking to another woman, we see them through her eyes and so become privy to a subjective state. But the husband and the other woman are *in themselves* rendered objectively: they look no different; they are not affected by the point-of-view. The basic language of the medium, the realistic surface, has not been violated. The same may be said of most flash-backs: a subjective recollection is rendered—but in objective, undistorted terms.

There are, however, moments on the screen in which the realistic surface is in fact destroyed and a purely subjective state is created. The processional at the end of Vigo's *Zero de Conduite* is shot in slow-motion, with the boys in their white gowns gliding through a snow of pillow feathers to the accompaniment of a totally distorted but oddly ecstatic song. In such scenes, and it must be noted that while they are often attempted they do not often succeed, the reality of the feeling is so compelling that an audience accepts and assimilates a totally subjective image. The participation is so intensive that instead of rejecting an image we know to be "unreal," we enter into it eagerly.

When successful, scenes of this kind are deeply moving for they are predicated on a rare and free flow of feeling between audience and material. But they are moments of grace and cannot be counted on—like those rare moments in a performance when pure feeling breaks out of the actor and is communicated directly, without the mediation of a physical correlative.

By and large the language of the medium remains the surface of reality, and there seem to be few experiences that cannot be rendered in this language. Moreover, there is a great challenge in making the commonplaces of life, that have so long eluded art, yield up their meaning and take their rightful place in the larger patterns of existence. Film is indeed, as Kracauer put it, the redemption of physical reality. For we are finally able to use the much-despised and ephemeral detail of everyday life, the common physical dross, and work it into the gold of art.

GINETTE BILLARD

Jacques Demy and His Other World

Like de Broca, Demy is a talent who seems too light for many people to take seriously; his films are too pleasant, too full of grace. Yet, in a sense, the press agentry of the Nouvelle Vague should have led us to anticipate films more like Demy's than the actual knottier works of Truffaut, Godard, or Chabrol. It is Demy who sacrifices banal plots and morals to the sheer delights of *mise en scène*, without any compensating intellectualization. His films

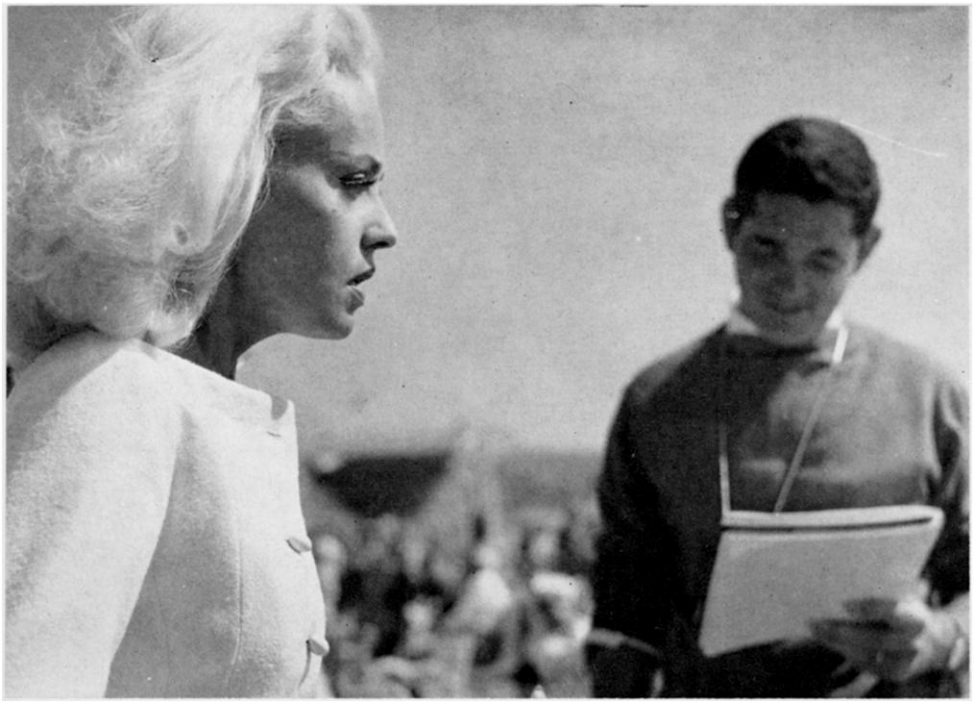
Above: Les Parapluies de Cherbourg.

are the work of a pure *metteur en scène*—a man who projects onto the screen his private world, who loves to fling the camera about, who is no more "committed" than a ballet choreographer. Like the best Hollywood musicals, Demy's films can make you enjoy the pure fluidity and dash of the medium yet avoid the problem of novelty of story material, because the "musical" line and rhythm of the film provides, like the music in an opera, another kind of perspective.

"Le jour n'est plus pur que le fond de mon coeur." ("The day is not more pure than the depth of my heart.") This quotation, from the dialogue of *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg*, Demy's latest film, is suggestive not only of this film, but of Demy's work since the beginning. Demy was born in Nantes in 1931; he is married to Agnès Varda, the only woman director in France. One might take him for a typical member of the Nouvelle Vague, but in fact he started in the film business in the most classical way: as an assistant director, then director of several short films: the routinely romantic *Le Sabotier du Val de Loire* (under the guidance

Jeanne Moreau in BAIE DES ANGES

Left: Anouk Aimée in LOLA



Jacques Demy directs Jeanne Moreau in BAIE DES ANGES

of Georges Rouquier, one of the mainstays of the documentary school in France), *Le Bel Indifférent* (on the story by Cocteau), *Le Saint Curé d'Ars,* and so on.

Since then, besides one of the sketches for *Seven Deadly Sins* (Lust), he has made three features: *Lola* with Anouk Aimée, *La Baie des Anges* with Jeanne Moreau, and *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg* with Catherine Deneuve. *Lola* is the story of a dancer in a sailor's nightclub in the harbor of Nantes; after seven years she is still waiting for the man who left her with a child and disappeared. *La Baie des Anges* traces the downfall of a young man who meets a not-so-young woman, attractive and dangerous; she precipitates him into the hell of gambling. *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg* is the tale of a trusting girl who gives herself to her fiancé on the eve of his departure for the army and never hears from him again. So in order to give a father to the baby which she—naturally—is expecting, she marries the rich young man who has been waiting all the time, patient and willing.

Told thus, these three stories seem to deserve all the epithets that have been thrown in Demy's face: "horrible melodramas," "shop-girl fantasies," and the like. But what if our intellectual critics are not able to recognize a beautiful story when they are told one, poetry when they encounter it, and charm when they see it on the screen?

The thing that strikes one most in Demy's films is that they *are* fantasies, the fantasies of someone who does not belong to this world: the famous "circles" in *Lola* (the same story happening to different people at different times or simultaneously) make it look as if Demy spent his life wondering: now how would I react if this and that were happening to me if I was a little girl, or her mother, or a girl of 17, or a B-girl, or the woman who lives for her only love? Demy cannot help but explore all the possibilities and *Lola* is a film which gives us the reactions of all these characters, sometimes concentrated in one person, to whom the same things happen.

Demy also does not live in a given period of time: the things which happened to Lola when she was very young, and her name was Cécile, are also happening to the little girl whose name is Cécile. Nor does he live in his

own country: all his films smell of the Hollywood paraphernalia: the man in white whom Lola awaits, the American sailors, the B-girls in *Lola*, the gambling resorts in *La Baie des Anges*, the musical angle, the great importance given to decoration—Donen and Minnelli have been here before, and so have the westerns that the French rank so high. (It has even been said of Demy that his main defect was that he was not born somewhere within range of Hollywood.) He sometimes gives the impression that he does not belong to his own sex: all his films are centered around women: he tells their stories with almost feminine refinement and charm. Yet the actresses in Demy's films have to go through severe ordeals. Anouk Aimée in *Lola* manages to survive her impossible part through her physique and her talent. Jeanne Moreau in *La Baie des Anges* is older, uglier, skinnier than she has ever been (yes, even in *Eve*). As for Catherine Deneuve, this very young, very blond former fiancée of Vadim has never before shouldered the weight of a whole film and she passes through this trial with all the temerity of extreme youth.

Demy does not even belong to his city: he has lived in Paris for years, but all his films are provincial: they take place in provincial towns, ports preferably (Nantes for *Lola*, Cherbourg for *Les Parapluies*, Nice for *La Baie des Anges*). He sometimes seems to be outside of his own craft, for instance in the extreme importance of music in his films (*Les Parapluies de Cherbourg* is in fact sung throughout, rather than spoken: it is a "film en-chanté" —enchanted but also in song). He also gives unusual importance to set-design: Bernard Evein, one of the best French art directors, has been faithful to Demy in most of his films, and they have a certain visual continuity—such as the red wall paper in *Le Bel Indifférent* echoed many years later by the red wall paper in *Les Parapluies*.

And still, in spite of such elaborations, which all too easily lead to commercial slickness, Demy's films genuinely "exist": they have in common a charm and a poetry which cannot be mistaken. There is a kind of art which is nostalgic without being sentimental, fantasist without being silly; and this is the realm in which Demy's imagination operates. After all, *Lola* is a love story of a woman who would not give up her romantic dream, but who in the end happened to be right. *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg* is not the conventional story of a great love betrayed, with a villain, lies, despair, etc. It is a modern story of two people who were in love with each other at one time in their life, and then found happiness each with another partner, and life just goes on.

Demy once said that he wished all his films could have the same characters. With the exception of *La Baie des Anges*, this is almost true: Marc/Michel, the common hero of his other two films, mentions in *Les Parapluies* a girl he once loved in another port—and who of course is Lola. There is also a parallel to be drawn between the mother-daughter relationship in *Les Parapluies* (Anne Vernon and Catherine Deneuve) and in *Lola* (Elina Labourdette and the little girl). It would be unfair to burden Demy with a reference to *La Comédie Humaine;* but in his future films we may see a similar patient unfolding of a richly personal vision.

LES PARAPLUIES DE CHERBOURG.

ERNEST CALLENBACH

The New Resistance

In our Spring 1964 issue, in his review of Olmi's *I Fidanzati,* Colin Young succinctly conveyed the *cinéma-vérité* position:

"I hoped . . . that it should be enough to find your way, through the cinema, to the event itself—face to face—and make the event speak for itself; selected and therefore (from the film-maker's point of view) of some interest, but not made to fit the dramatic cliché, and not 'interpreted' by an excessive formalism."

This puts tellingly the attitude of the most thoughtful documentarians today; it represents the direction in which, having shed the naive sociologizing influence of the Grierson school and developed a new confidence in our curiosity about real events and persons, the best contemporary factual films are moving.

I would like to discuss several new films which are near the opposite pole in film style—a group of recent works which utilize the film for poetic expression, rather than documentation. Where the *cinéma-vérité* tendency at its finest provides telling mute witness, these films are despairing cries of anguish; where the *cinéma-vérité* tendency is "scientific," these films are "poetic"—they are, from their first shots, concerned to establish conventions of poetic diction—to make it clear that they express a personal, passionate vision.

In case your heart sinks at the term "film-poet," which now seems to connote pretension, technical incompetence, and a studied disdain for intelligence, let us begin with a director whose work is backed by that staid, official body, the National Film Board of Canada. Clément Perron's *Jour après Jour* uses many current devices to the hilt: incredible hand-held following shots which are smoothly expressive rather than shaky; editing of a brisk, boldly associative kind; unobstrusive candid photography; remarkably expressive shots of machinery. These are deployed in a film which is as dense and compact as a good written lyric.

Like any outstanding work, *Jour après Jour* tempts one to minute description, as a kind of substitute for the reseeing of the film itself. But let me try merely to indicate something of the nature of the opening: how this film establishes its tone and style, and begins to impose its vision on the viewer. The camera is in a car speeding down a street—not a Parisian New-Wave street, but a snowy North-American

JOUR APRÈS JOUR

small-town street; a siren sounds, continuous and unsettling. We come to a factory: clouds, smoke, chimneys, fences. Then machines working, and their noises: mysterious agglomerations of pipes, channels, rollers. A woman's voice, openly rhetorical, intones: "And man said: Let us make the machine in our image . . ." After which we are treated to intimate views of bubbling vats, spinning rollers, twisting pipe joints, sludge-like deposits, with roaring noises assaulting our ears. It turns out that this is a papermill —its products used "to communicate—if possible," notes the voice.

Jour après Jour is structured in a series of "stanzas," each with some central tone and concern, and each with a certain progression of feeling; each uses some material also seen in other stanzas; each establishes, from some different beginning or perspective, something Perron wishes to show. He uses whatever he saw in the factory, and in the company town around it, in a very free manner; and the sound, by Maurice Blackburn, is also loose and associative—almost, in fact, a kind of *musique concrète*. It is impossible, from the film, to learn how paper is made; Perron takes pains, in fact, to remove from the film almost all traces of the superficial production rationality which is the concern of the classroom film. When we see a man turning a control wheel, we do not know what it controls; hence we are able suddenly to see the action of turning that wheel purely, in itself. When we see a line of men valiantly kicking huge and constantly accumulating rolls of paper down a chute in the floor, almost being buried in the process, we have no idea why this is necessary; dissociated from customary rationality, we are startled by the odd things men must do. Mechanical objects are also used freely for their emotional connotations rather than their literal functions. Thus a superbly wide range of materials can be fitted into the film: the mechanical operations of human hands, eating in the cafeteria, a long tracking shot going through the warehouse, with heels clacking on the floor, for no obvious reason. The sound track for its part can include things that go through the girls' heads on the assembly line, radio reports, airplane take-off and in-flight messages. Such is the imaginative verve of the film, both in images and track, that it integrates all these materials (and much more) with ease. Toward the end, we become aware that we have been watching what is, among other things, a parody on the creation; the voice laments softly now. "And the machine said . . . and the machine said . . ."

Another complex response to the contemporary scene is found in Stanton Kaye's *Georg*, a 55-minute 16mm film of an unusually ambitious design. Let me again describe the opening. There is a war going on; a soldier is shot, and falls; the camera apparently falls near him, and on its side. "Help me! My eyes are bleeding!" comes a cry. "My legs are gone!" Another voice, detached, with a German accent, comes on: "There I am," it says, as another soldier comes and pokes with his bayonet at the fallen man. "I found my camera then." The camera is picked up; the screen goes white, then black. The second voice is now speaking a diary into a tape-recorder, introducing some material he has prepared—speculating "should anyone ever find me—" and looking forward to a day when people would be "more receptive to each others' natures, ways—what a fine day that will be . . ." We then move into what a crude home-made sign announces is Reel One. The

GEORG

film establishes its visual authority immediately, as we see Georg (photographed by himself, as is everything in the film) showing slides of his earliest life, and then some movies of his Nazi war-hero brother, who shortly meets a comical and grisly end. After this we meet Georg's father, who comes to America and watches television for a life. Finally Georg himself has to cope with living: he tries to sell Volkswagens, but then moves with his young and pregnant wife to a mountaintop, where he plants a scraggly row of corn and sets out, with romantic confidence, to make an existence "away from all the people."

Here, as elsewhere, Kaye capitalizes upon the very awkwardnesses which usually defeat first films. The acting of the wife, uncertain and ill at ease, is right for the filming Georg is doing of her (for she senses that she is being in some way sacrificed) and hence is right for the film Kaye has made ("edited," say the credits) about Georg. Disaster strikes wife and baby, in a melodramatic birth sequence; Georg himself throws a homemade bomb at a nearby missile site and is shot down by the guards. One of them comes over to the camera, which Georg set running on this occasion as during all other crises in his life. "Shee-ut!" says the guard. And the screen goes blank.

This sardonic fable rises above the usual beginner's film by the rough sureness of its style. Kaye rightly sensed that this Pirandellian structure could be put to advantage; and he has multiplied the ironies of Georg's history very skillfully. We do not despise Georg as a nut or a bum; his attempt "to preserve, by whatever means were necessary, what I believe to be human" remains somehow very touching—largely, perhaps, because of the qualities of the voice (Kaye's own, incidentally). Georg's fruitless attempts to find some way of living as a man are only grotesque exaggerations of a common tendency: the attempt to salvage from society some areas where we can be let alone, some things upon which we can freely act. (Georg's moving to the mountain is, blown up to a farcical scale, much like the white middle-class move to the suburbs.)

Unlike most young film-makers, Kaye has a background in stage drama, which has helped him not only to obtain performances which are excellent within their chosen special range, but also to give a sustained structure and drive to the three "reels" into which *Georg* falls. But what is most promising about the film is Kaye's capacity to produce a film image which stands squarely on its own—often of a touching or funny kind, but always solid, demanding no concessions, and full of ironic ramifications. One seldom sees a first film, in 16mm or anywhere else, which displays such a firm grasp of the medium.

With his latest film, *Mass*, Bruce Baillie goes back to the kind of subtle, indirect commentary on modern life which he abandoned temporarily for the beautiful paean of *To Parsifal*, which was a loose poetic meditation on the legend, with Wagner on the soundtrack. Baillie's films are usually a counterposing of the way we live now with some implicit ideal—with *Mass*, the latter is suggested by two quotations from Sioux chieftains. One is heroic in the face of coming defeat:

No chance for me to live,
Mother, you might as well mourn.

The other is, for the film's content, a bitter irony:

Behold a good nation
Walking in a sacred manner in a good land.

To Baillie, one only has to look at our lives patiently to see how little they are worth by any such standard. *Mass*, which is visually polyphonous, draws its images from street life, from television-watching, from a banana-receiving dock; a dying man is carried away in a stretcher. Interwoven with this is a soundtrack partly drawn, rather horrendously, from real scenes, and partly composed of music Baillie recorded at a Trappist monastery. Various devices, such as slow, complex superimpositions and a faint clouding of the image with a diffusion filter make the images readable in a more than simply concrete way. Baillie thinks of the film's structure as following the mass pattern quite closely. The *Kyrie*, for instance,

contains nearly the only image in the film which connotes peace or a life of more than trivial busyness: a motorcyclist speeds across a bridge, hand tucked behind his back. Like the implied hero (the camera?) of *To Parsifal,* he does not seem to be going anywhere in particular; but he is a man going somewhere in a state of grace, like an Indian on horseback against the horizon perhaps, and his presence lends a note of humanity to what is otherwise a profoundly depressing film. Curiously, the film has neither *Dies Irae* nor any indication of a communion rite—the heart of the mass.

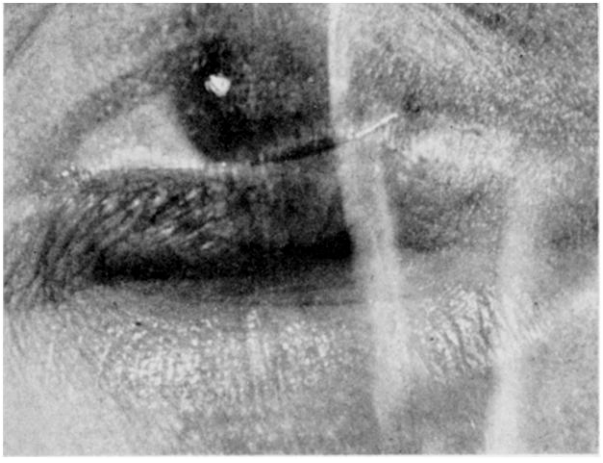
One of the most striking things about Baillie's work is his ability to juxtapose images of great tranquillity with a harsh, even despairing point of view. His drawings (he began as an artist) are mostly of demonic, Bosch-like faces; his films contain many placid, pure, uncanny compositions, edited with an unusual sense of visual flow. An early film, *Mr. Hayashi,* is still characteristic of how his mind works. It is a quiet, lovely film portrait of an aged Japanese gardener, who potters about in a long, shabby coat while the camera watches him, on a grimly beautiful, slightly foggy day; on the soundtrack his voice explains, in the too-often-rehearsed tones of the old, his sad life-history. This kind of tension enables Baillie to combine a lyric gift with rather mordant social comment.

It is worth noting, however, that this result is not consciously planned. We are good friends; several of Baillie's films have been edited in the studio in my basement. This may make my critical judgment of his work somewhat suspect, as too much familiarity can; but it has also enabled me to watch, to some extent, how his films evolve. They are not scripted or thought out in detail in advance of shooting, but grow through intermittent spurts of shooting and editing and sound-recording, each of which generates new ideas that gradually work together into a film. This procedure, with its obvious hazards, is perhaps the counterpart here of "nonpreconception" in the documentary; at any rate it is clearly allied with the so-called beatnik feelings

Mass

that have swept our young artists and students in the past decade: antirational, distrustful of anything but the moment's feeling and the moment's person-to-person relationship, pacifist in the emotional sense of not wishing to force anything—and hence opposed to most of the activities which make up our "civilization," including traditional radical politics. In his method of work as in the work itself, thus, Baillie bears witness against the state to which we have sunk.

The Devil Is Dead, by Carl Linder, comes out of the familiar surrealist tradition, but with various peculiarly contemporary twists. It is remorselessly and minutely biological, with a microscopic eye for the hair, the pore, the mucous membrane; and it displays an interest-



THE DEVIL IS DEAD

ing color sense, using predominantly reds, fleshtones, etc., which are neither drably "real" nor yet totally abstract; Linder operates in a heavily superimposed style, but relies on the psychological content of his images for much of his film's impact. In the kind of language necessary to call attention to oneself in New York, Linder has described the film as "a mythos of the sexes" with seven phases: "Devil-woman—female image; Masculine image; Violence; Gluttony; Castration; Transmutation; Fusion." But despite this, Linder has a genuine gift for imaging the strange, the bizarre, the troubling. (One of his projects is to do a full-length film based on de Sade.) He made an earlier film, *Telephonic Dolls,* in which a girl wearing a huge bug-shell is menaced by some kind of female sadist who inhabits an all-white junk-sculpture environment; and he is interested in man-and-mechanism as well as a traditional repertoire of surrealist sexual themes. His soundtrack in *The Devil Is Dead* is peculiarly appropriate to man's symbiosis with the machine: it is an unnerving series of gasps, gulps, hums, heavy breathing, clicks, buzzes, and so on. Linder works here in a staccato style without much variety of movement within the image (things go back and forth, in and out, but we are not obsessed, only a bit bored) and without enough of the insinuating associative carry-over from image to image which is a necessity in this kind of film. But Linder's films show an increasing range and power, and if he learns to build his work with more linear coherence he will do some very unsettling things indeed.

These films all attempt to confront directly the quality of modern life; though their attitudes and styles are varied, they share a revulsion against the tenor of industrialized, organized, mechanized life. One might consider them, in a sense, conservative. But I would suggest that they are in fact the filmic counterparts, in their intense personal "morality," of a peculiarly contemporary political event—the sit-in. While the sit-in depends for its success upon the involvement of numbers of people, it is fundamentally a direct personal action. Its essence is not in any group slogan or political decision, but in a characteristic feeling: "Here I place my body to insist upon simple justice—you may strike me or jail me or perhaps even kill me, but I will not move."

These films, like the sit-in, arise because the conventional channels of expression seem increasingly irrelevant to the moral concerns of the day—because there is no way in which one may live morally if one follows the possibilities laid down by society. Hence it is necessary, in film as in politics, to be scrupulous about knowing one's own feelings; for when one does move, it must be on the basis of intense and genuinely personal conviction, not on the basis of group membership, abstract political theorizing, etc. For these film-makers the apparent (or pretended) neutrality of *cinéma-vérité* is not enough, just as to the integration movement the apparent neutrality of the legal process is not enough. What is needed is a new cinema of personal resistance; and here, I think, are its beginnings.

SOURCES:

Day After Day (English version): Contemporary Films (see addresses in ad in this issue).

Georg: Stanton Kaye, c/o Film-Makers' Coop, 414 Park Avenue South, New York 14, N.Y.

Mass: Audio Films (see addresses in ad in this issue).

The Devil Is Dead: Carl Linder, 2535 Buena Vista Way, Berkeley 8, Calif.

A FURTHER NOTE ON TECHNOLOGY

In discussing the independent film—made without the support of banks, distributors, state ministries, patrons, etc.—we should be conscious that we are on the brink of a supremely important technical revolution, which will go far toward removing film from the status of an "industrialized," massively capitalized, and rigid art form—giving film-makers much of the freedom of the painter or writer.

The time has come when any of the advanced industrial nations—certainly among them the U.S., U.S.S.R., Japan, Germany, and Switzerland—are easily capable of manufacturing integrated, electronic-controlled film-making systems, for 16mm and 8mm, which would be capable of professionally flexible use yet would cost about the same as a Ford car. Since new standards have just been proposed for the dimensions of the 8mm frame, and since the **cinéma-vérité** movement has brought light 16mm equipment to the foreground, this seems a good time to reconsider the entirety of the film-making system, with an eye toward the world-wide advanced amateur market. If some of the ingenuity which has built the world's rocket systems can be applied, surely some remarkable advances can be achieved.

Let us consider, so far as possible without preconceptions, what would be the characteristics of an ideal 16mm or 8mm system. Recent cameras have already become virtually what is needed: they have reflex viewing, battery drive, optional electronic exposure control, and a decent zoom lens. What needs to be added? In some cases, a pulse adapter which sends out a signal to a synchronized tape-recorder, plus an easily changed magazine holding about 10 minutes' film. A miniature radio transmitter on the camera does three things: it sends a signal to the tape-recorder to start; it transmits an audible start mark to the tape; and it transmits the pulse for synchronization. The tape-recorder has an automatic input gain control; so one man, at the camera, controls both. It is easy to see the delightful freedom and flexibility such a system would provide. (As a refinement, it is possible to use microphones which attach to actors and, through miniature transmitters in a pocket, send signals to the tape-recorder nearby—in such a system no wires, booms, cables, or other interferences are needed.)

Two other chief items of equipment would be needed in our ideal system. The first is the battery-driven portable tape-recorder which records the sound and, next to it, the camera pulse signal. Existing recorders, with only slight modifications for our purposes, would suit.

The second item is a rather special projector, about which some detail is necessary, as it makes the difference between an "amateur" system in the pejorative sense, and an 8mm or 16mm system of professional applicability. Our projector must be able to do the following: project film through one channel and run sprocket-hole magnetic tape through another in absolute synchronization (in order to check final editing, etc.); it must be able to "listen" to the pulse of the tape on the tape-recorder and adjust its own speed to compensate for variations (thus producing a sprocket-hole tape in absolute synchronization with a given strip of picture); it must be designed physically in such a way that access to both picture and sound gates is quick and easy (so that it can be used like a Moviola or editing table). The projector must also be capable of transferring sound from the sprocket tape on its sound channel to a magnetic stripe on the picture strip, and then of projecting this combined film in the conventional manner. Lastly, this marvel must also include a mixing panel, so that the film-maker can combine onto his sprocket tape sounds from phonographs, quarter-inch tape-recorders, radios, microphones, etc.

Such a machine will clearly be neither cheap nor light; it will be by far the most expensive single item in the system. But it should also be the best designed, for many film-makers will wish to use it with cameras and recorders they already possess. No machine now in existence, so far as I know, has all these characteristics, though the so-called "double-system" projectors come fairly close.

What remains? Well, the future film-maker will of course need a 4-track synchronizer, to make up his materials for the laboratory's use in making his final print; and he will need (it might well be an integral part of the synchronizer) a splicer which cuts **between** frames, and butt-welds the two pieces together with heat, with no overlap.

Equipped with such a system, the independent film-maker would be technically capable of making films as complex and technically advanced as Hollywood in the thirties and forties—certainly far beyond anything Griffith or Eisenstein ever imagined! And, given enough time, he would be able to do these things **himself**, with the direct personal control characteristic of other art forms. We have advanced far enough, in other words, that our technology can, if we wish it, begin to liberate the film artist **from** technology in the burdensome sense; and film will thus begin to escape from the miserable dilemma of industrialization or amateurization.—E. C.

ANNOUNCING

A Film Poster Competition

In hopes of stimulating new ideas and higher standards of design in American film advertising, *Film Quarterly* is sponsoring a poster design competition. We are hopeful that this enterprise will bring forward a wealth of designs; it has already enlisted the enthusiastic support of many persons in the industry, and in design circles. Announcements are being sent, in the form of a flyer incorporating the rules below, to art-directors' leagues, design magazines, commercial and other art schools, advertising agencies and related organizations, and so on, as well as to persons throughout the film industry itself. We ask the help of all our readers in bringing the competition to the attention of potential entrants; flyers will be sent to all names given to us, and press releases are available to publications which might help spread the word.

The jury has been selected to include men with long practical experience in the film trade as well as a sound knowledge of graphic arts. However, familiar traditions in film advertising will carry no particular weight in the judging, which will focus on the graphic power and display effectiveness of the entries.

RULES

Prizes. There will be at least two money prizes: the United Artists Prize of $300, and the Brandon Films Prize of $125. Additional money prizes are being negotiated. The jury is empowered to award special non-monetary prizes and honorary mentions at its discretion. Winners and runners-up will be printed in *Film Quarterly* and will be given nationwide publicity; museum displays are also anticipated.

Eligibility. Any resident of the United States may enter. However, designs which have previously been printed or otherwise given public circulation are not eligible, since the competition is intended to stimulate new work. Entries must be finished art, not sketches or roughs.

Subjects. Any film of the present or past (whether fiction, documentary, animation, experimental, etc,) and of any length, is eligible. Designers are urged to study the trade press for information on forthcoming films, designs for which might find actual commercial application. Posters must include names of the director, producer, scriptwriter, director of photography, composer, and major cast; however, emphasis, size, and placement is up to the designer. Credits may be found in such reference works as *Film Daily Yearbook*, the journal *Filmfacts*, and preceding reviews in *The New York Times*. A reference librarian will explain how to locate such information quickly.

Sizes. Designs must be standard trade poster proportions: either 30 x 40 inches or 40 x 60 inches (vertical orientation only, in both sizes). Entries can be submitted flat or rolled in tubes, but must be uncreased. The entrant's name and full address must appear on the back of each entry; there is no limit on number of entries per person.

Colors. A full-color process will be used in printing the winners, so any colors and combinations of colors are possible.

Deadline. All entries must be postmarked January 15, 1965, or earlier, and must be sent to: Film Quarterly, University of California Press, Berkeley, California 94720. If return of entries is desired, after the judging, return postage must be enclosed.

Jury. JACK STAUFFACHER, Chairman (Designer and Printer; Stanford University Press). LAWRENCE EITNER (Head, Art Department, Stanford University). ROBERT GREENSFELDER (Distributor; Contemporary Films). JOHN KORTY (Animation Film-Maker). MELVIN NOVIKOFF (Exhibitor; Surf Theatre, San Francisco).

ALAN FERN

A Note on the Film Poster

The production of excellent posters has long been an integral part of the entertainment world. As far back as the 1850's, American circus and theatrical acts provided striking stock posters to advertise performances, and these posters directly inspired Jules Cherét when he designed the first French color-lithographed posters, primarily to advertise Parisian cabaret personalities. Later, of course, Toulouse-Lautrec and other artists designed entertainment posters that are still sought after today.

Even the early movies commissioned bold, attractive pictorial posters, but for some reason the motion picture poster has fallen far behind industrial advertising and other work in the graphic arts (paperbound book covers, for instance) in boldness of conception and in aesthetic quality.

It is welcome, therefore, to have a competition to attract designers, who may not have thought of film posters as an interesting problem.

Other nations have created superb film posters in recent years; no student of Polish or Swiss posters can afford to overlook their motion picture advertisements. There is every reason for this art to flourish in the United States. While billboard and transportation advertising tends to be increasingly restricted, and while our cities provide few places for the display of posters, movie theaters all have ample space for posters advertising their current and coming attractions, and an efficient system for circulating film posters exists. These posters should contribute, as they rarely do these days, to the attractiveness and gaiety of the city.

Apparently, distributors and exhibitors have given little attention to this whole area. A number of producers have devoted considerable creative energy to the design of credit titles for the film itself, but only rarely have posters been prepared with the same originality, evocativeness, and artistic quality. A few Saul Bass posters for films are memorable; other movie advertising tends to be tasteless, shrill, and—worst of all—uninformative.

Let us hope that this competition will help bring new life to the film poster. Let us hope that designers will rise to the challenge of advertising this great entertainment medium. And let us hope that exhibitors will find in these new posters the distinction, the power, and the delight that are evoked by worthwhile films. The graphic arts are an important component of the film; graphic arts *for* films should be important as well.

Film Reviews

THE SERVANT

Director: Joseph Losey. Script by Harold Pinter, from a novel by Robin Maugham. Photography: Douglas Slocombe. Music: John Dankworth. Producers: Joseph Losey and Norman Priggen.

The Servant is an odd film, and the oddest thing about it is that it has been taken so seriously—by the critics, but also by its director, Joseph Losey. It would seem obvious that the story is fundamentally comic: it is about an upperclass English ninny with pronounced homosexual tendencies who is easily seduced into a life of quite grotesque decadence by a servant and the servant's sexpot mistress. It has been remarked that the moral of Bergman's comedies is that an unfaithful wife is better than no wife at all. The moral here seems to be that even a sadomasochistic homosexual servant is better than none at all; and one can imagine the delightful things that could have been done with this by Bergman—who may have his doubts about God, but is devoted to man, with all his defects.

Losey, unfortunately, is interested in Tragedy; he is a very serious director indeed. When he begins his film with a beautifully staged street scene in which the background is a sign on the premises of one "Crapper," sanitary engineer, he doesn't mean us to yock—he means us to narrow our eyes and watch for ironic symbols of capitalist contradictions. When he uses a big close-up of a loudly dripping faucet to convey Tony's sexual excitement as Vera is about to seduce him, it does not seem to occur to him that this is funny; in fact he uses it again—to indicate discreetly what it is that happens at the end of the hide-and-seek game when Barrett has tracked Tony and his "guilty secret" to the upstairs bathtub. Drip-drip: aha!

The film has many scenes which are played straight and hence seem either leering or idiotic, where they should have been comic: Tony's upperclass girl friend trying repeatedly and unsuccessfully to get him to bed (he is about as sexy as an overripe banana); Barrett and Vera cavorting in the master's bathroom and bed; Barrett playing the role of the nagging housewife to suburban perfection; the appalling boredom of a country weekend with some older Empire stalwarts. These delicious opportunities are neglected in the filming, though the numerous *double-entendres* of the script are retained; and the result is an unsatisfactory black camp comedy, as an occasional critic has correctly called it, apparently produced in an attempt to make a serious study of contemporary decadence. (John Russell Taylor writes in *Sight & Sound* of "hints" of decadence and perversity, and suggests that Losey is doing "a modern Faust." What, one wonders, is Tony's reward for giving up his soul—Barrett's cooking?)

But it is worth stopping a moment to consider what we mean by camp comedy, which in some recent criticism has come to be a term of in-group praise. Films which play upon hidden sexual allusions, constantly implying "Look what we're getting by with, and nobody's digging it but us!" actually cannot escape insulting both the "in" spectator and the square: the insider because it busily invites him to snigger, and the square, of course, because it make jokes over his head, as if he were a child overhearing a racy conversation among adults. The strategy is, in short, an attempt to have one's joke and conceal it too—and naturally it never quite works. Difficulties are compounded when one senses a disparity in intention as in *The Servant,* where the director seems to be concerned with Social Criticism, but the scriptwriter keeps insisting on having his little jokes. (Taylor writes of the "picturesqueness and deliberate oddity in the screenplay.")

The real pity of it is that Losey would likely be a very good comic director. He has a great sensitivity for small nuance and significant camera handling (both of which get full rein here); the acting in his films is full of impres-

sive bits, and yet the total effect is flimsy and unsatisfying. What he lacks seems to be a kind of taste—a lack which could well be turned into a virtue. In *Chance Meeting*, for example, he builds up a clinch and then cuts from the embrace to an exploding flight of birds. This was fine in '29, but nowadays it is likely to bring down the house, like that faucet. More importantly, it produces overwhelming problems with character, ranging from the indulgence of a series of "guest stars" for whom Losey sets up some phenomenally complicated—and awkward—tracking shots, to the central issue of Tony's nature. One is given the distinct impression that Tony is to be taken seriously; he may even be some kind of symbol of Britain. And he is, after all, rich ("better than us," Aristotle put it) and he has a reasonably nice girl friend who tries fitfully to defend him against Barrett's guile. Indeed one supposes she is there to provide a moral center for the film: she sees what is happening, fights it, makes a last-ditch stand by trying to horrify Tony into mending his ways, and flees crying into the night when she fails; the sun sets daily on greater stretches of the former Empire. The trouble is that, although she says she loves Tony, she evidently understands him far less than does Barrett; and she is not a full character in a sense substantial enough to make us genuinely care either about her or whether she saves Tony from the fate he so obviously courts. She is merely an insufficient dramatic counterweight to Barrett. In this as in other respects, the film presents us with a put-up job; Tony's decline and fall is clearly inevitable, and one becomes impatient at being asked to watch a contest whose issue is not in doubt. Barrett, after all, is drawn without any complexities of his own; he functions, overneatly, only as what is needed to corrupt Tony; hence he is given psychological perspicacity, intelligence, implacable determination, and his

Wendy Craig, Dirk Bogarde, and James Fox in THE SERVANT.

sexually ambiguous and sadistic side: rather an arsenal for a pushover like Tony, who must have been lucky in having tougher Susans around in his earlier life, or his crisis would have been upon him long before. By contrast, then, as well as inherently, Tony becomes a stock figure of near-comedy: more risible to Americans than Englishmen, perhaps, and verging on the pathetic, but still functioning as a sort of jeune premier by reason of his money and unsteady veneer of manners.

Such figures cannot convince us that they embody important aspects of the human condition; their resemblance is rather to certain kinds of fantasy figures, the most familiar being those in the adolescents' magazines. This is the inevitable result of failing to make a decision about the fundamental tone of the film. Either you provide figures who are serious character studies, provide some real difficulties in Barrett's path, throw the outcome into doubt, and allow some wider psychological reality to appear; or you make a comedy, and take advantage of the very restrictions of the script by playing upon them. You cannot do both at once; and you especially cannot retain the giggling *double-entendres* while yet keeping a straight face about the action, or you end up with a film which, like this one, is unpleasantly the victim of the very ambiguities it hopes to use ironically. As in Edward Albee's play *The Zoo Story* (or James Schevill's somewhat similar *The Master*) we're dealing here with a highbrow version of the dominance- or bondage-cult material which has begun to appear on a somewhat more than subterranean level in American (and probably British) culture. When the drug-besodden Tony invites Susan to join the party at the end of *The Servant*, one is prepared to see the types carefully assembled there include somebody in black leather with a whip; but perhaps that was to come the next evening. The psychopathology involved is curious;* and considering attitudes on sex in the Anglo-Saxon world it is likely that this kind of thing is more than a rare deviation or the concern only of commercial pornographers. *The Servant* has been doing pretty well at the box office, and one doubts if this is because of Losey's dark thoughts about class. —ERNEST CALLENBACH

MARNIE

Director: Alfred Hitchcock. Scenario: Jay Presson Allen, from the novel by Winston Graham. Photography: Robert Burks. Music: Bernard Herrmann. Universal-International.

In *The Birds*, Hitchcock tried two things he'd never done before—suspense derived from nonhuman agents, and an unresolved ending. Since hardly anybody outside the *auteurs* club liked *The Birds*, it wouldn't be surprising if he retreated to familiar ground for his next film. At first sight, *Marnie* seems to be just such a safe retreat.

The agents of suspense are human, if not slightly superhuman: the Bird woman meets James Bond. Tippi Hedren makes up for all that inane smiling in *The Birds* by pouring her nervous energy into the title role, and the result is surprisingly commendable. It's Sean Connery who tends to smile too much (he doesn't have the outlets for action that he had against Dr. No), but his performance is more than adequate. As for the ending of the film, it's a thumping big red exclamation mark.

The plot seems like a potpourri of earlier Hitchcock films. It begins with Marnie lighting out for a fresh city after robbing an employer (shades of *Psycho*). This isn't her first theft, and now, changing her identity and appearance (*Vertigo*), she gets a job with another

* The full-fledged bondage cult, in which typically the dominant woman tyrannizes over men, involves the symbolic use of subjugated—sometimes literally leatherbound—women with whom the male onlooker identifies as they are sadistically misused by the dominant female. Current U.S. versions of this, I am told by a psychological researcher in the area, are reminiscent of German items in the prewar period.

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prospective victim, Mark Rutland. Her thievishness is bound up with a childhood trauma that sends her into a fit whenever she sees a red-and-white object (*Spellbound*) and also makes her crave love from her mother (who suggests what the mother in *Psycho* must have been like when she was alive). The plot thickens when Mark not only discovers that Marnie is a thief but falls in love with her, so obsessively (*Vertigo* again) that he forces her to marry him as the alternative to prison. They then lead a strained marital life (*Rebecca, Suspicion*) while Mark tries to find out the whole truth about Marnie before she kills herself or is caught by the police.

It isn't only the plot that reminds one of earlier Hitchcock. The dialogue, which has more wit and bite to it than in Hitchcock's most recent films, echoes his John Michael Hayes scripts of the mid-fifties. The color is well controlled, with smoky blues and greens for the exteriors and pale or neutral tones for the interiors, all these serving as foils for the traumatic reds; but they reflect the palette of *Vertigo* without matching its shimmering virtuosity. Similarly, Bernard Herrmann's music is a matter-of-fact echo of his lyrical *Vertigo* score.

It would seem, then, that Hitchcock has reached back beyond the offbeat melodramatics of *The Birds* and *Psycho* to the more subdued tensions of *Vertigo*. Of course, this alone would hardly offer a safe retreat, since *Vertigo* fared little better with the public than *The Birds;* so he has neutralized all supernatural overtones, weighting the film down to earth with a heavy plot mechanism *à la Spellbound*. In *Marnie,* Hitchcock has gone all out for realism.

At this point the film sounds well and truly condemned, for everyone knows that Hitchcock's realism is only skin deep. "I have to make films about something," he says, "but I don't really attach all that importance to what it is." Throughout his career he has skillfully adapted his themes to fit the prevailing fashions. In the thirties he could take a simple, Buchanesque attitude toward life, because that was what the majority of his public ultimately believed in. World War II added sternness to this attitude—one can see the change actually taking place in *Foreign Correspondent*. As the horrors of war entered the public consciousness, Hitchcock made his protagonists more complex and more corrupt: the widow-killer of *Shadow of a Doubt,* the youth-killers of *Rope*. The old simplicity and romance were becoming something of a liability, and Hitchcock began to disguise them: in *Notorious,* for the first time, he ventured to portray a "tarnished" heroine. By the fifties, the public view of reality had been embittered by the cold war and other disillusions, and Hitchcock became more overtly amoral, as in *Rear Window* and *The Trouble with Harry*. Even his most thirties-ish script of the period—the remake of *The Man Who Knew Too Much*—took on a skeptical anti-authority note. The contrast can be seen still more clear-

MARNIE

ly in *North by Northwest,* a reworking of *The 39 Steps:* the attitudes and experience of Eva Marie Saint are poles apart from those of the virginal Madeleine Carroll. Yet, at the end, the old romantic simplicity emerges briefly as the heroine reverts to straightforward femininity. And so it is with Marnie, who represents the conventional clichés of the sixties woman—chic exterior, sexual problems, and amoral resourcefulness—until the dénouement cleanses her of all but sweetness.

The point is, of course, that Hitchcock's realism is a means, not an end. It is a tool for shaping suspense, and a more supple tool than is usually recognized. He may accept the over-all conventions of the time, but he often gives them a sharp edge by carving them across the grain. Amid the stereotypes of *Lifeboat,* for example, his characterization of the Negro can still be watched without embarrassment—which cannot be said for most other Negro characterizations of the forties. One of Hitchcock's favorite devices for quietly jolting the audience is to add a sympathetic touch to a villain: the tormented murderer in *Rear Window,* world-weary James Mason in *North by Northwest,* and so on. In *Marnie,* where there are no villains, Hitchcock refines this device to the point of turning it inside-out: he adds *un*sympathetic touches to characters who have right and reason on their side.

If contempt for Hitchcock's realism shouldn't obscure its piquancy, it certainly shouldn't lead to moral indignation. In his calculated manipulation of characters and events, Hitchcock is doing nothing more reprehensible than (say) Antonioni does in his later films. The main difference is that Antonioni has a "serious" purpose in imposing his particular paradigm on reality, while Hitchcock is "merely" creating suspense. Antonioni's thesis of the vacuity of modern life leads naturally to intellectual discussion, while Hitchcock's suspense leads nowhere: it can be analyzed, but that is about all. Attempts to link it to a Heraclitean as opposed to a Platonic view of existence, et cetera, et cetera, may accurately reflect the viewer's own preoccupations, but there is no evidence that they reflect Hitchcock's, and usually they are simply a justification for enjoying so unphilosophical an experience as suspense.

In *Marnie,* this experience is rich indeed. Most Hitchcock films have only one main source of suspense, though the wily man may divert us from it by means of extensive red herrings (the opening of *Psycho* and *The Birds*) or a firework train of episodes (*Rear Window, North by Northwest*). *Marnie* does have one most emphatic source—the mystery of the red trauma—but Hitchcock's subdued brand of realism, paraphrasing the complexity of life, gives us three other major sources as well. There is Marnie as a criminal: will she be exposed, or will she get away with it? There is Mark's obsession with Marnie: will love or fury win out? And finally there is the sexual conflict: this involves not only Mark and the traumatically frigid Marnie but also a brunette (Diane Baker) who is in love with Mark and is determined to find out the truth about his mysterious wife.

Naturally, this proliferation of sources would not by itself ensure suspense. It all depends on how they are handled. Here we approach another misleading truism about Hitchcock: his technical mastery. It so happens that there are certain departments of technique in which Hitchcock has a patently blind eye. These include the phony backdrops that grate like TV commercials (especially in color), the bits of rapid montage that do not quite fit together, and the two-shots that are held so long that they almost ossify. All of these are conspicuous in *Marnie;* and Hitchcock even aggravates the crassness of the dénouement with some clumsily contrived shots.

Hitchcock's technical mastery—unlike his realism—operates on a deeper level. His handling of suspense depends above all on movement and timing. Movement enables him to generate a basic neural excitement in the audience. In some of his films he goes so far as to maintain a continual undercurrent of tension by gearing the action to a moving vehicle: the

train journey of *The Lady Vanishes* (where the tension reaches its climax when the train unexpectedly stops), the voyage of *Lifeboat*. At the other extreme, but with similar effect, he may send his camera roaming continually through a single static setting (*Rope*). *Marnie* has a sophisticated mixture of the two: occasionally the camera goes on a long, slow prowl, while the "moving vehicles" include cars, a cruise ship and a runaway horse.

As in most of Hitchcock's recent films, the movements in *Marnie* are generally slow. A rapid pace is easier to maintain and avoids the risk of boredom; but a slow pace, if it comes off, can build up a greater potential energy of tension. This is where Hitchcock's timing comes into play. In *Marnie*, with its four sources of suspense, he works continual variations on the tension to prevent it from growing stale. The audience is periodically keyed up to expect an outburst from one quarter or another; and from time to time Hitchcock allows a partial release —a flaring of temper, a moment of panic when Marnie runs into a former employer-victim— that briefly gratifies the audience while increasing the over-all tension.

One extended and rather melodramatic sequence illustrates the way Hitchcock uses movement and timing to manipulate suspense. (The sequence contains at least two obvious technical lapses, but the tension passes through them unscathed.) Marnie is riding in a fox hunt when she "sees red" and frightens her horse, which bolts away with her—and with the camera. The horse tries to leap a wall, stumbles, and breaks a leg. Now the camera takes over the movement, following Marnie in close-up as she goes off hysterically for a revolver, and then following the revolver in close-up as she returns to shoot the horse. Having pushed this particular line of tension as far as it will go, Hitchcock allows a respite—a static shot of Mark being warned on the phone of what has happened. But the tension snaps back when the camera follows Marnie into the house, still carrying the revolver, and all the way up and down the stairs. Only when she has left the house again are we sure that she isn't going to shoot Mark—at least, not just yet!

This sequence illustrates another of Hitchcock's devices for keeping the audience on tenterhooks. In the first half, the gun goes off; in the second, it doesn't. The former shocks, the latter agonizes, and the two together are doubly agonizing because there's no telling which is going to be which. Most of Hitchcock's films contain some equivalent of this gun, the most powerful being a mentally or emotionally unstable character who threatens to explode into violence. *Marnie* has two such threats—Marnie and Mark—aimed at each other the whole way through.

Marnie's behavior is especially unpredictable because we don't know the truth about her. Mystery is the bluntest instrument in Hitchcock's arsenal of suspense, but here he handles it with the delicacy of—well, not a scalpel, but certainly a sculptor's chisel. At the beginning, Marnie is smiling and self-possessed; then Hitchcock starts to chip away at her, putting her through a long series of minor transformations as she tells new lies about herself or unwillingly reveals new facets of the truth. In this respect, *Marnie* is even subtler than *Vertigo*, for the mystery that surrounds Kim Novak is simply a mask, unchanging until the final fifteen minutes. Unfortunately, it's in the final fifteen minutes of *Marnie* that Hitchcock's mystery reverts to bluntness. The subtlety of his build-up seems to promise not just an explanation but an apocalypse; the bathos he actually gives us seems like a slap in the face.

Of course, this mystery is precisely that "something" which is the pretext for Hitchcock's film-making and to which he doesn't "really attach all that importance." All of his films involving mysteries have something ludicrous about them, though this is less noticeable in films like *Psycho*, where he is half spoofing, than in *Vertigo* or *Marnie*, which appear to be serious. While the plot of *Vertigo* is even more ludicrous than *Marnie's*, its full outrageousness doesn't become apparent until one thinks it

over in retrospect. *Marnie* enjoys no such protection.

I would like to think that Hitchcock chose this bathetic dénouement as a dig at those who rhapsodize over his *Weltansicht.* The rest of the film offers all sorts of temptations to the critic who likes to discuss reality and illusion or the problem of identity. But one shouldn't be deluded by its veneer of modish situations—even to the limited extent of being indignant at the plot beneath. The mature Hitchcock has attempted only one film without contrivance—*The Wrong Man*—and (regardless of its merits) its fortunes would not encourage him to repeat the experiment. As a popular director, he recognizes that well-rounded plots are still in demand, even if they have to be hammered violently into shape.

Both the worst and the best of Hitchcock jostle for attention in *Marnie.* Because the weaknesses are so conspicuous, they tend to outweigh the strengths at a first viewing. But those who enjoy Hitchcock for his suspense shouldn't be disappointed. After all, they will already know that with Hitchcock one must take the smooth with the rough, the glib contrivances with the tension.—WILLIAM JOHNSON

THE PASSENGER

(Pasazerka). Directed by Andrzej Munk and completed by Witold Lesiewicz. Script: Sofia Posmysz-Piesecka and Andrzej Munk. Photography: K. Winiewicz. English version: John Minchinton.

Andrzej Munk died in a car accident in 1961. He was not quite forty, and he had been working in films for only eleven years. Yet, mainly on the strength of *Eroica* (1958), he had in Western eyes, at least, emerged as one of Poland's two leading directors. Against the romanticism of Wajda, Munk offered a more detached and more ironic view of Poland's recent past. Detached, and yet at the same time involved: for instance, part of the strength of the second part of *Eroica* lay in the way the myth of the escaped officer was shown to be not only comic and pathetic, but also necessary. Munk *accepts:* and that is why he of all directors was the man to make *The Passenger,* the film he was engaged upon when he was killed.

Europe has not yet accepted the fact of the death-camps, and perhaps it never will. Visitors to one camp in Czechoslovakia, for example, are still being told that this kind of thing happens only *west* of the iron curtain. But in *The Passenger,* set in Auschwitz, where something like 1,750,000 people were systematically put to death between 1940 and 1945, Munk recreates a world where the extremest horror is normal and the most pitiless cruelty becomes the law. His first purpose seems to be to force us to recognize the acts we are capable of, and which some of us have actually committed on a massive and military scale. To blame the Germans isn't part of his intention; simply because to blame someone else for an act of cruelty is at the same time to refuse to acknowledge the forces of cruelty in oneself. In the case of the camps it is more important to understand them than to blame, and to understand it is necessary to accept. Munk accepts Auschwitz. It was there, only thirty miles away from Cracow; men, women and children were carried there in trainloads to be gassed, and the smoke from their corpses rose on Polish air. And he withholds condemnation on a general level. Even as far as his central character, Lisa, is concerned, her "guilt" or "innocence" are less important to him (and to her) than that she should determine the true nature of her actions. Not surprisingly, therefore, *The Passenger* is a film both of unequivocal directness in its statement of the facts and of a haunting ambiguity in its interpretation of those facts. Metaphorically, the hand is seen to raise and strike, but the reasons for the blow remain obscure.

Just how much of the ambiguity is due to the film's incompleteness, we shall probably never know. The story concerns a woman, Lisa (Aleksandra Slaska) who, long after the war, is trav-

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Just how much of the ambiguity is due to the film's incompleteness, we shall probably never know. The story concerns a woman, Lisa (Aleksandra Slaska) who, long after the war, is trav-

elling with her husband on a liner. At Southampton another woman comes up the gangway, and Lisa recognizes her, or thinks she does: she is, or closely resembles, a girl called Marta (Anna Ciepielewska), a prisoner at Auschwitz, where Lisa was an SS guard. The encounter brings back the events of Auschwitz with appalling suddenness and in two movements—the account Lisa gives her husband, and the version she keeps to herself—we see those events. Between the two movements, and at the end, we return to the liner.

Apparently Munk died when the Auschwitz story was virtually complete. But the present-day story was not, and what had been made was unsatisfactory. Witold Lesiewicz has therefore used stills from Munk's material to tell the frame story. They are pictures in a square format and light in color, contrasting vividly with the movement, widescreen, and deep tones of the Auschwitz sequences. "Vivid contrast" is a weak way of describing the effect of that first appalling moment when, from stills of Lisa's horrorstruck recognition of Marta, we cut abruptly to darkness and the spectacle of naked women being tormented by *kapos* standing around them in a ring. Maximum shock, but for a purpose: it is important that the first thing which Lisa remembers when she sees Marta is both an act of degrading and gratuitous cruelty, and the key moment when her decision saved Marta from extermination.

After this initial descent into the past we return momentarily to the liner. To explain her distraught state Lisa tells her husband for the first time that she hadn't been a prisoner at Auschwitz, but an overseer. As she talks, images of Auschwitz return. She tells him that she was in charge of a section of prisoners responsible for sorting out the belongings of the dead: we see landscapes of a railway line and barbed wire, smoke belching from the chimneys, and piles of human litter, hills of prams, baskets, suitcases, and clothing. She was just doing her duty, she explains. She has to choose an assistant; and the camera passes along the faces of her *kommando* as she makes her selection. The women wear striped uniforms and their heads have been shaved, and they all look at Lisa (the camera) as she passes them. This long travelling shot is the only place in the film where Munk seems to address the audience directly: the silent stare of the women, hopelessly defeated and yet implacably hostile, declares, first, that they exist, and second, that they have a relationship with us. Significantly or not (as she is a creature of fiction?) when the camera comes to rest on Marta, she alone doesn't return its gaze.

Marta now works in better conditions. Her lover, Tadeusz, who as an artist has been kept alive in another part of the camp, is shown visiting her. Lisa claims credit for this. Then Marta is sick. Over images of women herded together in overcrowded huts, Lisa goes on: "Conditions were not too good there. We couldn't help it. Anyhow our soldiers at the front were worse off." The memory of her true part in these events makes her defensive.

The camp commandant arrives to claim Marta as a victim for the gas chamber. She steps forward, and is taken away to the death block. Lisa asks to see the death block: in images that scorch the brain she sees Tadeusz and Marta cramped with others in separate cells, the bodies of the dead, a guard casually pushing out of sight an arm hanging over the side of a cart.

This first version of Lisa's story takes ten or fifteen minutes to tell, and leaves a number of open ends, not all of which are closed later. We return to the liner, where it appears that Munk intended a party sequence. The stills we are shown are of Lisa as a hunted, hysterical figure on the edges of a frantic gaiety. Then the true account of her life at Auschwitz begins.

It was not Lisa but the *kapos* (who, beneath the Germans, were responsible for discipline in the camp) who brought Marta and Tadeusz together. But when Lisa discovers their secret she does nothing. She saves it up: "If you know what a person really cares for and if you are in a position to give it or take it away, then you are the master." In a short scene inserted

at this point the head female SS officer, "Ober" (Irena Malkiewicz) gives Lisa and her fellows a talk stressing the need to obtain the cooperation of key prisoners: to Ober, complacently adaptable, the camp is a place where life must go on as congenially as possible.

Through the wire dividing the camp Lisa furtively watches the arrival of a trainload of Jews. In a docile procession they enter the compound and proceed down a flight of steps into the gas chamber. A child caresses one of the guard dogs as she passes. On the roof of the gas chamber, in full view of the victims, a soldier opens a can of crystals and pours it down a funnel. From the ovens a black, greasy smoke belches forth. Behind Lisa, Marta appears, her face a mask of horror: they confront each other.

Lisa's detachment are sorting the belongings of the dead. Another SS officer, Inge, fusses over her pet, an Alsatian guard dog. A baby's cry is heard from a pram: Lisa lets Marta investigate it, and she returns bearing a doll wrapped in a blanket. Doubt about the child remains, however, and later Lisa watches Marta stealthily attending to something in a mountain of rubbish: this time, when challenged, she produces a bundle of flowers. "It's my birthday." No one remembers my birthday, Lisa reflects bitterly. These two exchanges are parallel: on each occasion Marta is scoring off Lisa, and both know it. Marta is testing Lisa, and Lisa allows herself to be tested. There is an undertone of erotic complicity.

Lisa knows that the flowers given to Marta can only have been picked from the officers' greenhouse, where the men prisoners are employed. Remembering Tadeusz, she goes to see him in the room which serves as an artists' studio. Suspicious of her, he pretends not to want to see Marta, but the sketches of her which he leaves lying on his table tell her that he is lying.

Outside, a group of women are talking to a group of men prisoners beyond a wire fence: Marta is watching them. Lisa hands Marta a pencil and paper and tells her to take the names of the women by the wire. When she hesitates, Lisa utters Tadeusz' name, and compulsively Marta takes the pencil and paper. Just at that moment, however, Inge's Alsatian rushes out and viciously attacks the women. Nevertheless, the victory is Lisa's. From this moment she tightens the screws on Marta, and never again until the very end of the film does she lose her ascendancy.

The camp band is playing and the prisoners, with averted heads, march past a naked girl standing on a rostrum. I hated these exhibitions, Lisa declares, but of course they were necessary. As Marta passes the odd little figure she calls out: "Anna! Anna!" and jerks up her head in a gesture of pride and defiance. Lisa watches with aristocratic approval.

Inge's Alsatian is found dead on the electrified wire: someone has hung up a piece of cheese as a bait. Inge is heartbroken.

News comes of an impending visit by an international commission. Lisa's detachment is chosen to be the showpiece, and Marta, who is sick and in the camp hospital, is brought back to the hut to be given individual attention. Lisa surprises Tadeusz paying an illicit visit to Marta: "I am ready for punishment," he says, but Lisa brushes him aside. When the commission arrives Marta, lying in her bed, at first responds to none of their questions; it is almost as if she doesn't understand them. "Do you receive letters regularly? For how long have you been having medical attention? Have you been ill before? Are the prisoners permitted to visit each other?" To this last question Ober replies that Marta's fiancé visited her only yesterday, and when asked to confirm this Marta can only say yes. Walking away from the hut after the visitors have gone, Ober congratulates Lisa on her choice of protégée, and hints at promotion. In the background a *kapo* knocks a prisoner into the mud and beats her without mercy.

"Meanwhile," continues Lisa, "the life of the camp family rolled on." The prisoners and staff parade to hear the camp orchestra give a performance of Bach's E major violin concerto. During the concert Tadeusz manages to pass

to Marta a medallion he has made for her. Then above the music can be heard the whistle of a train: another delivery is approaching. The whistle is repeated, louder; and the music is gradually drowned in the sound of the whistle, the engine's pistons, and the throbbing of the furnaces.

Cut to Lisa's first recollection: a stream of naked women are running between two ranks of guards. It seems to be some kind of test and/or lottery, as well as a sadistic game. Every time Lisa's finger falls one of the women is pulled aside, presumably for destruction. Then Marta passes: she is halted by the hook of a walking-stick around her neck. For some moments Lisa coldly appraises her, then gives the signal for her release.

A scrap of paper has been found stuffed in the brickwork of the detachment's hut. Lisa orders a roll-call, holds up the paper and orders Marta to step forward and translate it. She does so. It is a love letter or a poem; but it is longer than it could possibly have been to have been contained on such a small piece of paper, and after her first glance at it Marta does not read, she recites. The words and images she uses are homely and lyrical. "Darling, it must be autumn now. I am lying beside you in the grass. You will shield me from the rain. It is good that you exist . . ." All the time she is speaking Lisa is coldly observing the faces of the prisoners with the aid of her torch.

Lisa is called away from this, and she leaves instructions that the writer of the note must declare herself. At the office she learns from Inge that Ober has been named, over the radio from London, as a war criminal. "How do they know?" Inge is called into Ober's office, and outside Lisa looks at the scrap of paper which, with its series of numbers and list of familiar German names, she knows to be no love-letter. Called into Ober's office, Lisa is told that she is promoted to a new post in Berlin. Then she is challenged by Inge. It appears that a Jewish child has been hidden in the camp after all; Marta has outwitted her. But against Inge's protests, Lisa denies all knowledge of the fatal occasion when she allowed Marta to deceive her with the doll wrapped in a blanket.

Outside the office again, Lisa lights a cigarette and burns the note. But when she returns to her detachment she finds that one of the prisoners has stepped forward to confess: Marta. It is a complicated and ambiguous moment, which is resolved on the physical level by Lisa striking Marta on the face. She forced me to do it, Lisa says, and I had to defend myself. Marta, in committing herself to death, has regained the initiative.

This is the end of the second part of the story, and we return to the liner. Marta, or the woman who resembles her, disembarks at the next port, and the ship sails on: a company of people, the commentator says ironically, for whom there are no yesterdays or tomorrows, freed from the shackles of the past. It is the image of the Ship of Fools. And yet men and women like Lisa exist among us, even today. The commentary ends in mid-sentence.

As this synopsis shows, *The Passenger* is made up of separate scenes not all of which have narrative significance. The death of Inge's dog, or the scene showing the line of Jews entering the gas chambers, exist side by side with purely narrative incidents such as that of the flowers, or Lisa's visit to Tadeusz. The film as a result has a fragmented character. Moreover, the connections between the two parts are not entirely clear. For example, the sequence of Marta's removal and Lisa's visit to the death block which appears in the first part is not repeated in the second; and, on the level of did-Marta-die-or-didn't-she, this matters. In retrospect one gets an impression of a succession or frieze of images, rather than of a smoothly developing story-line.

They are images often of an extraordinary, hallucinatory power. Again and again the meaning spills over the sides of the story, as if the naked image inside were too large for it. In certain key scenes, when she is blackmailed by Lisa into taking the women's names, for example, or when she is interviewed by the in-

ternational commission, Marta becomes her entire race: it is as if a fatal moment of Jewish history is being re-enacted. Similarly, on Lisa's part her evasion of the truth is a playing back of the "good" German's excuses at the end of the war. It's important to emphasize that the fable is in a very obvious way secondary to its material: as with *Nuit et Brouillard*, with which *The Passenger* has obvious points of contact, the subject-matter is the death camps. I don't agree with the critic who wrote that "this is a story about two women, not about a concentration camp."* It is the camp, as an historical fact, which Munk forces upon us. It is the reality behind the fiction. The audience, like Lisa, has to grapple with that reality.

Seen in this light the need to find solutions for the Lisa/Marta story becomes less important. What *is* important, and what makes *The Passenger* such a novelty in the welter of Occupation films, is that its fiction does not degrade its subject-matter, though the fiction is the framework and the fictional characters are always in the foreground. Munk manages this in part by the way in which he has directed his actors. He has not allowed them to express feelings and emotions, because feeling and emotion are already expressed in the archetypal situation of prisoner and gaoler. His two principal characters can therefore be seen as figures in a rite: each has a part to play in a pre-arranged scheme of things, and neither is strong enough or free enough to step out of the ring or speak directly to the other.

Lisa looks back into her past with horror and anguish: anguish because she is still uncertain of what she was then, and what Marta meant to her. A suppressed sexual theme can be discerned without difficulty; but what of the note she finds and later destroys? What about the Jewish baby? Why did she allow herself to become Marta's silent accomplice? In scenes such as the confrontation of herself, impeccably uniformed, with the naked and exhausted Marta she can recognize herself in a position of absolute power: how then did Marta eventually seem to be the victor? She recognized in Marta something that she lacked and envied, something she tried to have for herself, then tried to kill: and looking back she relives those pangs of self-doubt, subsequently confirmed. And Lisa's anguish is ours. How far back are we willing to go to the roots of our actions? How far are we ready to admit that guilt stirred in us before our crimes were recognized as such?

Man cannot escape his past, Munk seems to say; he is responsible for his acts before society and before his conscience.† His first necessity therefore is to admit the truth. This is what faces Lisa, and what after her initial evasion and self-deception, even perhaps knowing she will fail, she painfully and obsessively sets out to do.

—JAMES PRICE

* Tom Milne, *Sight and Sound*, Winter 1963/4.

† *Image et Son*, Feb.–Mar. 1964.

THE ORGANIZER

(I Compagni—The Comrades) Director: Mario Monicelli. Producer: Franco Cristaldi. Screenplay: Mario Monicelli and Age-Scarpelli. Photography: Giuseppe Rotunno. Music: Carlo Rusticelli.

So few films have attempted to deal with the early struggles of the labor movement, and it is a subject of such importance and dignity, that it seems ungrateful to carp at what does come along. Nonetheless, *The Organizer* is a beautifully designed and magnificently photographed picture, and not much more. The fault lies with the director, Mario Monicelli, for serious failures of tone, and with the writers, Age-Scarpelli, for a rather obvious and often sentimental script.

The scene is Turin, then as now the Detroit of Italy, in the 1880s—twenty-odd years after the unification of Italy—and the story is of a textile mill where workers decide to protest against the 14-hour day, a twenty per cent accident disablement rate, half an hour for lunch,

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and low pay. Their first attempt is botched, but at this moment there arrives in their town an organizer called The Professor (Marcello Mastroianni) who interests himself in their problem although he is sought by the police and is supposed to be lying low.

At the Professor's urging, and with his advice on tactics, the workers strike. The film follows a number of characters' stories, spreading itself rather thin emotionally in the process: there's the Professor; the young natural leader who begins by suspecting the Professor and ends by emulating him; the plant's hot-head and strongman, who is killed; and a young soldier who spends his off-duty hours with the strikers and eventually faces them over the barricades. The strike fails, but the workers have learned their own strength, the bosses have been made to tremble, and a new "organizer" has joined the itinerant idealists like the Professor, who will eventually create the modern labor movement and socialism.

The film might have survived the obviousness of the story—the clash with the strikebreakers, the love of the soldier for the girl whose brother dies at the showdown, the Whore with a Heart of Gold who befriends the Professor—if it were not for the appalling touches of comedy (downright slapstick, at some points) which keep shattering the almost documentary illusion created by the extraordinary coarse-grain photography of Giuseppe Rotunno, the fine performances of Mastroianni and of Folco Lulli as the strong man and Renato Salvatore as the youth. The Sicilian who has to stamp on his switch-blade to open it, the Bergamasco whose dialect is unintelligible to everyone, the Keystone Cops fight at the switchyard when the strikebreakers arrive, and the horseshoe tossed through a window to land (surprise!) on a head outside, are inconsistent with the tone the film demands and, in part, achieves. Monicelli is famous, of course, for some first-rate comedies, notably *Big Deal on Madonna Street* and *La Grande Guerra*. There's no knowing whether the jarring dashes of slapstick in *The Organizer* are the result of habit, a failure to connect with his writers, somebody-or-other's demands for some of the old Monicelli boffs, or what, but they are terribly painful—the more so in that this might have been a very fine picture indeed.

—Jackson Burgess

Here and below: The Organizer.

LE FEU FOLLET

(THE FIRE WITHIN; literally, WILL-O'-THE-WISP) Written and directed by Louis Malle. Based on the novel by Drieu la Rochelle. Photography: Ghislain Cloquet. Music: Erik Satie. Art director: Bernard Evein.

Louis Malle's latest and finest film documents the last forty-eight hours in the life of an aging playboy. It is thus a long way both from the faintly sinister zaniness of a *Zazie dans le Métro* and from the wry yet romantic *The Lovers*—which, incidentally, was recently declared not obscene after all by the U. S. Supreme Court—and goes back, perhaps, to *L'Ascenseur pour l'echafaud,* but on a much higher level.

Le Feu Follet has flaws, especially in its dialogue, which sounds uneasy and stilted—too composed, too worked-over. That it remains first-rate cinema is partly due to Malle and partly to Maurice Ronet's performance as Alain, a handsome and melancholy man slipping into middle age.

The story line is simple. Alain leaves the Versailles sanatorium in which he has been taking an alcoholism cure, for a trip to Paris—having made the decision to kill himself upon returning from this short odyssey. His last hours are spent visiting old friends and haunts, in a half-hearted attempt to seek out some final knowledge of himself. The film is constructed in a series of episodes, and in each we learn more about Alain and his milieu—sometimes through the dialogue, but mostly as a result of Malle's consistently telling eye for the detail that illuminates, whether it be an object, a place, or a group of people.

Two sequences are superbly accomplished set pieces; the long sequence at the start of the film, shot entirely within Alain's sanatorium room, and the dinner party near the film's conclusion. In the first we are thoroughly soaked in the bric-a-brac, photographs, and mementoes surrounding Alain, and come to share the emotional state of a man who can no longer bear the hour-by-hour living of his life. This works brilliantly, though we can sometimes fault Malle for a clumsy use of symbols: a coat falling from its hanger, a tower of empty cigarette boxes that tumble apart, a newspaper clipping proclaiming *"La Mort."*

The dinner party is a masterfully staged ballet that beautifully conveys the undercurrent of tension in the rooms of an elegant town house, where every room is tight with unverbalized envy and contempt. Faces and bodies move, stop, chatter, regroup, seemingly having uttered nothing but cocktail banalities. But, by meticulously focusing on the details and forms of the surface, Malle gets beneath this veneer and evokes the tension that cuts through the rooms like an electric current.

The portrait that emerges, after observing the last hours of his life, is that of a graceful, charming, nominally brave yet in the end weak and insipid man. Alain is only nominally brave because he lacks the courage to live *between* those rare and precious moments of heightened experience that, in the end, are what we remember of our lives. Early in the film, Alain comments on his days as a soldier and how he treasured the moments of combat but loathed the hours between. He also laments how quickly his control over a moment of physical sensation slips through his fingers. Repeatedly, Alain talks of losing, of not being able to possess, of not being able to be loved *"ad aeturnum."* His friends, it becomes clear, have mostly learned to live, if some merely to exist, between those moments. But Alain will not face the innumerable commonplaces that compose the larger part of our existence; he wants the gold pot at the end of the rainbow, or nothing. (In the novel from which the film is loosely drawn, Alain is a heroin addict; his fellow patients are flamboyantly decadent, and his friends seedier.) Unlike the Egyptologist, Alain's old wenching partner, who "admires man not for his passion but for the fruit of his passions," Alain is unable to live and function between the passions.

Drieu la Rochelle's works are little known, largely because of his reactionary political views; he himself committed suicide when

facing arrest in 1945 as a Nazi collaborator. (The fullest study of his novels is in English—Frédéric J. Grover: *Drieu la Rochelle and the Fiction of Testimony*. University of California Press, 1958.) Yet Drieu seems to have caught an important vision of the moral and ideological confusions of prewar bourgeois France, and his work raised the problems of *littérature engagée* long before the term became fashionable. Malle's film subtly adapts the Drieu material to a postwar, vaguely existentialist framework. Never losing control of his material, he has avoided mawkishness: if there is sentiment in the film, it is because Alain is so easily sentimental about himself, not because Malle is. This scrupulousness is an accomplishment any director can well be proud of. —YALE UDOFF

LE FEU FOLLET.

LOLA

Written and directed by Jacques Demy. Photography: Raoul Coutard. Music: Michel Legrand, assisted by Beethoven, Bach, Mozart, Weber, Marguerite Monot and Agnès Varda. With Anouk Aimée (Lola), Marc Michel (Roland), Elina Labourdette (Mme. Desnoyers), Annie Duperoux (Cécile, Alan Scott (Frankie), Jacques Harden (Michel). Distribution: Films Around the World.

The start of *Lola* is American in design. An iris shot opens on a road by the seashore. The camera cranes down as a white Cadillac approaches. It stops and the driver gets out. This is Michel. He is wearing a white suit and a white cowboy hat. He stares at the waves for a few moments, then returns to his Cadillac, jumping into it as if into the saddle. The car swings round and moves off along the highway towards Nantes.

Jacques Demy has dedicated his first feature to Max Ophuls, and the "Lola" of the title refers also to *Lola Montès*. In her cabaret song, Lola becomes the top-hatted Lola of *The Blue Angel*. From the start, Demy uses references to films outside his own to give meaning beyond the immediate appearance. While depicting one character or situation, he also reflects others. So the fragile creature portrayed by Anouk Aimée partakes of the sadness of Lola Montez, and, for a moment, of the fatal attraction of Dietrich.

The opening shots, with their sweep and rhythm, whiteness and bold simplicity, establish Michel as a forceful figure. They have a direct quality reminiscent of the first appearance of a lone rider behind the titles of a Western. By suggesting this similarity, Demy at once gives Michel a central role. We realize that, though Michel may be absent from the screen for some time, he will reappear: his presence looms over the film. By using our familiarity with the Western, Demy can indicate the man's importance, his sense of purpose and his kinship with other returning travellers within the space of a very few shots.

Michel has returned to Nantes to find Lola. On his way past the harbor he narrowly avoids running down a group of American sailors. One of them, Frankie, is on his way to revisit Lola at the cabaret. He, also, is tall, blond, and dressed in white. As Michel arrives, Roland is about to leave. Not long after, he gives his English dictionary to a little girl named Cécile because she reminds him of a girl he used to know at school. Lola's real name is Cécile.

Roland bumps into Lola in the street: they haven't seen each other for ten years. She tells him that she has been in love with Michel since she was fourteen, and has waited for him to return for seven years. She sleeps with Frankie because he reminds her of Michel.

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Cécile meets Frankie and falls in love with him on her fourteenth birthday. Roland is in love with Lola. Lola still loves Michel. Michel reappears. Cécile pursues Frankie to Cherbourg, closely followed by her mother (Mme. Desnoyers). Roland leaves for a distant land, and Lola drives off with Michel.

Demy does not ask us to accept that this profusion of coincidence should occur within the space of three days; in a sense, the story is finished when the film begins, because Michel has at last returned home. From the moment of his arrival, time is in suspense. Demy is saying that we repeat the actions of others before us, doing what others will do again after us. Time is thus unimportant. *Lola* is not, as one critic suggested, an attempt to tell the story of a woman's life without using flashbacks. Instead, it tells about one person by showing others who are similar, both in the past and in the future. For instance, Cécile resembles Lola's past, and Mme. Desnoyers suggests her possible future. Instead of demonstrating the singularity of one woman and of one love affair, *Lola* emphasizes the *similarities* of a number of relationships.

Without recourse to the devices of dream sequence and flashback, the film is enriched both by references to other works outside it, drawing on their meaning and feeling to extend its own, and by the ease with which it slips back and forth in time, illuminating one character by placing another in a like situation, suggesting the emotions of an event which took place many years before. Thus it can show Lola's possible future, as an impeccable "widow" (Mme. Desnoyers) living quietly alone with her offspring, or her past meeting with Michel at a fairground many years before.

We can see Cécile starting on the path already plotted by Lola and her mother when she visits the fair with Frankie, the American sailor. In a beautiful slow-motion sequence, Cécile and Frankie leap off the roundabout and through the crowds, as if in a dream. Her hair streams lazily on the air and her face shines with delight. The rhythm of the sequence lightly conveys the nostalgia that Cécile is already weaving into these moments, storing them for some future dream. They are at once the present and the future past.

At this sublime moment, Demy achieves not only a reflection of Lola's past infatuation, but also of the happy illusion she has treasured during the seven long years she has waited for Michel's return. Just as the three women sustain their loves by illusion, this slow-motion sequence makes imagination more solid than "reality." Not realist in intention or construction, the film succeeds in linking the imagined and the real while yet emphasizing the presence of time. If not true to objective fact (which is meaningless), *Lola* is faithful to the emotions. A title at the beginning of the film reads "Pleure qui peut . . . rit qui veut . . ."

—MARK SHIVAS

IVAN'S CHILDHOOD

(IVANOVO DETSTVO; U.S. title: MY NAME IS IVAN) Director: Andrei Tarkovsky. Screenplay: Vladimir Bogomolov and Michael Papava. Photography: Vadim Yusov. Music: V. Ouchinikov. Art director: V. Chernyaev.

The Soviet war films exported to the West *(The Cranes Are Flying, Ballad of a Soldier, The Letter That Was Not Sent, Clear Skies)* increasingly appear as poetic exercises in which the directors use their material as an excuse for indulging in brilliant compositions and stylistic experiments, although on the script side they remain essentially propaganda pieces reminding us that war is a monstrous thing and that Russians are much antiwar. *Ivan's Childhood* is one of the latest to reach us, and in spite of certain similarities with earlier films, it is a significant advance in the use of the camera as an interpretive tool, and a deviation from the straightforward narrative of routine Soviet cinema.

Ivan is a small, twelve-year-old boy forced into premature manhood as a result of the war

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Ivan is a small, twelve-year-old boy forced into premature manhood as a result of the war

and the loss of his parents, who has become a most effective Russian spy. The story-content of the film involves his return to the Russian front and his camaraderie with two officers who have volunteered out of necessity to adopt the boy, and with whom he finds a much needed warmth and companionship between assignments. But the primary preoccupation of the film and the film-makers is with Ivan's dream-memories and fantasies which are introduced, often by direct cut, throughout the film. It is his escape mechanism, his return to the time of innocence and abandon, to happiness as he knew it—juxtaposed with his adult awareness of war which has destroyed him psychologically and emotionally. This ironic contrast of the two "Ivans" is seen in the pretitle sequence: in the bright, clear morning Ivan, a remarkably beautiful, glowing child is seen "flying" over the treetops near his village, and as he descends he meets his mother on the road; seconds later, from the depths of night we see a dark, dirty, small figure advance through a marsh as Ivan returns from the German camp.

Andrei Tarkovsky wih his first film clearly demonstrates that he is a director who is taken with the refinements of "artistic" style and beautiful compositions (not unlike, say, Welles or Losey). His visual concepts are consistently stunning and often startlingly right, utilizing some of the camera and cutting devices characteristic of Truffaut and the French directors. However, in the final analysis, it is in part his technical excesses and concern with pictorial values that throw the film off balance and rob it of its full potential.

The casting is near perfect—especially the astonishing performance of Kolya Burlayaev as Ivan. He succeeds beautifully in convincing us that he is both a clever and lovable child, and circumstantially an adult and a soldier. He is a representative product of war and at the same time an unusually fascinating individual. One assumes that Tarkovsky, since he shows us practically nothing of the war itself, is concerned with the boy's mental view of the war and his lost childhood. However, we do not see these elements as Ivan sees them, but as *Tarkovsky* and his camera see them. His meticulous, lyric style can be justified, as in the dream sequences which are metamorphosed into a super-reality, but the most objective realism in the film is equally as beautiful to behold. One seldom feels the overpowering anguish and terror of war as in the work of Wajda. Ivan's last mission at the end is the only time this comes through with any impact. If the style intrudes upon the film's objective images, it succeeds brilliantly in a sequence where the real and fantasy worlds converge in Ivan's mind as he acts out a war-game in the dark, stalking the enemy to the kill: a moment of true terror.

What the film does succeed in communicating with vivid imaginativeness and power is Ivan's tormented psyche and his remembrance of a beautiful childhood which is his only source of goodness and hope. Whether it is simply meeting his mother on the road to draw a bucket of water from the well, or riding to the beach in the rain on an apple-cart, Tarkovsky and his cameraman Vadim Yusov invest the images with a surreal haunting beauty not easily forgotten. And after the silent, yet eloquent epilogue, in which we learn of the child's tragic end, we return to Ivan's dream vision—a final liberation, a return to paradise lost. *Ivan's Childhood* is an ambitious directorial debut which can stand well beside the first film of practically any director.

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A HARD DAY'S NIGHT

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of this profitable beginning, *Business Week* has confidently predicted that *A Hard Day's Night* will gross six to ten million dollars in this country, a story which caused United Artists stock to climb ten points.

In the San Francisco area, at least, things have not gone quite so swimmingly as predicted. Thousands of girls who were willing to pay from seven to seventy-five dollars for a distant, twenty-six minute glimpse of the Beatles have dwindled to a few hundred willing to pay $1.25 to see them in Brobdignagian, one-and-a-half-hour fullness. Like their Dionysian rituals of adoration, the vagaries of teen-age taste are mysterious in origin. It may be that the Beatles' charisma does not project from the screen (although it seems to project very well from foggy, pulp-magazine reproductions); it may be that the girls (who are not the perfect fools they seem) can recognize overweening commercialism when they see it; or it may be that the makers of *A Hard Day's Night* have nouvelle-vagued themselves to death. After all, the secret of a teen-age idol's popularity is an idiot-simple demeanor and the hostility towards him of the adult generation. The kind reception accorded this film by adult reviewers, combined with its somewhat arty contents (which brought it the good reviews in the first place) may well cut it off from its intended audience in America. If it fails here, it will do so for the best of reasons.

This is not to deny that *A Hard Day's Night* was made to make money. On a primitively commercial level it is calculated to shape further the Beatle image, which may well be a monstrous, cleverly staged *Selbst-parodie*. What these four young men are really like will undoubtedly never be known. What they are supposed to be like is pushed at us from every magazine and newspaper stand. They are supposed to be zanies, first and last, crazy clowns who say improper things and do impossible things. A sort of Jerry Lewis and Dean Martin rolled into a lump of silly putty and divided into four parts of japing unlikeliness, they are designed to be something with which teen-agers can IDENTIFY, a licensed folly which is a bubbly counterpart to black-leather jackets and switchblades. Asked during the course of the film whether he is a "Mod" or a "Rocker," one of the Beatles replies that he is a "Mocker," which—no matter how you spell it—tells the story.

The plot line is simple and obvious: A Day in the Life of the Beatles (ideally conceived). Since the day's activities center about rehearsals for a TV performance, the boys are given frequent opportunities to exercise their musical skills. Background noise for many other sequences, as well, is provided by their songs, and United Artists has issued the soundtrack as a long-playing record. After all, this is what the teen-age audience will have come to see: "The Beatles singing your favorite songs." But the many episodes that space out the songs are not merely stuffing: like the music, they are well calculated to produce an effect, to further weld the bonds of identity between the Beatles and their youthful fans. The picture begins with the boys running to catch a train, pursued by a swarm of screaming girls. Settling down in their compartment, they discover an old man (Wilfrid Brambell) among them. This is "Paul's Grandfather," a type of Foxy Grandpa who assists in maintaining the intensity of mayhem while at the same time providing material for the homosexual motif that snakes its way through the picture (he is billed, frequently, as "a clean old man"). When the Grandfather leaves the compartment, he is replaced by a stuffy Blimpish type, complete with Bowler and *Times*. His arrival provides the occasion for a riffle of brutal repartee between the two generations: the older is bullying, stupid, falsely patriotic, ugly, pompous, while the younger is misunderstood, painstakingly polite, good-natured and tolerant, insolent only when pressed. This ends only with the Beatles' departure from the compartment ("Let's leave the kennel to Lassie"), and a subsequent bit of absurdity in which the four boys bait the imprisoned Bear from the outside.

Since the action of the film is compounded

of like episodes, a résumé is impossible. None, however, is really necessary, for the three motifs introduced during the early moments of the picture—running (flight), antagonism towards the establishment (order), and subsequent mayhem (misrule)—are extended by variation throughout the remainder of the action. The unifying tension is that which exists between the harried manager of the troupe (played by Norman Rossington) and his obstreperous charges, a good-natured badinage which has, as always in such cases, an underlying darkness. The Manager wants them to "behave," to "shape up," to "stop clowning around." They, on the other hand, seek to escape his supervision and to disobey his orders. One is invariably reminded of a group of school boys on an outing in the charge of a bullying but ineffectual master. Told to stay in their room and answer fan-mail (homework), they rush off to a party. Faced with deadlines and interviews, they scamper about in madcap antics while the Manager, a TV director, and the rest of the adult world go crazy with frustration. The question of money-making is never mentioned, save indirectly: all action apparently exists in a vacuum.

This nonsense is hardly new: anyone familiar with the Elvis Epicacs will quickly recognize it. In such fantasies, youth is equated with wisdom, age with folly. Parents are stupid, sons are brilliant but misunderstood. Duty is dull (evil), and fun is . . . fun (good). This is pandering of the worst sort, but it sells, and so has a reason for being. Youth must have its dreams, and the industry stands ready to supply them.

But *Hard Day's Night* is different from the usual pap. For one thing, it is technically exciting—in both senses of the words. The camera is very much alive: it runs, it jumps, it seldom is caught standing still. Unlike the bland flatness of the Elvis movies (which are reminiscent of the old *SatEvePost* illustrations), the image on the screen has depth. Gilbert Taylor, the cameraman, takes his techniques as he finds them, and he finds them everywhere. Much of the acting is apparently designed to suggest improvisation, and the camera assists this by a pseudo-documentary awkwardness. As in a documentary, the camera is insistently *there*, probing, pointing, pursuing, predicating. There are, as well, suggestions of nouvelle vague: the sequences in which the Beatles jape and jug-

A HARD DAY'S NIGHT

gle are presented in such a way as to remind one of the filmic high jinks in recent French movies. There are the same sped-up frames, the same seeking out of unusual camera-angles. That the director of this calculated nonsense was Richard Lester (of the famous *RJ&SS* film) goes a long way to explain its excellence, although much credit obviously goes to the editor, John Jympson, whose cutting and splicing was designed to produce an over-all impression of inspired restlessness.

Considering the talent that went into its making, it is not surprising that *A Hard Day's Night* is fun to watch. I saw this film two nights in a row, and enjoyed it more the second time through. The pandering motifs are not, as in a Presley picture, pushed *ad nauseam*. They are worked into the dramatic fabric so as to be almost invisible; moreover, the fabric is whisked by the customer's eyes so fast that he is unable to distinguish shoddy from silk.

Then too, the Beatles (Paul, John, Ringo, George—if you didn't know) are fascinating to watch. Each has a distinct personality suggested by his face: Paul, with his bangs, is a sort of Buster Brown—mischievous yet moral. John, credited with being the leader, has rather cold features, perhaps a bit bestial; it is he who drops most of the campy remarks. Ringo, the most "manufactured" of the quartet, is supposed to be the ugly duckling, the outsider. Ugly he certainly is, but the sequences in which he deserts the others for an hour of lonely, rejected wandering is the most painfully self-conscious in the picture. When, at the end of his misadventures, he falls in with a dirty-faced boy playing hooky ("We're *both* 'deserters' "), one can hear, in the distance, the clacking of somebody's typewriter.

I was most impressed by George, the quietest Beatle. In a wonderful bit of pantomime in which he lathers and shaves the mirror image of the Manager's assistant (John Junkin), he reveals a clown's serene insouciance. It is he, also, who has the best solo sequence in the picture: when he wanders into the office of a designer of teen-age clothes, an out-and-out fag-got ("Don't *breathe* on me, Adrian!") who makes the mistake of asking his opinion on recent styles, the innocent, dead-pan George reduces the fairy to twinkle-dust.

The strange business of Paul's Grandfather puzzles while it satisfies. The idea of a spry, sly, scheming, profiteering, and philandering old man fits well into the design of the story: a hypocritical representative of the parental generation, yet outside it because of his age (and inclinations), Paul's Grandfather serves as a sort of master of the revels throughout. Certainly the performance of Wilfrid Brambell is well above what one might expect in such a light-weight production: alternating waspish (hypocritical) Puritanism with a Silenus leer, his professional presence goes a long way towards pulling the haphazard elements of the story together. Indeed, all of the supporting players are excellent in their various roles, from the long-suffering TV director (Victor Stinette) to the hysterical fashion designer (Kenneth Haight). And Anna Quayle, as an unnamed, unidentified woman, turns in a bit of drollery that arrests the forward dash of things for one mesmerized moment.

Show business has its lion's share of freaks, and this is a movie about show business; still, one cannot help wondering why so much of the fun had homosexual overtones. Such a quantity of queer has certain implications, a drift which whispers things about the Beatles. Must they be counted among the flaming creatures, or was this false fire? Still, granted their clowning, jesting, anti-establishment role, and given the intimate connection between that role and the one assumed by the homosexual in our society, perhaps, the motif is something more than sly long-bacon at Mum and Dad.

A final note: because of the rapid-fire delivery, the thick Liverpudlian accents, and the interlarding of esoteric slang, some sequences of this film need subtitles. —JOHN SEELYE

IL BIDONE

(The Swindle) Director: Federico Fellini. Producer: Titanus. Screenplay: Ennio Flaiano, Tullio Pinelli and Fellini. Photography: Otello Martelli. Music: Nino Rota. Astor.

A section of sewer pipe, gleaming in the sun, lies alone in an arid farm field as three bogus priests dig for a spurious treasure; to some wild Nino Rota music, a luxurious white American convertible makes its way down a crowded Roman street and stops to pick up two passengers; on New Year's Eve, a swindler pauses for a moment in a flea market to play with a bubble wand: all of this bears the unmistakable mark of the bizarre visual genius of Federico Fellini, but there is this time some little difference. What we are seeing here is Fellini in a kind of Stylistic transition, and a search, too, for an adequate expression of the director's highly personalized vision of, as he has said, "the terrible difficulty people have in talking to each other—the old problem of communication, the desperate anguish to be *with,* the desire to have a real, authentic relationship with another person." *Il Bidone* (made in 1955, and only recently released here) is the second part of what Fellini has called "my trilogy of solitude" and the religious theme which so permeates all his work is easy to trace through these three films: in *La Strada,* the anguish of Zampano on the dark beach; Augusto's ritual death on the hillside in *Il Bidone;* and Cabiria's symbolic resurrection, a sweeping re-affirmation of life. But this film is the weakest of the three; Fellini quite obviously knows what he wants to say, but he seems in *Il Bidone* unsure about exactly how to say it.

The story resembles not only in form but in content a kind of cinematic folk ballad. Augusto (Broderick Crawford) is the leader of a small band of swindlers made up solely of himself, a painter nicknamed Picasso (Richard Baseheart) and a gray-haired glamor boy (Franco Fabrizi) who wants to be a popular singer "like Johnny Ray." They make their skimpy living by quite blatantly and with a certain zest cheating peasants and slum dwellers, but none is really satisfied with his lot: Augusto wants to pull off that "one big deal"; Picasso wants to paint, but has neither the talent (observe the picture he tries to peddle at the New Year's Eve party) nor the money (good husband that he is, he always turns his share of the take over to his wife, played by Giulietta Masina); and Roberto seems really to take nothing very seriously save his sex life. But it is Augusto upon whom Fellini primarily concentrates, and it is he who most greatly feels the burden of his various failures. His age—forty-eight—is continually referred to, much like Guido's in 8½, and his attempts to convince his betters to go in with him on a hopelessly naive "big deal, before it's too late" are observed with sympathy and almost unbearable candor.

The trio manage to knock over such small game as they take on without too much trouble, but Augusto, meeting, by chance, his teen-age daughter by his estranged wife, decides that if he is to get enough money to put her through college the big deal must be pulled off immediately. He has no chance to execute his rather hopeless plans, however, for he is apprehended by one of his old victims and sent to prison. Upon his release, Augusto goes back—this time with another gang—to his old dodge, masquerading as a monsignor and swindling peasants out of thirty thousand lire worth of mass money, trying to scrape together enough for tuition. He tries to convince his gang that he could not bring himself to take money from a poor farm family, but they seize and beat him and discover the money in his shoe. His face bloodied and battered, his back broken, Augusto is left at the foot of a steep hill to die. He lies paralyzed all night, but when in the morning he hears the distant singing of some peasants on their way to market he manages to crawl up to a road on top of the hill, where he dies lonely and in great pain, calling out to them "Wait for me . . . I'm coming . . . I'm coming with you." But they do not hear, and move round the bend of the mountain road, still singing.

Around this essentially simple tale is woven the sur-neorealistic fabric of Fellini's own dream

world which manifests itself in images of the seashore, of empty landscapes and fairgrounds, of lonely piazzas with a fountain bubbling, of empty streets, of big, expensive cars, of bizarre nightclubs and loud parties, of alienation and, ultimately, of life without resolution. There is the traditional scene of a walk through the streets at dawn (in *Il Bidone* this is a really beautiful one, with a drunken nightclub musician piping home Augusto, Roberto, and their evening's pickups by playing a popular song on a badly tuned violin), and the by now almost obligatory party scene (and the most brilliant scene of the film: a New Year's party which strips bare the horrible limitations of our trio of swindlers while fireworks explode in the distance, giving the whole episode a vaguely hallucinatory effect). But there are scenes too which come close to disaster, which approach, tease and barely escape sheer bathos. Augusto's first meeting with his daughter is at once too pat and too abrupt to be entirely believable: the dialogue here is properly ill-at-ease and painfully accurate ("How's your mother?" "Oh, fine . . . She had the flu but she's over it now"), and the dolly shot which ends the scene, with the suddenly subjective camera swinging out and away from Augusto, is fully as evocative as it was at the end of *I Vitelloni;* but we are never entirely convinced or very greatly moved. As in the scene between Augusto and the crippled peasant girl, when she asks him, in his monsignor's disguise, to say a prayer for her and he refuses, we marvel not at the effectiveness of the scene but rather that Fellini was able to bring off at all, to raise it above the level of the most embarrassing *fumetti.*

That Augusto, then, really does have the money hidden in his shoe comes as a surprise and even as a relief to us, for up to this point we have absolutely every reason to believe that he will die a reformed and persecuted humanitarian and the film will follow its apparent course and degenerate completely into the rankest soap opera. But when the new group of swindlers begin to stone Augusto as he runs clumsily down the rocky hill we finally begin to realize that Fellini is making a plea for the acceptance of man, evil and deceitful though he may be. Augusto of a sudden has assumed the proportions of a kind of roguish martyr, and this may be exactly the trouble. Fellini has said that he searches to look at reality "with an honest eye—but any kind of reality: not just social reality, but also spiritual reality, metaphysical reality, anything man has inside him," but this is the first time in the entire film that Augusto's particular moral dilemma has been presented in terms other than purely external, physical conflict, and we are not prepared for this sudden surge of empathy. Social reality (the scene in the slum with the trio passing themselves off as government representatives of the new housing project), spiritual reality (the conflict between Augusto and the peasant girl mentioned earlier), metaphysical reality (Crawford's walk home, alone, New Year's morning across an empty piazza with two whores casually accosting him as he moves along the rainy street), all have been touched upon, but it is not until this final scene that Fellini finally manages to probe any deeper than his brilliant surface. And by now it is almost too late.

The entire film, despite Otello Martelli's subtly flowing camerawork and Fellini's own attempts at visual and emotional coherence, is abrupt, almost elliptical in spots. We see the trio, for example, casually swindling a gas station attendant and then we inexplicably jump-cut to a drunk scene in a deserted amusement park, which may or may not be the result of post-release editing. Be that as it may, many of the scenes end either too quickly (the dawn walk after the evening in the nightclub) or with a resounding thud (Augusto's attempted swindle of a café patron who turns out himself to be an old pro), which quite destroys any lyric flow the film may once have—and should have—had. Picasso's disillusionment and remorse in the fairgrounds at night is very movingly portrayed, with both Crawford and Baseheart playing for all they're worth (Augusto: "In our racket you have to be alone. You think

you're scared now—think how you'll be at my age"), but as Roberto and Augusto drive away afterwards with the village whore and Picasso turns toward us, standing against a stone wall, tears streaming down his face, the film cuts, in a style more Godard than Fellini, before we can see him full-face. Admittedly *Il Bidone* seems to be more underkeyed than the other two sections of the trilogy, but these several glaring abridgements only make it seem clumsy and uncertain.

Il Bidone remains an interesting addition to the Fellini canon and a flawed but vital second part of the trilogy. What we see in it perhaps most of all is the disquieting, almost painful struggle of one of the major film poets of our time to make a statement about which he seems uncomfortable, from which he seems almost at times to retreat. *Il Bidone* is at bottom a step-stone and a jumping-off place, a rough sketch of themes to be developed later and with far more passion and eloquence in *Cabiria, La Dolce Vita,* and *8½.* After the first brave step of *La Strada,* Fellini seems for a moment to stop, apprehensive of the vision he has uncovered, and then proceeds with it here by employing only externals, unsure of his power and his theme, and reluctant to deal with them in any but the most pacific of superficialities.

—JOHN C. COCKS, JR.

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Entertainments

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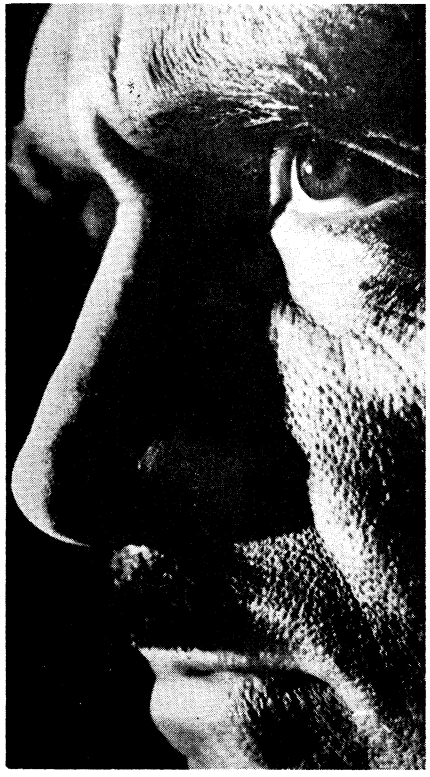

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