FILM QUARTERLY

CUMULATIVE INDEX TO
VOLUMES XII AND XIII

FALL 1958–SUMMER 1960

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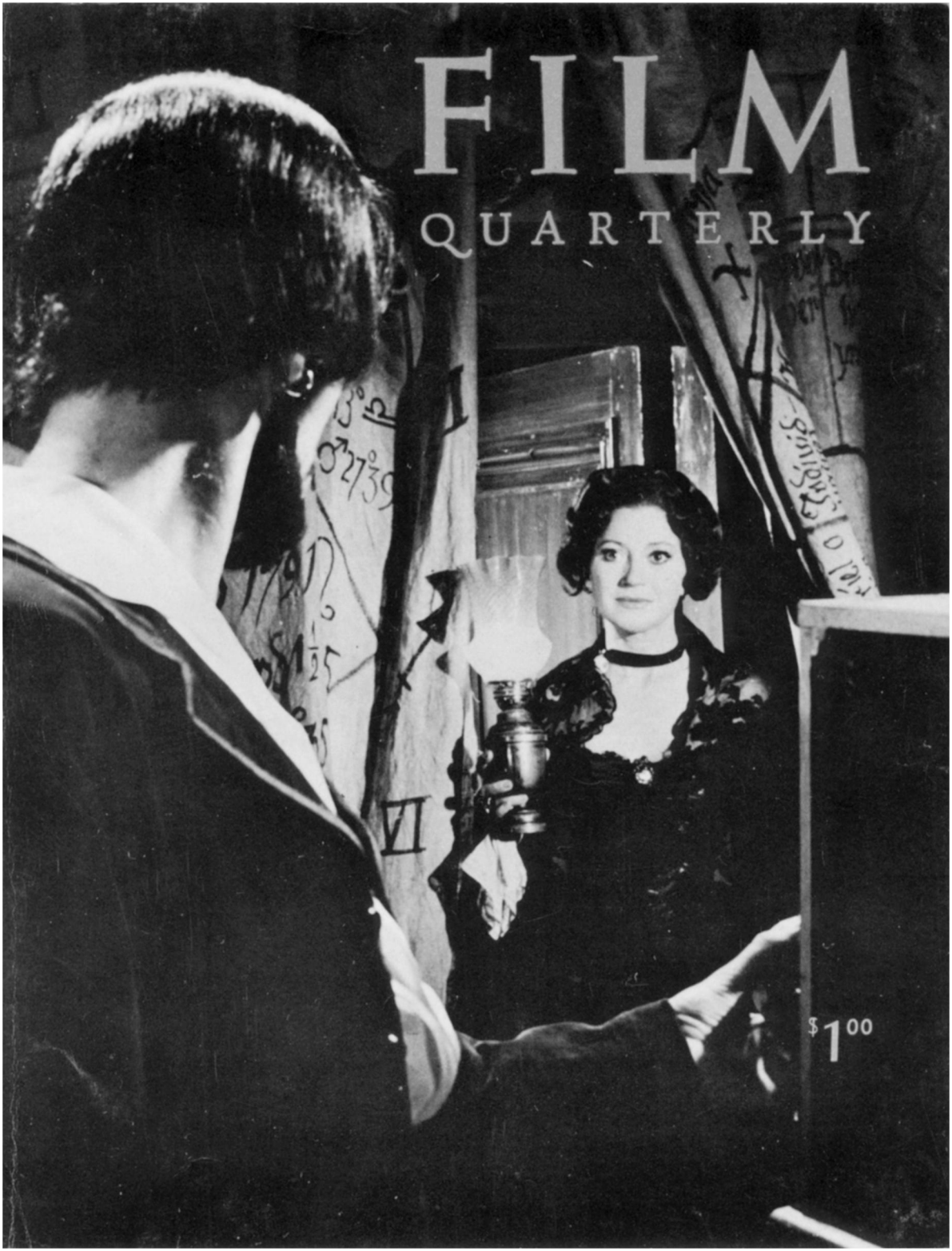
CUMULATIVE INDEX TO VOLUMES XII AND XIII

Authors, Articles, Topics, and Films or Film Books Reviewed

Titles of films and books reviewed appear in *italics*. First reference number indicates volume number; second indicates issue number; third indicates page. Since topics were not indexed in the index issued for Volume XII, this cumulative index has been prepared. The index to Volume XIV will include topics, but will not be cumulative. It is hoped that a cumulative index for a number of years can occasionally be issued in the future.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THE COVER: Max von Sydow and Gertrud Fridh in Ingmar Bergman's *Ansiktet* (*The Face*; U.S. title, *The Magician*).

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Editor's Notebook

Like most specialized, small-circulation periodicals, *Film Quarterly* expects to lose money. It would be reassuring to the publishers, however, if it lost somewhat less; and as it happens there is a way in which this can be achieved—by increasing the proportion of subscribers among our readers. Because of the high costs of printing *Film Quarterly*, with its large amount of typesetting and its many stills, the return from bookstore and newsstand sales is well below manufacturing costs alone. Subscription payments, on the other hand, come to us in toto and very nearly cover the actual costs of publishing the journal—aside, at least, from overheads that are impossible to quantify. This approximation is, we feel, a correct policy. Its corollary is that if our circulation rose enough that per-copy costs declined significantly, we would lower the price accordingly. But at present the need is for more subscriptions. By this time readers have had opportunity to become familiar with the journal, and many must know that, although some items in each issue will infuriate them, others will bring reliable delights. We will be grateful if such readers would use the card inserted in this issue to enroll themselves among the faithful, ensuring prompt and direct receipt of each issue.

About our contributors: COLIN YOUNG is Los Angeles Editor of this journal and wrote "The Hollywood War of Independence" for our Spring 1959 issue. DONALD RICHIE, film critic for *The Japan Times*, is the co-author (with Joseph L. Anderson) of *The Japanese Film: Art and Industry*, just published by Tuttle. He lives in Tokyo and writes for many publications in Japan and abroad. FREDERICK M. WIRT has been studying censors and their works for many years; he has been active since 1953 in opposing film censorship before the Ohio legislature. He is Assistant Professor of Government at Denison University, Granville, Ohio. ERNEST CALLENBACH is Editor of this journal. ALBERT JOHNSON is Assistant Editor.

COLIN YOUNG

The Old Dependables

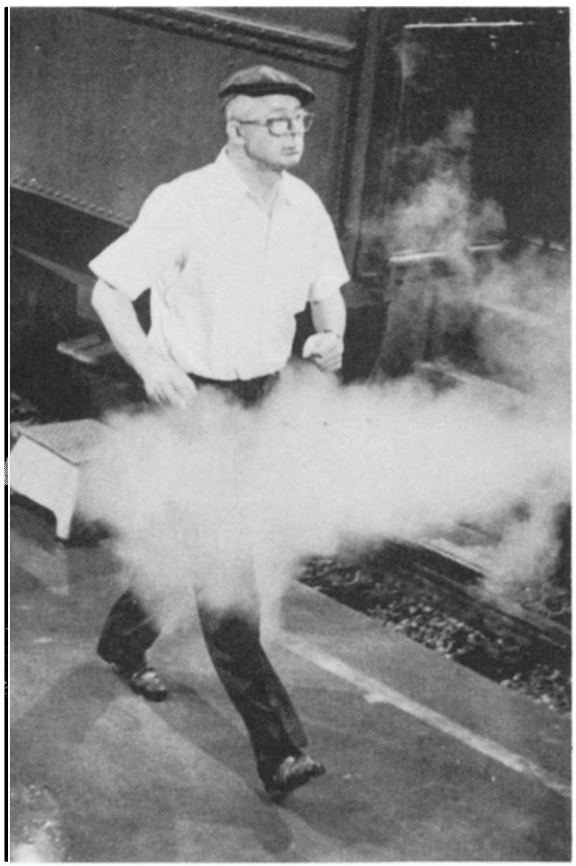
Six months ago I discussed in *Film Quarterly* a small group of American film-makers, younger directors struggling for the inside position from which to make films of, for, and by themselves. I also noted that we were not always getting the films from the "old masters" that we might expect from them. Since this time, four of these gentlemen, with records of film-making stretching back into the silent period, have come out with new films: *Some Like It Hot* by Billy Wilder, *The Nun's Story* by Fred Zinnemann, *The Horse Soldiers* by John Ford, and *Pork Chop Hill* by Lewis Milestone. George Stevens' long-awaited production of *The Diary of Anne Frank* is also in release, William Wyler is completing *Ben Hur*, and Stanley Kramer, a relative newcomer, is completing *On the Beach*.

These are all men who appear, from the outside, to have earned the right to make the films of their own choosing, in their own way. Each has experienced critical and box-office success. *Sunset Boulevard, Double Indemnity, The Lost Weekend* by Wilder; *High Noon, From Here to Eternity, Member of the Wedding* by Zinnemann; *Stagecoach, The Informer, Grapes of Wrath, The Long Voyage Home* by Ford; *All Quiet on the Western Front, A Walk in the Sun, Of Mice and Men* by Milestone—these titles read, in their way, like a history of the recent American cinema. But as we shall see, it is an over-simplification to lump together men of this caliber with this kind of credential, to expect the same kind of thing from them, or to expect them to function in a given period in the same way.

In an attempt toward balancing the books, toward correcting any one-sided emphasis on unbridled youth and unmitigated good will (or gall) in my earlier article, I talked with as many of these gentlemen as I was able to meet in the time available to me. The result was at times surprising, at others disheartening, and was not always as clear as I would have wished.

When I talked half a year ago with Martin Ritt, he complained of the failure of European directors to understand the particular dilemma of the American director, who has always to be aware of the mass public to which his films must cater. Billy Wilder, on the contrary, revels in this situation. "When I took *Some Like It Hot* to Europe," he said, "I met several European journalists who were dismayed and somewhat disappointed by my choice of film. But it is an absolute cinch to make a film so that it will win first prize at some festival in Zagreb. It is much more difficult to make a film which has world-wide popularity. I have no interest in making arty films to appeal to a group of critics, full of false aesthetics. There is an international association of them, capable of falling into raptures about Cocteau's dead donkey draped over a piano. There are film-makers for these critics too, who have no concern about who is going to pay the bills, no worry about the man who runs the business, who pays the usher's salary. The critics have no idea what precisely Bergman is saying, but they rave about him nevertheless. But what is much more difficult, and to me much more important, is to win for my films the attention and

support of a world audience. I am, after all, an old hand at prize-winning. The time has now come not to work for awards, but to make the pictures which will 'bring them back in,' which will recover the lost audience."



Billy Wilder during the shooting of SOME LIKE IT HOT.

As he talked with me, he paced his office floor, from his desk to the bookcase containing, along with the basis of a very respectable library, his awards, including three Oscars (two for *Lost Weekend* (1945), a Cannes prize for the same film, one from Venice for *Ace in the Hole* (1951), one from Sicily for *Love in the Afternoon* (1957), from Belgium for *Sunset Boulevard* (1950), from the Foreign Correspondents of Hollywood, from Germany, and so on. In all he has received nominations from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences sixteen times. The "false aesthetics" argument is too vague to do much with. He cannot possibly mean that Bresson, Ray or Buñuel, or Bergman are impossible to justify on aesthetic grounds. Critics may write "phony criticism" but that is another matter. What is now central to Wilder's position is that a film must be thought to *fail* if it fails at the box office. But what if the film-maker himself stands behind his productions? Then, the aesthetics argument to one side, on Wilder's remaining premise, that of financial responsibility, it should be possible to distinguish between artistic and financial failure. This really is all that the optimistic minority of film-goers (and film-makers) wish to argue, and a reassuring example of its possibility was recently evidenced by the mutual agreement of Bresson, Tati, and Fellini to pool resources and make up each other's losses out of each other's successes. Within France itself, this might be thought of as Tati subsidizing Bresson.

Since Wilder seeks such a large audience for his films, I asked him what he thought was his responsibility to them. "Primarily not to bore them," he replied. "And not to show them what they saw last night on television. There are perhaps two kinds of picture. The first starts with a very complicated story which has to be flattened out so that it is understandable to the audience. The second is a simple story with ornamentation. The second is now my preference. I want the story to have the same appeal in Minneapolis as in Düsseldorf.

"When working on a screenplay, we always have a million ideas in the first week, but for the next 25 we are eliminating, sifting. The more I do, the more I realize that the important factor is simplification. The simpler the better. This applies also to the camera, and cutting. I believe that the audience should not notice tricks, since this destroys the illusion. I try to tell a story subtly, but simply, without camera tricks, and without overcutting. I am too aware of the value of a close-up to waste it. A man, by the way, who really understands this is Wyler, who is surely a great director—simple, but elegant, always in the right place at the right time."

Kirk Douglas in ACE IN THE HOLE.

Wilder started as a writer, in Germany (he was born in Austria), and still thinks of himself as one. He came to the United States in 1934, and although he worked alone in Germany, when he was employing his native language, he has always had a collaborator here. The bulk of this time, he has collaborated with Charles Brackett, perhaps the longest and certainly one of the most fruitful such liaisons of recent years. They were responsible for fourteen titles together while at Paramount, and when Brackett was promoted to producer, Wilder became a director. This was on *The Major and the Minor* (1942). Earlier they had done two scripts for Lubitsch, *Bluebeard's Eighth Wife* (1938) and *Ninotchka* (1939). Wilder acknowledges a debt to Lubitsch, as indeed will anyone who worked with him. Particularly, he said, Lubitsch was a great innovator, and never took credit for additional writing for which he was responsible. With Brackett, Wilder went on to make, among others, *Five Graves to Cairo* (1943), *The Lost Weekend, Emperor Waltz* (1948), *A Foreign Affair* (1948), and finally *Sunset Boulevard,* his second Oscar winner.

Neither his favorite film, nor his only "failure," however, were made with Brackett's assistance. When asked which of his own films he preferred he cited *Double Indemnity* (1944), the screenplay for which he wrote with Raymond Chandler from a short story by James Cain. "It contains, I think, fewer mistakes than any other film I have made, and is the one which has been most imitated. It started the style for private-eye stories which followed and which are still seen on television."

The one failure was *Ace in the Hole* (also known as *The Big Carnival*). This was the first film for which he was responsible as producer. Notwithstanding its prize at Venice,

Wilder is prepared to write it off as a mistake, since it has never recovered the initial cost. He blames this entirely on the subject, as there could not, he said, have been anything wrong with the execution. "As soon as you have chosen and decided upon an idea or a subject, you have already made a success or a failure. You are not likely to become a bad writer or director all at once."

It is perhaps no more than a happy accident then that *Ace in the Hole* was made at all. Its story of a headline-hungry renegade news reporter is raw-edged and angry—with anger not only in the central character (well played by Kirk Douglas), but throughout the film. A newsman, fired for unreliable conduct on a New York daily, vegetates in a small one-newspaper New Mexico town. Assigned to a routine mining accident, he contrives a misleading account of the danger of any possible rescue attempt. Claiming that he alone can get in to the trapped miner, he uses his skill as a writer to capture the attention of the nation, and hold it on the front page for a week. As a result, the man dies unnecessarily in the mine, and in a somewhat melodramatic climax the newsman is stabbed to death by the miner's wife, to whom he had made one promise too many. Meanwhile, around the site of the mine appears a crowd of carnival size, as if waiting impatiently for the next show at a circus; concessions and side-shows are set up. A section of society is, implicitly, indicted with the reporter.

This, in the end, is perhaps why the film failed. An audience does not like to be chastised. Or perhaps a studio secretary was right when she said to me that there were "too many bad people in it." At any rate, it was an odd choice for a man to make for his first film as a producer unless he had his heart in it, and unless he saw it as being in the normal line of development of his work. Certainly, since then, Wilder has tried nothing like it again. Following it with the very popular *Stalag 17* (1953) and then the handsomely polished and tasteful *Sabrina* (1954), Wilder, the producer, seemed to have learned his lesson. *The Seven Year Itch* (1955) and this year's *Some Like It Hot,* both with Marilyn Monroe, have been aimed at a broad public, eager and willing to be entertained. Made primarily as diversions, they have been, on the whole, remarkably successful.

Had *Ace* not died, Wilder might today be making somewhat different pictures, still with the skill and polish which everyone who ever works for Lubitsch takes away with him, but with more pugnacity in choice of subject, and perhaps less confined to the studio. His first film script was for Robert Siodmak in Germany (*People on Sunday,* 1928) in which the camera moved out of the studio into the parks and streets of Berlin for its story of four young men on their day off. (Fred Zinnemann was assistant cameraman on this film.) As it is, Wilder still speaks a little as a man who must earn the right to strike out in a new direction. "*Some Like It Hot* once again establishes me a little, and I can afford to experiment a little more again." He is now working with the Mirisch Company, for United Artists release, and appears well content with the three brothers who run the company. "I have complete freedom of choice of subject—they do not control me during shooting, or in cutting. Sometimes they have an opinion and I listen to it, of course. I do none of the bookkeeping, and have no taste for business arrangements—how can you spend time with your lawyers and business managers and bookkeepers while you are trying to knock out a story?" The Mirisch brothers give the film-maker a financial share in his picture, Wilder continued, and ask him to gather his cast, in-

stead of starting with the stars, and looking around for a willing director.

Now that Hecht-Hill-Lancaster is in the doldrums the Mirisch Company is probably the most important of the independents releasing through United Artists. (They also have Ford's *Horse Soldiers* in release.) According to Wilder's account they provide ideal circumstances for a man of talent and responsibility. I have not heard the same from everyone who has worked with the company, but Wilder could scarcely be more definite. "Unless what I choose is impractical, or censorable, I have complete authority to make what I choose." A subject will be "impractical" if it costs more than it earns. Thus everything is aimed at a world market. This places restrictions on Wilder's choice as large as anyone can conceive, but as we have seen, Wilder does not regret this. He relies on his own good taste to keep his films, aimed so broadly, from falling below a certain standard.

The next film he will make, in the year which he allows himself now for each production, will be a New York love story, again with I. A. L. Diamond on the screenplay (*Some Like It Hot* and *Love in the Afternoon*), and again with Jack Lemmon in the cast. Wilder considers Lemmon one of the most talented actors presently available. The title is *The Apartment*, and Wilder expects it to be a little different from anything he has ever done before. In much the same way, *Some Like It Hot* was for him a departure, his first "out-and-out farce."

It was suggested by a farce of the 'thirties, of Franco-German origin. The setting was changed, and of course the motivation. Two young, attractive, somewhat bumbling unemployed musicians (Lemmon and Tony Curtis) accidentally witness the St. Valentine Day massacre, are observed, but escape. In order to get out of town, they enlist in an all-girl band, bound for Miami. This mixture of blood-bath and farce Wilder explains in the following way: "I was constantly aware of the necessity to be realistic with the massacres (although the first one is not shown directly), because this provided the motivation for the boys *remaining* as girl players. Their double role has to be established as a life-or-death thing—that's why the wigs didn't come off. This is the classic farce construction—someone put in danger and then forced into a farcical situation."

The massacres, as it is, are played fairly broadly, as broadly as Wilder thought he dared; he considers the whole gangster era now as being slightly comic. But for my own taste, it left an unpleasant impression, and moreover did not seem to work as motivation. The danger is not sufficiently omnipresent in Miami, and in fact Curtis slides in and out of his two roles with apparent freedom, whenever he wishes to pursue the band's vocalist in a more appropriate disguise. This in itself provided the film with most of its humor, even if of a fairly predictable kind. Monroe was impressive, and another aspect of the film which I found attractive was the reappearance of such die-hards as George Raft, Pat O'Brien, and Joe E. Brown.

"There were some errors, of course, there always are, but the film came off completely as I imagined." And this remark is typical of Wilder. Apparently restless, nervous, he nevertheless gives the impression of supreme confidence. Asked what he thought about the present state of the industry, he replied that he sometimes felt a little bit like someone walking through a hospital, the only one who is healthy. He fully expects the number of worthwhile pictures to be made each year to be no more than thirty, and he fully expects to provide one of these himself. Considering that he has learned from Stroheim

as much as from Lubitsch he suggests that this gives the key to his films. "In fact they say of me that there are two Wilders—Wilder the farceur, and Wilder the cynic. 'Is he too shallow,' they say, 'or is he too bitter?'" Whatever is true of the past, we can safely assume that Wilder the cynic has been asked to take a back seat. Although he considers that *The Apartment* will be more serious than *Some Like It Hot,* it is doubtful that he will ever again allow his cynicism full rein.

With every reason for as much authority, if he wished it, is John Ford. But the impression I formed of Ford's present position in the film business was quite different. Talking with Wilder, one is always aware of the danger of his cutting the whole thing short because he might suspect that he was with one of those "dead donkey-lovers." Talking with Ford is much worse. He is suspicious of the conversation from the start, as if any talk about film-making, especially about his films, was superfluous. He pretends to be not even certain of the studio he is in, though conceivably by now they might have begun to look all alike. With a patch over one eye and the other eye concealed behind dark glasses, he was likely to want to talk about his socks more than about his work. ("Do you know that I saw a pair of these socks in a shop window in Gourock, and the man wasn't going to let me have any, because he exported them all to a store in Beverly Hills, till I told him I'd always been buying my goddamned socks in that store. So he did me a special favor.") He wears what is by now accepted as a uniform—relaxed, informal down to the boots, an attire which shows so much contempt for the organization that it would be thought of as forced in a younger man, without the cragginess and the usefully intermittent deafness to go with it.

SOME LIKE IT HOT: *Marilyn Monroe, Tony Curtis.*

It is hard, in any one conversation, to be sure that Ford has said what he means. I had just asked him how much control he had over his scripts when the following duologue ensued with his secretary, Meta Sterne. She came in to announce that "the girl" was here to see him.

—What girl?

—The girl you've cast for Lucy, I guess.

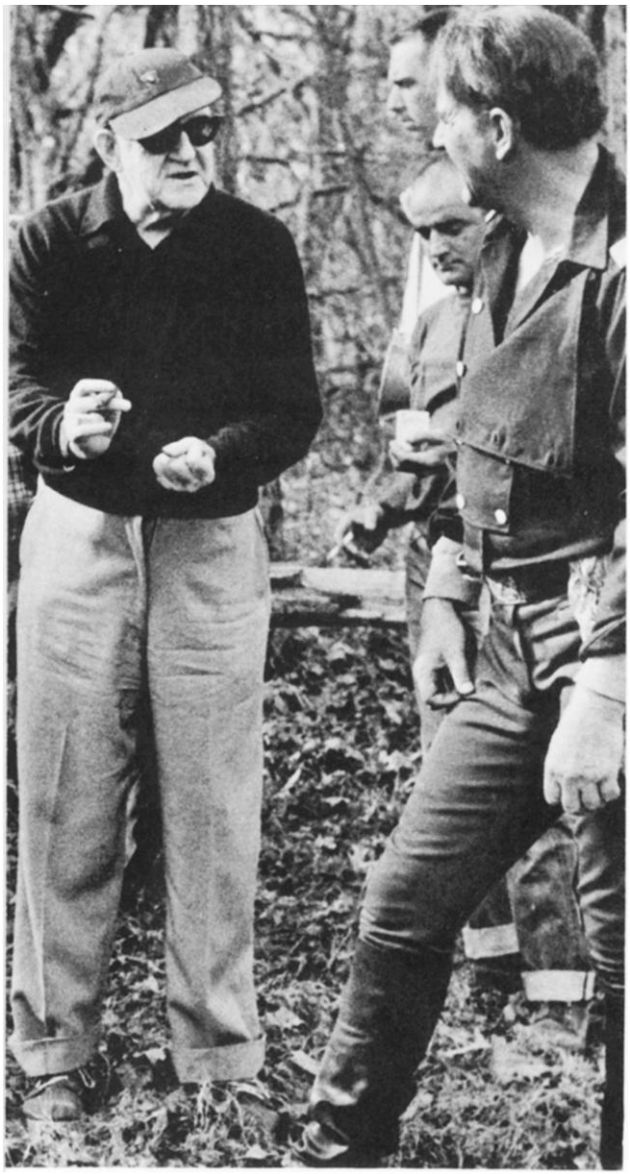
—For who?

—For Lucy.

—Who's Lucy?

—The girl in the picture. The girl who gets raped . . . .

—Get's what?



John Ford directing THE HORSE SOLDIERS.

The secretary waited. This was perhaps not a new routine, or a unique one.

—Well, tell her to wait, she's not going to get raped yet.

Then, turning to me, he added: "That answers your question, doesn't it? I'm really going to have to read that story."

But "that story," he had told me just a few moments earlier, was the best one which has come his way for many years. It is the one on which he is already engaged, with Willis Goldbeck as producer, *Captain Buffalo* (a title which will probably be changed), from a story by the *Saturday Evening Post* writer James Warner Bellah. Set in the 1880's, it is an account of a crack Negro cavalry unit, and the court-martial for rape of one of its members. "We have shaped the story to be told through a series of retrospects, as cutouts from the court-martial. As we develop it, he really looks guilty as hell."

It is not so long since Emmett Till's abductors were cleared of a charge of murder in Mississippi, even though everyone "knew they had done it" (in fact they later told newspaper reporter William Bradford Huie that they had). The 1880's are considerably before 1955, and although the trial which forms the basis of Bellah's story is military rather than civil, Northerners and Southerners will no doubt draw their own conclusions. Thus it might be in something of this sense that Ford admitted that the story was a tricky one to be tackling today. But he emphasized its story qualities, and nothing else, and went out of his way to explain that he had not come across as good a story as this for many years.

On the other hand, when asked specifically if he had been making the films he wanted to make he answered with an explosive "No! I don't want to make great sprawling pictures. I want to make films in a kitchen." *Captain Buffalo* does not seem to be quite that. And neither does the one with which he wishes to follow it—a production of *The Judge and the Hangman,* which he described as a *character* mystery set in the Bavarian Alps.

When pressed about the amount of control he had over script, shooting, or editing, Ford took one of two lines. The first was the simplest, and one that most people would be

willing, I think, to accept. I had asked him which of his postwar films he had some particular regard for. "It is hard to say. I wouldn't like to lay special claim to any of them. And it's not really a very fair question. I might just as well ask you which of your film reviews of the last five years you particularly liked, when what you really wanted to do was write the great Scottish novel. "But," he added, "I've made some pretty good films in my time—*Stage Coach, Grapes of Wrath, The Informer.*" (The first and last were made in collaboration with screenwriter Dudley Nichols.)

The implication was, then, he had made some pretty good films in his time, so do not press him too hard about some of the more recent ones. "The old enthusiasm has gone, maybe. But don't quote that—oh, hell, you can quote it."

It is all right, I think, to quote it, because it is not entirely true, and because even if it were true, the fact that his current films remain popular would be a remarkable tribute to his skill as a film craftsman.

But at other times Ford gave something of the impression of having been taken by surprise by changes within the film industry. He talked of "having noticed" that over the last five or six years the committee system of supervision had been creeping in, and that although his contracts still gave him right of first cut, the small print told another story. "But now that I am on to them," he added, "I'll be on my guard. Now I've realized what is happening to me, so now is the time to do the films I want to do. At 64 I am too old for anything else."

This explanation is hard to accept, and perhaps he did not expect it to be taken seriously. It certainly does not fit with what we have known of him in the past, or with the stories that he likes to tell of himself, especially when they apply to producers; for example, one that he told me on this occasion: When he was doing a picture on the Fox lot, the associate producer questioned the way he was setting up a shot. Ford asked him how he would like to do it, and the man explained it to him. Ford very obligingly made the changes, shot the scene that way, and then asked if it was satisfactory. When he heard that it was, he took the film magazine off the camera, and handed it to the associate producer with the words, "Here's your scene. Now I will shoot it my way."

It is quite possible that the days for that sort of thing have passed. Ford still shoots very economically, giving his editor very little room for decision, or alternatives. Thus when he told me that perhaps he would shoot *Captain Buffalo* in such a way that it could be cut only one way, he was not really saying anything new, although he seemed once again to want to give that impression.

He seemed less optimistic about the ultimate benevolence of producers than Billy Wilder, but said that in fact all that happened to *Horse Soldiers* after he left it was that some of the humor was cut. All the other changes had been made earlier, including the all-important one of lowering the age of the Southern lady, who is taken along as hostage, from 60 down to something much more romantic. The love story was completely manufactured. The studio publicity sheet, as is often the case, tells the whole story. "In order that *The Horse Soldiers* would prove great entertainment and not just a history lesson filmed in color and wide screen, screen writers John Lee Mahin and Martin Rackin, also the producers, used much of the background of the book (by Harold Sinclair) for research material, but only five pages of the novel as the jumping-off place for the screen story." And of course they jumped far and true.

Nevertheless there are scenes in the film,

John Ford's THE HORSE SOLDIERS.

principally of large groups of men on the move, which have enough of Ford's original zest to suggest that he is not entirely right to think of himself as a past enthusiast.

When he had finished with me, rather than vice versa (the half cigar he had cut off for me anyway was almost gone), he said with *some* apology in his voice, "Now we'll have to see about raping that girl." The girl in question came wafting in, fresh and eager. I seemed to have seen her in several of Ford's pictures, but since she was a newcomer, I must have been mistaken. If it had not been for something else Ford had let slip during our conversation, I might have questioned him further about the raping in *Captain Buffalo.* I had asked him what he thought of the present market for films. "Hollywood today," he said, "is a market for sex and horror. I don't want any part of that."

What do we have thus far? Two of the leading directors in Hollywood, one claiming more active control of his pictures than the other, but each, whatever else they have done in the past, concentrating now on interesting, entertaining stories. Quite apart from the fact that he has had a most varied career, also influenced by Lubitsch, Lewis Milestone has primarily the reputation of pursuing his personal point of view throughout a series of films—more specifically a point of view toward war, through films like *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1950), *A Walk in the Sun* (1945), and more recently *Pork Chop Hill* (1958). There are two things wrong with this account. First, it does not give sufficient attention to Milestone's earlier reputation as a comedy director (*Two Arabian Knights,* 1927–28), and it passes over films like *Front Page* (1931) and *Of Mice and Men* (1939) which at least have been important to Milestone himself. Second, the account is contradicted by Milestone, although, as we shall see, there might, in turn, be reason to qualify his disavowal.

Milestone came to the United States in 1914, from Russia. He has been working in Hollywood since 1917, and until he became an editor in 1920 (under W. A. Seidi), he worked in all phases of film. He collaborated on several scripts, like Wilder, not feeling confident enough in his English. His first film as a director was *Seven Sinners* which he made for Warner Brothers in 1925; the screenplay was by Darryl Zanuck. His success with *Two Arabian Knights,* made in 1927–28 for Howard Hughes, earned him the right to make *All Quiet* in 1930 for Universal. It was his sixth picture. After that he made a series of dramas, *Front Page* (1931), *Rain* (1932), *Hallelujah, I'm a Bum* (1933), and then a number of lesser ones. A full story of Milestone's career would have several apparent rises and declines to explain. Films made in the middle and late 'thirties seem to have much less of the stature of the films (above) which preceded them, or of others like *Of Mice and Men* and *Red Pony* (1949) which followed them. He had to survive the rigors of *Purple Heart* (1944) before making his World War II epic *A Walk in the Sun* (1945), and it was not until last year that he made the film of the Korean war, *Pork*

Gritty realism: Milestone's PORK CHOP HILL.

Chop Hill. It does an audience little harm to wait for a good film, and the director may need the time to let his ideas of his subject settle down sufficiently before he can find a vehicle for their expression. But again we run into two details which do not fit so tidy an explanation. For three years after completing *Les Miserables* Milestone worked outside the United States (1952–55). He made two films in England, *They Who Dare* for Aubrey Baring (who later co-produced *The Key* with Carl Foreman) and *Melba* for Sam Spiegel. Later he directed an American-Italian co-production *The Widow.* On his return to the United States he worked in television (including two films for *Have Gun Will Travel* and two for *Schlitz Playhouse*). He spent a year with Kirk Douglas on preparation for a film of *King Kelly,* a story of the rise and fall of a dictator, but this fell through. Then came *Pork Chop Hill,* which finished shooting in August of 1958.

The second detail is Milestone's disavowal. He has repeatedly been asked by critics if, in his war films, he has been working out a personal attitude to war, and he has repeatedly said that he is not. He prefers to say that he "responds" to the books which come his way, and which he has the opportunity to film.

Whatever we make of this statement by Milestone, and he has said it so frequently that perhaps it ought to be accepted, it is not necessary to conclude from it that Milestone fails to bring a point of view to his productions. He has not seen any action on the line himself, but this does not prevent him from sympathizing with the line soldier. And in *Pork Chop Hill,* as we shall see, his point of view carried him farther than sympathy.

The screenplay by James Webb was taken from about forty or fifty pages of a book by S. L. A. Marshall, an army historian and operations analyst, who was also a news-

paper reporter. It simplifies the confusion of several months during which the Chinese troops partially overran Pork Chop Hill, and the Americans battled to recover it and subsequently to hold it.

Marshall was sent to Korea in 1953 to analyze the United Nations infantry line and its methods under pressure, to estimate whether the troops were good or bad, to see what was wrong or right in their tactics and to recommend such corrections as were indicated. Surprisingly enough this task of overseeing met with coöperation in the field. Not always able to observe the action directly, however, Marshall would have the men and officers assembled as soon as possible after a battle and get from these survivors the story of what happened. Since the natural propensity to be a hero after the event must be latent in most soldiers, it is surprising how often men and officers appear in a bad light. Lt. Joe Clemons, hero of the film, is not nearly so heroic in the book. Although he never did anything foolish when under fire, his command of King Company during its counterattack on Pork Chop Hill and during its efforts to maintain its position, was much less than impeccable. His repeated failure to report the extent of his losses (he was at the end down to about 15 men, out of 170), contributed to the higher command's ignorance of the seriousness of his position. Clemons in the film is made much more efficient, although no more fortunate. And the failure to reinforce King Company when it is needed is laid at the door of some higher officers. This, although an interesting change, is not a surprising one. The Clemons who is left is now sufficiently attractive for a male star of Gregory Peck's prominence.

This was Peck's first picture as a full-fledged, man-behind-the-scenes producer. The version which was released was the version he preferred. I regret not having seen the film at its first preview, in the form in which Milestone left it, but I have been able to piece together some of the differences. The film, in its present form, makes some use of scenes of the truce talks at Panmunjom, an ironic and tragic background for the fighting on the Hill, less than seventy miles away. But much more of this cross-cutting was in the earlier version.

It was not the aim of the film to do the job of recording the battle. Milestone appears to have been intrigued by something to which Marshall makes only passing reference. The battle being fought was as bloody and as difficult as any in the Korean campaign. And dramatically, dialectically, it was the most absurd. Seventy miles away, truce talks were in progress, which soon would decide where and when to end the war. The film brings these talks and the battle closer together in time. Although in fact three months passed before the Americans gave Pork Chop Hill back to the Chinese, "feeling it was no longer worth the price of a squad or a man," Milestone wished to make a sharper, more general point, than that made in the book, or in the film as it is now being seen. At present the film ends with Clemons leading his survivors down the hill in a series of long slow shots, through the subsiding smoke of battle, and we are reminded of the earlier stages when their direction had been up the hill against the enemy's guns. Over this is cast the voice of Clemons. "So Pork Chop Hill was held, bought, and paid for at the same price we commemorate in monuments at Bunker Hill and Gettysburg. Yet you will find no monuments on Pork Chop. Victory is a fragile thing and history does not linger long in our time. But those who fought there, know what they did . . . and the meaning of it. Millions live in freedom today because of

what they did."

Quite apart from wondering what the third sentence means, we have no conviction at all that the *last* sentence has been proven. It seemed when I saw the film to have been tacked on as a last desperate attempt to give some final (and acceptably "patriotic") point to the undertaking. (In fact, it appears, it *was* added.) What the rest of the film has tried to say is that the hill was useful to both sides as a bargaining point in the truce talks, permitting whoever had it to speak from a position of comparative strength. But this is hardly saving millions from a fate worse than death.

Milestone wished to have an additional sequence, which would add to the irony of a more continued cross-reference between Panmunjom and the hill, not simply ending on the achievement of a band of men, but with the statement that their achievement in the end was not merely heroic. In this version, four days after the men walk down the hill, the truce talks would end. The hill is neutralized, given the status of a no man's land. Low fog and smoke blow across the deserted, abandoned battlefield. "The men who fought there know what they did, and the meaning of it."

This ending would have had very much more force than the existing one, and since the material which preceded it would have supported such a conclusion, it would have given point and substance to a film which for all its gritty, shell-shot realism lacks final conviction.

When talking of this one night last year with Rouben Mamoulian, Mamoulian reminded Milestone of the scene in *Hamlet* (Act IV, scene 4) in which Hamlet asks a captain in the service of Fortinbras the purpose of their army's march.

Capt.: We go to gain a little patch of ground
That hath in it no profit but the name.
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it;
Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.
Ham.: Why, then the Polack never will defend it.
Capt.: Yes, it is already garrisoned.

Milestone had in mind to do no more, and yet no less, than show a latter-day example of this seeming absurdity.

The film seems to have suffered in several other ways since the first preview. Material near the beginning of the film has been eliminated in order to get more quickly to the character of Clemons, sometimes with very unsatisfactory results. And throughout, subsidiary character is pared beyond the bone, so that we get an impression from time to time of a one-man army. As someone commented, it begins to get too close to Errol Flynn's single-handed victory in the Burma campaign. This must in the end have proven somewhat embarrassing to the technical advisor on the film, Capt. (formerly Lt.) Joseph G. Clemons, even if it did not embarrass Peck. We can assume, I think, that it embarrasses Milestone.

In fairness to Peck and his advisors, many of the values they excluded from the final version have nevertheless been read into it by some critics. Milestone himself is surprised at the film's reception. And since the film is finding an audience, Peck must feel himself doubly exonerated. But the fact remains that what is left is in many places muddled, inconclusive, and centered too carefully on one man.

Milestone is due to begin his next picture in January of 1960. "The present title of the work is *And the Angels Sing* (formerly *Ocean's Eleven*), based on an original story written by an assistant director and a garage mechanic, who had the plot and all the details. It is the story of eleven men, all ex-

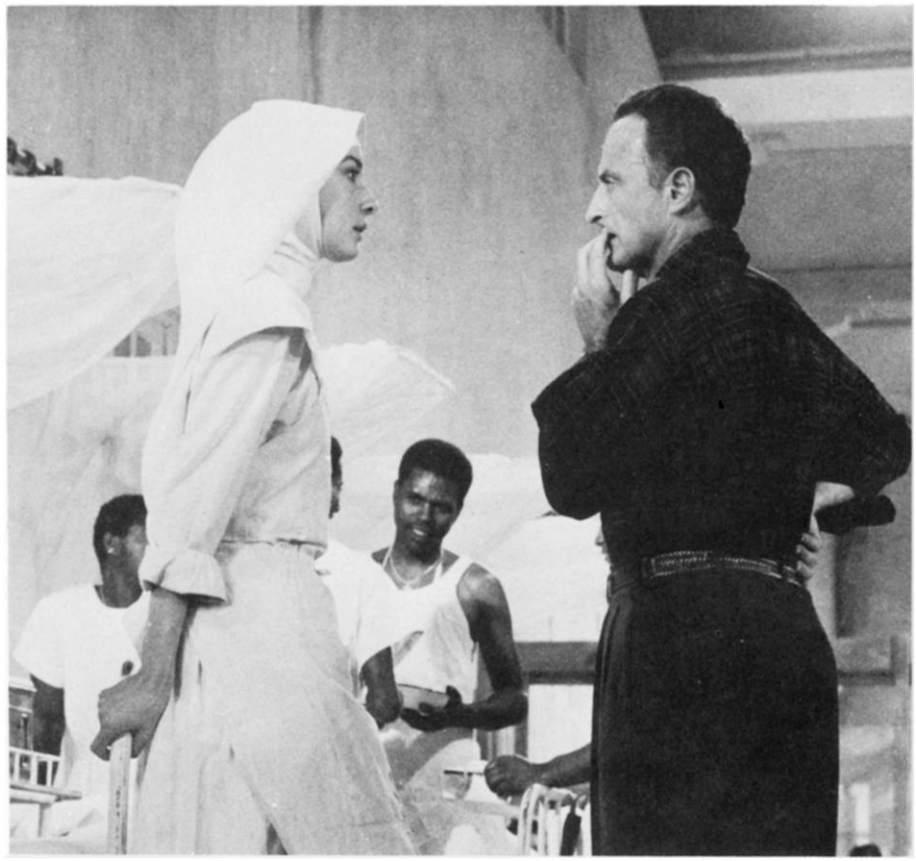
soldiers, who hold up five casinos in Las Vegas, planning and executing the job like a military operation—something like *A Company of Gentlemen*, an English story, in which a group of officers rob a bank. The problem every one of these films has to face is the resolution. After the successful achievement of the objective, Crime Must Not Pay, the criminals must get their desserts, and while we are meting these out, the drama goes downhill. We hope to avoid this by concentrating more on the personal drama at the end." When I asked Milestone what picture he would wish to make if there were no restrictions, he named William Bradford Huie's *The Execution of Private Slovak.*

Milestone's visual and dramatic style has drawn considerable comment over the years, but what impressed me most in our conversation was his insistence on adequate dramatization of his material, and his interest in finding an economical, cinematic way to give visual expression to this material. He referred to a sequence from an early Chaplin short, *The Pilgrim* (1922), which he has long considered a classic example of imaginative screen economy. "At the opening of the picture, a prisoner escapes from jail, causing great confusion. He comes across a parson swimming in a river, steals his clothes and is thus able to make his escape unnoticed by the prison guards who are out looking for him. I sometimes ask new writers to draft a shooting script for this sequence. One man went up to 25 pages, but Chaplin did it in three shots. In the first we see from a high angle a prison yard, the men walking around in an orderly fashion. In the foreground is a large steam whistle. Without warning the whistle begins to blow. We see pandemonium in the courtyard, and then the scene is obscured by the steam from the whistle. In the second shot, we are on the shore side of a bush, by the river bank. A man appears on the other side of the bush, from the river. He is without clothes, and dripping wet. He reaches through the bushes, presumably for his clothes, but instead lifts up into the frame a prisoner's garb. His face shows his horror. In the third shot, we see Chaplin, grotesquely ill-fitted, walk down the road in a minister's attire, past the guards, who look the other way. I mentioned this to Chaplin one day, but he did not remember the scene. He had to get the film out again to be convinced that he had done it just that way. But this, I think, is the kind of screen structure we should always be looking for."

In the end, among this present group of directors, it is probably only Fred Zinnemann who is using the control he can exercise over his pictures consistently to make films which he personally feels deeply and to make them in the way he wants. *Oklahoma!* is the only possible exception, but Zinnemann does not consider that film to have been a success. He seems to have *enjoyed* doing it, since the field of the musical was completely new to him, but he has certainly seemed much more at home with everything else he has tackled. And there has been evidence that certain conditions are necessary to him, otherwise a continuing relationship with a project will become impossible. He was dissatisfied with the progress (or perhaps lack of it) of *Old Man and the Sea*, and left the production. It is perhaps certain that with his departure went the last chance of the film's success. John Sturges, strong dramatist that he is, in turn had no more of the native flair for Hemingway's quiet tale than perhaps Zinnemann had for the brash, robust Rogers and Hammerstein book for *Oklahoma!*

It is since the success of *High Noon* (1952)

that Zinnemann has had the control that he needed to make his own pictures. Since that time he has made *Member of the Wedding* (1952) from Carson McCullers play, *From Here to Eternity* (1953) from James Jones' war novel and Daniel Taradash's brilliant script, *Oklahoma!* (1955), *Hatful of Rain* (1957) from the play by Michael Gazzo, and *The Nun's Story* (1959) from the book by Kathryn Hulme, with screenplay by Robert Anderson. Each of these subjects he has taken seriously and personally. Whatever else we might wish to say of *The Nun's Story*, it shows remarkable feeling for Catholic emotion and spirit in a Protestant. It is his temperament for affixing himself to an idea of a character derived from the character itself which is most notable in Zinnemann's work, and which I first discovered in his earlier war film *Teresa* (1951). For some reason I was unconvinced by his story of the paraplegics, *The Men* (1950), made for Stanley Kramer, with Marlon Brando in the lead role. But his handling of Montgomery Clift in *The Search* (1948) and some years later in *From Here to Eternity* carried conviction and certainty, qualities which he seemed to have been able to transmit to his cast. Working in *High Noon* with old faithful two-expression Gary Cooper (hat on, and hat off) he, and in this case also his editor Elmo Williams, succeeded in bringing together the elements of Cooper's performance, of the subsidiary characters, and of the mise en scène which could most adequately present the quandary of a man iso-



Audrey Hepburn and Fred Zinnemann at work on THE NUN'S STORY.

lated at the time of his greatest need.

This same concentration on character, and sympathy with it, and in addition his long-evidenced treatment of the camera as a means of getting close to both character and scene, are shown again to good advantage in *The Nun's Story*. He told me he came away from his experience of directing Audrey Hepburn full of respect for her ability. We must, in our turn, be impressed by the performance he has elicited, and by the manner in which he has staged it.

Perhaps, however, Zinnemann's concern with characterization has sometimes been at the expense of the over-all drama of his stories. There was something very arbitrary about the successful resolution of *The Search*; we were not sufficiently prepared for the happy ending, however much we may have been made to want it. And indeed in *The Nun's Story* we are not always certain *why* Gabrielle Van Der Mal became a nun, so that by the end of the picture, when her doubts lead her to resign her order, we are not quite certain why she is leaving the convent. The present form of the picture runs the risk, I think, of making us accept Gabrielle as a willing but not a born nun, so that when the war turns her into someone seeking vengeance we are a little taken by surprise. We have, against the odds, become accustomed to thinking of her as a nun, and we are surprised that she has not. Knowing that the present version of 149 minutes is considerably shorter than the first cut which was previewed several months ago in San Francisco, I asked Zinnemann what had been cut out.

"In all, about 47 minutes of film were cut, most of it however from the first part of the film, and most of this from the scenes of the girls' training. We found, simply, that it was too long, and that we were losing our audience. There was also, in the earlier version, a scene between Gabrielle and her father, in a restaurant, in which her father gives her a last treat. This would have gone some of the way towards satisfying your objection, but we felt that we did not need it. When the time comes, war turns Sister Luke away from the convent, and we thought that that would be enough." When Sister Luke hears that her father has been machine-gunned by the Germans she goes to confession. "Father, I no longer belong in a convent. I wear the cross of Christ above a heart filled with hate for our enemies." It may be unreasonable to want any more than that.

Certainly, the opening hour or so, covering the girls' entrance into the convent, their acceptance after five days into the Congregation of Postulants, and their taking of the final vows, constitutes one of the most moving and engrossing hours in the contemporary cinema. One after another, stark, unrelenting demands are made of the Postulants. Just when we think that they have been asked to take the last step away from the ordinary thoughtless hedonisms of their former lives, a sister will remark with devastating simplicity that "of course one sister will not touch another." They will not converse in groups, they will not form attachments, they will walk with humility away from the center of a path or corridor, they will confess all sins publicly and suffer the punishment of self-effacement. Throughout all this, in a manner which is taken for granted rather than explained, the Mother Superior and the image of Christ remain unyielding sources of authority. The settings are always magnificent, the white gowns of the initiates beautiful against the browns and grays of the convent. The face of the watching nun as Sister Luke's hair is shorn appears impassive, but the woman beside me in the theater wept openly. A lesser director would have made more use of Gabrielle's family,

HIGH NOON.

watching as it were, from the wing, tears running down cheeks, hands gripping tightly around moistened handkerchiefs. It could have been terrible. As it is, since there is so little emotion on the screen, something has to give in the audience. And finally when Zinnemann does cut to the family, our attention is drawn by the face of Gabrielle's younger sister, not weeping, not envious, but if anything sullen, disapproving. "You are only an instrument," sums up the officiating priest, "you are nothing in yourself."

In preparation for the film, Zinnemann spent time in convents. At one, he was received courteously but shown nothing of what he actually wanted to see, being taken instead to the machine shop. "However," he recalled, "on a second visit they permitted me to observe a dress rehearsal for the ceremony of initiation. I had not asked to see this, or to see anything specific, since this is not done. (Gabrielle had to learn this lesson also.) But I had explained in general why I was there, and when they were ready they showed me what they could."

Zinnemann thought that it was odd that except in *Film Quarterly*, the reviews of his film had failed to mention the contribution of the art director Alexander Trauner. "To have his work taken for granted is probably the greatest praise," said Zinnemann, "but it is odd nevertheless."

This, with *High Noon*, is Zinnemann's favorite film. He spent two years on it and was still, when I talked with him (in July), partially involved, working on the task of taking the film to the public. This he considers to be an essential part of a director's task, and partially explains the difference in attitude between Zinnemann and the other men with whom I talked. "We are a little concerned about the teen-age market for the film," Zinnemann explained, "although a friend has suggested that for this market we might change the title to *I Kicked My Habit*."

His next work, for which he has already been scouting locations in Australia will be John Cleary's *The Sundowners*, with a screenplay by Isobel Lennart.

Of the remaining directors mentioned at the beginning of this article—Stevens, Wyler, and Kramer—I can say little here, since I have had no opportunity to talk with them. After an unpromising start in directing (*Not as a Stranger*, 1955, and *Pride and the Passion*, 1957) Kramer is showing a new stylistic authority. He has returned to important social issues with two admirably intrepid films, *The Defiant Ones*, on race relations, and *On the Beach*, about nuclear warfare (to be released in December).

George Stevens, after *The Diary of Anne Frank*, is scheduled to make *The Greatest Story Ever Told*; his experience with *Anne Frank* may encourage him to use a somewhat more oblique approach than he did before.

William Wyler, a man admired by other film-makers of the stature of Wilder and Milestone (and also, it seems, by the Japanese director Yoshimura), has recently turned his attention to large subjects which fill the biggest screens available to him; his *Ben Hur* is on 65 mm film.

But further details on these men must await another issue.

DONALD RICHIE

The Later Films of Yasujiro Ozu

The Japanese—film critic and paying customer alike—think Yasujiro Ozu the most Japanese of all directors. This does not mean that he is their favorite, though he has been given more official honor than any other; it means that he is regarded as a kind of spokesman; the man-on-the-street will tell you that "he has the real Japanese flavor."

This "Japanese flavor" has a much more definite meaning than say "the American way" or "the French touch" if only because Japan is so intensely conscious of its own Japaneseness. Modern civilization is only one hundred years old and serves as a mere veneer over a civilization which has endured for two millenniums.

This has created the familiar contrasts of the country, has given the Japanese his often near-schizoid intensity, and has made him extremely conscious of his differences from the Westerner. These—after a certain period of exploration—he tends to guard. The careers of many men of letters, and some not so lettered—politicians, for example—show the familiar pattern of the parabola: a period of early exploration among things Western followed by a slow and gradual return to things purely Japanese.

The career of Ozu has followed this pattern, and indeed this pattern is one of the things celebrated in the Ozu film; its tension is obtained by the confrontation of various individuals who are in different sections of the pattern: by confronting, for example, a father who has "returned" with his daughter who is just on her "way out." And there is never much doubt as to just whom Ozu is for. It is for this reason that many of the young dislike his work, calling him old-fashioned and reactionary. And so he would appear, since he so continually celebrates those very qualities against which young Japan is constantly in revolt: the traditional virtues of Japan.

That these virtues are mainly theoretical in no way falsifies Ozu's position; though everyday Japan is not a country noted for restraint, simplicity, or near-Buddhist serenity, these qualities remain ideals, and Ozu's insistence upon them and the public feeling for or against them make them more than empty hypotheses.

Take, for example, the quality of restraint. In a strictly technical sense, Ozu films are probably the most restrained now being made—the most limited, controlled, and restricted.

He uses, for example, only one kind of shot. It is always a shot taken from the level of a person seated in traditional fashion on *tatami*. Whether indoors or out, the Ozu camera is always about three feet from floor level, and the camera almost never moves. There are no pan shots and, except in the rarest of instances, no dollies.

This traditional view is the view in repose, commanding a very limited field of vision. It is the attitude for watching, for listening, it is the position from which one sees the Noh, from which one partakes of the tea ceremony. It is the aesthetic attitude; it is the passive attitude.

It is the attitude of the *haiku* master who sits in utter silence and with an occasionally painful accuracy observes cause and effect, reaching essence through an extreme

simplification. Inextricable from Buddhist precepts, its puts the world at a distance and leaves the spectator uninvolved; a mere recorder of impressions which he may register but which do not personally involve him. Ozu's camera is Leonardo's mirror in the Orient.

Most Ozu films begin with a short sequence which introduces and reënforces this impression. *Late Spring* (Banshun, 1949) opens with a short scene inside a home in Kamakura—thirteenth-century capital of Japan and scene of the beginning of what we now know as the Japanese way. Nothing happens, no one is visible. The shadows of the bamboo move against the *shoji*; the tea kettle is boiling, the steam escaping. It is a scene of utter repose; there is no subject, no theme, unless it be the gratefulness of silence and repose. This quality having been established, one of the characters enters and the film begins.

Empty rooms, uninhabited landscapes, objects (rocks, trees, tea kettles), textures (shadows on *shoji*, the grain of *tatami*, rain dripping), play a large part in Ozu's world, and the extreme simplicity of this view is matched by a like simplicity of construction once the film has begun.

Ozu abstentiously refrains from cinematic punctuation which many other directors would think indispensable. As early as 1930 he had begun to give up optical devices commonly thought of as being necessary. He says that his silent *Life of an Office Worker* (Kaishain Seikatsu, 1930) "was a rare film for me—I used several dissolves. But this was the only time I ever did. I wanted to get the feeling of a morning beginning. The dissolve is a handy thing, but

Ozu and his favorite camera position.

Top: Ozu directing TOKYO STORY, *with Chieko Higashiyama and Chishu Ryu. Bottom: the finished scene.*

it's uninteresting. Of course, it all depends on how you use it. Most of the time it's a form of cheating." Several years later he was limiting himself even more severely, if as yet only on the technical level. In *I Was Born But . . .* (Umarete wa Mita Keredo, 1932) "for the first time, I consciously gave up the use of the fade-in and fade-out. Generally, dissolves and fades are not a part of cinematic grammar. They are only attributes of the camera."

This restriction is further reflected in Ozu's manner of setting a scene, or indicating a setting. *A Hen in the Wind* (Kaze no Naka no Mendori, 1948) is laid almost entirely in an industrial suburb. To indicate this, and to communicate the atmosphere of the locale, Ozu contents himself with a single image: a large gas tank seen from a distance; in conjunction, a river bank. These two indications are all he needs and he returns from time to time to refresh our memories.

Also he will again and again use precisely the same camera set-up to preface a sequence in series. In *Early Spring* (Soshun, 1956) scene after scene begins with early morning in the suburbs. Each of these morning scenes begins with a shot from outside the house: the early morning express visible in the distance, the neighbor's wife empyting her garbage. The same footage is not used, but the shots are so similar that the effect is the same. Ozu wanted to capture the eternal sameness of life in the city and succeeded admirably.

This abstentious rigor, this concern for brevity and economy, this aspiring to the ultimate in limitation, is also naturally reflected in Ozu's choice of story material. Except for his very early films (before he had achieved the eminence necessary for control of the content of his pictures) his subject is always the same: it is the Japanese family.

His later and best films are about nothing else. In all these films the whole world exists in one family. The ends of the earth are no more distant than outside the house. The people are members of a family rather than members of a society, though the family may be in disruption, as in *Tokyo Story* (Tokyo Monogatari, 1953), may be nearly extinct, as in *Late Spring* or *Tokyo Twilight* (Tokyo Boshoku, 1957), or may be a kind of family substitute, the small group in a large company, as in *Early Spring*.

It is for this reason that Ozu but rarely treats romantic love. He himself has said, "I have no interest in romantic love," and has proved this statement in his films. One of his few postwar failures, *The Munekata Sisters* (Munekata Shimai, 1950), occurred when the producing company insisted upon including romantic love interest. His only real interest in the various forms of love is in those which exist between members of the family, and he is successful with romantic love only when it finds an outlet in the form of family love, as between man and wife.

As a creator of the Japanese home drama at its best, he is much more interested in the leisurely disclosure of character and incidental incident than in action or plot, and has said: "Pictures with obvious plots bore me now. Naturally, a film must have some kind of structure, or else it is not a film, but I feel that a picture isn't good if it has too much drama." Thus, in *Late Spring* the interest is in the relations between a father and daughter, and in their varying reactions to her coming marriage. In *The Flavor of Green Tea and Rice* (Ochazuke no Aji, 1952) is shown a married couple who have no children to hold them together; in at-

tempting to find a stronger basis for their marriage they find each other again. In *Tokyo Story*, Ozu examines the relations between three generations; in *Equinox Flower* (Higanbana, 1958), the effect of a broken home upon two generations.

In the 1959 *Ohayo* (Good Morning), his forty-ninth film, Ozu returned to light comedy and the world of children. Taking one of the ideas in the 1932 *I Was Born But . . .* (the two children, displeased with their father, go on a "silence" strike), Ozu created his most cheerful work, an endearing yet completely unsentimental comedy of Japanese manners.

The two little boys, angry that their father won't buy them television, refuse to answer the next door neighbor lady when she says good morning. Ordinarily, their silence would have had no meaning but, for one thing, the families are living cheek by jowl in a new housing settlement, and—for another—the neighbor lady has just had words with the little boys' mother. Eventually all the other neighbor ladies (and there are many) are involved.

The little boys (told to shut up by their father and taking it literally) refuse to speak, even in school, but this is not their entire motivation. Earlier they had found such remarks as "good morning" and "nice weather" and "how do you do" absolutely meaningless and agreed not to use them any more. As a kind of substitute for speech there is a game (which later gets out of hand) involving breaking wind. This is the most elaborate running-gag in the film and Ozu keeps it amusing. One even finds amusing the little boy who, anxious to enter into the game, tries too hard.

Unlike *I Was Born But . . .*, however, *Ohayo* was no indictment of society; it is merely a slightly satirical diversion and, though quite amusing by itself, important mainly in that here Ozu has brought together a number of the elements which constitute his view of the world.

Despite his lack of interest in plot (and because of his interest in character) Ozu feels that the script is of the utmost importance, and it is also the single element of the film which gives him the most trouble. This accounts for his relatively small output, forty-nine pictures since 1927—his later work appearing at the rate of about one film a year.

"Write and correct, write and correct. In this way only can you make progress," he has written, adding "In making films, the most difficult job is in writing the script. It is impossible to write a script unless one knows who is going to act in it, just as a painter cannot paint if he does not know the color of his paints. Name stars have never been of special interest to me. What is important is the character of the actors. In casting it is not a matter of skillfulness or lack of skill that an actor has. It is what he is . . ."

Despite the fact that he was the last important director to convert to talkies, and

OHAYO: *Masahiko Shimazu, Chishu Ryu, Koji Shida, Kuniko Miyake*

Ozu shooting LATE SPRING. *Father (Chishu Ryu) and daughter (Setsuko Hara) at Kamakura.*

did so most reluctantly at that, the dialogue in Ozu's films is the most interesting in Japanese films. Its strength is the complete naturalness which it achieves without attempting naturalism. Ozu's characters always say what is appropriate to the situation, as if their conversation were stolen directly from life. It could not have been better phrased by anyone and yet the art with which it is said has no suggestion of the "artistic." In fact, many critics judge it by the standards usually reserved for the most serious literature.

Both dialogue and script are a result of Ozu's long-standing collaboration with Kogo Noda, another perfectionist. In practice, Ozu says, "When a writer and director work together things won't come out very well if their physical constitutions are not similar. If one likes to stay up late and the other to go to bed early, a balance can't be struck, and they'll both tire. With Noda and me, we see alike on drinking and staying up and I think this is a most important matter. On the scenarios we do, of course, the dialogue is written by both of us. Although we don't write down the details of the sets, they are in our minds as one common image. We think alike. It is an amazing thing."

Ozu's attitude toward the films has always been that of a perfectionist, and in everything that he does in films, the parts fit so perfectly that one is never conscious of the virtuosity with which it is done. His pictures are so subtle—the precise opposite, in this sense, of Kurosawa's—that one never thinks to praise the skill with which his effects are achieved.

Some of Ozu's most memorable effects are those most apparently simple. In *Late Spring* there is a remarkable sequence, about three minutes long, where Setsuko Hara and Chishu Ryu, as daughter and father, watch a Noh performance. They do not move; neither does the camera; and the scene is intensely affecting, simply because of the carefully

contrived context surrounding it. At the other extreme there is an uproariously funny scene in *Early Spring* where the office workers are playing *mah-jongg* and where the humor consists entirely in what is being said (usually in complete contrast to the facial expressions of the actors) and the way in which it is delivered: it is like a ballet, with the sentences moving. A preordained pattern has been placed upon the dialogue yet, at the same time, what the characters are saying is utterly natural, and because of the way they say it, extremely funny.

The end effect of an Ozu film—and one of the reasons why he is thought of as spokesman—is a kind of resigned sadness, a calm and knowing serenity which prevails despite the uncertainty of life and the things of this world. It is an attribute of the good Buddhist who looks at the world from a distance and is uninvolved. The Japanese call this quality, which is essentially the traditional Japanese aesthetic spirit, *mono no aware*, for which Tamako Niwa has given the inspired translation: "sympathetic sadness."

One usually sees the effect upon the father, though the other members of the family are certainly not immune to it. Still, Japan is a patriarchy (and Ozu always put himself into his own films) and it is the father we remember longest because his realization of *mono no aware* usually forms the coda and conclusion of an Ozu film.

In *Tokyo Story*, after the wife has died and the children left, the father bids farewell to the daughter-in-law (the only member of the family who was at all nice to the older people) and then, slowly, turns around and enters the empty house. In *Tokyo Twilight* there is a long final scene in which the father, alone in the house, his daughter dead, his wife gone, sits and looks straight ahead of him. In *Equinox Flower* there is a lovely final scene where the father, in the train, is going to make up with his daughter, who has married without his permission. He is happy, he hums a song and looks out of the window and the sense of *mono no aware* never hit the spectator harder. Finally—and perhaps the best of these sad apotheoses of the father—is the final scene of *Late Spring*. The daughter has gone, finally married, and the father is left alone. In the final scene, he takes a pear from the table and begins to peel it. There is a close-up of his hands performing this simple duty while he, almost unknowing, looks straight ahead, then down to the business at hand.

Critics have often pointed out that this final figure is actually Ozu himself; that he, like his heroes, is a man who delights in Japanese arts, is a connoisseur of them, and who adores the simplicities of life. They maintain that it is Ozu himself who is the father in *Late Spring*, the old man in *Early Summer* (Bakushu, 1951), the bereft father (Ozu is unmarried) in *Tokyo Twilight*.

Whatever value these observations may have, they do point to an origin for all the

A script reading during shooting of TOKYO TWILIGHT. *Ineko Arima, Setsuko Hara, Ozu.*

later Ozu films. They are much influenced by a literary form called the *shishosettsu*, the semi-autobiographical novel, and by the work of Naoya Shiga, a man specializing in this form. (Though this form is exceedingly prevalent in Japan, many critics foreign and otherwise have singled out the *shishosettsu* as the single thing most wrong with Japanese literature.) These works, and particularly the work of Shiga, have what the critic Taihei Imamura has called "a Japanese attitude in that the observer tries to recall a phenomenon instead of analytically reconstructing it."

This very Japaneseness of Ozu's approach, intuitive rather than analytic, the emphasis upon effect rather than cause, emotive rather than intellectual, is what—coupled with his marvelous metamorphosis of the Japanese aesthetic into images visible on film—makes him the most Japanese of all directors.

Yet, oddly, this has had the effect of keeping his films off the international market, the Japanese themselves being afraid that his excellence will not be recognized. And in true Japanese fashion, they prefer not to try rather than to fail. Despite the success of *Tokyo Story* in Los Angeles and London, and of *Tokyo Twilight* in New York, they have, until recently, preferred to ignore it, one of the canons of the Japanese business world being that the West cannot hope to appreciate anything "truly Japanese," which is—of course—merely another facet of the country's extreme consciousness of its own special Japanese quality.

However, since the outstanding success in Japan of both *Equinox Flower* and *Good Morning* there have been signs of Japanese interest in letting the films of Yasujiro Ozu be shown abroad. And this is as it should be. He is one of the few senior directors of Japan to remain unknown while others of his generation—Gosho and Mizoguchi—have achieved foreign acclaim.

New Periodicals

Studies in Public Communication, available from the Department of Sociology, University of Chicago, Chicago 37, Illinois ($1.00), has joined the *Public Opinion Quarterly* as a journal dealing with the mass media from a social-science standpoint. In the current (second) issue, the editor notes the potentialities of such studies. Although the contents of the issue suffer from the intolerably dull writing almost universal among social scientists, they have many important implications. Kenneth P. Adler, in the only article specifically related to film, reports a comparative study of the patrons of a conventional theater and an art house in Chicago, with useful suggestions for any theater manager considering changing to an art-house policy—a change that has become encouragingly common in certain types of communities.

FREDERICK M. WIRT

To See or Not to See: The Case Against Censorship

Films have been censored in the United States, as in other countries, for many years. Recently, however, censorship statutes have proved increasingly unenforceable in court, as well as increasingly unpopular. In this article we present the principled case for abolishing censorship entirely.

Since the U.S. Supreme Court decision on *The Miracle* in 1952, film censorship has been under constant attack. Censorites have redefined their legislative standards under judicial pressure, but in the *Lady Chatterley's Lover* decision this June, the high court overthrew even these new terms as applied to "immorality."

Because films in our country are usually regarded as "mere entertainment," not worthy of serious scrutiny, it seems odd that so much heat develops over film censorship. Yet an intense atmosphere of rage and fear does hover about those in the struggle. It may be sensed in the shrill, white-lipped courage of ladies speaking for the first time before committee hearings, in the loud alarms sounded by religious groups, and in the worried outcries of civil libertarians, both academic and judicial, against the encroachments of censorship. The issue, clearly, touches closer home than the actual social importance of the cinema would seem to justify. It does so, as we shall see, because attitudes toward censorship are inevitably linked with attitudes toward morality and social change, and because the cinema, being enjoyable, is suspected of the diabolical powers our Puritan streak has always attributed to things pleasurable.

Before approaching the current battleline, let us examine censorship briefly in the general perspective of history and social change. Historically, censorship has never worked except in short-run terms. Anne Haight's careful tabulation* reveals that most of the books we now consider great have been banned, from antiquity to our time, but their excellence has survived persecution; their effects, whatever they have been, have not been averted. There is little so futile as the censor of yesteryear, for what was yesteryear's anathema is today's delight or bore. I have known censors shamefacedly to mention how solemnly they struggled, in the 'twenties, to prevent films from showing women smoking or wearing suits which might indicate the inhabitant was female.

The battle sites for book censorship have drastically shifted over the ages—from blasphemy to sedition to sex, as Morris Ernst points out—reflecting shifts in our major concerns and fears. On the whole, censor activity well illustrates Santayana's remark that "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it," thus, unfortunately, also condemning to repeated opposition those who see the folly and danger of censorship.

The historical inefficacy of censorship in suppressing expression reflects its larger weakness—it cannot suppress social change. Organ-

* Anne Haight, *Banned Books.* (New York: R. R. Bowker Company, 1935.)

ized society always tries to control social change, of course, but little by little change does come. New technology, knowledge, opportunities, ideals—all take their effect. Necessarily, a lag arises between old and new, and with it a tension arising from the controllers' unwillingness to adapt.

The social function of censorship is to defend established morality and thereby to inhibit and frustrate this rhythm of change. Books, plays, paintings, and films are reflections of social attitudes, dramatizing conflicts in these attitudes when such exist. Social changes thus carry along with them their own recorders of the tension accompanying change. Censorship is the political weapon aimed at these recorders, as part of the battle against change; the artist whose works defend the powers-that-be is never the one censored. But, as change does come, and with it new ways of believing and acting, the censor never wins the war, although he may have his Bull Run victory. Whether the case is that of an Egyptian pharaoh's ban of a blasphemous papyrus suggesting that the sun is the center of our system or the British Lord Chancellor's ban of *Tea and Sympathy*, the course of battle is identical and the outcome inevitable. Thereby, the heresy of yesterday becomes the platitude of today—and fair game for future heresy.

If these broader perspectives challenge the utility of censorship, other factors question its compatibility with our democracy. I am convinced that on three grounds it stands condemned as an alien intruder in our society. It promotes irresponsible exercise of power through its vague standards; it brings the state too deeply into things which should be personally decided; and it blocks the free play of ideas so central to democracy.

The irresponsibility arises because standards of what is censorable are vague. States might successfully institute laws prohibiting films in which flesh is shown more than ten centimeters below the clavicle, or in which the hero's hands touched any other portion of the heroine than the arms or waist. But censorship statutes are never written in objective terms, because they are aimed at *attitudes* and *values*, not actions. Since censor laws never define precisely what is prohibited, the interpretation of the administering censor fills the empty generalities of the law with morality by fiat. The process is becoming increasingly unenforceable in law but many years and many legal struggles are always required to prove this.

Anna Magnani as the demented girl in THE MIRACLE, *which the New York City license commissioner found "personally and officially blasphemous."*

Censors have frankly admitted, to me and in publications, their subjectivity in operating. No other inference can be drawn from the fact that—as my statistical studies establish conclusively—different censors handle films in strikingly different manners. Censorship can thus be a reflection of the administrator's personal values, so much so as to be irrational; one former Ohio censor cut and banned Chaplin's films because of her personal dislike of the great comedian!

Such misuse of power is inherent in the whole business. Yet, democratic government means, at heart, checks on the irresponsible exercise of power, limits on the arbitrary. But, here, where the censor's own values are made his authority through loosely worded terms, where are the clear limits and how do we perceive transgressions of those limits?

A second offense to democracy arises from the intrusion of the state into personal matters of belief. Americans are normally sensitive to the government's exercise of powers over their lives, yet in film censorship the state prescribes the limits of allowable belief and morality. Ohio and New York banned *The Miracle* at the demand of a minority religious group arrogantly claiming a monopoly on communication with the deity; when censor boards yield to such religious pressures, the famous principle of separation of church and state is in jeopardy.

The Censor Mentality

The people are not the best judges of what is good for them. If they had been, censorship would never have been necessary. The people are not fit to judge for themselves. Statistics prove that only 10% of the people are thinking persons; 15% think part of the time, and 75% never think at all. The fact that certain very objectionable and disgusting pictures, barred from Ohio, are permitted to show in the states which do not have censorship proves the people are not the best judges. [*—Ohio censor, when challenged for deleting newsreel shots of Eugene V. Debs.*]

Another personal matter on which the state trespasses is parental training of children; the parent is assumed incompetent for that task. The censorite argues that, though "decent" people do well, there are many parents who give little time to their children's moral training, and so the state must act to protect the young. This is not only class snobbery, but a tacit admission that the church and school, as well as parent, are incompetent or inadequate. Tacitly, too, this approach is designed to ensure a smaller target (the censors) for those seeking to oppose social change; many film producers and far more parents are less easy to manipulate than a few officials open to the pressures of articulate morality groups.

Another intrusion of the state into personal matters is that nonartist amateurs are put in control of the artistic process, always a most private affair. Who should censor—if someone must? Educational degrees, as required in New York, are no guarantee of artistic sensitivity, perception, or talent. Even film artists would be of doubtful value because of varying artistic standards; would we really prefer a Cecil B. DeMille in charge of what we can see?

In practice, the actual background of operating censors is often astonishingly irrelevant to their supposed competence. Ohio's chief censor for over 30 years came to work fresh from a degree in home economics. Leslie Binford, the Memphis censor for decades (removable only by his recent death), was notoriously anti-Negro. Police chiefs, the censors in such big cities as Boston, Detroit, Chicago, and Washington, are trained in many things, but hardly for this. In short, because no one knows what constitutes a competent censor, any or none of these people are qualified. If, as a minimum, however, one would expect censors to know something about art, those in office are grotesquely unqualified.

The end result of employing such general license in personal matters is to create the third offense to democratic principles—an intolerable restriction on the free play of ideas. The state

William Holden, Maggie McNamara, and David Niven in THE MOON IS BLUE, *which received widespread and profitable distribution though it lacked the Code seal.*

declares that its citizens shall not contemplate *that* action illustrating *that* attitude, but they must be constricted to *this* action and attitude. A pernicious feaure of censorship is that the tactical alvantage always lies with those who would restrict variety. Prior restraint requires the *exhibitor* to demonstrate that his product is not dangerous; post restraint, such as criminal obscenity laws, require the *suppressor* to prove his case.

The evidence of such conformity is both direct and indirect. My analysis of what state censors have banned reveals very few proscriptions for political or economic reasons—contrary to the fears of civil libertarians. Police violence against striking miners in the 'twenties, *Birth of A Nation*, a pro-Republican film of the Spanish Civil War, anti-Negro statements in postwar racial films, the Stalinist *Salt of The Earth* recently—that is about it. Russian films, widely shown in the 'twenties, were kept from the screen in our time not by censorship but through a combination of public aversion and informal pressure upon exhibitors. The lack of censor activity in this area, however, is less attributable to any reluctance on their part than it is to the absence of politically controversial films from our screens. One of the more intriguing findings of the recent Fund of the Republic study of blacklisting in the movies was that American-made films rarely contained Communist propaganda, even when worked on by the Hollywood Ten.*

The real danger lies in the anticipatory effect upon film producers which censorship creates. The financially burdened film-maker will be unwilling to risk his investment with the uncertain values of censors if controversial subjects are considered deeply. It is not coincidental that the period after *The Miracle* decision of 1952 was marked by film treatment of such previously taboo topics as perversion, drug addiction, and miscegenation. Another anticipatory effect is that film-makers will turn to subterfuges to fool censors. The *double entendre* is well known for this purpose. There is also what Ben Hecht terms "The Law of The Virtuous Finish," whereby the bulk of a film may without challenge dwell lovingly upon sin, if the ending makes a hasty bow to such moral lessons as "crime doesn't pay." Such hypocrisy is an indirect result of fear of morality-group pressure upon the box office and censor boards.

The preceding analysis has suggested three grounds on which censorship offends against democracy. Yet, if there is such a clash, how can censorship rally to it such social groups as women's clubs and churches? Are the interested parties in such organizations merely smut-snifters whose Puritanism is so great as to be psychopathic? My experience reveals that they are other than this stereotype; they are people who fear the dangerous effects of films upon youth more than they love democracy. One anguished theme runs from the protests against *The Kiss* in the Mauve Decade to those denouncing *Anatomy of a Murder* this year in Chicago—these scenes will corrupt our young! If the state can protect us from disease and tainted food, is its obligation not greater to protect our youth against moral corruption!† This charge cannot be dismissed lightly with clichés if films do create substantive evils; anyone care to defend the free speech of a dope-pusher barking his wares before a high school?

* See Dorothy Jones' content analysis in John Cogley, *Blacklisting: I—Movies.* (New York: Fund for the Republic, 1956.)

† A quite reasoned statement of the indictment and obligation may be found in the recent *Catholic Viewpoint on Censorship* by Harold C. Gardiner, S.J. (New York: Doubleday, 1958.)

What these people fail to realize is that we have very little evidence that films do corrupt youth. There has been little such controlled study, and what has been done presents contradictory answers. The Payne Fund studies of a quarter-century ago in some parts suggested there might be effect, and in other parts were unsure. The British Magistrates Association concluded recently that there was no evidence of a relationship between movies and juvenile delinquency. A U.S. Senate committee recently investigating that subject found trained clinicians had contradictory ideas with very little substantiating evidence. A comprehensive study of the indoctrination films used on World War II soldiers found little effect on their motivation to serve—the prime objective of such indoctrination. Equally inconclusive psychiatric theories exist: that films incite to delinquency and that they are safety valves which may help prevent it.

Thus we see that the censorite indictment must be answered with the verdict of the Scots court, "Not Proven." The interaction of film and audience is a very complex event, yielding no agreed-upon findings of effect. The U.S. Supreme Court has insisted that the burden of proof rests on the state to demonstrate the need for any kind of prior restraint; despite all their fears, the censorites have given no such demonstration. This verdict runs counter to the "commonsense" opinion of the censorite who believes a youth is corrupted if he views *The Moon Is Blue*; is it not possible, however, that corruption, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder?

A priori we may argue that films interact with their audience in three ways: they provide vicarious escape (the safety valve notion), they mirror society, or they stimulate to new behavior and values. If they provide escape or catharsis, why censor what is harmless, indeed beneficial? If they reflect society, why censor what is in society? If such films are dangerous, the proper course lies against society, not its mirror. But, if films stimulate the new and possibly the dangerous, I still ask, why censor? The answer takes two forms.

First, I doubt whether censorship is an efficient means. Censors ban few films but delete many fragments, mostly such minutiae as excessive stabs or *double-entendres*; generally they leave alone the themes, many of which may be truly subversive but concealed under the producers' subterfuges mentioned earlier. (Thus, *The Last Hurrah* was untouched, even though its theme was that a political crook is not to be condemned if he is a nice guy.) Further, when censors compel producers to employ subterfuges, they prevent the film from providing meaningful examinations of serious moral problems, *i.e.*, from being a truly effective agent of community morality.

Second, censorship of the potentially dangerous should be denied because of the probability that the good censorship may do is outweighed by its evil consequences. Thus, I have noted that under censorship the producer finds it safer to wade in the shallows than to risk the exhilaration of the racing currents; waders rarely drown.

Alec Guinness as Fagin in OLIVER TWIST: *the racial stereotype as motive for censors.*

But democracy and freedom mean risk. There is always risk that the citizen will decide to use freedom unwisely—but on this gamble we bet our all. Freedom of speech guarantees not that all the mind's outpourings will be good, but that there will be opportunity for the best to appear, like gold dust in the sludge of the miner's pan. Censorship, like all organs of the status quo, rewards the mediocre, not the best.

What holds for freedom in general holds for freedom of the artist. Uncensored art forms always involve a certain risk to their society. As the artists' function is to look at things anew, to create and re-create, his works may indeed be "subversive" to current morality. But the risk taken by a democracy is that free arts are necessary to a free society—to reveal what it is and aspires to—and on this ground a good deal of troublesomeness may be tolerated from artists. Better to risk the superficial and salacious (whatever that means) than to prevent production of the impressive and meaningful: better *The Defiant Ones* than *Amos 'n' Andy*, better *The Bridge Over the River Kwai* than *Buck Privates*.

Under censorship, however, the creative impulse is frustrated and diverted into the required, comfortable but shallow channels. The deeper meanings of life are forsworn, as morality is imposed by others' dictates and not accepted through critical understanding after personal examination. Socrates' warning rings clearly down to our time, "The unexamined life is not worth living." Art is a most precious means of examination and understanding; for real service, it must be safeguarded from the stultifying hands of censorship. That hand is also of the past, dampening the dynamic forces of change. Thus, in citing George Bernard Shaw's comment we return to our beginning:

> All censorships exist to prevent anyone from challenging current conceptions and existing institutions. All progress is initiated by challenging current conceptions, and executed by supplanting existing institutions. Consequently, the first condition of progress is the removal of censorships. There is the whole case against censorships in a nutshell.

ERNEST CALLENBACH

Classics Revisited: *The Gold Rush*

Scratched, cut, dilapidated, bootleg prints: since its earlier re-issue in 1942 they were practically the only means of seeing *The Gold Rush* in this country. But even their mutilated remains could not destroy many basic images: the dance of the rolls endlessly cited in film histories; the hallucinatory sequence where Charlie turns into a huge chicken; the dance hall with its sequined girls and shabby miners; the cabin teetering on the edge of the abyss; the not-quite-right happy ending . . .

Thanks to the payoff Chaplin recently made to the Internal Revenuers, and thanks also, perhaps, to the more relaxed political atmosphere, we can now see the work clearly and see it whole —or rather, with the deletions and compressions Chaplin made when he took out the silent titles and added an explanatory narration and music. (It is, always a bit surprisingly, a British voice, and the music is *Limelight*-ish; the net effect of the sound track is pronouncedly nineteenth-century.) *The Gold Rush*, certainly, is one of Chap-

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lin's achieved masterpieces of silent comedy, the work of a great artist of sentiment and pathos.* But it is worth looking at rather more closely. The year Chaplin made it, 1924, was also the year of *The Navigator, Sherlock Jr., The Freshman*—a year of fantastic burgeoning of talents in that great uprush when American comedy threw off the technical domination of vaudeville and stage to become an art form with its own perfections. Like those other films, *The Gold Rush* can remind us of much about comedy that we badly need to know.

The picture opens with an iris-in revealing a thin line of aspiring miners crawling across a snowy mountain landscape; the narration hits us with travelogue melodrama. In a moment, though, we notice the tramp ("the little fellow," the narration calls him) wandering along an icy ledge. He slips but recovers his balance; he is followed momentarily by a gigantic bear; he slides down a snow slope. He is the full-blown tramp figure, complete with cane (which sinks to the handle in the snow when he leans on it): urban and possibly Londoner, a little picturesquely Dickensian in the derogatory sense; perky, naïve, no longer mischievous or vengeful. (There is in *The Gold Rush* virtually none of the earlier kicking-in-the-pants that makes even high school kids cringe.) The gestures are those of the tramp-dandy, made excruciatingly unapropos (like his costume) when he finds himself amid fur-coated sourdoughs in the arctic wilderness.

The story-line (*The Gold Rush* was made after *A Woman of Paris*) has become firm and rich. And if the film has none of the flabbergasting imagination of a Keaton (is it in *The Frozen North* — 1922 — that Keaton emerged deadpan from an IRT subway exit into an icy waste?) it nonetheless creates a comic world as viable as any, and with a great deal of genuine poetry to it.

For readers who may never have seen the film, its plot, in brief summary, runs thus: Wandering in a blizzard, the little fellow comes to the cabin of Black Larsen (Tom Murray), a homicidal miner; he is saved from being put out into the storm again only by the arrival of another and even bigger miner, Big Jim (Mack Swain). One of the best bits in the early part of the film is the struggle between Larsen and Big Jim for a rifle; as they grapple, its muzzle keeps pointing with magical precision at Chaplin, no matter which way he runs. Later, as starvation impends for the three men, Larsen loses a card draw and sets out for help; he encounters the law, kills two more men, and is done in by an avalanche. Meanwhile Big Jim and the little fellow get hungrier. In another extraordinary passage Chaplin cooks and serves up one of his shoes. He bastes, carves, nibbles the edge of the sole experimentally, adds salt; finally Big Jim goes along and munches the uppers; when Chaplin has finished he licks the remaining morsels off the nails. Shortly afterward Big Jim begins imagining that the little fellow is a chicken, and chases him with gun and axe; but a bear finally saves the day by wandering into the cabin. The little fellow dispatches it with the rifle and dazedly begins laying out plates and sharpening knives.

The second section opens in the "Monte Carlo Dance Hall." Georgia (Georgia Hale) is a dance-hall girl pursued by Jack Cameron (Malcolm Waite), a handsome miner. The little fellow is smitten; she uses him to humiliate Jack; there is a *bagarre* in which the tramp thinks he has knocked Jack out (actually he dislodged a wall clock onto his head by a wild blow). Left in charge of a nearby cabin, he is visited one day by Georgia and some other girls; after she finds her picture under his pillow she puts him on heartlessly, and agrees to come to dinner New Year's Eve. But of course they do not come; as

* Theodore Huff in *Charlie Chaplin* (New York: Henry Schuman, 1951, p. 187) says that "Chaplin himself characterized *The Gold Rush* as 'the picture I want to be remembered by.'" In his book Huff gives a very detailed *post-hoc* scenario for the film, conforming to the version now being shown except in minute details that are probably the result of slight lapses in Huff's reconstruction of his notes; the action of the film is recorded fully, and something of its flavor—though this is a more or less hopeless enterprise for silent comedy.

The "Monte Carlo Dance Hall" on New Year's Eve.

the tramp sits at his delicately laid table, gifts arranged and candles lit, he must fantasticate a gay dinner party, with Georgia radiantly affectionate and himself overwhelmed so that he can say nothing and resorts to the dance of the rolls to express his joy. It is the sound of Georgia shooting off pistols in the dance hall at midnight which awakens him; he gets up, listens, and goes off there himself. Georgia, however, has just remembered her promise, and, with Jack and the girls, goes to the cabin. Finding the table in the empty room, she is touched by the tramp for the first time—a slightly maudlin contrast with the withering scene earlier when she cast her eyes around the dance hall hoping to find "someone honest and worthwhile" and did not even notice the tramp standing near her, rigid with emotion. Back at the dance hall, she sends the tramp an apologetic note. But Big Jim is now also looking for the little fellow; a blow has made him amnesic, and he needs help in relocating the "mountain of gold" he had found near their cabin. Before letting Big Jim drag him away, the tramp declares himself wildly to the astonished Georgia, promising to take her away from all this.

What follows is one of the most neatly constructed passages in all of film comedy, and it bears a great deal of study since silent structure has literally become a forgotten art. In it we can see Chaplin working according to the accepted tenets of silent method; the waves of gags grow and break, grow and break, with the ground swell of the story-line pushing them in and over us.

The tramp and Big Jim find the cabin with no trouble. They go in; the tramp drinks from Jim's immense flask as he lugs in provisions—staggering more and more as he does so, until he finally curls up on a bunk. Big Jim shakes the empty flask in amazement, and sacks out himself. In the night a blizzard blows the cabin, in a series of unconvincing model shots, to the edge of an abyss, where it comes to rest with about half of it hanging over the edge.

The little fellow awakes with a frightful hangover. He crawls out of bed and goes to the window to look out. The frost, however, is too thick to rub off, and he gets no inkling of the cabin's new location. He walks toward the side of the cabin that is over the precipice, and his weight makes it begin to tilt; he walks back, and it

The cabin on the edge of the abyss: establishing long shot.

returns to horizontal. This basic scene sets up in the audience's mind a rough series of expectations, and the film proceeds to exploit them with horrifying precision. The little fellow moves the table out for breakfast; as the cabin tilts he pushes it back just in time, and the cabin falls back again. When Big Jim wakes up and he again tilts the cabin, he explains it as a "liver attack," pointing to his stomach. Big Jim rises, and his bulk now seems agonizingly large. However, in a delightful variation on the underlying situation, each time Chaplin crosses to the abyss side of the cabin, Big Jim goes the other way, so their weights counterbalance each other. Chaplin picks icicles from the roof to melt for breakfast. As the cabin tips again, the men conclude that it really can't be their livers: "There's something missing underneath!" And, of course, the next gag follows with the inevitability that in silent comedy functions like fate in Greek tragedy: Chaplin must open the door to see what is missing. First, however, he jumps up and down on one side of the cabin—that deliciously rapid jump involving only his legs, a kind of hop. And Big Jim jumps heavily up and down on his side, with of course no result. The tramp then goes to the door opening on the abyss side of the cabin. We know, from the establishing long shot of the cabin in its new location (crisp morning after snow), that outside the door is nothing at all. The door sticks. The tramp bumps it with his shoulder. It still sticks; he bumps it harder still. We watch in medium shot as his efforts become stronger; it is all admirably economical —no cuts back to the outside. With a great push he succeeds; the door opens; we cut to the outside long shot in time to see his tiny figure swing out clutching the door, wriggle in terror, and swing back abruptly and aghast into the cabin; cut to an interior shot (a little closer now) of Big Jim dragging him firmly back in, and then of him fainting away and slumping to the floor.

The initial set of tensions is now resolved; the predicament is clear, and one would expect the two simply to get out of the cabin onto terra firma as promptly as possible. This, however, they are immediately prevented from doing by an ominous creaking and additional tilting of the cabin, which lurches sickeningly and seems about to plunge over the precipice, but is caught by a rope somehow tied to it, which catches in a rock crevice. Inside, Big Jim and the tramp find themselves lying on the floor, which has assumed about a 45-degree angle. A new set of gags thus begins as they attempt to get out of this new predicament.

First the tramp hiccups (as he does at several other points in the film), shaking the cabin and bringing down an angry caution from Big Jim. As the cabin lurches again, the tramp scrabbles desperately up onto Big Jim and tries to climb up to the door and safety; but in spite of treading ruthlessly on Big Jim's head he doesn't make it, and takes a sickening slide back down and out the abyss-side door, only to be caught by the scruff of the neck by Big Jim, and hauled back in again. Now Big Jim insists that he be given a hoist up on cupped hands and on shoulders; as he gropes for the door, it swings in, hits him on the head, and *he* takes the long slide—but the tramp is somehow able to drag him back. (At this point, the audience is limp.)

On his next attempt Big Jim makes it. Leaping to the ground, he discovers his claim marker by the cabin, and in his delight forgets about the little fellow, who calls out to him. Finally, Big Jim lowers a rope; the tramp grabs it, walks up the steeply sloping floor, and jumps. As he does so, the cabin tips over the edge and crashes downward out of sight; the tramp staggers on the brink, almost faints again, and collapses beside Big Jim and the claim marker. Fade-out.

Whatever Chaplin's possible debt to Harold Lloyd's *High and Dizzy* and *Safety Last*, he has here carried the device of near-escapes from

falling to a quite agonizing perfection, and with a complexity and subtlety beyond those shorter films. And if, as experimental psychologists maintain, fear of falling and fear of loud noises are our only inborn fears, the appeal of such sequences goes very deep indeed—and by skillful titillation of such a basic anxiety the comedian may obtain rather more than belly-laughs from his audience. . . .

The third and remaining section of the film is anticlimactic. Big Jim and the tramp sail for the States, rich men. While dressed in his tramp costume for a photographer, the little fellow falls backwards down a ladder into the steerage, and lands next to Georgia, who is also on board. He is apprehended as a wanted stowaway, and it seems inevitable that the impending happy ending will be destroyed. Georgia offers to buy his passage; but this gesture proving her feelings turns out to be unnecessary as his new status is reëstablished by the ship's officers. All ends happily, we are told, with a marriage. Yet we have seen often before the smug smile leading to the prat fall, the happy dream giving way to grim reality; and we half-see the tramp soon again walking away in the snow "to resume his bleak lonely existence," as the narration at one point put it.

For the emotional center of gravity of the film is the sequence in which the tramp is deceived by Georgia and her friends, as its comic center is the cabin scene; and the triumphs of true love cannot long keep the world at bay.

The key elements in the vision? —The search for love, above all; this time found in the person of a girl harder and less "good" than the usual Chaplin heroine. But the pattern is basically the same: the tramp, we are asked to assume, is a very lovable little fellow indeed in spite of his superficially unprepossessing appearance; he is good in the way a child is good, and the girls are made to love him with a stylized love that might be thought somewhat maternal—at any rate, they finally recognize his affectionateness, his true worth and dignity, and in those films where the tramp is saved from his "bleak lonely existence" it is through this sort of grace. —The existence of good and evil, too; the Big Jims and Black Larsens of the world exterior to the tramp's person, who struggle violently, often for objectives the tramp has no hope of reaching through struggle, and can only attain through luck or guile. Sometimes, as in the case of Big Jim when he is delirious from hunger, or the millionaire of *City Lights,* these merge in an ambiguous power figure who must be cajoled, placated, or even fought; more often still the good figure is not there at all, so that the tramp wanders through a hostile universe ruled by street bullies, tyrannical headwaiters, and the like. It is worth noting that in Chaplin films as a whole evil is portrayed rather convincingly and in detail: greed and poverty, guile and deception; but the goodness of the tramp rests upon charm and pathos much of the time, or, as in *City Lights,* is dramatized mawkishly. —Most of all, the vision shows the world as a series of traps and dangers: physical peril, hunger, trickery that will not always be reversed as Georgia's is here. It is a world, like those of all great artists, having the power to haunt us afterwards, physically: we *see* that world in our mind's eye, more real than the supposedly real world of most "realistic" films, with a timelessness that every "serious" film-maker, beset with problems of costume, slang, and manners, must sometimes wildly envy. The wonderful shabbiness of dress and settings in *The Gold Rush* seems beyond our art directors today. The grime and disrepair seen now in the beautiful soft grays of a good print have disappeared from the screens but not from our minds; and they still remind us of poverty, sadness, and the essential human condition—the last because, no matter how materially fat and sassy we become, we sense all too well on other levels that moths still corrupt and thieves break in and steal—and villains wield sticks and what is old must be made to serve. At the end of *The Gold Rush* the luxuries of Big Jim and the tramp are precarious indeed—only an accidental fall away from the miseries of *The Immigrant.*

It is because of the intensity of this vision, of course, that films like *The Gold Rush* will last and last, when today's bloated extravaganzas

have crumbled to dust in the vaults. Even in the heartless and mechanical world of the cinema, art tells. . . .

It is an art of charm or sympathy of character, ingenuity, timing, grace: an athletic and kinesthetic kind of beauty that can be very moving. (In silent comedy no one can forget that the cinema is an art which involves bodily responses —from the acute and delicious agony of the comic ecstasy to the imperceptible delights in even the least movements of a Chaplin or a Keaton.)

Chaplin has often been referred to as the greatest artist the screen has yet produced. Whether this is true I personally doubt: he never reached the tough unity and compression of *Le Jour Se Lève*, the finesse of *Rashomon*, the searing intensity of *Los Olvidados*, and in a sense one must judge every artist by the highest point he has reached. Nearer home, I would maintain that Keaton surpassed Chaplin with *The Navigator* and *The General*, both works of astonishing virtuosity and purity of aesthetic motive, and moreover of great technical brilliance.

But Chaplin's work as a whole clearly stands out far and above Keaton's as it stands out above everyone else's: he is the undeniable Hero of the cinema, who has shown beyond doubt what can be done with this new medium. (And, also hero-like, he snarls back admirably at oppression; he now fathers still another child!) Such are the hungers of our artistic life that he will probably make a great deal of money from *The Gold Rush*, as he did from *City Lights* in 1953.

The question in reëvaluating Chaplin today centers around the problem of his sentimentality. This is in reality a complex social as well as artistic problem. Anderson and Richie, in their discussion of sentimentality in the Japanese film, where it assumes the proportions of a major tendency,* define it as the exhibition or demanding of emotion about something that doesn't really justify such emotion; such demands debase or titillate our feelings, rather than catharsizing them. And in this sense Chaplin certainly makes illegitimate demands: the "goodness" of the little fellow is supposed to generate more feeling than we can give without finding ourselves wallowing.

No doubt, deciding what justifies what degree of emotion is a cultural matter capable of wide variations. We know that in periods of soft cultural "line," such as the Victorian era, tears flowed and hearts palpitated at fictional and stage events which in harder times like our own seem only grotesque. We may even find in the supposedly cynical *film noir* of the 'thirties and 'forties a certain unpleasant concealed mushiness; and we may agree with Anderson and Richie that *Gervaise* is, after all, a *mono-haha*: a mother-picture, seeking tears.

Yet the object of much of film art is to produce an emotional involvement with events portrayed which will be strong enough to seem overwhelming and "real" but without asking ridiculously much, as does sentimental melodrama or overt political propaganda. In the long cultural run, evaluations of artistic success in this balancing act are bound to shift—sometimes drastically, so that Pope after a time seems chilly, and Shelley overblown, though their immense technical skill cannot be brought into doubt. It is from our own peculiar position on this sort of social sand, therefore, that we must judge any artist who, like Chaplin, is good enough to bother thinking of in terms longer than a decade or so.

Of *The Gold Rush* we may say, I think, that it is Chaplin near or at the peak of his powers. He had mastered feature-length construction; he had peeled away from the tramp almost all of the mere silliness inherited from the music halls. (When Jack twice trips the little fellow in *The Gold Rush*, it is in a complex dramatic context; nobody laughs.) In Georgia he created a somewhat lifelike portrait, though basically in the good-bad, heart-of-gold tradition; the other figures have the oversize effect that people have in our emotional life if not ocularly. *The Gold Rush* has the simple, lasting appeals of a well-defined constellation of characters, an overwhelmingly sympathetic hero, a satisfying pattern of frustrations followed by surprising and deserved success. It is a remarkable film, though

* See the review of *The Japanese Film* in this issue.

Deepening the comic agony: left, the little fellow races to rebalance the cabin; right, he and Big Jim as the cabin seems about to topple.

it is not "life," any more than is *Br'er Rabbit*, really—except that, as Freud once remarked, there is no such thing as an adult unconscious. . . .

Today, we are confronted with a cinema that has no great clowns. Tati is a good comedian, a funny character, but he is not a clown, and he has forgotten the structural lessons of the silents. Moreover, the likelihood is that he will move further in the direction of *Mon Oncle*, toward comic films he directs and appears in as one of a group of major figures. But the great clown orients everything around himself, and creates a personal, unified vision. This inspired monomania is out of fashion, as is the early tramp's avarice and cruelty. Yet no other kind of dramatic figure can move us in the way a clown can: the needle of comedy goes very deep, as the McGraneries, uneasily out to "get" Chaplin, dimly perceive. No doubt, "if we deserved comedy we would have it!" —Yet there seems a real richness of material in our world, and someday perhaps it will come: bitter, hilarious comedy that will restore us our sanity. Toward such comedy *The Gold Rush*, perhaps paradoxically, teaches more than *The Great Dictator* or *M. Verdoux*; for with sound a certain debilitating constriction set in with Chaplin. (The Marx Brothers only escaped it to some extent; occasionally so did Fields.) In this age, when laughter almost inevitably becomes subversive of something or other, the clown will often be taken for an agitator, and comedy may become a clandestine rite. Still, the bigger a bubble, the more tempting it is to use any needles at hand.

—The comedy we need will be liberated from dialogue as from more or less everything else. Through it, if anywhere, will the cinema teach us about freedom.

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In our last issue we inadvertently omitted the name of Arthur Knight as author of the review of *N.Y., N.Y.* and *Highway*. Our faces are especially red because, as one of our other contributors wrote, "that review does the really difficult thing well: describes *what happens* on the screen." Mr. Knight's name could at least be found by the curious on the contents page, however, though another lapse led us to omit listing there Henry Goodman's review of *I Soliti Ignoti* and Albert Johnson's review of *Compulsion*. With this issue we have finished reshuffling the contents page, and such accidents should now cease. Apologies to all.—ED.

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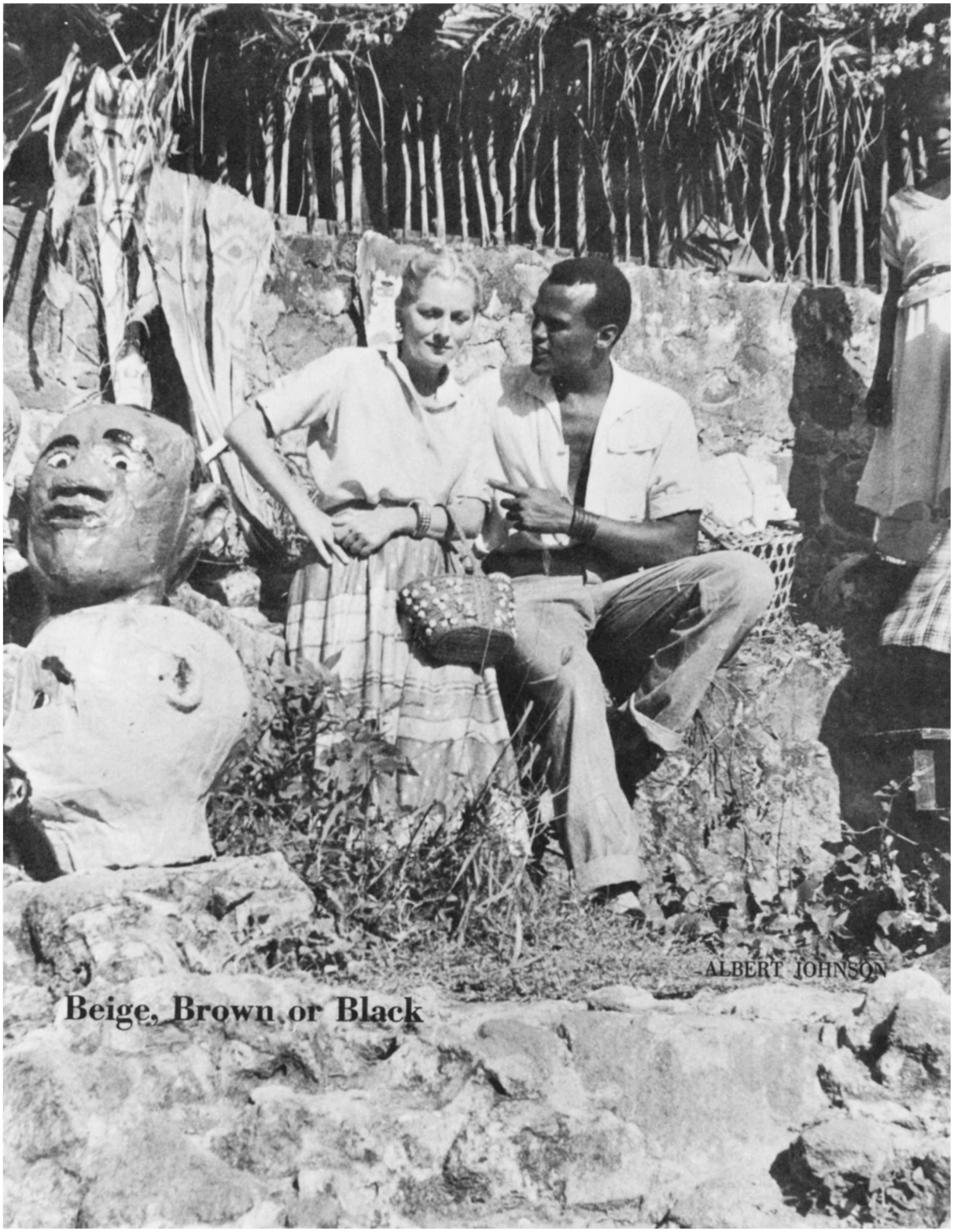

ALBERT JOHNSON
Beige, Brown or Black

The late nineteen-forties, a brief period of sociological experimentation in American film making, contained several works dealing specifically with problems involving Negro characters. Such films as *Home of the Brave, Pinky, Lost Boundaries,* and *No Way Out* were particularly memorable because they attempted to portray the Negro in a predominantly white environment; and as a figure of dramatic importance, the Negro has long been overlooked or carefully avoided on the screen, chiefly because of the refusal of Southern theater exhibitors to book such films. The U.S. Motion Picture Code's rule regarding the depiction of Negro characters, notoriously outdated, has only managed to keep in effect a rigidly stereotyped view of a race whose economic and intellectual status has risen to such a degree since 1919 that one tends to look upon most Negro screen actors as creatures speaking the language of closet-drama.

American drama has suffered from a lack of Negro playwrights (not to mention Negro screen writers) who are able to present their characters in authentic and dramatically informative situations, for certainly few racial groups in this country flourish so actively on a level of melodrama, except perhaps the Puerto Ricans in New York, and yet, the two most successful stage works about contemporary Negro life are based upon the same rather bland premise: the sudden acquisition of a large sum of money by a middle-class family (*Anna Lucasta* and *A Raisin in the Sun*). These plays succeed because they honestly develop character in an all-Negro milieu on a nonstereotyped basis—they reveal the Negro to audiences with the same sympathy and insight with which Sean O'Casey exhibited the Irish in *Juno and the Paycock.* So far, so good, but what has happened in the American cinema since the 'forties regarding the plight of the Negro?

First of all, the Supreme Court decisions regarding integration of Southern schools, in 1954, once more brought the entire question of Negro-white relationships to the attention of the world. The incidents ensuing from this historic decree have yet to be conveyed in either stage or screen terms, and apparently, no one is courageous enough to do anything about it, but, at any rate, the Arkansas affair stirred interest in the Negro race once more as a focus for drama. Secondly, it was apparently decided by various Hollywood producers that a *gradual* succession of films about Negro-white relationships would have a beneficial effect upon box-office returns and audiences as well. The first of these films, *Edge of the City* (1956), is the most satisfactory because it is the least pretentious. The performance by Sidney Poitier (the Negro actor whose career has most benefited by the renaissance of the color theme) was completely authentic, but true to the film code, any hint of successful integration must be concluded by death, usually in some particularly gory fashion, and so, Poitier gets it in the back with a docker's bale-hook. The most constructive contribution of *Edge of the City* to film history is one sequence in which Poitier talks philosophically to his white friend, using language that rings so truthfully and refreshingly in the ears that one suddenly realizes the tremendous damage that has been nurtured through the years because of Hollywood's perpetration of the dialect-myth. The film was praised for its honesty, but its conclusion was disturbing; audiences wanted to know *why* the Negro had to be killed in order for the hero to achieve self-respect.

Strangely enough, this promising beginning of a revival of American cinematic interest in interracial relationships took a drastic turn with Darryl F. Zanuck's lavish production of *Island in the Sun* (1957). The focus changed from concern for an ordinary friendship between men of different racial backgrounds to the theme of miscegenation, considered to be, in Hollywoodian terms, a much bolder and more courageous source of titillation.

This film, made solely for sensationalistic reasons, was supposed to depict racial problems on the fictional West Indian island of Santa Marta, but it became simply a visually fascinating docu-

Left: Tropic dilemma: Joan Fontaine and Harry Belafonte in ISLAND IN THE SUN.

American film mythology: Integration leads to death. Kathleen Maguire, Sidney Poitier, and John Cassavetes in scenes from EDGE OF THE CITY.

ment without a real sense of purpose. Against a background of tropical beauty, a series of romantic attachments and longings are falsely attached to a group of famous personalities, each of whom is given as little to do as possible.

Harry Belafonte, a Negro singer who has risen to the astonishing and unprecedented stature of a matinee idol, was presented as David Boyeur, a labor leader for the island's native population, and his obvious attractions for a socially distinguished white beauty, Mavis (Joan Fontaine) created a furor among the Southern theater exhibitors, who either banned the film or deleted the Belafonte-Fontaine sequences. Actually, there were no love scenes between the two, only glances of admiration and dialogue of almost Firbankian simplicity. In fact, Boyeur's decision not to make love to Mavis is evasive and full of chop-logic, and every indication is given that poor Mavis will literally pine away thereafter among the mango trees. On the other hand, a Negro girl, Margot (Dorothy Dandridge) is allowed to embrace and eventually marry a white English civil servant (John Justin) and, although their life on Santa Marta is segregated, they finally sail happily off to England together at the end of the film. And so, the crux of the matter of miscegenation is again at the mercy of the film production code. Although "color" is the most important problem on the island, it seems that a white man may marry a Negro girl and not only *live*, and live happily, but that a Negro man and a white woman dare not think of touching. There is an odd moment in *Island in the Sun* when (after watching Mavis yearn for Boyeur in sequence after sequence) the Negro reaches up and lifts her slowly from a barouche, holding her waist. The shock-effect of this gesture upon the audience was the most subtle piece of eroticism in the film, and only the lack of honesty in the work as a whole made this hint of a prelude-to-embrace seem realistic.

Island in the Sun also stirred other concepts about color, for the problem of concealed racial ancestry is introduced, bringing out all sorts of moody behavior on the part of a young girl, Jocelyn (Joan Collins) and her brother, Maxwell (James Mason). Jocelyn attempts to break off her engagement to an English nobleman, but he ignores her racial anxieties and is willing to chance the improbabilities of an eventual albino in the family. Maxwell, however, is driven into gloom, drink, and eventual murder, one feels, because the Negro skeleton in the family closet has thoroughly rattled him. The entire film is certainly important as a study of the tropical myth in racial terms, and even Dandridge's character, though she comes out of the whole business fairly happily, is not entirely free from the stereotype of the Negro as sensualistic, for, at one point, she performs a rather unusual Los Angeles–primitive dance among the Santa Marta natives, an act that is quite out of character, if one knows anything at all about the prob-

American film mythology: American G.I.'s are more susceptible to miscegenation. Far left: Natalie Wood and Frank Sinatra. Right: Tony Curtis in KINGS GO FORTH.

lem of class consciousness among the Negroes themselves in the West Indies.

Miss Dandridge has been continually cast as the typically sexy, unprincipled lady of color, in all-Negro films like *Carmen Jones* (1956) and *Porgy and Bess* (1959), as well as in a singularly appalling film called *The Decks Ran Red* (1958), in which she is the only woman aboard a freighter in distress and, naturally, is pursued by a lusty mutineer, with much contrived suspense and old-hat melodrama. It is ironic, under the circumstances, to recall that this actress' dramatic debut in films coincided with that of Belafonte in *Bright Road* (1955), a minor work about a gentle schoolteacher and a shy principal in a Southern school.

The commercial success of *Island in the Sun* led to the decisive movement in Hollywood to make films dealing specifically with the theme of miscegenation. The color question appeared in the most unusual situations, particularly *Kings Go Forth* (1958), an epic cliché of wartime in France, where two soldiers (Frank Sinatra and Tony Curtis) find it nicer to be in Nice than at the front. Sam (Sinatra) falls in love with Monique Blair (Natalie Wood), whose parents are American, although she has been reared in France. Monique lives with her widowed mother, and reveals to Sam that her father was a Negro. Exactly *why* this is introduced is never really clear unless it was intended to bring some sort of adult shock to a basically *What Price Glory* situation, for even Mademoiselle from Armentières is fashionably under the color line in contemporary war films. There is also a triangle complication, for while Sam is away, Monique becomes infatuated with Britt (Curtis) after hearing him play a jazz solo on a trumpet. This implies that even Monique's French upbringing cannot assuage the jazz-tremors of her American Negro heritage. Of course, nothing is solved in the film. Although Sam and Britt go through a baptism of fire and limb-loss, their characters are molded out of a screen clay pit as tough-talking, hard-drinking, callous hedonists, and the fact that both love *and* racial awareness are merged in their personalities is supposed to be basis for poignancy; besides, marriage with Monique is only weakly suggested at the conclusion of the film. Perhaps the most unfortunate part of *Kings Go Forth* was its adherence to the lamentable Hollywood practice of casting a white actress in the part of a mulatto heroine, thereby weakening even further an already unsuccessful attempt to jump on the bandwagon of popular film concepts regarding hardhearted American officers falling madly in love with foreign girls of another race. *Kings Go Forth* convinced one that racial films were once more in vogue, and the so-called taboo theme was simply a "gimmick."

Although it attempts boldness, *Night of the Quarter Moon* (1959) only belabors the question of intermarriage. Ginny (Julie London) marries a wealthy San Franciscan, Chuck Nelson (John Drew Barrymore) while on a vacation in Mexico. When she reveals that their marriage might cause them trouble because of her racial background (she is one-quarter Portuguese-Angolan, which is, one supposes, cause for some sort of genetic alarm), Chuck tells her that such statistics only bore him. However, the film erupts into a succession of violent and racially antagonistic episodes on the part of Chuck's society-minded mother (Agnes Moorehead), the San Francisco police force, and the neighbors. The fact that Chuck is a Korean war veteran, susceptible to mental blackouts and fatigue, creates an odd impression about American film myths of this nature. It would seem that war veterans are more susceptible to miscegenation, and that certain environments, like

the Caribbean or Mexico, actually put one into that frame of mind which considers racial backgrounds to be of major insignificance, eventually leading to intermarriage. All of this chaos leads to one of the most incredible courtroom sequences in film history, during which Ginny's Negro lawyer (James Edwards) strips the blouse from her back in front of the judge so that her skin color can be revealed as white. *Night of the Quarter Moon* did contain one notable feature, however. It showed an adjusted, sophisticated, and extremely articulate interracial couple, Cy and Maria Robbin (Nat Cole and Anna Kashfi), and Maria's summation of a white man's general attitude toward a quadroon is a very forthright and adult statement that takes one by surprise.

It is, indeed, the social position of an individual who is able to pass for white that seems to bear most interest for film makers, and it was only a matter of time (28 years) before a remake of *Imitation of Life* (1959) would appear. Fannie Hurst's novel, a tear-jerker, could possibly have been a fine film, considering the different film techniques and audience attitudes of 1931 and 1959. However, the earlier version of the film is the more honest of the two, if only for the fact that the mulatto girl, the true figure of pathos, was played by Fredi Washington, a Negro actress. But the basic premise that any Negro girl with a white skin is doomed to despair on a social level is maintained in a most unreal and almost farcical manner. The clichés are kept intact and aimed at the tear ducts, and once more, one cannot help feeling that a Negro screen writer might have been able to bring subtlety into the characterizations. *Imitation of Life* is a hymn to mother love, a popular fable of ironic contrasts between the light and the dark realms of racial discrimination. A famous actress, Lora Meredith (Lana Turner), and her daughter, Susie (Sandra Dee), are devoted to the Negro maid, Annie Johnson (Juanita Moore), and her mulatto child, Sarah Jane (Susan Kohner). But it is the behavior of Sarah Jane as a beautiful young woman that is handled falsely. Living in a nonsegregated environment in a Northern metropolis, surrounded by the glamour of Lora's world of the theater, it is inconceivable that Sarah Jane would be made to feel inferior by people around her, especially since she is not, by any stretch of the imagination, obviously a Negro. It is equally incomprehensible that Sarah Jane's taste in clothes would not be affected by the chic apparel of both Lora and Susie, both of whom symbolize a world to which she very much wants to belong. The final stroke of absurdity lies in the sequence in which Sarah Jane is savagely beaten by her white boy friend (Troy Donahue) when he learns that she is a Negro, implying that anyone who attempts to step out of an established class structure,

"Ironic contrasts between the light and the dark realms" of mother love. Above: Sandra Dee and Lana Turner. Below: Susan Kohner and Juanita Moore in IMITATION OF LIFE.

The hero in isolation: Harry Belafonte in THE WORLD, THE FLESH AND THE DEVIL.

racially or otherwise, must be subjected to physical violence. This attitude (equally out of place in a film like *Room at the Top*) comes as a shock and reflects a dangerous kind of moralizing. As if inner anguish is not enough for an individual who is unable to successfully "pass" for white, or move from one social strata to another, one must behold such a character actually beaten up and thrown into the gutter.

In *Imitation of Life,* Annie's funeral is epic sentiment in the charlotte russe tradition, complete with a spiritual by Mahalia Jackson—an episode that is completely fictional and as incredible to Negro spectators as it is to white; and Sarah Jane's psychological maladjustment never leads one to imagine that she would so blatantly embrace her Negro heritage by hysterically throwing herself upon her mother's coffin; also one is never told what the girl eventually does or becomes. What is not understood by the makers of *Imitation of Life* is that a Negro's sympathies are with Sarah Jane, *not* Annie, and that contemporary audiences are able to discern the finely hypocritical dictums of the fake solution, the outdated stereotypes of the code, and, in a sense, the anti-integrationist's point of view.

The Negro character in the nineteen-fifties is very much the hero or heroine in isolation, and the cinema never quite illustrates this quality of "invisibility" and frustration as often as it should. Perhaps the most effective presentation of this particular aspect of racial adjustment is *The World, The Flesh and the Devil* (1959), in which Ralph Burton (Harry Belafonte) finds that he is the only person alive in New York City after some great destructive force has swept away all human existence. The horror of loneliness in New York, a potential Angkor Vat surrounded by steel foliage, is brilliantly evoked, at once underlining one's contemporary fears of sudden, radioactive destruction, and emphasizing the symbolic figure of the Negro hero alone in society.

The appearance of two white people throws the film back into the world of color consciousness. Sarah Crandall (Inger Stevens) meets Ralph, and for a time they exist together, but he insists upon maintaining separate living quarters. The racial issue remains symbolically in his mind, though, in reality, it is gone with the civilization around them. When Benson Thacker (Mel Ferrer) arrives, however, a triangle is created, a wall of simple-minded cliché obscures the true situation, and, after a gun battle and fight, the men declare peace, join hands with Sarah, and walk into the oblivion of Wall Street together.

This parable exemplifies today's approach to the theme of interracialism; vague, inconclusive, and undiscussed. Like a fascinating toy, American film makers survey the problem from a distance, without insight, and guided by a series of outmoded, unrealistic concepts regarding minorities. The major irony is this: that in a country where life is actually lived quite freely with races so intermingled, it is still difficult to capture this sense of freedom, of humanity, this robust diversity of backgrounds of American life upon the screen. As far as motion pictures are concerned, the Negro character remains mysterious because he is the most diversified by background, by color, and by regional dialect, and, considering the number of films involving Negroes, the race as a whole is inadequately represented on the screen. Represented solely by limited night-club entertainers and recording artists, and only a few outstanding young actors (Poitier, Belafonte, and Henry Scott, who has appeared in only one small role so far), it is no wonder that audiences cannot get a sense of truth between the black, brown or beige images that vary so greatly from celluloid to reality, from mythology and stereotype to history and drama.

Film Reviews

Wild Strawberries

Smultronstället, the Swedish title of *Wild Strawberries,* is an expression that conveys both the time and place of gathering the fruit. When the elderly protagonist, driven to return to the past by disturbing dreams, a foreboding of death, a sense of material success and personal failure, pauses at the scene of his youth and discovers the wild strawberry patch, he murmurs "Smultronstället," and a tremor of music underlines the meaning. Literate observers should have no difficulty in identifying the device. Ingmar Bergman's wild strawberries are the equivalent of Marcel Proust's famed *petit madeleine* which the narrator dips into a cup of tea to commence his *À la Recherche des temps perdus.*

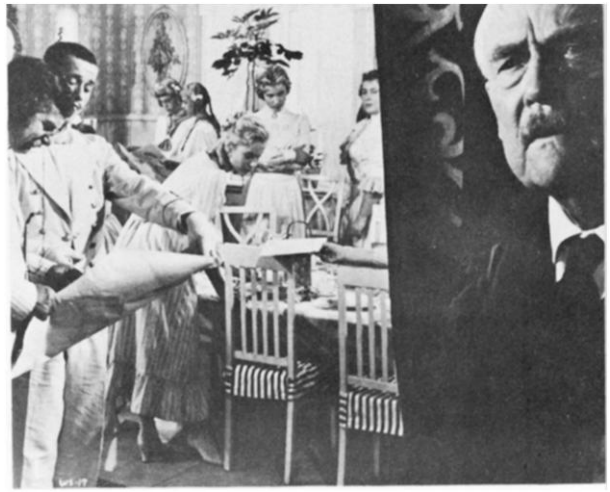
The essence of Proust's image, and Bergman's, is the conception that an event assumes its meaning, not from the action itself, but from the way it is regarded at different moments in time, and that life is composed of a series of such isolated moments, given meaning by their temporal relationship to the memories of the man who experiences them. Proust, complementing the achievements of such comparable artists as James Joyce and Henry James, transferred the setting for a novel from the physical world to the infinitely richer and more complex area of the mind, and, by liberating the novel from its traditional boundaries of naturalistic plot development, external characterization and conventional dramatic structure, changed the course of modern fiction. Bergman, complementing the achievements of his own contemporaries (Chaplin, Welles, Renoir, Bresson, Visconti, Ophuls), has performed a similar service for modern cinema.

Wild Strawberries is a synthesis of the most significant developments in modern film aesthetics. Story is subordinate to the evocation of mood, and montage is minimized to emphasize the moving camera, with greatest concentration placed upon the planned sequence, centering attention upon the action within the frame. The director imposes an elliptical image, an impression suggestive of other ideas and emotions; elaborates upon its meaning to his characters and to himself, but leaves the conclusion to the observer, to whom the image may mean as much, or as little, as he chooses, depending upon the extent of his intellectual contemplation and personal response. Technique is employed for the exclusive purpose of developing this evocative image. Style is therefore subordinate to content, but, since meaning is implicit within the context and never explicitly stated, the style conveys its own meaning. This distinction sets modern cinema apart from preceding theories. Advocates of the entertainment or polemical film both maintain that the story is all-important, and technique merely a complement, whether the film is *Shoeshine* or *Gone with the Wind.* Opposing theorists, admiring "pure cinema," value solely montage, the technique of visual motion, regardless of what is being said. (Thus, devout anti-Communists may acclaim *Potemkin* as the greatest film of all time.) In modern aesthetics, style imposes its own meaning, and meaning demands its own style; the two are interrelated, and both come directly from the creative artist, the director, who is consequently forced to originate his own projects rather than merely interpret. Each film therefore becomes a personal statement by its director, and this principle, inevitably, is the most important of all.

"In our relations with other people we mainly criticize them. I have therefore withdrawn myself from all forms of social contact." In these opening lines, Professor Isak Borg expresses his personal tragedy and the theme of *Wild Strawberries.* Man's inability to communicate with other men has always been an essential part of Bergman's philosophy, but he has never expressed this theme so strongly or indicated so passionately his belief in the necessity of making a positive attempt. *Wild Strawberries* is a film about life, and life, to Bergman, can only be expressed through man's relationship to other men. Dr. Borg, who has dissociated himself from mankind and turned inward upon himself, is actually a dead man, a living corpse. When

he is first seen, a handsome, dignified old gentleman looking back upon his life, he explains and attempts to rationalize his solitude as the consequence of a dedication to abstract science, but the dream which begins his odyssey immediately clarifies the difference between the man as he thinks he is, as he appears to others, and as he really is. On a lonely walk amid decaying houses, he loses his way. The overhead sun is blinding; his footsteps echo in the silence, the only external sounds come from a clock with no hands—the symbol of an unfulfilled life. His only human contact is a man with no face, whose body disintegrates before his eyes. A driverless hearse loses a wheel—the wheel of life—which veers toward him and crumbles at his feet. A coffin opens, and his own corpse clasps his hand and attempts to pull him into the grave.

Dr. Borg's subconscious mind reveals to him that he is dead, a conclusion which he consciously rejects. It is this suggestion of self-delusion which frightens the doctor, making him sensitive to the way he appears to others and prompting his reluctant search for self-knowledge. Borg's past, as it gradually emerges, is the story of a man whose introversion, masked as idealism, slowly separates him from human contact. As a youth, he is shy and reticent, unable to communicate with the girl he loves, who complains sadly that he only wants to kiss her in the dark. Losing her to a more earthy lover, he places her upon an imaginary pedestal as the symbol of his lost aspirations, and, imagining that she too may have regrets, withdraws into himself. As a practicing doctor in a small town, he is admired for his disinterested benevolence, but he soon abandons his practice to retire to a university and pursue abstract science. An unhappy marriage is not saved by the birth of an unwanted son, and, after the early death of his wife, he retires altogether from society, enjoying his own vision of himself as a man whose basic idealism has placed him above the natural world, depriving him of human happiness but enabling him to become self-sufficient through dedication to his work. When his career leads him to national renown, he is saddened to find the triumph empty, but, with the ironic wisdom of



WILD STRAWBERRIES: *A view of the past.*
Bibi Andersson (left, center) and Victor Sjöstrom.

maturity, he accepts this result as part of the human condition. To Borg, at this point, life seems simple enough, and the observer at the outset of the film is willing to accept his own view of himself. He is wealthy and honored, adjusted to his loneliness, compensated by his work and the physical comforts provided by his housekeeper, and able to take ascetic pleasure from the presence of a beautiful woman or a charming young girl. If he is sometimes disagreeable, quarreling petulantly with his housekeeper and dictatorially forbidding his daughter-in-law to smoke in his presence, and seems (like Proust) something of a *voyeur* in his penchant for observing intimate scenes without becoming involved, these seem forgivable failings in a sympathetic old man who is capable of self-mockery. He looks at life from the outside with tolerant irony, and draws his comfort from poignant reminiscences of his great lost love.

Borg, however, is wrong about himself, and a series of disturbing incidents gradually awakens him to an awareness of his own intellectual incomprehension. His housekeeper treats him with contempt, and his daughter-in-law shocks him with her cool revelation of his son's hatred and her own dislike. Her accurate appraisal of him as a selfish old egoist, masking his utter ruthlessness under a guise of old-world courtliness and charm, is as disturbing as her disinterest in his inner turmoil. An encounter with

a tormented couple reminds him of the failure of his own marriage, and a visit with his aged mother, in which she probes emotionlessly among meaningless relics of the past, sharply illustrates the futility of deceptive reminiscences and the barrenness of an isolated existence. His own son's rejection of procreation because of his inherited hatred of life leaves the doctor with a deep residue of guilt. A brief triumph with a filling-station attendant who remembers his past generosity is spoiled by his daughter-in-law's mockery and his realization of his own indifference. His final acceptance of honors for his life's work finds him contemplating the series of events during his day's odyssey as marked by an extraordinary causality. When the modern incarnation of his lost love, an adolescent torn between a materialistic atheist and an idealistic ministerial student, calls to him, "It's you I really love," before departing on her own life's journey, he is capable of realizing that her touching idealization of him as a symbol of worldly wisdom is merely an expression of human desire for the unattainable.

It is this realization, as he perceives the truth about the girl he lost, which provides the key to his self-knowledge and to the film. In the great "wild strawberries" scene, inspired by the mood this return to the scene of his childhood has evoked, he visualizes an incident he could not have witnessed. The charming Sara, yielding unwillingly to the advances of his rakish brother, is humiliated by exposure to the happy family group, and finds herself torn between her devotion to him and her physical response to a practiced seducer. As he watches her weeping on the stairs, he smiles in tolerant understanding of her human imperfections. The scene is a deeply moving evocation of lost happiness, and it is only gradually that the observer, like Professor Borg, realizes that it is all subtly stylized and unreal. The girls in starched petticoats, men in spotless white jackets, a pair of twins speaking in unison, the deaf old uncle posed with his earphone as in a tintype of the period, movements gracefully choreographed, attitudes clearly defined—all are idealized, as a nostalgic old man would like to imagine them.

Once more, it is only his subconscious that can break the barriers separating an idealized past, a predetermined future, and an unrealized present. When he finally sees the real Sara, it is in a second dream—vividly differentiated from his imagined reminiscences by lighting, playing, and mood—in which she holds a mirror to his face and forces him to regard the truth. This truth involves her own happiness in her marriage and maternity, the result of her acceptance of life, and the consequences of his own rejection, expressed in the symbol of stigmata as he gropes for entrance into the real world, his failure of an examination in humanity, and the verdict passed upon him by his wife, whom he has watched in the ritual of seduction and whom he must hear condemning him for his own indifference. When he is able to accept his sentence—solitude, with understanding of its justice and its meaning—he is finally ready for his Christian rebirth. Although his attempt to communicate fails—his housekeeper misunderstands an awkward effort at kindness, and his son brusquely interrupts his groping inquiry—he is at last free in his imagination to clasp the hand of the real Sara, through time and space, and go to meet the final evocative image, his parents seated beside the river bank, fishing, the eternal symbol of the quest for the meaning of life. When he contemplates this image and smiles, it is a final acceptance of life in all its agony, a passionate affirmation of the joy in being a man.

If aspects of *Wild Strawberries* are ambiguous, so is life itself. The theme is universal, and Isak Borg, eloquently played by Victor Sjöstrom, is universal man, isolated within himself, searching for meaning and striving to communicate. Although the film will displease audiences who resist the suggestion that a motion picture should ask them to think, it is filled with passages which can hardly fail to provoke an emotional response. The old man, alone in his study, regards the deceptive photographs of his departed relatives and thoughtfully extends his hand toward his silent dog. Mellowed with wine, he recites a poem of the search for God in nature to a group of animated young people, who pause for a moment to contemplate infinity. Two youths

abandon their sexual rivalry to quarrel about religion, and the neglected girl scornfully asks the result. A beautiful young woman, intolerantly condemning sterility as the cause of civilization's decay, broods over the consequences of a matriarch's rejection by the generations she has fostered. An actress and her Catholic husband ask forgiveness for intruding their cancerous marital torments upon the consciousness of untroubled youth, and are abandoned together beside the open road. It is not by accident that they reappear in the professor's dream: the man to conduct the examination in humanity, the woman to burst into laughter at the doctor's diagnosis of her death. The most moving images are the doctor's visions of Sara, the mercurial yet constant girl who represents man's aspirations; and the scenes in which she participates are designed and played with a heightened sensitivity commensurate with the impression she conveys of lost illusions.

In every respect a great film, *Wild Strawberries* is something more, a profoundly modern work of art. Its modern quality is not merely a matter of automobiles speeding along four-lane highways, cigarette-smoking women in slacks, and discussions of Freudian psychology and the H-bomb, but is inherent in the texture of the film's ideas and style. It is Ingmar Bergman's personal answer to the widespread theory that modern civilization is incapable of producing tragedy, and, to anyone who appreciates Bergman's significance in modern cinema, modern philosophy, and modern art, it is probable that his answer will seem decisive.—EUGENE ARCHER

Ansiktet

"Step by step we proceed into the dark. Motion itself is the only truth."

—Spegel, in *Ansiktet* (The Face)

In the opinion of this writer, who has seen all twenty-five of the films on which, since 1944, Ingmar Bergman's name has appeared (as writer and/or director), *Ansiktet*, written by Bergman himself, is quite the richest of the Swedish director's achievements—which is not necessarily to call it the greatest. But certainly among the latter-day films of Bergman whereby he has too glibly been hailed as a master symbolist (in France, especially), *Ansiktet* most fully supports the attribution. Before *The Seventh Seal*, Bergman's engagements with symbolism had been largely tentative when not obtrusive or, as in the case of *Fängelse* (Prison, 1948), pretentious and over-wrought. With *The Seventh Seal* he essayed a full-dress metaphysical adventure: to my sense, a cold article, visually handsome but ambiguous, not from complexity but from Bergman's uncertainty as to the central question he was proposing. The film strikes me as inconsistent metaphysically and unpersuasive realistically. *Smultronstället* (Wild Strawberries), which followed, is as dense with arcana, and here again I feel that Bergman placed too heavy a burden of cross-reference on a situation which he was reluctant to follow through: the outcome should have been a tragic, perhaps fatal insight on the part of Professor-Emeritus Borg, but neither Bergman's script nor Sjöstrom's performance sustained the inference of a complex terror of mind. (These considerations apart, it is a vapid production, cinematically). After *Nära Livet* (Close to Life, 1958), a kind of superior soap-opera in the more familiar Bergman vein of intersexual alienation (though it was not Bergman's scenario), this prolific self-synthesiser has produced a film which combines something of the substance of *The Seventh Seal* with something of the tone of its immediate predecessor, *Smiles of a Summer Night* (1956).

A synopsis of the events in *Ansiktet* is probably indispensable to any further elaboration I have to offer. Dr. Vogler's Magic Health Theater is approaching Stockholm in a coach (the year is 1846) by way of a baleful landscape, thinly forested. The company consists of Dr. Vogler, evidently mute, his youthful assistant Mr. Aman, Tubal (his mouthpiece, as it were), Grandma, "a witch," and the driver, a healthy young dim-wit named Simon. In the forest, Vogler resuscitates a drunken actor, Spegel,

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ANSIKTET: *Gunnar Björnstrand.*

who seemingly dies in the coach before its arrival. Upon reaching Stockholm, the group is detained by Consul Egerman and Chief of Police Starbeck, not because of Spegel but because Egerman has wagered Dr. Vergerus, a confirmed materialist, that supernatural powers exist: they have decided to test their respective convictions through Vogler, whose record declares that he has functioned alternately as a mere sideshow conjurer, a healer, and an inducer of visions by recourse to mesmerism. During the company's brief sojourn at the Consul's mansion, domestic life therein is radically disturbed. Mrs. Egerman visits Vogler secretly, begs him to explain why her child has died, and tries to seduce him. Mrs. Starbeck, "wife" to the Chief of Police, is hypnotized by Vogler into bawdy and humiliating accusations of Starbeck, while Dr. Vergerus is influenced against his will by Vogler but will not admit it and, discovering that Aman is not a man (she is Mrs. Vogler disguised), offers to buy her out of the company. Backstairs, Tubal sells love potions to the servants; Grandma sells them incantations. At the climactic seance, Egerman's coachman is mesmerized into believing himself bound with chains; upon recovery he strangles Vogler.

An autopsy is held immediately in the attic, where Vergerus dissects the corpse. Starbeck, anxious to avenge his own loss of prestige and to defend the Egerman household, recites the doctor's signed declaration that the organs of the deceased indicate no unique powers. Left alone with the dismembered corpse, Vergerus is at first astounded by a hocus-pocus of bodiless hands and rustling curtains, then reduced to clammy terror when confronted by Vogler, whom he has presumably just anatomized, a Vogler no longer dumb and without his imposing beard or long hair. (The body was that of Spegel, who had returned during the night to die in Vogler's arms.) Vogler and his wife, packing to leave, are forced to surrender their moral advantage by begging for money on which to resume their travels. Egerman, encountering this *volte-face*, with the formerly impressive Vogler now asking Vergerus for a handout, is persuaded he has lost his bet. Tubal and Grandma desert the Vogler company, he to marry the Egerman's cook, she to augment the fortune she has secretly hoarded from her traffic with the gullible. At the last moment, as the depleted crew prepares to leave, Vogler is summoned to the Palace by Royal Command. The King has expressed his desire to witness one of Vogler's magnetic performances.

It may be evident from this summary, if only by reference to those films of Bergman shown in America, that *Ansiktet* recapitulates certain familiar elements. The haunted forest and the actor as a mirror of death were utilized in *The Seventh Seal*; the traveling carnival, a minor group in the same film, had been the nucleus of *Gycklarnas Afton* (American title: The Naked Night, 1953); the Molière-geometry sex-play recalls *Smiles of a Summer Night* (which, in turn, recalled Renoir's *La Régle du Jeu*). Bergman's work has been characterized by his uncertain amplification of themes and properties from one film to another (not always

his own films). Both the uncertainty and the persistent eclecticism, since they have derived from a genuinely personal search for film situations which would best embody his concepts, dignify Bergman's continuity, despite the many undistinguished films which have been included in his career. In *Ansiktet* there is no fumbling, either with the ideas or with their incarnations: the movie proceeds enthrallingly at two simultaneous levels; it is attractive and entertaining to watch, it is instructive to contemplate. It is *theater*, in the most generally vivid sense of the term; the décors are potently involved, the atmospheric tone in every scene is created by those cineplastic means which Swedish technicians can so ably supply when controlled by a director who knows not just precisely but imaginatively what he wants. Bergman's inspired use of actors and actresses is notorious. This film is no exception. Though most of the players are not required to be anything more subtle than types, something a good deal more resourceful was demanded of Vergerus, Mrs. Egerman, and Vogler. Gunnar Björnstrand, Gertrud Fridh, and Max von Sydow (the Knight of *The Seventh Seal*) yielded their finest powers to Vogler-Bergman.

Strenuous speculation has already been advanced, locally, as to the prototype of Dr. Vogler, with nominations ranging from Jesus Christ to Simon Magus. Such identifications, though they may for all I know enhance the pleasure of the concerned specialist, are far too restrictive. Without urging my own not very esoteric interpretation of every detail in a film which will not have been seen by my readers upon publication of this review, I will surmise that anyone who has fished in the currents flowing from Thomas Mann on the paradox of the artist as at once a charlatan and a Messiah should have no difficulty with the internal gist of *Ansiktet*. The house of Egerman (Eager Man) is the most integrated microcosm of the Bergman view to date, where loneliness is immutable except through sex, where faith and science, youth and age, dreamer and doer, master and servant, give back equally fatuous answers to the flux of life, and the artist is eternally importuned for purposes inadequate even to his own incomplete and protean vision.

That Bergman has essentially a comic intelligence—in the sense that with the glaring exception of *Hets* (Torment, 1944) he strives always to *reconcile* contradictions—is not usually stressed in criticism. Sometimes the reconciliation has been an evasion on Bergman's part, but more often, perhaps, a correction by his intellect of a natively unconsoled intuition of futility and cruelty in the human predicament. Many of his earlier films summarized with such lines as "At least we have each other. A year ago it was worse and we were alone"; "The worst thing is not to be betrayed but to be lonely"; "Let them have their summer. Soon wounds and prudence will come." Even in *Gyklarnas Afton*, Bergman's most ruthless film, where he leads a mutually ambivalent couple to the brink of destruction, he spares them for each other at the end. And in *Smiles of a Summer Night*, the old dowager protests, "I'm tired of people, which doesn't prevent my loving them." Creative skepticism—quite simply, the view that truth is multiple—is securely the prevailing temper of *Ansiktet*. Dr. Vergerus replies to a statement of Manda (i.e., Aman) with the question, "Is your husband of the same opinion?" She answers, "Well—he doesn't speak." "Is that true?" the doctor asks, and she counters quickly with, "Nothing is true!"

But if nothing is true, anything is demonstrable. Vogler's levitation act is exposed as a fake; none the less he dominates Vergerus, first magnetically, then with magician's props, and he renders the coachman powerless. Or does he—in either case? Is his influence on Vergerus any more actual than the coachman's imaginary fetters? Is it not "true" that they demand from him what they want? The pathetic Mrs. Egerman insists that Vogler alone understands her. Needing to be understood, she does not distinguish between sexual magnetism and omniscience, and she tells her husband that Vogler seduced *her*. Similarly, Sara, one of the maids, who virtually rapes simple Simon, joins the Vogler outfit; she is so impressed by having been "seduced." Tubal's press-agent wisdom

enunciates the point as he sees it: of Sofia, the cook, who engulfs him on sight, he asserts, "It's power that counts, not faith. Sofia felt the power." (In view of these equivocations we may well entertain the ghoulish possibility that if Spegel didn't die the first time, perhaps he didn't the second, and that the good Dr. Vergerus anatomized a living corpse!) One of the most effective of Bergman's dramatic antitheses in this film is the circumstance of Vogler's first words, for which we have waited in prolonged suspense: "I hate them . . . I hate their faces, their bodies, their movements, their voices. But I'm afraid, too. And that makes me powerless." The speech is even more crucial when heard as an echo of a drunken servant's remarks in a preceding kitchen scene. "There's something special about mountebanks. Their faces make you mad . . . You want to smash them . . . You want to tread on them. Faces like Vogler's—"

I suspect *Ansiktet* will be one of Bergman's most misunderstood films. He has acquired prestige of such overwhelming proportions at so abrupt a pace (curious how ignored he was outside Sweden between *Hets*, 1944 and *A Woman's Dream*, 1956, one of his poorest films) that a begrudging reaction is bound to set in. Having entered, with assurance at last, the world of the nonliteral event, he is likely to pay for the step dearly—in terms of appreciation—particularly in the eyes of the Vergerus-Egermans who typify Anglo-American criticism (to say nothing of the Danish). They cannot for long afford to entertain transcendentalism touched by irony.

Finally noteworthy is the fact that Bergman's progress in creative film-making is accompanied by his increasing enlistment of the noncontemporary setting (as in *Gycklarnas Afton*, *Smiles of a Summer Night*, *The Seventh Seal*, the film here noted, and the one he is now making, *The Well of the Virgin*—inspired by a medieval Swedish ballad). Modern Sweden provides no sources richer than the "sommarlek" cliché to induce memorable images from her movie-makers; the welfare-state drive toward invariability and an incessant imitation of America at its most mediocre, if most efficient, level of operation, has consolidated the emotional inflexibility of the Swedish social scene, bequeathed by centuries of inclement weather cycles and deeply impervious Lutheranism. From the outset, even before the "folkshemmet" insurgence of 1932, the masterpieces of the Swedish film have invariably been set in a previous era or in a situation remote from the progressive-urban scene of Swedish pretensions. (*Hets*, again, may be thought of as an exception, yet it deals, allegedly, with a system no longer current in the school structure.) *The Outlaw and His Wife* (1917), *Arne's Treasure* (1919), *The Phantom Carriage* (both the 1920 and 1958 versions), *The Legend of Gosta Berling* (1923), *Himlaspelet* (The Road to Heaven, 1942), *Miss Julie* (1951), *Gycklarnas Afton* (1953), and *Salka Valka* (1954): such films stand out from the contemporary-problem ones like the challenging steeples which alone redeem the "*efter U.S.-modell*" skyline of Stockholm's harbor—or like those evocative birch trees which in every spring most poignantly illuminate the sombre stilted uniformity established by massed acres of evergreen.—VERNON YOUNG

A Hole in the Head

This very agreeable film is bound to disappoint some of Frank Capra's admirers, but they can console themselves, between laughs, by reflecting that if Capra isn't making the kind of pictures he once did, they aren't seeing them as they once did. Much of his earlier work relied on a stereotype of the good little people resisting the bad big people; it belonged to the 'thirties and would seem out of place today (*He Who Must Die* notwithstanding). The goodness, however, remains, and accounts for some sticky passages, most of them centering on Eddie Hodges, a nice youngster but too patently an emblem of vulnerable innocence. He doesn't cry much, but you know he could, and shouldn't have to.

Missing, too, is the kind of ready-made conflict that many of Capra's earlier pictures had

enunciates the point as he sees it: of Sofia, the cook, who engulfs him on sight, he asserts, "It's power that counts, not faith. Sofia felt the power." (In view of these equivocations we may well entertain the ghoulish possibility that if Spegel didn't die the first time, perhaps he didn't the second, and that the good Dr. Vergerus anatomized a living corpse!) One of the most effective of Bergman's dramatic antitheses in this film is the circumstance of Vogler's first words, for which we have waited in prolonged suspense: "I hate them . . . I hate their faces, their bodies, their movements, their voices. But I'm afraid, too. And that makes me powerless." The speech is even more crucial when heard as an echo of a drunken servant's remarks in a preceding kitchen scene. "There's something special about mountebanks. Their faces make you mad . . . You want to smash them . . . You want to tread on them. Faces like Vogler's—"

I suspect *Ansiktet* will be one of Bergman's most misunderstood films. He has acquired prestige of such overwhelming proportions at so abrupt a pace (curious how ignored he was outside Sweden between *Hets*, 1944 and *A Woman's Dream*, 1956, one of his poorest films) that a begrudging reaction is bound to set in. Having entered, with assurance at last, the world of the nonliteral event, he is likely to pay for the step dearly—in terms of appreciation—particularly in the eyes of the Vergerus-Egermans who typify Anglo-American criticism (to say nothing of the Danish). They cannot for long afford to entertain transcendentalism touched by irony.

Finally noteworthy is the fact that Bergman's progress in creative film-making is accompanied by his increasing enlistment of the noncontemporary setting (as in *Gycklarnas Afton*, *Smiles of a Summer Night*, *The Seventh Seal*, the film here noted, and the one he is now making, *The Well of the Virgin*—inspired by a medieval Swedish ballad). Modern Sweden provides no sources richer than the "sommarlek" cliché to induce memorable images from her movie-makers; the welfare-state drive toward invariability and an incessant imitation of America at its most mediocre, if most efficient, level of operation, has consolidated the emotional inflexibility of the Swedish social scene, bequeathed by centuries of inclement weather cycles and deeply impervious Lutheranism. From the outset, even before the "folkshemmet" insurgence of 1932, the masterpieces of the Swedish film have invariably been set in a previous era or in a situation remote from the progressive-urban scene of Swedish pretensions. (*Hets*, again, may be thought of as an exception, yet it deals, allegedly, with a system no longer current in the school structure.) *The Outlaw and His Wife* (1917), *Arne's Treasure* (1919), *The Phantom Carriage* (both the 1920 and 1958 versions), *The Legend of Gosta Berling* (1923), *Himlaspelet* (The Road to Heaven, 1942), *Miss Julie* (1951), *Gycklarnas Afton* (1953), and *Salka Valka* (1954): such films stand out from the contemporary-problem ones like the challenging steeples which alone redeem the "*efter U.S.-modell*" skyline of Stockholm's harbor—or like those evocative birch trees which in every spring most poignantly illuminate the sombre stilted uniformity established by massed acres of evergreen.—VERNON YOUNG

A Hole in the Head

This very agreeable film is bound to disappoint some of Frank Capra's admirers, but they can console themselves, between laughs, by reflecting that if Capra isn't making the kind of pictures he once did, they aren't seeing them as they once did. Much of his earlier work relied on a stereotype of the good little people resisting the bad big people; it belonged to the 'thirties and would seem out of place today (*He Who Must Die* notwithstanding). The goodness, however, remains, and accounts for some sticky passages, most of them centering on Eddie Hodges, a nice youngster but too patently an emblem of vulnerable innocence. He doesn't cry much, but you know he could, and shouldn't have to.

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in common. The worthy poor always managed to do in the conniving rich in the last few reels, after such suspenseful sequences as Mr. Smith's filibuster, but there was usually some doubt as to just how they'd manage it. There were more surprises and more variety of scene, a sense that the story had all the space it needed. The small towns, the boxcars on the move, the halls of the mighty, have been replaced in *A Hole in the Head* by one small, handsomely photographed segment of Miami Beach. And the casting in depth that seemed to find room for every good character actor in Hollywood has given way to a platoon of stars. Some of these production values seem extraneous, though the color, particularly in one night scene at a dog track, is often handsome and William Daniels' CinemaScope cameras stay right on top of the small gestures and telling expressions that still distinguish Capra's work.

And the expressions do tell, the lines of Arnold Schulman's script are batted back and forth lightly but with perfect aim. Most film comedy has become so extravagant in conception (even in Ealing's "little" comedies) that the importance of technique is in danger of being forgotten. There is one scene here, basically serious and crucial to such plot as the picture possesses, that could serve as a model of how to keep a small joke going. There is nothing hilarious in a man sitting down in a chair that threatens to collapse under him, but Capra plays with the idea so skillfully, keeps up the suspense so long, and lets it go so gracefully that a fairly long sequence, with few camera setups, is sustained. This is something that Jacques Tati, working with more intricate comic ideas and much funnier images, failed to do, over and over again, in *Mon Oncle*. This is not to say that Capra has more comic genius than Tati, only that he is a director and this picture, in that sense, is directed.

In another sense, unfortunately, the film, or rather its plot, has no direction, and its origins in television and the stage are only too apparent. There is simply too little conflict and much too little motivation for a picture nearly two hours long. The hero isn't willing to be a "little man"; he has plans. "I'm not poor," he says, "I'm broke." The plans are obviously doomed from the start, since Sinatra's Tony is too good a Joe to be a success. (In this respect, at least, Capra hasn't changed. The film's real success-image, a promoter bloodcurdlingly well played by Keenan Wynn, is a thoroughgoing worm, and the decent people are desk clerks, cab drivers, and maids.) The only suspense hinges on whether Tony will realize the folly of his dreams in time to save his hotel from bankruptcy and his son from the living death of adoption by a miserly uncle. This is melodrama without the drama. In the end he keeps the boy, apparently keeps the hotel, gets a girl not only prettier but more sensible than the "wild bird" he's been playing around with, and so infects his brother that they're both convinced that hope is enough. Well. It isn't much, and it doesn't go anywhere, and the laughter-through-tears approach backfires. Leaving what? Mainly laughter.

For this is a funny picture, getting its laughs often and nearly always legitimately. There is an unconvincing caricature of a fun-loving chick dashing madly to her doom on a surfboard, played rather monotonously by the visually exciting Carolyn Jones. But most of the humor, even though the idiom is basically Yiddish and suffers a little by being given to supposed Italians, gets the greatest possible mileage from insults, shrugs, groans of despair, and downright boorishness. Some of this has been done before by Paddy Chayefsky, Shelley Berman, and even a few TV situation comedies, but seldom as well,

and never better than when delivered by Edward G. Robinson, whose performance here is a revelation. Rescued from a set of mannerisms so rigid in recent years as to cut off all feeling, Robinson—whether describing Turkish baths "where you can take off your clothes and meet people" or arranging a marriage in front of the parties involved and wondering "What did I say?"—is brilliant, a *schnorrer* to the hilt. Thelma Ritter, with a little less to work with, consistently hits the right note with no apparent effort. Jimmy Komack makes a fine happy ninny of cousin Julius, and Connie Sawyer has mastered a drunken walk to wonderful effect. Small pleasures, perhaps, but they add up, and the Hope that makes the consistency of *A Hole in the Head* rather gummy is less important than the hope held forth by the return of Frank Capra from the arid wastes of popular science.

—JOSEPH KOSTOLEFSKY

Les Mistons

For some little time now we have been hearing and reading about the crop of rising young French directors but we have had little opportunity to see their work at firsthand. Signs of a change are in view with the arrival of François Truffaut's *Les Mistons* and the promise of other films by the group shortly. This short film, the first by Truffaut, a French film critic whose writings have appeared in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, marks an auspicious debut.

Based on a story by Maurice Pons, *Les Mistons* (euphemistically translated into English as *The Mischief Makers*) recalls the activities of five young French boys on the threshold of adolescence as they move through a summer in which the magic circle of childhood is broken and they stumble hesitantly, unsurely, into the mysterious world of puberty. Baffled by a change they do not yet fully comprehend, the boys release their bewilderment over an awakening sensuality on a pair of young lovers, Gerard and Bernadette (played by Gerard Blain and Bernadette Lafont), spying upon and tormenting the pair, trailing them about the streets and through the woods, observing their love-making, deriding them by scratching obscenities on walls, jeering, and hooting, and releasing their ambivalent emotions by projecting their unfulfilled lusts onto the ripe young body of Bernadette, who in their eyes becomes something of a goddess—mysterious, desirable, unobtainable, a legend.

All of this is revealed through a combination of visuals and commentary, both of which weave a spell of poetic sensuality combined with a nostalgic tenderness for the lost innocence of childhood. The summer becomes something of a ritualistic *rite de passage*. In the words of the commentary, the boys discover themselves but lose themselves; they discover a new kind of love but lose the old kind. No longer children, not yet adults, they have been touched by the age-old serpent, who has revealed to them "the fate and the privilege of the flesh." The ritual, mythic element is stressed by the commentary (references to serpents, gods and goddesses, nymphs and satyrs; the description of the tennis game between the lovers as a rite, a ceremony of desire) and by the use of slow motion to heighten certain actions (a group of girls dancing; the boys falling in simulated death agonies as they machine-gun each other in play, only to spring to life again; one of the boys bending down to smell Bernadette's bicycle seat; and particularly a repeated image of the heads of the two lovers approaching each other in a kiss which, by its repetition and deliberation, transfigures and transcends time and partakes of the mythological and the divine).

The world of the lovers is in its own way as full of ritual as that of the boys, with its bicycles and athletics, its love play and nuzzlings, but here again there is a certain loss of innocence through an awareness of the cruelty of life and love (the pair watch in fascination and disgust a praying mantis devour its mate) and the capriciousness of fate (Gerard is killed on a mountain-climbing expedition, leaving Bernadette to walk alone through the autumn days like a tragic young goddess in black).

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Truffaut has told his story with economy and

Kim Novak and Frederic March in MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

precision, infusing it with humor, tenderness, and a poetic beauty. With an obvious eye on costs he has shot the film almost entirely out of doors, using such natural settings as woods, streets, steps, walls, an old arena, a bench, a railroad station. He has handled his camera with assurance and control, incorporating long traveling shots, slow motion, and speeded-up motion (in a bit involving a prank played by the boys on a man with a hose that is reminiscent of a comic gag from the early days of film). With his shots of girls walking, of girls riding on bicycles with skirts flying, and by keeping the camera close to Bernadette's body in the tennis game, he has evoked the proper air of sensuality. He has been completely successful in setting the tone desired and in the creation of mood in this "remembrance of things past." His film has more truth and life in its twenty-seven minutes than many films have in three or four times its length.—WILLIAM BERNHARDT

Middle of the Night

From Paddy Chayefsky, the filmgoer can usually expect the meat-and-potatoes of character development. He is more than a dogged young writer who insists on the actualities of common speech. He is a man concerned with the possible breadth and depth of love, and the limits we thoughtlessly put upon it. *Marty,* young enough but not very attractive, managed to grope his way toward affection. The boy in *The Bachelor Party* was baffled by his own irrational resistance to the responsibilities of love. *The Goddess* was a hopeless searcher, longing for an ideal relationship which could survive alongside her passionate love of self.

Middle of the Night is another *Marty* story. But this time the issue is maturely deliberated by a man who is aware of unusual odds—the dangers of dissatisfaction when a man of 56 marries a girl of 24.

The important thing about Chayefsky is his willingness to let people talk. This is supposed to be a dramatic fault. Among the more fastidious students of film, it is held to be a sin against the medium. Better a pistol-packing myth on horseback, they say, riding against the sky, than a real, miserable human being talking out his troubles in the huddled environment of modern life. Such film critics are more loyal to a mechanical mystique of their medium than they are to life.

Middle of the Night is a story about a man who is searching for the right thing to do. He talks about it, to himself and to others, and finally, despite the doubts of his family and the girl's family, the two lovers persuade each other it will work. There isn't much more than that. There is action, of course—they go to a mountain cabin for a week end; the girl's former husband comes back to see her.

But it is basically a story about a decision, and this decision concerns a couple of people we have come to care about. The most memorable moments are full of talk, and they are moments which reach deep into human life—the restaurant scene in which Jerry (Fredric March) gets up three times to leave, or the car sequence in which he orders Betty to stop being a child.

Surely for Mr. March this is one of the finest performances of a long and proud career. His early confrontation by a determined widow (Betty Walker) is a masterpiece of polite repugnance. The scene which follows is in pitiful counterpoint: he telephones another older woman, who turns him down. From the first tense tremor in his voice to the final slow withdrawal by the camera, his doubt and disappointment represent universal man in a familiar phase of torture quite unrelated to age.

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too much upon biting her fingers as a representation of nervousness. Certainly she has never been better. As for the others, they are a gallery of wonders: Glenda Farrell as Betty's mother and Lee Grant as her dismal friend; Joan Copeland as March's daughter, who "whacks him across the face with some kind of stupid psychology"; and Martin Balsam, the son-in-law who finally bursts out in a rage against his wife's father-fixation.

Delbert Mann has had some experience with this kind of story, and he is not afraid to linger on a medium two-shot if the words are the center of the scene. He is equally careful, in *Middle of the Night,* to alternate outdoors and indoors, excitement and quiet—March's drunk scene is as loud as the one in *The Best Years of Our Lives,* and it is almost as revealing. He makes good use of narrow halls and a narrow stairway in Betty's shabby apartment house. He frames her darkly in a narrow bedroom door as she slowly turns to face her ex-husband's return.

Film gives freedom to expand and repeat, and for the most part the writer and director have used this freedom with restraint. In the play, Jerry asks Betty to dinner on the very day he first shares the story of her life. The film allows him time to watch her at work, plant himself across the street and meet her on the walk, and finally work up the nerve to ask her for a date. It is a funny and touching sequence of events.

It is his refusal to depend on mere extremism for theatrical effect which makes Chayefsky such a responsible spokesman for mankind. But there is a strange excess of theatricalism about the ending of this picture. Jerry's business partner, who never found happiness in love, has to commit suicide in order for him to turn back from his despair and seek Betty in humility once more. It is a heavy weight for the conclusion to carry, and the embrace at the fade-out is banal and somewhat sad. We have now been delayed so much that we have time to wonder whether the issue raised by the film has been fully explored, after all.

If Chayefsky can tease us and startle us into recognition by his characters alone, his talent is rare enough for gratitude. We need not require him to be a poet, as well, and a structural engineer. This is his best-constructed film since *Marty,* and a more thoughtful and satisfying study of human life than any Hollywood film so far this year.—RICHARD DYER MACCANN

*The Beat Generation**

It is not quite clear whether Robert Frank and Alfred Leslie made their short on the beat generation in a mood of objective amusement or loving commitment. The mildly poetic camera, anyhow, establishes first off its own mood of gentle humor and holds it, with rare lapses, through the thirty minutes of the film. To the pleasant whine of an offstage wren, dreamily caroling that all her eggs are broken, we wake up early in the morning with a beatnik girl and her young son in their lower East Side apartment. The tender shots of this sleepy slattern pushing back the curtains and hovering uncertainly in the vicinity of her husband's scattered underwear (exactly what to do with it?) leave us somewhat unprepared for her outburst at the end of the film (and of the day), during which she slaps his face and accuses him of messing up their life with his no-account friends. But maybe Frank and Leslie wished us to infer that a full day spent in the company of Allen Ginsberg and Gregory Corso will turn any good little beat into a bad little bourgeoise, simply out of an instinct for self-preservation.

At any rate, shortly after breakfast Ginsberg and Corso appear, accompanied by beer. A rather charming sequence occurs here with the two poets squatting before a dingy white wall to drink and talk and cavort before the camera. There are striking close-ups of their expressive faces and mouse-nest hair rhythmically intercut with long shots of Ginsberg wildly dancing against the large, plain rectangles of the wall.

It should be noted that in Ginsberg we have a natural. His big, mobile features, jerky movements, and general expression of small-boy com-

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plicity clearly establish a personality and add considerably to the fun of the film. When he is out to ham it up (a series of infantile contortions in the bathroom mirror, for instance), the editing shears usually get there in time.

Now—still morning—the train-conductor husband (played by the painter, Larry Rivers) returns from work and joins the party. The wife picks up haphazardly and fetches and carries beer. Guests come and stay. To a background of baroque strings "The Bishop" enters with mother and sister. The women emphasize their conservative, "nesting" characteristics. They sit with their knees pressed together and never join the fun. A lovely girl sprawls reading all day on the bed. In a surreal sequence a crowd of bedraggled women huddles in the rain listening to "The Bishop" preaching beside the American flag, which—with a wicked frivolity—suddenly flaps across his face. When the wife explodes into a crying fit at the end of the evening and the husband retaliates by leaving with his friends, he tells her succinctly, "I certainly *do* know what there is to cry about and it hasn't anything to do with what's happening right now."

But this is the only overcharged note in an otherwise pleasant and unpretentious episode. One may regret that the film *doesn't* deal with what there is to cry about—it would probably have made a livelier and more provocative production—but this was obviously not its intention. Paradoxically, the chief fault of the film—its sloppy way of just-letting-things-happen—is also its very excellence, for the mood of aimlessness permeating it expresses well the casual indirection of the beat movement as a whole.

THE BEAT GENERATION : *Peter Orlofsky, Larry Rivers, Allen Ginsberg, Gregory Corso.*

Careful planning, however, might have achieved the same effect with both greater efficiency and greater artistry. But this would have necessitated a clear point of view on the part of the film-makers and, as is suggested at the beginning of this review, choice of attitude is precisely what they have avoided.

The other chief value of the short is also documentary: its intimate shots of the new Bohemia and its conventions. There is, however, a certain amateurish quality in the editing – now and again the camera hesitates on a dirty sink we have seen too often (in this and other films), or on stacked canvases that suggest a productivity apparently lacking in the lives portrayed. The surreal sequence is too long and rather awkwardly handled, as these interpolations so often are.

The score is mostly good jazz, but the script, written and narrated by the poet and novelist Jack Kerouac, ought to have been put in other hands. Lines like "his tortured socks" are inaccurate as well as overwrought: those socks (the husband's) aren't tortured, they are *limp*.

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Four Recent French Documentaries

The "serious" French director is unlike his Anglo-Saxon counterpart in that documentary film-making as such holds no special prestige for him. Many French directors of the postwar generation have, at some stage in their career, done documentary work (Louis Malle, Pierre Kast, Alain Resnais, Georges Franju) but with very few exceptions they all look upon this field merely as a *bonne école*, a good way to learn their trade; they have always been most interested in *transcending* the subjects they are given to treat (in almost every case their films were done to order for the government or private industry). By this I do not simply mean that they make a very free use of film technique to "get at the heart" of their subject, as does Lindsay Anderson, for example; no, their subject matter interests them *only* in so far as it enables them to develop some highly personal fantasy, generally far removed from what anyone else would consider the "heart" of the subject at hand.

A brilliant exception to this rule is Jean Rouch, who made *Les Maîtres-Fous* and *Treichville* (*Moi, un Noir*), and who is a true documentarist in the Anglo-Saxon sense; a rather sad confirmation of it is Agnés Varda, whose recent commissioned documentaries are so inferior to *l'Opéra-Mouffe* and *La Pointe Court* (both financed by herself) precisely because her strained efforts to transcend imposed subjects led her into the most embarrassingly mannered preciosity. The most remarkable confirmation of the rule is, of course, Georges Franju, the uncontested master of postwar French documentary. In his case, "transcendence" is a mild word indeed, for did he not turn a film on slaughterhouses into one of the most beautifully antirealistic films ever made (*Le Sang des Bêtes*) and a short commissioned by the Defence Ministry into a fiercely pacifistic masterpiece (*Hôtel des Invalides*)? That Franju was never really interested in the Griersonian conception of documentary becomes apparent when one sees all of his thirteen shorts: four of his first five commercial shorts were masterpieces or near-masterpieces, but by the time he had made his seventh he had completely lost interest in the two-reel format and was only biding his time, waiting for his chance to make features; that chance has finally been given him, but it may have come too late.

These are three extreme cases; but the most recent documentary work of Alain Resnais and Chris Marker (who had previously collaborated to make *Les Statues Meurent Aussi*, still banned by the French censor because of its anticolonialist sequences) provides equally interesting examples of both the healthy, and the less healthy results which can come of this typically French attitude towards documentary.

Careful planning, however, might have achieved the same effect with both greater efficiency and greater artistry. But this would have necessitated a clear point of view on the part of the film-makers and, as is suggested at the beginning of this review, choice of attitude is precisely what they have avoided.

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Chris Marker is a personable young man with excellent taste and a fine cultural background (he edits a series of books for that enterprising postwar publishing house, *Les Editions du Seuil*): in short the ideal young French intellectual. His first film (or at least the first to attract any general attention) was called *Dimanche à Pékin,* and was a prettily impressionistic color-study of "Peking the picturesque."

Now aside from the rather irritating implications of this de-politicized attitude (Marker is at least a fellow-traveller, and only just a shade more critical than is to be expected) the most distinctive, and no less irritating, feature of this visually handsome little film was its commentary. Written by the director himself, it rambled on from the first frame to the last, piling up *mots d'auteur, astuces, calembours,* and every other kind of word-play the French language allows, with the most astonishing facility—and self-consciousness.

My first impression on seeing *Lettre de Sibérie* was that Marker must have found Siberia a pretty dull place, or else that his movements were so restricted that he wasn't allowed to film anything of interest; why else had he had to go to such incredible lengths to "jazz up" his film? Because jazz it up he did. The mainstay of this operation was, of course, the inevitable commentary, ten times wittier here than in *Dimanche à Pékin,* ten times faster and denser, too: you've really got to be on your toes, this time. All in all, it *is* a pretty brilliant job of verbal juggling, though a passing attempt to "transcend" his subject by suggesting that *his* trip has something to do with one of Henri Michaux's fabulous journeys (the opening line of commentary is "Je vous écris d'un pays lointain") is rather distastefully inappropriate in view of the willfully superficial, slightly smug, and above all thoroughly unpoetical tone adopted.

I'm afraid, however, that were it not for a few *morceaux de bravoure* which were *not* shot in Siberia, and which I shall come to in a moment, a blind man could have as much fun sitting through a screening of this film as we who have the gift of sight; in fact, he would probably have a better time than I did, for he at least, would not have his attention continually distracted from Marker's witticisms by the incredibly dead, ugly, grainy images which were, inexplicably enough, all that he and his cameraman were able to bring back from their stay in that "land of contrasts" (to cite the central cliché around which Marker so skillfully wove his commentary). Painfully aware, as I expect he must have been, of the visual poverty of his footage, Marker decided to interlard the purely "documentary" sequences of his film with two or three items shot in a Paris studio and on the animation table. The first of these is a set of animated variations on the theme of mammoth elephants, treated in a rather noisy, UPA-like style which is not unamusing. With the second—a parody of publicity shorts, suggested by the manifold uses to which the Siberian puts his reindeer ("Employez RENNE pour votre lessive!")—the joke begins to wear a bit thin, and as for the third. . . There is, however, one other stunt sequence which I feel is worth describing, not only because it is one of the most amusing episodes in the film, but because it will help to convey the more than ambiguous political implications behind Marker's apparently irresponsible wit.

Not far from the end of the film we are shown a short sequence filmed in a Siberian city under construction: a red bus full of workers drives over an as yet unpaved street, and passes a car driven by some administrative personnel, while nearby a crew of laborers are leveling the street-bed by dragging a heavy timber over the earth. These shots are then run through three more times, each time with a different commentary. First comes the "progressive" commentary (this *modern* bus is red, the *color of the socialist revolution*; as we can see, both workers and administrative personnel are motorized; these happy workers are hard at work building their own city, etc.); next comes the "reactionary" commentary (this *crowded* bus is red, *the color of blood*; automobiles like this one are scarce, uncomfortable, and terribly expensive; the workers leveling the road are being forced to use the most primitive of tools to do

so, etc.); and finally we have what Marker calls the "objective" commentary (the bus is just red and is less crowded than the Paris *Métro* at rush-hour; this passing Mongolian worker—described in the reactionary commentary as "sinister"—is merely cross-eyed, etc.) It was actually very funny to see and hear, but in point of actual fact, the workers leveling that road may or may not have been supplied by the neighboring "reform through labor" camp, and if they were not, why then this city may or may not be springing up on the site which the former inmates of a recently disbanded camp have "freely chosen" for their new home.

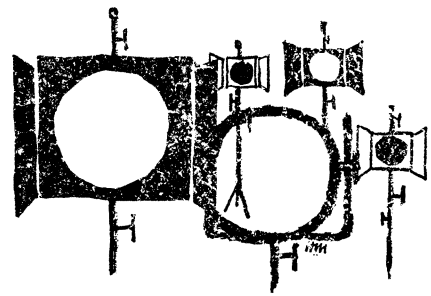
In the end, though, one does have to admit that, by dint of a tremendous amount of brain-racking, Marker did manage to turn really deadly material into a fairly entertaining film. Let us therefore hope that the *succès d'estime* this film has earned in Paris (among bourgeois critics) will enable him to have another crack at it, and that this time he will employ his wit and resourcefulness behind his camera as well as over his typewriter.

Alain Resnais resembles Chris Marker in many respects. He, too, is witty and cultivated (though a bit less complacent), he too is an authentic French intellectual (a rarer quality among French film-makers than may generally be supposed abroad). But unlike Marker, he has a deep feeling for specifically cinematic values. Even in such youthful essays as *Van Gogh* and *Guernica* or in the purely pedagogical *From Renoir to Picasso*, his sure sense of rhythm and tone were clearly apparent. His two most recent documentaries (and perhaps his last, since he has just finished his first feature, *Hiroshima, Mon Amour*, and it is rare that feature directors ever revert to shorts) are two of the most remarkable examples I know of "abstracted" film-making, in the same sense that Cézanne in his later years can be said to have "abstracted" landscapes and still-lifes.

The first of these was *Toute la Mémoire du Monde*, a black-and-white *étude* (with all the musical and pictorial allusions this word implies) on the French National Library.

In my opinion the basic *formal* conception of this work is highly original, and even revolutionary: from beginning to end the film is one long "dolly-shot." On a purely technical level, of course, this description is but a figure of speech; the technique of *Toute la Mémoire du Monde* has nothing whatever to do with the rather primitive "ten-minute takes" found in Hitchcock's film *Rope*. But whereas the over-all impression created by Hitchcock's camera as it doggedly followed his characters around the set was an absolutely static one (as a matter of fact, this was the most interesting feature of that film), Resnais produces an effect of absolute dynamism by juxtaposing dozens of highly stylized dolly-shots designed to "describe" the various halls, reading rooms and stacks of the edifice on the Rue Richelieu.

At the very beginning of the film, a mysterious shot done in a dark cellar of the library sets the prevailing visual and emotional tone: panning upward from a dusty, haphazard pile of old books (which has served as background for the credits) the camera discovers a strange black metallic apparatus with three gaping eyes (it is actually another camera from which the magazines, which might enable the lay spectator to identify it, have been removed), a microphone is lowered into the frame and the narrator's filtered voice begins the weird, evocative commentary.



After the initial shot described above, the camera sets out through the complex "security system"—dozens of heavy gates and grills, sluggish open-work elevators, and an army of vizored attendants, constantly checking permits and turning keys in locks. The formal organ-

ization of this sequence is of a controlled complexity practically unparalleled in film-making: the various permutations and combinations devised by Resnais in juxtaposing similar and/or contrasting trucking-speeds and trucking-directions, the play of light and shadow and the spatio-dynamic ambiguities within each separate shot, engender patterns of rhythm and tone which are not unlike the free, highly intellectualized structures found in the work of certain contemporary composers. Resnais, who has long been considered one of France's best cutters, does not generally draw up his cutting scheme in the cutting room, as do most American directors, nor during the elaboration of the script as most English and many French directors do: he fashions his cutting plan *while he is shooting,* and has a rare capacity for conceiving each shot as a plastic function of the shots which are to precede and follow it in the final work-print. As for the spatio-dynamic ambiguity referred to above, one of the best examples is afforded by a shot in which the camera tracks along a cat-walk around the outside of a dome over the main reading-room. (By implication the camera's "eye" is that of a guard pacing the prison wall.) Although the audience are conscious of the fact that "they" are advancing along the cat-walk, the smooth curves of the dome and hand-rail, together with the perfectly white sky in the background, create a double impression of absolute stillness and undefinable motion.

Finally, having got past all the barriers separating the "prisoners" from the outside world, we reach the "cell-blocks": the stacks, with their long dark aisles filled by the echoing footsteps of invisible guards. Here I should like to say a word about the photography of Ghislain Cloquet (who did the splendid color photography in *Nuit et Brouillard*). His accomplishment in lighting the cramped quarters this film was shot in as though he were working on the best-equipped set in Hollywood, the way he managed to dehumanize the library attendants (whom we see constantly throughout the film, without ever really seeing them at all) and humanize their prisoners, the books, rank him, I feel, as one of the finest cinematographers in the world.

A word, too about the score of this film: it is signed by Maurice Jarre, whose remarkable music for Franju's *Hôtel des Invalides* may be familiar to some readers. His music for *Toute la Mémoire du Monde,* though perhaps a bit over-eery in spots, evinces the high degree of proficiency he has attained turning out incidental music for the Théâtre National Populaire, and considering the general mediocrity of film music the world over, certainly deserves praise for its solid orchestration and relatively audacious atonality. (Unfortunately, Resnais was ill-advised enough to ask Pierre Barbaud, whose amateurish music had already substantially contributed to the mediocrity of Chris Marker's films, to do the score for his next documentary, and except for a few measures written in a fairly successful imitation of Berg's early twelve-tone style, he fared no better on this assignment than he did in Marker's films.)

During the second part of *Toute la Mémoire du Monde,* we follow a book on its journey back through the maze of corridors and elevators as it rises toward the sunlit reading-room for a few hours of blessed freedom, able at last to fulfill its knowledge-giving role, and the film ends with an exquisite combination pan-and-dolly shot beneath the famous vaulted ceiling of the library's main reading-room.

Though less ambitious, on the face of it, than *Toute la Mémoire du Monde,* Resnais's most recent short, *Le Chant du Styrène* (first shown publicly in Paris in March of this year) is perhaps even more brilliantly perfect. I say less ambitious because, in a sense, "it has all been done before": *le styrène* is a type of plastic—polystyrene. But rather than an industrial documentary, the film is a synthesis of visual abstraction and verbal lyricism, and as such it has probably never been equalled since the heyday of British documentary. The film opens with a very startling shot done in stop-time photography in which we see strange tentacular shapes of garishly colored plastic "growing" just as plants used to grow in the *Secrets of Life* series or in Rouquier's *Farrébique.* The half-

dozen shots that follow are all in the same vein: we seem to be visiting some weird plastic garden or subterranean grotto, and though we recognize some of the objects shown us as knife- and fork-handles or dish-racks, there is no doubt but what they are *also* tropical plants or stalactites. This sequence is accompanied with those few measures in Barbaud's score which have some musical stature, and this effectively heightens the sense of strangeness. As an added refinement, the elongated *Dyaliscope** frame is filled in for each shot with fuzzy, hardly visible geometric shapes which blend with the dark-colored background and offer a kind of neoplastic contrast to the baroque vegetation.

Suddenly, in the very center of the lower border of the huge screen there appears a tiny red bowl, and the commentator's voice is heard for the first time, making a literary pun which is, in a way, a counterpart to the punning title: "Temps, suspends ton bol." The "scene" changes and we begin to explore, still in tremendous close-ups which destroy all sense of proportion, a factory in which household objects are being manufactured from polystyrene. This is the first stage of the journey we are to take as we follow the plastic backwards from its finished products to its most elementary origins. Stated this way, the schema of this film is very banal, but we must not forget that this schema is to be elaborated upon by Alain Resnais and . . . Raymond Queneau. The author of *My Friend Pierrot* has written for this film one of the most brilliant and witty texts ever spoken on the screen. It is in the form of a long picaresque poem, couched in what I expect are rather free alexandrins, and bears a hilarious resemblance to the long narrative poems of Victor Hugo (a quotation from whose work serves as preface to the film). Unfortunately it is quite impossible to give any idea of the dry humor of this mischievous text, without resorting to long, untranslatable quotations.

Alain Resnais and his cameraman, Sacha Vierny (to whom, inexplicably, was ascribed the miserable photography of *Lettre de Sibérie*) have performed a veritable *tour de force* in 'industrial" camera-work. The acid contrast between candy-colored ribbons, pellets, and sheets of plastic as they pass through the gamut of presses and conveyor belts and the steely greys and browns of the machinery itself, is more than simply striking: it serves to create a perfectly coherent *abstract* universe, in which the sudden appearance of a line of workers shuffling oddly into the factory toward the end of the film—practically the only shot in which the "natural" spectrum is given full play—produces the shock of a rude awakening, as it recalls the irksome presence of mere humanity on the edge of this mechanical fairy-land. (This dehumanization is reminiscent of a similar quality in *Toute la Mémoire du Monde*). The dynamic use of color is also remarkably refined: the camera is often in movement, but its movements never seem banal or gratuitous as they do in so many industrial films, and the reason is that brightly colored fore- or back-grounds are constantly sliding past steely back- or foregrounds in breathtaking kaleidoscopic fashion. One remarkable use of color as a dynamic element occurs in a *fixed* shot, in which we see tens of thousands of orange-colored plastic pellets sifting through a steel screen: the blue-grey steel appears in the most unexpected places in the vast frame and seems slowly to devour the brightly colored pellets, for the camera-angle chosen makes it impossible to tell that these are simply falling through the holes. *Le Chant du Styrène* lasts some twenty minutes, and I should say that, photographically speaking, there is only one shot in the entire film which I have really "seen before" (the classical shot of red-hot slag falling in huge viscous slices into a slowly moving string of gondolas).

The most important element of synthesis in the film is the relationship between the metric structure of Queneau's verse and the relaxed rhythm with which Vierny's startling images are made to succeed one another. In the case

* *Dyaliscope* is one of the optical processes which the French have drawn from their compatriot Henri Chrétien's original anamorphosing lens. It is far superior to Cinemascope in every respect: clearer image, no distortion in panning shots, etc.

of this film, I presume that Resnais' *montage* was, at least in part, conceived after the shooting was over, for the use of the verse meter as a kind of bar-line regulating the leisurely syncopation of the editing is far too subtle to be accidental.

Finally, as Queneau leads us farther and farther back towards the sources of polystyrene—coal, petroleum, etc.—he seems suddenly aware that there is no reason why this account should ever stop, and with a few speculative verses on the prehistoric origins of coal and petroleum he decides, still without breaking the meter, that further investigation is better left "à d'autres documentaires," and this provocative little masterpiece just seems to stop . . . on a close-up of the seething jade-green sea.

—NOEL BURCH

Book Reviews

The Japanese Film: Art and Industry, by Joseph L. Anderson and Donald Richie. Tokyo and Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1959. $7.50.

The subtitle of this book is no accident. On page 345 the authors summarize their argument thus: "That excellent films continue to be made is not to the credit of the industry but to the credit of those few men, directors and producers usually, who have the integrity and sheer brute strength to fight against what is surely one of the most conservative, artistically reactionary, inefficient, and unprofessional film industries in the world." In the introduction, Kurosawa, director of *Rashomon,* supports their argument and goes on to regret that it was a period film which won for him the Venice prize in 1951. He would have been much happier, and the prize would have had more meaning, he says, if he "had made and had been honored for something showing as much of present-day Japan as *Bicycle Thieves* showed of modern Italy . . . because Japan produces contemporary-life films of the caliber of the DeSica picture at the same time that it also produces those period-films, exceptional and otherwise, that in large part are all the West has seen and continues to see of Japanese cinema."

The bulk of the book, in all its great detail, might be thought of as substantiating these two arguments: it is difficult to make good films in Japan, and the Japanese contemporary-life film no less than the period film is an important part of world cinema. The initiated will not be surprised by either argument. Small non-Japanese-speaking audiences in the United States have in the last ten years or so been seeking out representative Japanese film showings in obscure New York Buddhist temples, or in Japanese neighborhood theaters up and down the Pacific Coast, where they were always at the mercy of their ignorance, but were generally rewarded by their lack of temerity.

But for others, the book will be a surprise, and even without its strongly eclectic point of view it would still be fascinating reading for anyone with an interest in the cinema, or in twentieth-century Japan. Its authors have themselves been responsible for most of the English-language articles on the Japanese cinema published so far by the film journals. Their present work is certain to remain a standard reference work for many years. Its only predecessor of substance generally available in a European language is *Le Cinéma Japonais* by Marcel and Shinobu Guiglaris and this is the first in English. Its publication has been eagerly awaited and it is rarely disappointing.

The plan of the first part is similar to that used by Lewis Jacobs in his *Rise of the American Film.* Advancing more or less chronologically, it examines the origins, organization, and achievements of the Japanese film industry, introducing directors, producers, studio executives, actors, writers as they appear in time, every now and then stopping to examine a more general situation or trend, such as the introduction of sound or the wide screen, government censorship during the war and occupation con-

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trol after it (when many notable films were ordered destroyed), the intra-industry fights for control of the market and its eventual division among the current big six, the customary failure of co-productions, and the apparently typical Japanese tendency to turn full circle as public or government opinion demands. In the second part, the authors concentrate on a select list of directors and actors, the techniques and content of Japanese films, and their public.

The directors chosen for especial attention are in the main men whose names have at least been mentioned in Western film journals, but by no means all or even their most recent work has been seen here, and in the case of one, Ozu, almost nothing has been seen outside local festivals. In the order in which the authors take them they are: Kenji Mizoguchi (known here for *Ugetsu, Chikamatsu Monegatari, Street of Shame*); Heinosuke Gosho (*Where Chimneys Are Seen, An Inn at Osaka*); Yasujiro Ozu, about whom Donald Richie writes in this issue; Mikio Naruse (*Floating Clouds, Untamed Woman*); Shiro Toyoda (*Grass Whistle, Snow Country*); Keisuke Kinoshita (*Twenty-four Eyes, She Was Like a Wild Chrysanthemum*); Akira Kurosawa (*Rashomon, Seven Samurai*); Kimisaburo Yoshimura, none of whose films have been generally seen here; Tadashi Imai (*Rice*).

In biographical sketches of these men, the authors manage to give a solid impression of each, his weaknesses (some of them self-confessed) as well as his strengths. Of some we have had earlier experience, while others like Yoshimura are almost completely strange to us. Even in the case of the former it is of value to have more information as, for example, on Kurosawa's working methods (including, surprisingly, a frequent use of a multicamera setup) and on the scripts he writes for others. (There is, however, no complete explanation of why he continues to write, nor is the independent quality of these scripts always estimated.) Various myths about *Rashomon* are buried—it was not commercially unsuccessful in Japan, nor was it typical of the Japanese period film.

Of equal value is the authors' care to explain the various genres of Japanese films, and to emphasize the importance for most film-makers of distinguishing between these genres (with the insistent exception of Yoshimura, who shows some of the irritation of John Ford when critics make an attempt to classify his work). Among the genres which are distinguished and discussed are *jidai-geki* (period films), *gendai-geki* (films about contemporary life), *shomin-geki* (films about the "common people," particularly the lower-middle class), and the short-lived but sensational type known in English as the sun-tribe films, *taiyozoku*—violent, adolescent, and rebellious.

Incredible as it may seem, the six major companies now control the industry in such a way as virtually to eliminate competition, having managed to agree not only on the nominal part of the market which each has special claim to (rural audience for one, white-collar group for another, and so on), but also on an "exclusive-use" system by which no studio may make use of the technical staff or talent of any other company. Films are more and more made on a production-line method (long the dream of many American studios), at an average budget of $70,000 (for Toho) and an average income of $190,000 (50% of the gross). A studio must be capable of turning out a picture a week, otherwise its theater chain will have to look elsewhere, and the studio will lose its block-booking advantages. Anderson and Richie are rightly afraid of this stabilization of the industry, although from their own account of the infighting within the industry (much of it startling, much merely ludicrous) a stable situation may not be long-lived.

In the introduction, Kurosawa seemed pleased by the standards of criticism maintained by the authors in this book. They seem to agree, on the whole, with my personal judgment of those films which have been shown here, but too often their grounds for criticism are vaguely expressed or concealed behind such aphorisms as "truly cinematic" or "essence of cinema." They are particularly vague at various critical moments when we had hoped for clarity, as for example in the discussion of Eisenstein's theories about the Japanese cinema (p. 57) and in some references to pace in Japanese films (p. 325 and p. 360). Sometimes they seem to overrate films (for

example, Toyoda's *A Cat, Shozo, and Two Women*), and sometimes they skim over a subject area which we would have thought would deserve much more attention. More important than the chapter on actors, for example, might have been one on cameramen. As it is, there are only a few references to individual photographers and their contribution, in addition to some notes about their organization in the studios. The difficulties of editors, script writers, and composers are adequately illustrated, but some of the stylistic mannerisms of the Japanese sound track might have received more attention—as, for example, the trick (usually effective) of introducing a new scene or sequence with a sharp percussive sound, usually on top of the cut. It is said that Kurosawa does most of his own editing, but we might wonder about some of the others, and whether there are any editors in Japan with an independent reputation—as here for example, in the case of Elmo Williams or the late Merrill White.

The style of the book is often lively and almost always is unstilted and unimitative. The impression is usually given of the authors' desire to get at and express their own opinions rather than repeating those of others, though with the seemingly exhaustive coverage of early, middle, and late films this is doubtless not entirely the case. They take pains to give the themes of the films they discuss, however briefly, so that a secondary scholar could do his own generalizing. Some of their phrasing is awkward, as with the often-used construction "unlike in other countries." The most serious deficiency is the total absence of bibliographical material. Perhaps it was too varied to be finished in time for this first edition, or perhaps it was thought that the available scholarship for Japanese sources was too limited to merit its inclusion. But it is usually wise for authors to leave this decision to the readers, and it is to be hoped that a later edition will reveal some of their secrets. The illustrations are on the whole good, and are well reproduced. The text is clearly printed and well designed, but the choice of chapter headings, in Part I, is rather self-conscious—"Slow Fade In," "Wipe," "Costume and Property." The chapter divisions, however, are thoughtful enough. The index is good.

The many excellences of this work will guarantee it a long life. The authors and publishers have served the film student well. — COLIN YOUNG

The Techniques of Film Animation, by John Halas and Roger Manvell. New York: Hastings House, 1959. $10.00.

For a long time the literature on animation was limited to a few volumes, with some of the choice works available only in foreign-language editions. Luckily or unluckily as the case may be, the last few years have presented us with a plethora of reading matter on the subject. Thoughtful articles on animation can be uncovered if one bothers to sift the inordinate amount of material which fills the journals and trade publications of today's film industry. A good example would be the extensive coverage afforded the medium in the recent *Sight & Sound*. The article was both informative and stimulating, an unusual combination.

The series, which has run in *American Cinematographer* for many months, is a good example of the stultifying approach to this subject. It was written to give enlightenment to all those film technicians who look upon animation as the magical half-brother of motion pictures. The result is an offhand treatment of the most pedestrian sort, leaving the reader convinced that animation is the domain of dull and witless lovers of tedium. It is in contrast to this sort of

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material that *Techniques of Film Animation* finds an important place.

The Halas-Manvell book is one of the most recent additions to the Focal Press series, an English library of guidebooks on film and television production. Most of the books in this series are very commendable as technical reference works, taking a place beside "Spottiswoode" and other comprehensive volumes.

It is rather unfair to criticize this book on the grounds that it is a bit stodgy, since by nature technical books seem to end up that way. This academic flavor will appeal to many readers who find excitement in such things as strict detailing of complicated areas or the inclusion of voluminous appendixes. This book claims to have the longest glossary of animation terms ever published.

To those who find in animation a mathematical funhouse, there is a section explaining the application of parabolic, hyperbolic, logarithmic, and exponential functions to animation moves and planning—to my knowledge the first article of its kind to grace the medium.

There is even a question-and-answer survey entitled "Opinions About the Future." Here one can find some fragments of capsulized wisdom from the modern animation industry. To mention only a few, we have platitudes and clichés from Steve Bosustow, as well as acumen in the epigrams of John Hubley or Phil Stapp.

This is definitely not a book that one relaxes with in front of the fireplace on long winter evenings. It contains little of interest to those who are looking for philosophy of film or reflections on the art of animation. The book begins by tracing the evolutionary aspects of animation and then moves rapidly into the nuts and bolts of production, where it stays.

It is almost impossible to wholly explain the vagaries which surround animation production even to those people directly concerned in the art. This being the case, any book which does a good job in outlining and discussing the methods of production will serve as a valuable dictionary aid. Despite its limitations there is a great deal of information crammed into this little book.—BENJAMIN JACKSON

Correspondence & Controversy

Power Among Men

Your reviewer Thalia Selz must be a hard, hard woman. In her treatment of the UN film, *Power Among Men*, she shows no sympathy for the fact that this film, almost uniquely in present-day theatrical production, has been made as a serious work of independent film-making, apart from usual considerations of box-office and conventional success; it is an attempt to symbolize basic and world-wide problems in a responsible way. Perhaps, as she says, it fails; but doesn't such an attempt deserve more sympathy than openly meretricious films like *Rio Bravo*, which another of your reviewers hands a nice bouquet? What we need in film reviewing is more love of the film and less intellectual condescension.

—JOHN HARDY
Eureka, Calif.

[Mrs. Selz may have been impolite in her review, but as Mr. Hardy almost admits, she seems to be right in her analysis; and if "serious" films must be made allowances for, perhaps their seriousness needs extra scrutiny? (The truest sympathy is surely not the most indulgent, and love of film must surely mean a love of what is found excellent without hedging.) As to the question of critical stance among our reviewers: we try to make sure our reviewers are as correct as the nature of reviewing allows regarding the aesthetic qualities of films—which we take to be somewhat though by no means completely separable from their intentions. Mr. Fielding, for example, clearly said that *Rio Bravo* is hokum—but very competent hokum. Our reviewers differ quite widely, as is inevitable and desirable, on the political, moral, and philosophical positions by which they explicitly or implicitly judge a film's intentions; we trust they differ less on aesthetic criteria.—ED.]

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Film Scholars Organize

While much has been written on the subject of the cinema in the United States during the past fifty years, no central body has existed to act as a clearing house, a center of interest and exchange of knowledge, and of scholarly study of the field of the moving image. The need for such an organization had been increasingly felt, and at last, at the Third Annual Conference on Cinema, held in New York at the Museum of Modern Art last March, the looked-for society was officially founded, as The Society of Cinematologists. The purpose of the Society, as described in its constitution, is "the study of the moving image." The description was purposely drawn broadly, with the fact clearly in mind that the dominant form for the exchange of emotions and ideas in the world today is moving images, accompanied by sound. The concern of the society is to be with the craft and art of this medium whether it be known as cinema, film, motion picture, or movies; whether it be on celluloid or tape, viewed on a screen or shot from a tube, transported in a can, cable, or through the air.

Membership is open to those concerned with motion pictures as a liberal art. The degree of concern is to be judged by the Council and confirmed, if recommended, by the membership. Concern means devotion to the medium as craft and art, regardless of an individual's academic or professional position. A scholarly posture must be the measurement of concern, as well as proof of individual competence. Scholarship is tangible, in writing, in works, and in teaching. The Society is a fellowship of scholars in spirit, mind, and performance.

Applicants should send personal and professional data to the Secretary, Professor Hugh Gray, 12022 Coyne Street, Los Angeles 49, California.

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