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FILM QUARTERLY is published by the University of California Press, Berkeley 4, California. $1.00 per copy, $4.00 per year (higher rates abroad—see your subscription agent). Editor: ERNEST CALLENBACH. Assistant to the Editor: CHRISTINE LEEFELDT. Los Angeles Editor: COLIN YOUNG. New York Editor: ROBERT HUGHES. Rome Editor: LETIZIA CIOTTI MILLER. Paris Editor: GINETTE BILLARD. Chicago Editor: CAROL BRIGHTMAN. Advisory Editorial Board: ANDRIES DEINUM, AUGUST FRUGÉ, HUGH GRAY, ALBERT JOHNSON, PAUL JORGENSEN, NEAL OXENHANDLER. Views expressed in signed articles are those of the authors. Indexed in *International Index to Periodicals* and *Art Index*. Published quarterly. Second-class postage paid at Berkeley, California, and at additional mailing offices. Printed in U.S.A.

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his talk about art as a crucible sounds odd—that kind of mystic lacks the proper stamp. Or the coy omission of film-makers whose work does in fact approximate the writer's ideas about "professional" cinema—Dan Drasin, Ed Emschwiller, Helen Levitt.

What is sad about this, and worth more than a passing sneer from those who care for the art, is that the foundations are in theory supposed to provide the intellectual risk capital for a society whose formal power centers have little concern for art or ideas; this is, in principle, why their funds are not taxed away into the government's coffers. In practice, even the giants are timorous and conventional beasties in almost all their grants. *Time's* sour reaction to Ford's surprisingly adventurous set of grants hence does our national cultural scene no service. But we may expect with some confidence that among the lucky film-makers at least several will produce films of top quality which are genuinely novel. This will be good return for money: the total budget for grants ["tuns of gold"] was below that for a low-budget Hollywood film or a modest TV spectacular. The Ford Foundation, in short, deserves a modest pat on the back, and not this elbow in the kidney.

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New Periodicals

Moviegoer (Box 128, New York 9, N.Y.—$1.00 per copy, $3.25 per year) is the best of the new crop of U.S. film journals. Editor James Stoller has adopted the sound policy of gathering good writers and giving their highly personal reactions full scope. The first issue contains a variety of articles and reviews, reprints of some of Pauline Kael's fine blurbs for the Berkeley Cinema Guild, a curious note by Paul Goodman explaining why he and his friends don't take films very seriously, and comments on the Great Auteur Debate.

CAROL BRIGHTMAN

The Word, The Image, And *The Silence*

In contemporary criticism, particularly when it "pans," it becomes increasingly obvious that the words of seeming description just don't stick—at least not to what happens on the screen. Instead, it is the paper wars which are supported, the sectarian skirmishes of critics whose periodic schedules encourage newsy jurisdiction at the price of understanding. Film criticism has, in effect, largely become an awkward series of maneuvers between camps, by which critics can distinguish themselves not according to their singular perceptions, but simply *from* each other. That they fail even in that is obvious from the surprising coincidnce of fault-finding phrases which, in the hands of many serious critics, only exceeds Crowther's anxious preoccupation with "negativism" by a degree of literacy, or by a matter of taste. It would appear, from a cursory reading of such regular critics as Kauffman, Simon, and then Sarris, that they are often intent upon resisting those cinematic impressions which can*not* be subsumed beneath a single word or phrase which judges, while it presumes to describe. Yet it is just these impressions of which the best of modern cinema is made.

Truffaut, Godard, Antonioni, and Bergman in *The Silence* may be analyzed according to a literary principle of dislocation, for example; but to superimpose on that a suspicion of formlessness which slips easily into charges of deliberate obscurantism, or irreverence for the "fullness of life" (a novelistic ideal we've clung to long after the fragmentations of modern life have undermined it), is a tricky pastime of critics who have inherited movies largely by default, in place of the new novels which have abandoned them. Like much of recent European literature these films defeat the pundit; their meanings (or apparent lack thereof) cannot be paraphrased, much less used as sticks to beat or tame the very animals from which they are wrenched. Whenever meaning is attributed to man or deed within these films, it characteristically presents itself as simply a further phenomenological routine: we take it or leave it depending on whether or not it is displaced by another, or left hanging. But first we note its presence on its own peculiar terms. Recognition without judgment, unfortunately, has always been rare in the West; only in our time we have forgotten that it is the essential distinction which would make the critic's imperative a worthwhile one.

"Ingmar Bergman's *The Silence*," John Simon submits, "is, I am sorry to say, a disappointing film" (*New Leader*, Feb. 17). I maintain it is not, but my first concern here is to question the *technique* of Simon's judgment. I choose his review because it so effectively spans the gap between the news hacks, bedeviled with messages of promise, and those critics who know better than to freight movies with an irrelevant duty to console—but who nevertheless have not eluded that vocabulary which scales their plus and minus value according to vague normative assumptions of what "says" something, and what does not. Essentially there is no difference between the affirmative mania, bored in the face of gratuitous invention, and the splenetic disaffection of critics such as Simon who can't put up with [Godard's] "attitudinizing and maundering about the human crisis" (*NL*, Sept. 30, 1963) at the expense—*of what*? Of succinct statement presumably, direct narration, content unencumbered by stylistic options. It is hard to guess the alternative because it forces us to stop talking about modern films and begin talking about drama perhaps, or nineteenth-century novels—some art where, alas, the blind of the camera is absent.

We do know, however, what happens to the critic when a modern film is found "maundering"; so will his attention. "Emptiness, boredom and lack of transcendental values" will, by virtue of a peculiarly anxious empathizing, guarantee the emptiness, boredom, and lack of a transcendental response from the spectator. As if these emotions projected in the film are merely projections of living tensions, the spectator suffers accordingly, mistaking art for life. He is accustomed to the abreactions of their more positive or tragic counterparts. These latter emotions, he finds, do *not* tend to drag, without happy end or any end at all; conventionally, they respond to objective stimuli as well as ultimately transform the given world in their own images. The emotions born of frustration, on the other hand, endure for the very reason that the given environment cannot be assimilated or overwhelmed; it remains in the rough: the fractious residue of a world cut off from human use which survives to remind its inhabitants of their uselessness. A character in this case doesn't interact; he does not develop in time—but in space. His being expands, gesture by gesture, until by the end he has revealed himself within the configuration of objects (including the human) into which he is thrown. The emotional content of his existence arises from a crisis without solution. But our critic won't have one without the other; hence he is doubly confused. He wants an out, an alternative to the apparent submission, a proper measure of experience which might attribute motive to that existence, giving it the causal necessity he likes to find in life.

"Like Antonioni, Bergman chose to make a trilogy about the emptiness, boredom and lack of transcendental values in life; like Antonioni's, Bergman's third installment stringently divests itself of narrative content and shifts the burden of communication from incident to implication, from statement to symbol." The comparison with Antonioni is apt, but the analysis is wrong.

Let me first suggest that if Simon insists upon bracketing this formidable assembly beneath such worn and depreciable labels, better he simply say these "trilogies" (if the term itself is anything more than a critical expediency) are about lives which *happen* to be empty, bored, and bereft of transcendental values. There is a difference, and not a negligible one for a face-to-face encounter with

The basic constellation in THE SILENCE

these films. What preserves them all from being thematic tracts in the first place (with the partial exception of *Through a Glass Darkly*) is the fact that character is applied to idea, not idea to character. (When the latter occurs, Simon may be right: "Bergman, whatever his greatness, does not have enough 'ideas' for a film of ideas." *NL*, May 27, 1963—on *Winter Light*.)

Simon seriously errs when he automatically introduces an *evaluative* discrimination between the effectiveness of "communication" shifted from "incident" to "implication," from "statement" to "symbol." He assumes a gradual weakening—or dissolution—of expression in its passage from statement to symbol ("symbol" in a sense the Symbolists would have abjured). Just so, does Kauffman find *The Silence* "patently a symbolic work about alienation . . . its symbolism is its defect; it breaks down into a series of discernable metaphors" which he scrupulously itemizes; he then concludes imperturbably, "it almost seems to have been contrived as an exercise for that school that looks on *criticism* as cryptography" (*New Republic*, Feb. 22, 1964. Italics mine: curious that Kauffmann faults the critic not the film, which would seal his case.) The well is poisoned, no wonder it yields an unsavory draught.

Such semantic malpractice cannot be cured by a dictionary or thesaurus. Only a new look at the films themselves will suffice. Kauffmann's charming synopsis demonstrates how irrelevant the old, letter-bent eye can be to these films. "Two sisters are traveling through Europe. . . . Ester is unmarried, Anna is married and is accompanied by her eleven-year-old son. Ester suffers a violent attack of an unnamed but obviously grave illness. They must stay overnight in the capital of a fictitious country . . . in a *luxe* hotel . . ." It all happens, but something's wrong (and it's not the fact that this would seem to make even duller watching than it does reading). The missing factor upon which the whole power of the film depends is that *The Silence* makes sense not according to what happens, but to *how* it happens. The plot synopsis is irrelevant because the film is not "about" a plot, but about certain emotions, about character. Events serve to provoke characters to certain quintessential routines through which we see their existences circumscribed.

Film like any art has a number of parts, none of which are expendable but any of which can be exploited to serve varying purposes. It is unfortunate, and not entirely coincidental, in a time when the director's function as technician is frequently exploited far more than his (or his screenwriter's) function as storyteller, that critics should tax that part of stylistic invention with the losses accrued by the part of direct narration. Hence Kauffman: "Bergman so easily creates such an atmosphere of import that, in fact, its excellence only emphasizes the vacuousness of the piece." The resulting exegeses are not only misleading but useless to a true reception of the film.

Consider Simon: "Like *Eclipse*, *The Silence* deals with non-communication." (Non-communication, like in vacuousness.) But what are the silences, punctured by natural sounds and only abortively by vague, erratic monosyllables in both films, if they are not forms of communication? Because these characters do not speak in paragraphs, are they not communicating? (This, I fear, is the plaint of the literary man.) A muttered "No-no," a blank or searching stare, is as much an act of communication in film as a mouthful of whys and wherefores. Bergman's "implication" may be as declarative as Wayne's whip, it only says something else. A mum female is not a trussed symbol of man's inability to communicate, but a mum female. It's the least we owe her, without holding her or her director to promises they never made. We might listen to our Vittis, Moreaus, and Thulins for what they do say, not for what they fail to say. *Eclipse*, finally, isn't "about non-communication," but a certain kind of communication; the same holds for *The Silence*. If what is communicated is

Anna and the waiter.

boredom, emptiness, etc., so be it, but let us not fall into a Panglossian trap and prate about an "inability to communicate": the happier emotions just aren't there; meanwhile, a great deal, including some acute intelligence concerning the nature of women, happens in their absence.

In his review of *Eclipse* (*NL*, Feb. 4, 1963), Simon called it a "luminous failure," a phrase which might better describe his own critical response to the film. After a brilliantly perceptive description of *Eclipse* as a "metaphor made up of many smaller metaphors," he nevertheless asks—and we must demand the same of him—"Why should so many superb details add up to an unsatisfactory film?" "Because," he replies, "we cannot care for people who will not even put up a fight against boredom, because we are not allowed to go inside characters, because no possible alternative to defeat is offered." But why can't we care? Won't our *amour propre* allow it? Or is it a commitment to that "fulness of life" properly delineated in novels? Are we free to care only when these characters become somehow hopeful? Is their acquiesence too strong a tonic for us, a sense of loss which poisons our attentiveness? It is our loss, of course, if that is the case. But despite Simon's oddly arbitrary conclusion, it would appear he cared very much, at least enough to notice a great deal more in the film than most.

It may well be that an obdurate impatience with such hopelessness begins with a critical

confusion over the purpose of a film—a confusion which is more than semantic. There is no reason why film or any art should be freighted with a "burden of communication." People may frequently address each other for that purpose, but artists are rarely so singlemindedly inclined. In art such communication is a contingency of the essential production. A film is composed of parts of which "communication" is one, but one inextricably bound to the visual structure of the whole; and in the modern film moreover, one which is often incidental, as spectacle to a tragedy. It is the propagandist, however enlightened or enlightening, who will use his characters, incidents, and symbols primarily to communicate certain messages, rather than to objectify them. Imagine for a moment some natural mystery (a man's fate, perhaps, driven to term by an accident): suppose we were asked to choose between belief and comprehension; comparably, we can distinguish art from propaganda. In neither case are we fooled, but in the latter the sense is merely conveyed rather than created.

For critics suffering from an undue preoccupation with film as communication, style, or formal coherence, will frequently go unnoticed or misconstrued. "Like *Eclipse*, *The Silence* will have no truck with a middle. And there is no end either . . ." Unless one walks in after the beginning, such an observation is irresponsible. Again Simon barks up other trees. Very possibly for any film whatsoever, no matter how conventionally narrated, the beginning, end and middle must be first considered as just those points before which nothing happens, after which nothing happens, and then, everywhere in between. Even with a causal propulsion from one event to another, the movement of "plot" in cinema is uniquely a succession of images—not incidents; and the expressive content of an image or sequence, contributive to the total plot, is not necessarily proportionate to its apparent activity or relevance to the solution of plot. It is indeed extremely difficult when speaking of film to dissociate the function of incident itself

from the function of its component images (angle, lighting, sound properties, etc., which determine their net effect). Simon manages so easily because he is simply looking for—and so, naturally misses—action, the action which leads the spectator from one time and place and statement, to another.

First in the consequent "threefold inadequacy" Simon finds in *The Silence,* is "not enough forward thrust, not enough momentum to unite the specific points, the complementary but discrete images." Presumably he will take his images only if they are ornamental to action which moves neatly if thrustingly forward. It is undoubtedly a problem of the imagist films of today (to risk another expedient label) that we must respond *specifically* to the cinematic environment: that our attention must be delicately tuned to the tensions in visual as well as sound montage, and finally that the beginnings and ends of these contrapuntal sequences be initially observed in montage as well as in *mise en scène,* rather than in the origin and solution of narrative action. Such attention is nothing new, and we know too well how blindly it can be pressed into the service of the most egregious examples of New American Cinema. But *The Silence* is no such film: Like many an imagist film it is static in that there is no significant development of plot.* Action is synchronous; the dramatic whole emerges in the overall pattern of juxtaposition. Should the film begin anywhere else but in the clammy heat of the train compartment, where again it ends, the whole would collapse. We would lose the thematic unity which seals the three lives in an inescapable vise at each end: from their emergence out of a mutally debilitating past into a foreign city, to the return of the two back to the same past, without future, by the same route, while the third surrenders to an actual death, locked in the middling labyrinth of the strange hotel. Importantly, we would lose Bergman's favored myth of the journey which, although it proves elliptical in *The Silence,* in many of his earlier films serves to draw character along an arduous path of discovery and development, for better or worse.

Simon submits as the second aspect of the "threefold inadequacy": "There is not enough human content; there are hints of the past . . . but the characters do not have enough space in whch to develop, precisely because what space there is must remain empty to convey the message." We are reminded of his impatience with *Eclipse* for not allowing us "to go inside the characters." Just why he should demand further entrance (if indeed any "inside" exists) is unclear, but it's clear enough that Simon is not alone among critics dissatisfied with appearances unbuttressed by explicit motivation. The point of *The Silence* and *Eclipse* is that the emptiness, the preoccupation with objects, *is* the "human content" of each film. When the objects take over (in *Eclipse*) they displace a quality of human content, not "human content" itself. Man must remain responsible, even for his displacement. Again, it is the least we owe him.

Perhaps if critics ceased snapping at messages ("Why does this well-bred, intelligent boy pee in the corridor of this posh hotel? Obviously, that means *something.*"—Kauffmann), this deductive trap could be avoided.* Simon has considered only that space where he

*Godard is the exception here, since images in his hands are themselves set in motion. Through jump-cuts, swift panning, and the "snapshot" cutting used in *Le Petit Soldat,* action is not accreted through successive visual impressions, but is propelled on a linear plane, frame by frame; like the full life of the Absurd which it reflects, it affords no regret, no flashback nostalgia for the consequences of actions already spent in a present severed from successive moments of consciousness; its *happening* is all, and is complete.

*"The dwarfs are just symbols. . . . The tank in the street is a sumbol. . . . The few words in the foreign language are a symbol. Even the wild sex is a symbol." (Sarris, *Village Voice,* Feb 20, 1964). So goes the ridiculous extreme of this kind of criticism—a kind of madness, assuredly, where either everything's a symbol, or nothing is.

finds his "message," and obviously, finding it less than earthshaking he wants more, more filler material. The ladies are too disturbed, the boy a sphinx without a riddle; there must be some explanation! Clearly *The Silence* does not offer us full-blown case studies, or even spare ones. We are confronted with the effects of disturbance, of the supine obeisance of the boy, not the causes; the symptoms, not the disease. But why demand more?

We might introduce a very respectable argument here for the timely realism of Bergman's assemblage, but this isn't the point. Simon ressembles the art critic who looks at a Gris and complains there is no substance there, only surfaces. By now we should know that the "insides" of things, as well as minds, can only be viably described from the outsides. There are many ways to accomplish this. A psychoanalytic inter-penetration of behavioral symbols is only a more frantic manipulation of surfaces, and in film particularly this preoccupation tends to be least interesting (e.g., *David and Lisa*, along with the plurality of Hollywood's psychodynamic whodunits). Bergman in fact deserves credit here for controlling his impulse to explain, an impulse which has burdened many of his films with themes they strain overmuch to deliver. No doubt it is this very reserve which led Truffaut to allude to *The Silence* as his best film – a reserve which in effect leads Bergman to engage in the same dislocation of action from its customary emotional, judicative responses which Truffaut himself used so effectively in *Shoot the Piano Player*.

Only when Ester's breakdown seems imminent and we are shocked by our incomprehension of her disease ("symbol" says lung cancer) does she exclaim: "We try out many attitudes; but the forces are too strong, the dark forces." And these lines do provide a clue, in depth, of the existential imperatives Ester has wagered without profit. They underline the psychical evidence of her torment without diminishing it by abstraction. She exclaims, she does not explain, and it comes as revelation: Ester *would* say that on her deathbed. Unlike the tag line, "God is love, love in all its forms," in *Through a Glass Darkly*, Ester's recognition provides us with only a skeleton key to her schizophrenia, a schizophrenia which is, fundamentally, as ordinary as it is alarming. Her monologue (for the sympathetic old waiter can't understand a word) is simply a tentative summation, which happens to be final, under which her previous misadventures might be reckoned. As apologia it is equally vulnerable to reason and passing sensation, like all last-ditch acts of personal vengeance. We find ourselves still observing her phenomenologically, with no real explanation of the origin of her breakdown, no real expectation of a solution, but waiting nevertheless for the act of recognition which will seal her fate. That is the tension which ultimately is unrelieved in a dramatic sense; it is merely superceded when our attention is shifted to the boy troubling over the foreign words she has passed on to him.

As it happens Ester knows perhaps a little more about herself than we can, but not enough to convert herself conveniently to symbol. From the intellectual pride (a pride, as well, in the appurtenances of intellect) which we observe manifested so coolly before the typewriter, we can deduce a long history of such "attitudes" desperately assumed–but none the less authentic for that–to withstand the invasion of irrational forces which will fracture not only the attitudes but the human will-to-assume itself. The "forces"–the incestuous attraction for father, then sister, finally for self–achieve their proper magnitude as the shriek of flesh, once repressed, or exiled by the disjunctive demands of intellect, becomes intolerably mean and animalistic. The forces of the body, finally, its "secretions and excretions," prove too strong for the assumptions of the will.

Could this be the Message? And is the leap to faith to follow? Perhaps the words which Johan doggedly pursues on the retreating train do forge a link between Ester's last will and testament to the powers of comprehension and

the ongoing, pre-reflective life of the boy. "Spirit," he reads (in the dubbed version, although we are denied this last-minute tip in the subtitles). Simon concludes that this final act of communication suggests "Art is universal, and so, potentially, is language." Such a leap does befit the customary reduction of Bergman's plots to Intellect *v.* Art, Reason *v.* Faith, etc. Even better, we could snare a happy synthesis here, since it is the intellectual's submission to faith in the endurance of language as source of communion among men which carries the day. (The fact that, as Simon observes, language shared by the sisters is used solely to poison each other further against themselves, and can only fall comfortably upon the uncomprehending ears of the old waiter, could merely add a note of heroic desperation to Ester's testament.)

If Ester's sudden volubility *is* also Bergman's, the screenwriter finally possessing the screen, then perhaps the mesmeric oscillations between Ester's unsure intellectualism and Anna's unsure voluptuosity (linked by Johan's dutiful passage from one to the other) have merely been enforced to set up reverberations in our mind ("implications"), which Bergman can manipulate, even fulfill, in the single verbal dialogue between the "attitudes" and the "dark forces."

Not bad. Silence could make sense after all: it's been communicated. The polar personae of the two women, locked in a baleful embrace, cancel each other out dramatically. The dilemma can only be resolved in the timely confession of the more articulate, rising from her heated couch to speak for a director who simply hung around with a camera until this moment, when he would finally say what just can't be said any other way.

So runs the risk of reading a movie. If this should satisfy we should not be surprised to catch ourselves a moment later echoing Sarris, for one, whose critical job is relieved by the "evidence of an irreversible decline" he finds so generously supported in the symbolic obviousness of *The Silence*. Or like Kauffmann and Simon (on *Winter Light*), how easy it will be to wonder why Bergman has to make films when his messages are carried so economically in a few lines, in a few static sets. But it *doesn't* satisfy. For one reason, as Colin Young observes in his review of *The Fiancés*, because "Ester and Anna must finally say to each other what their conduct has said already to us. This is not dramatic redundancy—exposition in the eighth reel—unless you look at these films as being conventionally about action which grows continually in a straight line instead of proceeding in circles which never really close."

Words speak while images only appear, and words are our business (don't we all share them?) while images are thrust upon us in the pure state, from a source compounded of artifice and raw being, leagued in the elusive interests of the director's imagination. So we find ourselves surrendering to the faintest appeal of language which explains, at the expense of a visual language which simply presents. We find it hard to see the sudden burst of speech as just another phenomenalist event.

Even Anna explains (earlier): "You hate me because you hate yourself—and all I have!" Her revelation probes the surface of their enmity like a periscope. But nothing follows: Ester dismisses her with a tricky condescension still left to her. Nevertheless the words may linger. Our first clue—first among the many with which we would later challenge Bergman's cinematic integrity, concluding perhaps, with Kauffmann, that the fact "the film is a rebus, with clues to be hunted in it, indicates its limitations" (not our own, of course). But Anna's words do echo throughout the succeeding silence. Ultimately, the two women do mirror each other; the dichotomy can be resolved only if they fuse, intellect with animality. Until then (until another film) Anna will find Ester's eye in the mirror watching her feed on her reflection, and Ester will find Anna's sex eating at her own body in despair of ever claiming that sex; and each will hate what she lacks, and love, needing the loss to heal the open wound. There can be no fusion, just as there is no explanation in *The Silence* but merely image straining to achieve a coherence

through the dwindling resources of meaning which words provide. Anna catches a further symptom, not a solution. The silence in the film, as much as the grate of natural and unnatural sounds, perpetually threatens to swallow the human voice. Not unreasonably do these characters often halt mid-sentence, overwhelmed by their vulnerability.

It is hardly suprising that Simon should find his third inadequacy in the physicality of the film (although it should be noted that this physicality, which Sarris believes pitches *The Silence* into the nudie circuit, is as searing a display of wounded intellect—not sex—imaginable). "For a film which proceeds by metaphors and implications," says Simon, "certain sensual details are too strong." The question arises, Even if we could support this distinction between implication and incident, metaphor and statement, why single out "certain sensual details" as somehow "stronger" than what seems to be the nonsensual details of the rest of the film? This is a confession of taste, or of a proclivity to register the more obvious functions of sex on a higher frequency than other demonstrations of instinct, thought, or emotion. What really unsettles Simon is likely to be that Bergman has isolated sensual details from their customary contexts. Even when Anna takes the café waiter, sex is still somehow onanistic; more important, these details are reported naturalistically without any interest in causes or effect.*

But the real issue here is that Johan's adventures in the hotel corridor, or Ester's assault upon cigarette, bottle, and later, upon her translations (safe cinematic proof of the Female Intellectual), are no more nor less "implication" or "metaphor" than Ester or Anna indulging themselves (much to their dissatisfaction). To me, these indulgences are less sensual. Anna moving through the streets, the bathroom, or just moving, is far more so. It is not the degree of exertion which animates these latter scenes; it is their resonance, their suggestiveness, cinematically enforced in close-ups which amplify the minutest gestures into actions of resounding signficance. Walking back and forth in the room becomes the pacing of a trapped animal. Lighting a cigarette, getting a fix. Ester's grimace, a spellbound shriek without issue. Anna putting on a dress, an act of self-immolation. The old man eating a frank to lure the boy, nothing less, or less ludicrous, than castration. Johan being frocked by the dwarfs, a defloration. True passion resides in the charged gesture, not the overt act.

Not the least curious aspect of these close-ups is the fact that instead of creating a sense of intimacy with the characters, they effectually alienate them from us. We are continually rearing back from the massive circumstances of their narrow lives. Faces, fingers, hair, appear too close—they get *in the way*. Ester's naked face imprisons her, but it is all there is. The only difference between these three faces filling the screen and the painted masks of earlier films whereby Bergman obscures the human countenance from simple view, is that these faces mask themselves, without artifice. Sven Nyvkist's camera imprisons them by liberating them from any background. Just so, the spare details of environment themselves encroach. Rather than provide the objects by which a man passes out of himself into a concrete world, these corridors, damask curtains, featherbeds appear as obstacles, like the glass windows through which an infrequent view of the world outside is gained—sealing the inhabitants away from any real encounter with that world. Like the earliest of Bergman's films, *The Silence* is an *huis clos* but not on principle, simply because if one looks so close, it appears that way. Stripped to its inessentials, the human condition itself is claustrophopic.

Every visual incident amplifies the frustration of instinct caught at cross-purposes with

*Kauffman is led by the details to quibble, "Foe of censorship as I presume to be, I have not yet seen explicit sexual details in any film that were necessary to it. Whatever was cut out of *The Silence* has not hurt it" (an interesting admission coming from one of our more venerated weekly reviewers).

Anna—from Ester's viewpoint.

reality, until by the end, instinct appears resoundingly solipsistic. Reality remains a tank, lumbering prehistoric monster, phallus erect but extinct like the spine of a dead horseshoe crab. Escape appears for the boy as an interminable chase through the labyrinthine corridors: for his mother, it is the bought relief of the café and theater, reached through a street pinched by men and machines. For Ester everything she finds herself doing is a futile escape.

Johan *is* the sphinx; his blank face compels interpretation, but it repels every attempt to read. When the old waiter attempts to "talk" to Johan (after the misfire of his sudden, frightful embrace) he fumbles for a worn photo of himself taken at the same age standing behind the open coffin of his father. The boy responds with interest; with less interest he later slips it beneath the carpet, unseen. Brief displays of affection are native to his youth; an over-all impression of cool reticence is more native to his character. Johan is involved in a crisis without solution; he may be the product of it, but he promises no salvation; in effect he is unformed enough to be the product of other worlds the sisters have forgotten or never known. His remains the one existence which bridges the shrill edge of *The Silence* with the world of possibility beyond, but he has not yet stepped beyond. So far, he too only perceives the world through glass. And when he does his attention is swiftly marshalled, as by the trainload of tanks which jerk his round eyes back and forth, uncomprehendingly (while telling us clearly enough that the town we are entering is sealed off from the rest of the world — and from its own fredom — by military rule). The sun which Johan watches rising over the mountains, a white heat resembling Antonioni's ultramodern "eclipse," is unnatural. All of the pastimes open to Johan are unnatural; only his curiosity is not. When he looks out at us, it is as if he sees as far as the flat screen which delimits him, no further. His eyes never really focus. He has the terrifying innocence which comes once in a lifetime from knowing the worst without understanding either the worst or the best life may offer. Should he never mature to understand, he might be one of the bemused Exterminators of the coming generation. Like the depthless Anna who stares at mirrors, Johan stares and finds things staring back at him, all equally detached from any knowledge he might have of their use. All three are hemmed in by a web of anxiety spun from the unconscious recesses of their frustration, which forbids natural engagement.

Bergman has transformed his three favorite themes into a new film, quite superior to his others. Notably, the Big Questions do not function in *The Silence* as excuses for the big answers. There is indeed no exit in life's game, but hell is hardly rendered more bearable in togetherness. Women do scrape the bottom of human experience, but for that very reason theirs is the more pitiful lot. (Unlike the women in *Brink of Life*, Ester and Anna are not awaiting men. In fact, the absence of men—except for the dumb and solely functionary waiters—in *The Silence* is a curious thing; Ester tries hard to assume the masculine principle, but cracks embarrassingly.) Lastly, mans' quest for knowledge is, in truth, a bitter one, so much so that the twin horns of reason and impulse which he is condemned to ride do eventually impale him. Life itself is a dying-in; any other form of protest would bore these three travelers who at least know how to make more out of their "lack of transcendental values" in less time and space than a host of busier characters marked for deliverance.

PETER COWIE

An Interview with Lindsay Anderson

Lindsay Anderson, whose first feature, THIS SPORTING LIFE, appeared last year, has been noted for his work in various fields, including film criticism and documentary. He was one of the founder-editors of SEQUENCE in 1947, and began writing and directing industrial films in 1948. Among his best known short films are WAKEFIELD EXPRESS, THURSDAY'S CHILDREN, O DREAMLAND and EVERY DAY EXCEPT CHRISTMAS. He has also worked in the theater, where his productions have included THE LONG AND THE SHORT AND THE TALL, SERGEANT MUSGRAVE'S DANCE, BILLY LIAR, THE FIRE RAISERS, and THE DIARY OF A MADMAN. Most recently he has directed the London production of Max Frisch's ANDORRA at the National Theatre.

Is there any connection between the theatrical revival that started in British theater with Look Back in Anger *in* 1956, *and the resurgence of the British cinema a year or two later?*

Of course there is. Most immediately because both "revivals" were signalled by the same work—Tony Richardson's production of John Osborne's play at the Royal Court in 1956, and his direction of the film version a year later. Probably the development was inevitable anyway, since the time was historically ripe for a break-through of both creative and social activity in the flabby, exhausted atmosphere of postwar Britain. It happened first in the theater, probably because it is easier to experiment with a play than with a film. The finance involved is not so vast, and new talent is more readily acceptable. In fact, there was strong pressure against the employment of Tony Richardson to direct *Look Back in Anger*, and Associated British were only forced to accept him by the intransigence of John Osborne. (Similarly they had refused to consider the idea of my directing the film version of *The Long and the Short and the Tall*, as they had refused to accept the idea of Peter O'Toole playing the leading role which he had brilliantly created on the stage.) A further fillip was given to the movement by the success of Jack Clayton's first full-length film, *Room at the Top*, and by the even greater success in Britain of Karel Reisz with *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*. This last film, which owed its existence again to Tony Richardson and John Osborne, who imposed both Karel Reisz and Albert Finney on a reluctant industry, really and finally dispelled the prejudice against new talent in British films.

How did you manage to set up This Sporting Life?

I didn't. The production of this film was really a miracle. Although I had suggested it originally as a subject to Tony Richardson, who wanted me to direct a film for Woodfall, it was eventually bought by the Rank Organization to be made by Julian Wintle's Independent Artists. I think their idea was that the novel could make another *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*; and this is why it was offered to Karel Reisz. But Karel did not want to make another *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, and he was anxious to get experience on the production side. So he offered to produce the film if I were given it to direct. Much to my surprise Julian Wintle agreed, and so we made the picture under extremely good conditions, and without having to go through the tortuous ordeal of setting it up.

Why is it that scarcely any British directors write their own scripts, in the way that many French directors are able to?

ANDERSON

Lindsay Anderson directing Richard Harris and Rachel Roberts

In the first place it is something of a myth that directors on the Continent always write their own scripts. Truffaut, for instance, works with writers and his last two films have been adapted from novels. Resnais is also extremely literary in his approach to film-making—and even Antonioni works with writers, though certainly from his own ideas. I think the dependence of the British directors on novels or plays arises partly from the much greater difficulty in this country of setting up pictures, and the fact that producers and distributors are more likely to accept subjects that have already proved themselves in another medium. This certainly inhibits one from setting out to write an original script. Whether there is also a more basic "literary attitude" on the part of British artists is a question I should like to see critics discuss with discernment.

Did you find the reception of This Sporting Life *encouraging?*

Yes and no. In general the critical response was extremely good; though I was interested, if not terribly surprised, to find that "highbrows" tended to be noticeably less enthusiastic than ordinary, sensitive people. Our bad reviews came from snob papers like *The Times*, *The Manchester Guardian*, *The New Statesman* and *The Spectator*—precisely, in fact, from those critics who are always moaning that the British cinema cannot achieve the same "artistry" as the New Waves of France and Italy. England—or rather intellectual England—has not changed so very much, and there is still the prejudice against direct and large-scale emotional statement that crippled and exiled a writer like D. H. Lawrence. But, taking a larger view, I found the response to the film extremely gratifying, particularly when one bears in mind its harshness and its uncompromising emotional demands. Ten years ago it is impossible to imagine such a film achieving a full circuit release in Britain.

Do you feel that the present system of distribution and exhibition in Britain needs overhauling?

Most emphatically. From a purely economic point of view, the domination of exhibition by the two powerful combines of Rank and A.B.C. is certainly most pernicious—and I wish that the critics of artistically pretentious reviews like *Sight and Sound* could bring themselves to admit the relationship between these intractable economic realities, and the creative daydreams in which they so naively indulge.

And apart from the economics of the case, this petrifaction of the system of exhibition means that the whole business of showing films remains obstinately and disastrously out of date. It is the distributors and the exhibitors who are behind the times, not the film-makers. Films continue to be handled and publicized and shown almost exactly as they were

thirty years ago. If anything rather worse, since the cinemas are older and the people who run them are more defeatist. There is certainly a new public for good films, and one which could be made to yield profitable business. Unfortunately distributors and exhibitors are so lacking in vitality that they can think only in terms of immense and unshakeable profits from spectacular blockbusters. In this respect the British cinema is lagging far behind the Americans—there is absolutely no equivalent here to the art theater chain in the US, which has developed so marvellously in the last few years.

How do you explain what some critics have called "The obsession with the lower classes and the North of England" in so many recent British films?

I regard such phrases as journalistic jargon, impossible to discuss very seriously. Britain remains so obstinately and unprofitably class-conscious that it is still impossible to make a film without the social level of its characters being the first consideration. Of course this is ridiculous.

But you won't deny that there has at least been a shift in subject matter and social approach in the best of recent British films?

Undoubtedly—and largely for social-historical reasons—the most vital writings of the past several years in Britain has come from writers of working-class origin, and astonishingly many of these have come from the industrial midlands and the North. David Storey, Alan Sillitoe, Shelagh Delaney, John Arden, Stan Barstow, John Braine, Willis Hall and Keith Waterhouse . . . . The same, incidentally, is true of our young actors: Albert Finney from Lancashire, Tom Courtenay and Peter O'Toole from Yorkshire, Tom Bell from Liverpool. Naturally this has resulted in a shift from the almost exclusively middle-class, suburban concern of the pre-1956 British cinema. But only a small number of these books or films have been primarily "social" in their approach. Unfortunately most of the cirtics and the journalists who write about them remain bourgeois either by origin or by ambition; and undoubtedly they see this new tradition as something of a threat. Defensively they falsify what they see, and hasten to create by the use of quite inaccurate labels ("kitchen-sink," "working-class realism," etc.) a phoney image which they can easily destroy. The persistent falsification and denigration of these works by some critics is purely a domestic facet of the class-war. Do you remember any of them (or their like-minded predecessors) applying the same dismissive sneers to films like *La Bête Humaine, Le Jour se Lève, Two Pennyworth of Hope*, or *On the Waterfront?* All of which were equally "obsessed with the lower classes". . .

Do you like to work with actors, or would you prefer to use amateurs, like a number of Continental directors?

I have no resentment of actors, if that's what you mean, in the manner of Bresson, Antonioni, etc. Acting at its best is a creative, fully expressive art; and I think that the tendency today to regard actors as unfortunately necessary pieces of furniture, to be manipulated and pushed around by the director, is very mistaken. When I read in a notice of *This Sporting Life* a phrase like "Anderson has 'managed to extract' powerful performances from Richard Harris and Rachel Roberts," I can only smile. This is an extraordinarily false idea of how such collaborations work. In fact the Frank Machin of the film is Richard Harris' creation—and a vital contribution to the whole personality of the picture. To work *with* artists of this caliber is enormously stimulating—much more so, to me, than trying to restrict them to the limits of one's own imagination.

Is there any director who has had a particular influence on you? As regards technique I should have thought Resnais . . .

I admire Resnais. I don't like his pictures very much, at least not so far, but that is a matter of taste. Certainly I think his daring and his rigor have helped many other directors (including myself) to break down the old shibboleths of "technique"—I mean the kind of faceless Hollywood narrative style that still represents to many technicians the only permissible way of telling a story on film. But the construction of *This Sporting Life* was not inspired by Resnais: it came more or less directly from the book. And much of the cutting style and the use of sound develops the style I used in documentaries years back, like *Wakefield Express* and *Every Day Except Christmas*—which no doubt showed the influence of Humphrey Jennings. And I think there's a sort of (unfashionable) directness and absoluteness in the way the characters are regarded that might recall John Ford . . . . But this game of "influences" is a tricky one, and perhaps better played by critics than by artists. I can tell you one thing: the spider didn't come from Bergman, but from the novel. And anyway I have never seen *Through a Glass Darkly*.

Have you any plans for further work in the cinema?

I am hoping to direct a new and more authentic version of *Wuthering Heights*. David Storey is doing the script, and Richard Harris will play Heathcliff.

PAULINE KAEL

Hud, Deep in the Divided Heart of Hollywood

As a schoolgirl, my suspiciousness about those who attack American "materialism" was first aroused by the refugees from Hitler who so often contrasted their "culture" with our "vulgar materialism" when I discovered that their "culture" consisted of their having had servants in Europe, and a swooning acquaintance with the poems of Rilke, the novels of Stefan Zweig and Lion Feuchtwanger, the music of Mahler and Bruckner. And as the cultural treasures they brought over with them were likely to be Meissen porcelain, Biedermeier furniture, oriental carpets, wax fruit, and bookcases with glass doors, it wasn't too difficult to reconstruct their "culture" and discover that it was a stuffier, more middle-class materialism and sentimentality than they could afford in the new world.

These suspicions were intensified by later experience: the most grasping Europeans were, almost inevitably, the ones who levelled the charge of American materialism. Just recently, at a film festival, a behind-the-iron-curtain movie director, who interrupted my interview with him to fawn over every Hollywood dignitary (or supposed dignitary) who came in sight, concluded the interview with, "You Americans won't understand this, but I don't make movies just for money."

Americans are so vulnerable, so confused and defensive about prosperity—and nowhere more so than in Hollywood, where they seem to feel they can cleanse it, justify their right to it, by gilding it with "culture," as if to say, see, we're not materialistic, we appreciate the finer things. ("The hunting scene on the wall of the cabana isn't wallpaper: it's handpainted.") Those who live by making movies showing a luxurious way of life worry over the American "image" abroad. But, the economics of movie-making being what they are, usually all the producers do about it is worry—which is probably just as well because films made out of social conscience have generally given an even more distorted view of America than those made out of business sense, and are much less amusing.

The most conspicuous recent exception is *Hud*—one of the few entertaining American movies released in 1963 and just possibly the most completely schizoid movie produced anywhere anytime. *Hud* is a commercial Hollywood movie that is ostensibly an indictment of materialism, and it has been accepted as that by most of the critics. But those who made it protected their material interest in the film so well that they turned it into the opposite: a celebration and glorification of materialism—of the man who looks out for himself—which probably appeals to movie audiences just because it confirms their own feelings. This response to *Hud* may be the only time the general audience has understood film-makers better than they understood themselves. Audiences ignored the cant of the makers' liberal, serious intentions, and enjoyed the film for its vital element: the nihilistic "heel" who wants the good things of life and doesn't give a damn for the general welfare. The writers' and director's "anti-materialism" turns out to be a lot like the refugees' anti-materialism: they had their Stefan Zweig side—young, tender Lon (Brandon de Wilde) and Melvyn Douglas' Homer, a representative of the "good" as

From HUD.

prating and tedious as Polonius; and they had their protection, their solid saleable property of Meissen and Biedermeier, in Paul Newman.

Somehow it all reminds one of the old, apochryphal story conference—"It's a modern western, see, with this hell-raising, pleasure-loving man who doesn't respect any of the virtues, and, at the end, we'll fool them, he doesn't get the girl and he doesn't change!"

"But who'll want to see *that*?"

"Oh, that's all fixed—we've got Paul Newman for the part."

They could cast him as a mean man and know that the audience would never believe in his meanness. For there are certain actors who have such extraordinary audience rapport that the audience does not believe in their villainy except to relish it, as with Brando; and there are others, like Newman, who in addition to this rapport, project such a traditional heroic frankness and sweetness that the audience dotes on them, seeks to protect them from harm or pain. Casting Newman as a mean materialist is like writing a manifesto against the banking system while juggling your investments so you can break the bank. And even the manifesto betrays where your feelings and

involvement are: your arguments are weak and trite; the arguments you set up to knock down are strong. Hud's shouted last remark, his poor credo, "The world's so full of crap a man's going to get into it sooner or later, whether he's careful or not," has, at least, the ring of *his* truth. The generalized pious principles of the good old codger belong to no body.

The day *Hud* opened in San Francisco the theater was packed with an audience that laughed and reacted with pleasure to the verve and speed and economy, and (although I can't be sure of this) enjoyed the surprise of the slightly perverse ending as much as I did. It was like the split movies of the war years—with those cynical heel-heroes whom we liked because they expressed contempt for the sanctimonious goody guys and overstuffed family values, and whom we still liked (because they were played by actors who *seemed* contemptuous) even when they reformed.

It's not likely that those earlier commercial writers and directors were self-deceived about what they were doing: they were trying to put something over, and knew they could only go so far. They made the character a heel so that we would identify with his rejection of official values, and then slyly squared everything by having him turn hero. And it seems to me that we (my college friends) and perhaps the audience at large didn't take all this very seriously, that we enjoyed it for its obvious hokum and glamor and excitement and romance, and for the wisecracking American idiom, and the tempo and rhythm of slick style. We enjoyed the *pretense* that the world was like this—fast and funny; this pretence which was necessary for its enjoyment separated the good American commercial movie—the good "hack" job like *Casablanca* or *To Have and Have Not*—from film art and other art. This was the best kind of Hollywood *product*: the result of the teamwork of talented, highly paid professional hacks who were making a living; and we enjoyed it as a product, and assumed that those involved in it enjoyed the money they made.

What gave the Hollywood movie its vitality

and its distinctive flavor was that despite the melodramatic situations, the absurd triumphs of virtue and the inordinate punishments for trivial vice—perhaps even because of the stale conventions and the necessity to infuse some life that would make the picture seem new within them—the "feel" of the time and place (Hollywood, whatever the locale of the story) came through, and often the attitudes, the problems, the tensions. Sometimes more of American life came through in routine thrillers and prison-break films and even in the yachting-set comedies than in important, "serious" films like *The Best Years of Our Lives* or *A Place in the Sun*, paralyzed, self-conscious imitations of European art, or films like *Gentleman's Agreement*, with the indigenous paralysis of the Hollywood "problem" picture, which is morally solved in advance. And when the commercial film-makers had some freedom and leeway, as well as talent, an extraordinary amount came through—the rhythm of American life that gives films like *She Done Him Wrong, I'm No Angel*, the Rogers-Astaire musicals, *Easy Living, Bringing Up Baby, The Thin Man, The Lady Eve, Double Indemnity, Strangers On A Train, Pat and Mike, The Crimson Pirate, Singin' in the Rain, The Big Sleep*, or the more recent *The Manchurian Candidate* and *Charade* a freshness and spirit that makes them unlike the films of any other country. Our movies are the best proof that Americans are liveliest and freest when we don't take ourselves too seriously.

Taking *Hud* as a commercial movie, I was interested to see that the audience reacted to Hud as a Stanley Kowalski on the range, laughing with his coarseness and sexual assertiveness, and sharing his contempt for social values. Years before, when I saw the movie version of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, I was shocked and outraged at those in the audience who expressed their delight when Brando as Stanley jeered at Blanche. At the time, I didn't understand it when they laughed their agreement as Stanley exploded in rage and smashed things. It was only later, away from the spell of Vivien Leigh's performance, that I could reflect that Stanley was clinging to his brute's bit of truth, his sense that her gentility and coquetry were intolerably fake. And it seemed to me that this was one of the reasons why *Streetcar* was a great play—that Blanche and Stanley upset us, and complicated our responses. This was no Lillian Hellman melodrama with good and evil clay pigeons. The conflict was genuine and dramatic. But Hud didn't have a dramatic adversary; his adversaries *were* out of Lillian Hellmanland.

The setting, however, wasn't melodramatic, it was comic—not the legendary west of myth-making movies like the sluggish *Shane* but the modern west I grew up in, the ludicrous real west. The comedy was in the realism: the incongruities of Cadillacs and cattle, crickets and transistor radios, juke boxes, Dr. Pepper signs, paper-back books—all emphasizing the standardization of culture in the loneliness of vast spaces. My west wasn't Texas; it was northern California, but our Sonoma County ranch was very much like this one—with the frame house, and "the couple's" cabin like the housekeeper's cabin, and the hired hands' bunkhouse, and my father and older brothers charging over dirt roads, not in Cadillacs but in Studebakers, and the Saturday nights in the dead little town with its movie house and ice-cream parlor. This was the small-town west I and so many of my friends came out of—escaping from the swaggering small-town hot-shots like Hud. But I didn't remember any boys like Brandon de Wilde's Lon: he wasn't born in the west or in anybody's imagination; that 17-year-old blank sheet of paper has been handed down from generations of lazy hack writers. His only "reality" is from de Wilde's having played the part before: from *Shane* to *Hud*, he has been our observer, our boy in the west, testing heroes. But in *Hud*, he can't fill even this cardboard role of representing the spectator because Newman's Hud has himself come to represent the audience. And I didn't remember any clean old man like Melvyn Douglas' Homer: his principles and rectitude

weren't created either, they were handed down from the authors' mouthpieces of the socially conscious plays and movies of the 'thirties and 'forties. Occupied towns in the war movies frequently spawned these righteous, prophetic elder citizens.

Somewhere in the back of my mind, Hud began to stand for the people who would vote for Goldwater, while Homer was clearly an upstanding Stevensonian. And it seemed rather typical of the weakness of the whole message picture idea that the good liberals who made the film made their own spokesman a fuddy-duddy, worse, made him inhuman—except for the brief sequence when he isn't a spokesman for anything, when he follows the bouncing ball and sings "Clementine" at the movies. Hud, the "villain" of the piece, is less phony than Homer.

In the next few days I recommended *Hud* to friends (and now "friends" no longer means college students but academic and professional people) and was bewildered when they came back indignant that I'd wasted their time. I was even more bewildered when the reviews started coming out; what were the critics talking about? Unlike the laughing audience, they were taking *Hud* at serious message value as a work of integrity, and, even in some cases, as a tragedy. In *The New York Herald Tribune*, Judith Crist found that "Both the portraits and the people are completely without compromise —and therein is not only the foundation but also the rare achievement of this film." In *The Saturday Review*, Arthur Knight said that "it is the kind of creative collaboration too long absent from our screen . . . by the end of the film, there can be no two thoughts about Hud: he's purely and simply a bastard. And by the end of the film, for all his charm, he has succeeded in alienating everyone, including the audience." According to Bosley Crowther in *The New York Times*, "Hud is a rancher who is fully and foully diseased with all the germs of materialism that are infecting and sickening modern man . . . And the place where he lives is not just Texas. It is the whole country today. It is the soil in which grows a gimcrack culture that nurtures indulgence and greed. Here is the essence of this picture. While it looks like a modern Western, and is an outdoor drama, indeed, *Hud* is as wide and profound a contemplation of the human condition as one of the New England plays of Eugene O'Neill . . . The striking, important thing about it is the clarity with which it unreels. The sureness and integrity of it are as crystal-clear as the plot is spare . . . the great key scene of the film, a scene in which [the] entire herd of cattle is deliberately and dutifully destroyed, that helps fill the screen with an emotion that I've seldom felt from any film. It brings the theme of infection and destruction into focus with dazzling clarity."

As usual, with that reverse acumen that makes him invaluable, Crowther has put his finger on a sore spot. The director carefully builds up the emotion that Crowther and probably audiences in general feel when the cattle, confused and trying to escape, are forced into the mass grave that has been dug by a bulldozer, and are there systematically shot down, covered with lime, and buried. This is the movie's big scene, and it can be no accident that the scene derives some of its emotional power from the Nazis' final solution of the Jewish problem; it's inconceivable that these overtones would not have occurred to the group—predominantly Jewish—who made the film. Within the terms of the story, this emotion that is worked up is wrong, because it is not Hud the bad man who wants to destroy the herd; it is Homer the good man who accedes to what is necessary to stop the spread of infection. And is all this emotion appropriate to the slaughter of animals who were, after all, raised to be slaughtered and would, in the normal course of events, be even more ***brutally*** slaughtered in a few weeks? What's involved is simply the difference in money between what the government pays for the killing of the animals and their market value. It would not have been difficult for the writers and director to arrange the action so that the audience would feel quick relief at the destruction of

the herd. But I would guess that they couldn't resist the opportunity for a big emotional scene, a scene with *impact*, even though the emotions don't support the meaning of the story. They got their big scene: it didn't matter what it meant.

So it's pretty hard to figure out the critical congratulations for clarity and integrity, or such statements as Penelope Gilliatt's in *The Observer*, "*Hud* is the most sober and powerful film from America for a long time. The line of it is very skilfully controlled: the scene when Melvyn Douglas's diseased cattle have to be shot arrives like the descent of a Greek plague." Whose error are the gods punishing? Was Homer, in buying Mexican cattle, merely taking a risk, or committing hubris? One of the things you learn on a ranch, or any other place, is that nobody is responsible for natural catastrophes; one of the things you learn in movies and other dramatic forms is the symbolic use of catastrophe. The locusts descended on Paul Muni in *The Good Earth* because he had gotten rich and *bad*: a farmer in the movies who neglects his humble wife and goes in for high living is sure to lose his crops. *Hud* plays it both ways: the texture of the film is wisecracking naturalism, but when a powerful sequence is needed to jack up the action values, a disaster is used for all the symbolic overtones that can be hit—and without any significant story meaning. I don't think the line of *Hud* is so much "controlled" as adjusted, set by conflicting aims at seriousness and success.

It hardly seems possible but perhaps Crowther thought the *cattle* were symbolically "fully and foully diseased with all the germs of materialism that are infecting and sickening modern man." Those sick cattle must have *something* to do with the language he uses in describing the film. "It is a drama of moral corruption—of the debilitating disease of avaricious self-seeking—that is creeping across the land and infecting the minds of young people in this complex, materialistic age. It is forged in the smoldering confrontation of an aging cattleman and his corrupted son." Scriptwriters have only to toss in a few bitter asides about our expense-account civilization and strew a few platitudes like, "Little by little the country changes because of the men people admire" and the movie becomes "a drama of moral corruption," etc. The English critics got even more out of it: Derek Prouse experienced a "catharsis" in *The Sunday Times*, as did Peter John Dyer in *Sight and Sound*. Dyer seems to react to cues from his experience at *other* movies; his review, suggesting as it does a super-fan's identification with the film-makers' fondest dreams, is worth a little examination. "From the ominous discovery of the first dead heifer, to the massacre of the diseased herd, to Homer's own end and Hud's empty inheritance of a land he passively stood by and watched die, the story methodically unwinds like a python lying sated in the sun." People will be going to *Hud*, as Charles Addams was reported to have gone to *Cleopatra*, "to see the snake." Dyer squeezes out more meaning and lots more symbolism than the film-makers could squeeze in. (A) Homer just suddenly up and died, of a broken heart, one supposes. It wasn't prepared for, it was merely convenient. (B) Hud's inheritance isn't empty: he has a large ranch, and the land has oil. Dyer projects the notion of Hud's emptiness as a human being onto his inheritance. (C) Hud didn't passively stand by and watch the land die. The *land* hasn't changed. Nor was Hud passive: he worked the ranch, and he certainly couldn't be held responsible for the cattle becoming infected—unless Dyer wants to go so far as to view that infection as a symbol of or a punishment for Hud's sickness. Even Homer, who blamed Hud for just about everything else, didn't accuse him of infecting the cattle. Dyer would perhaps go that far, because somehow "the aridity of the cattle-less landscape mirrors his own barren future." Why couldn't it equally mirror Homer's barren past? In this scheme of symbolic interpretation, if there was a dog on the ranch, and it had worms, Hud the worm would be the reason. Writing of the "terse and elemental polarity of the film," Dyer says, "The earth is

livelihood, freedom and death to Homer; an implacably hostile prison to Hud"—though it would be just as easy, and perhaps more true to the audience's experience of the film, to interpret Hud's opportunism as love of life and Homer's righteousness as rigid and life-destroying—and *unfair*. The scriptwriters give Homer principles (which are hardly likely to move the audience); but they're careful to show that Hud is misunderstood and rejected when he makes affectionate overtures to his father.

Dyer loads meaning onto Hud's actions and behavior: for example, "Instead of bronco-busting he goes in for a (doubtless) metaphorical bout of pig-wrestling." Why "instead of"—as if there were bronco-busting to do and he dodged it—when there is nothing of the kind in the film? And what would the pig-wrestling be a metaphor for? Does Dyer take pigs to represent women, or does he mean that the pig-wrestling shows Hud's swinishness? Having watched my older brothers trying to catch greased pigs in this traditional western small-town sport, I took the sequence as an indication of how boring and empty small-town life is, and how coarse the games in which the boys work off a little steam. I had seen the same boys who wrestled greased pigs and who had fairly crude ideas of sex and sport enter a blazing building to save the lives of panic-stricken horses, and emerge charred but at peace with the world and themselves.

Are the reviewers trying to justify having enjoyed the movie, or just looking for an angle, when they interpret the illustrative details *morally*? Any number of them got their tip on Hud's character by his taking advantage of a husband's absence to go to bed with the wife. But he couldn't very well make love to her when her husband was home—although that would be par for the course of "art" movies these days. The summer nights are very long on a Western ranch. As a child, I could stretch out on a hammock on the porch and read an Oz book from cover to cover while my grandparents and uncles and aunts and parents didn't stir from their card game. The young men get tiréd of playing cards. They either think about sex or try do do something about it. There isn't much else to do—the life doesn't exactly stimulate the imagination, though it does stimulate the senses. Dyer takes as proof of Hud's bad character that "his appetites are reserved for married women." What alternatives are there for a young man in a small town? Would it be proof of a *good* character to seduce young girls and wreck their reputations? There are always a few widows, of course, and, sometimes, a divorcee like Alma, the housekeeper (given substance by Patricia Neal), but they can hardly supply the demand from the married men, who are in a better position to give them favors, jobs, presents, houses, and even farms. I remember my father taking me along when he visited our local widow: I played in the new barn which was being constructed by workmen who seemed to take their orders from my father. At six or seven, I was very proud of my father for being the protector of widows.

I assumed the audience enjoyed and responded to Hud's chasing women because this represented a break with western movie conventions and myths, and as the film was flouting these conventions and teasing the audience to enjoy the change, it didn't occur to me that in *this* movie his activity would be construed as "bad." But Crowther finds that the way Hud "indulges himself with his neighbor's wife" is "one of the sure, unmistakable tokens of a dangerous social predator." Is this knowledge derived from the film (where I didn't discover it) or from Crowther's knowledge of life? If the latter, I can only supply evidence against him from my own life. My father who was adulterous, and a Republican who, like Hud, was opposed to any government interference, was in no sense and in no one's eyes a social predator. He was generous and kind, and democratic in the western way that Easterners still don't understand: it was not out of guilty condescension that mealtimes were communal affairs with the Mexican and Indian ranchhands joining the family, it was the way Westerners lived.

If Homer, like my father, had frequented married women or widows, would Dyer interpret that as a symbol of Homer's evil? Or, as Homer voiced sentiments dear to the scriptwriters and critics, would his "transgressions" be interpreted as a touching indication of human frailty? What Dyer and others took for symbols were the clichés of melodrama—where character traits are sorted out and separated, one set of attitudes and behavior for the good characters, another for the bad characters. In melodrama, human desires and drives make a person weak or corrupt: the heroic must be the unblemished good like Homer, whose goodness is not tainted with understanding. Reading the cues this way, these critics missed what audiences were reacting to, just as Richard Whitehall in *Films and Filming* describes Newman's Hud as "the-hair-on-the-chest-male"—although the most exposed movie chest since Valentino's is just as hairless.

I suppose we're all supposed to react on cue to movie rape (or as is usually the case, attempted rape); rape, like a cattle massacre, is a box-office value. No doubt in *Hud* we're really supposed to believe that Alma is, as Stanley Kauffmann says, "driven off by his [Hud's] vicious physical assault." But in terms of the modernity of the settings and the characters, as well as the age of the protagonists (they're at least in their middle thirties), it was more probable that Alma left the ranch because a frustrated rape is just too sordid and embarrassing for all concerned—for the drunken Hud who forced himself upon her, for her for defending herself so titanically, for young Lon the innocent who "saved" her. Alma obviously wants to go to bed with Hud, but she has been rejecting his propositions because she doesn't want to be just another casual dame to him; she wants to be treated differently from the others. If Lon hadn't rushed to protect his idealized view of her, chances are that the next morning Hud would have felt guilty and repentant, and Alma would have been grateful to him for having used the violence necessary to break down her resistance, thus proving that she *was* different. They might have been celebrating ritual rapes annually on their anniversaries.

Rape is a strong word when a man knows that a woman wants him but won't accept him unless he commits himself emotionally. Alma's mixture of provocative camaraderie plus reservations invites "rape." (Just as, in a different way, Blanche DuBois did—though Williams erred in having her go mad: it was enough, it was really *more*, that she was broken, finished.) The scriptwriters for *Hud*, who, I daresay, are as familiar as critics with theories of melodrama, know that heroes and villains both want the same things and that it is their way of trying to get them that separates one from the other. They impart this knowledge to Alma, who tells Hud that she wanted him and he could have had her if he'd gone about it differently. But this kind of knowingness, employed to make the script more clever, more frank, more modern, puts a strain on the credibility of the melodramatic actions it explicates—and embellishes. Similarly the writers invite a laugh by having Alma, seeing the nudes Lon has on his wall, say "I'm a girl, they don't do a thing for me." Before the Kinsey report on women, a woman might say, "They don't do a thing for me" but she wouldn't have prefaced it with "I'm a girl" because she wouldn't have known that erotic reactions to pictures are not characteristic of women.

The Ravetches have been highly praised for the screenplay: Penelope Gilliatt considers it "American writing at its abrasive best"; Brendan Gill says it is "honestly written"; *Time* calls it "a no-compromise script." Dyer expresses a fairly general view when he says it's "on a level of sophistication totally unexpected from their scripts for two of Ritt's least successful, Faulkner-inspired films." This has some special irony because not only is their technique in *Hud* a continuation of the episodic method they used in combining disparate Faulkner stories into *The Long Hot Summer*, but the dialogue quoted most appreciatively by the reviewers to illustrate their new skill (Alma's rebuff of Hud, "No thanks, I've had one cold-hearted bastard in my life, I don't want an-

other") is lifted almost verbatim from that earlier script (when it was Joanne Woodward telling off Paul Newman). They didn't get acclaim for their integrity and honesty that time because, although the movie was entertaining and a box-office hit, the material was resolved as a jolly comedy, the actors and actresses were paired off, and Newman as Ben Quick the barn burner turned out not really to be a barn burner after all. They hadn't yet found the "courage" that keeps Hud what *Time* called him, "an unregenerate heel" and "a cad to the end." It may have taken them several years to learn that with enough close-ups of his blue, blue eyes and his hurt, sensitive mouth, Newman's Ben Quick could have burned barns all right, and audiences would have loved him more for it.

In neither film do the episodes and characters hold together, but Ritt, in the interim having made Hemingway's *Adventures of a Young Man* and failed to find a style appropriate to it, has now, with the aid of James Wong Howe's black and white cinematography, found something like a reasonably clean visual equivalent for Hemingway's prose. Visually *Hud* is so apparently simple and precise and unadorned, so skeletonic, that we may admire the bones without being quite sure of the name of the beast. This Westerner is part gangster, part *Champion*, part rebel-without-a-cause, part the traditional cynic-hero who pretends not to care because he cares so much.

When *Time* says *Hud* is "the most brazenly honest picture to be made in the U.S. this season" the key word is brazenly. The film brazens it out. In *The New Yorker* Brendan Gill writes, "It's an attractive irony of the situation that, despite the integrity of its makers, *Hud* is bound to prove a box-office smash. I find this coincidence gratifying. Virtue is said to be its own reward, but money is nice, too, and I'm always pleased to see it flowing toward people who have had other things on their minds." Believing in this coincidence is like believing in Santa Claus. Gill's last sentence lacks another final "too." In Hollywood, a "picture with integrity" is a money-making message picture. And that's what Crowther means when he says, "*Hud* is a film that does its makers, the medium and Hollywood proud." He means something similar when he calls his own praise of the film a "daring endorsement"—as if it placed him in some kind of jeopardy to be so forthright.

If most of the critics who acclaimed the film appeared as innocent as Lon and as moralistic as Homer, Dwight Macdonald, who perceived that "it is poor Hud who is forced by the script to openly practice the actual as against the mythical American Way of Life" regarded this perception as proof of the stupidity of the film.

But the movie wouldn't necessarily be a good movie if its moral message was dramatically sustained in the story and action, and perhaps it isn't necessarily a bad movie if its moral message is not sustained in the story and action. By all formal theories, a work that is split cannot be a work of art, but leaving the validity of these principles aside, do they hold for lesser works—not works of art but works of commerce and craftsmanship, sometimes fused by artistry? Is a commercial piece of entertainment (which may or may not aspire to be, or pretend to be, a work of art) necessarily a poor one if its material is confused or duplicit, or reveals elements at variance with its stated theme, or shows the divided intentions of the craftsmen who made it? My answer is no, that in some films the more ambivalence that comes through, the more the film may mean to us or the more fun it may be. The process by which an idea for a movie is turned into the product that reaches us is so involved, and so many compromises, cuts, and changes may have taken place, so much hope and disgust and spoilage and waste may be embodied in it or mummified in it, that the tension in the product, or some sense of urgency still left in it, may be our only contact with the life in which the product was processed. Commercial products in which we do not sense or experience divided hopes and aims and ideas may be the dullest—ones in which everything alive was processed out, or perhaps ones that were never

alive even at the beginning. *Hud* is so astutely made and yet such a mess that it tells us much more than its message. It is redeemed by its fundamental dishonesty. It is perhaps an archetypal Hollywood movie: split in so many revealing ways that, like *On the Waterfront* or *From Here to Eternity*, it is the movie of its year (even though it's shallow and not nearly so good a film as either of them).

My friends were angry that I'd sent them to *Hud* because, like Macdonald, they "saw through it," they saw that Hud was not the villain, and they knew that though he expressed vulgar notions that offended *them*, these notions might not be unpopular. The film itself flirts with this realization: when Homer is berating Hud, Lon asks, "Why pick on Hud, Grandpa? Nearly everybody around town is like him."

My friends, more or less socialist, detest a crude Hud who doesn't believe in government interference because they believe in more, and more drastic, government action to integrate the schools and end discrimination in housing and employment. However, they are so anti-CIA that at Thanksgiving dinner a respected professor could drunkenly insist that he had positive proof that the CIA had engineered the murder of Kennedy with no voice but mine raised in doubt. They want centralized power when it works for their civil-libertarian aims, but they dread and fear its international policies. They hate cops but call them at the first hint of a prowler: they are split, and it shows in a million ways. I imagine they're very like the people who made *Hud*, and like them they do rather well for themselves. They're so careful to play the game at their jobs that if they hadn't told you that they're *really* screwing the system, you'd never guess it.

The plaintive reviewer for *Variety*, obviously Lon disguised as "Tube," can't believe what he sees and searches for what the film is *really* saying: "Where *Hud* misfires and falls short of the mark is in its failure to filter its meaning and theme lucidly through its characters and story. This lack of clarity and dramatic neatness is likely to leave the bulk of the filmgoing audience somewhat bewildered. Many may leave the theatre with little more than a bitter aftertaste at apparently having spent almost two hours in the company of an unpleasant pivotal figure, instead of with the fresh philosophical slant on the changing patterns and values of the contemporary American West that lurks just beneath the surface and is the elusive prize that only the more analytical customer will take away as a reward. Stripped of this bonus of insight and perception, the picture loses its taste, flavor and significance and rests on the naked values of its plot, and that, alas, is liable to be the superficial way it is received by too many people." And in a triumphant gesture of naiveté, *Variety*'s man suggests a solution: "A clever ad image that hints of intended artistic stature rather than mere racy melodrama could boost its fortunes somewhat by encouraging the audience-to-be to be prepared to probe a little, not just come for pure escape and sensual stimulus."

But the advertising men, more shrewd about the film than the reviewer, and not a bit naive, had already written full-page ads: "HUD has got guts. He uses them to take what he wants, and damn anybody who gets in his way. HUD has charm. He uses it to possess any woman he wants, and hang anybody who gets in his way. HUD is all man, but a man with a barbed wire soul. Somewhere in your life you've met a HUD, fascinating as a cobra, mean as hell, not so much above the law as outside it. He's a charmer. He has an enormous craving for possessions, for people, for women. To him they're all things to be owned, to be used, to be manipulated. That's HUD, without the sugar coating . . . You'll think, 'This is how it really is.' *Hud* shows you a segment of life as it really is. *Hud* is a beautiful, honest motion picture." No, but it's a good movie.

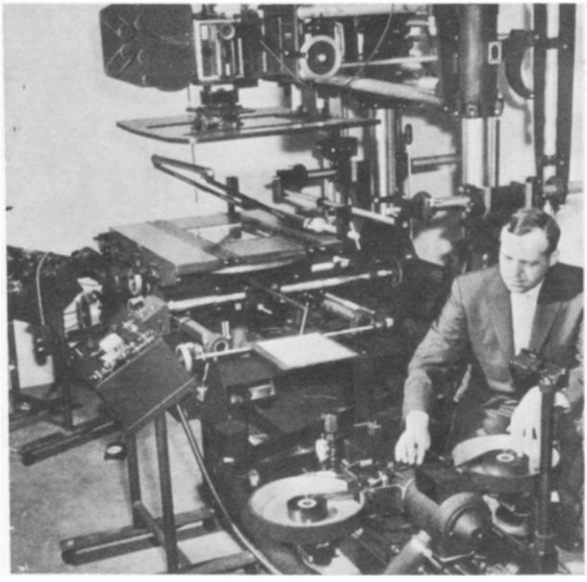
The News, a monthly bulletin designed to circulate information about independent film production and exhibition, is now being published by Canyon Cinema at a new address: 2201 Ward Street, Berkeley, California. Subscriptions are $2.00 a year and sample copies are usually available.

THE TECHNOLOGY

Film is an art peculiarly at the mercy of its technology. This is obvious in what relates to quality of image and sound. Less apparent, yet of immense significance, are the effects of technological factors associated with crew requirements, supervisory relationships, operating schedules, and so on. Space prohibited the inclusion in our last issue of the following photographs, which strikingly illustrate some of the extremes which can be found within current film-making practice.

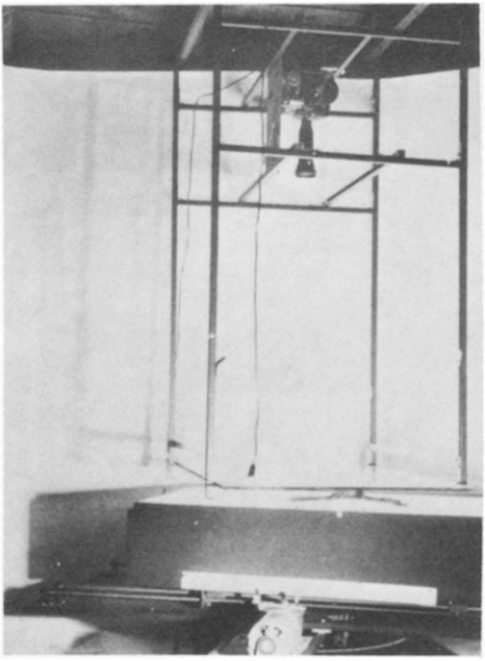
◄ The standard Hollywood full-crew method. As many as 50 technicians work on the normal Hollywood set. This allows great technical resourcefulness which can produce fine technical results; but it also constipates the creative process and can restrict the director's authority to the point where he can realistically be described as "the foreman on the set."

The *cinéma-vérité* approach. ► The blimpless, battery-driven Auricon camera and Nagra tape-recorder (often with a directional microphone) minimize size, weight, and intrusiveness. They are operated by a two-man crew. Normally the brothers David and Albert Maysles, shown here, use only natural, existing lighting. Such equipment comes close to the hypothetical "camera-pen" envisioned by French film-maker and critic Alexandre Astruc, with which one could "write" films as directly as one writes on paper.



◄ The Oxberry animation stand shown here is the key component in the standard full-cell animation process upon which the traditional Disney style depended. Much bigger versions also exist, but this one is capable of extremely complex and delicate combinations of movements. However, its use requires an elaborate division of labor previous to the photography stage: outlining, inking, and coloring of the moving figures; the painting of backgrounds; charts of movements, exactly timed. Operation of the machine is in itself a specialized job. Cost of the installation is reported to be around $40,000.

John Korty's home-made animation stand ► in Stinson Beach, California. Korty's rig uses a 16mm Bolex camera with zoom lens. The table supplies only 140 watts of flourescent light from below: Korty's images are made with translucent papers, knotty yarns, and other items. It can move from side to side and rotate. Total cost is around $1700. This system keeps the creative process simple and direct, as Korty manipulates his materials on the light table as he shoots. The result (see below) is a sprightly, Klee-like style which has earned Korty a reputation as one of the chief new talents in U. S. animation. He's now working with Henry Jacobs (whose record *The Interview* was the basis of the Pintoff film) on what promises to be a horrifyingly funny film on smoking.



THREE VIEWS ON CINÉMA-VÉRITÉ

COLIN YOUNG

Cinema of Common Sense

The term *cinéma-vérité* has been used, loosely, by critics to label documentary films which employ the technical advantages of the new light cameras and sound recorders, and which usually do not begin with a script but with an actual on-going event which they try to record, or a situation which they attempt to deseribe, always, allegedly at least, with the minimum of interpretation. In attempting to get at the *truth* of a situation, the preconceived script is disallowed, the film-maker does not *direct* (in the sense of controlling what is in front of the camera), and the editing process is faithful to the actual event—its continuity, its relationships, its entire character. No one, I maintain, really expects to find such a thing as the "objective statement," although some of the new documentary film-makers sometimes permit themselves to talk as if that's what their films were concerned with. In less polemic moments they will admit to the "subjectivity" of their cameras and their editing, but will insist that they are trying, to the limit of their own discretion, to represent the events or situations as they found them—not as they expected to find them, not as they wish you to believe they found them, but as they saw them through the camera.

This, then, could more accurately be called the cinema of common sense, the naturalist cinema—Louis Marcorelles prefers "direct cinema," Drew Associates have dubbed their program "The Living Camera." It can readily be distinguished from the conventional cinema which deals, and revels, in contrivance—the immaculate control which a film-maker can exercise on his material so as to present to an audience his very personal vision of it. In its traditional forms this has led the director on to the sound stage where by set design, costuming, lighting, and casting he can place in front of his cameras the precise image he seeks to represent, and for the editing he supplies himself with those shots which he can then redirect into the controlled interpretation of the image which will be shown to an audience. Generally speaking, most such controls are abandoned by the c-v director; and he tries, during editing, to be dictated to by his subject, rather than conversely.

This seems familiar—it fits with one possible interpretation of what Robert Flaherty was about (what Frances Flaherty calls nonpreconception). It is also very unfamiliar because it has resulted in some rather startling films—films which do not seem to follow at all the traditional lines of the story film.

In this space I had meant to write a full-scale polemic on behalf of cinéma-vérité, but circumstances prevented me from undertaking it now. The polemic is needed, it seems to me, because the new styles in documentary are either being attacked (at least in part through misunderstanding) or ignored (by timorous exhibitors and television bookers). Henry Breitrose asks what is meant by calling a "Living Camera" film *interesting* (Leacock and the others at Drew Associates used to say they were merely trying to get on to subjects which were "interesting" and present them as faithfully as possible to an audience). He says that the films are usually as good as their subjects are interesting, but that the most successful ones work because their subjects have a structure which permits the "story" to unfold "naturally." He concludes that whenever the

meaning of the event is externally evident, and when the event's structure is sufficiently similar to the traditional structure of dramatic conflict, there is a good chance of the films's working.

This seems to me to beg the question—just as Peter Graham does when he implies that all cinema must be judged by the same set of standards—*Potemkin* and *Le Chemin de la Mauvaise Route* equally, even although these standards were arrived at and set down before Herman made a film, before Rouch or Leacock or the Maysles ever held a camera. There was the day when a documentary film-maker argued, at the first Flaherty Seminar in 1954, that a documentary film-maker, if he could not have a set script in his hand, should at least have a strong outline in mind and should see to it that all material shot would relate to that outline and would contribute to the argument of the film. Who said that? Leacock. Seven years later he was saying something else. The cinema had moved forward. The critics want to hold it back.

Nevertheless, Breitrose is justified in keeping some kind of score. Among the Drew Associates films some are vastly more successful than others. *On the Pole* (the story of Eddie Sachs' 1962 race at Indianapolis) is a fascinating document of a man chasing a lunatic ambition. Undoubtedly, this is the most articulate film made by the group. They chose Sachs, firstly because he had the favored position (earned by the driver with the fastest qualifying heat), and secondly because he was a talkative, outgoing man. But the film succeeds because of the film-makers' skill in putting the audience in a position to judge what is being said. Knowing that they could not predict the outcome, they took us inside Sachs' ambition to win and then stayed with him when he lost, forced out of the race by car trouble. It is here, in this early example of "Living Camera," that one myth is quickly destroyed—namely that the presence of the camera interferes with the audience's chances of seeing a person behave naturally. We see Sachs standing disconsolately by the track, with the race still in progress, a race no longer his. He becomes aware of the camera, tries to pretend he has not seen it, but we become aware of his bluff—we see him putting on an act, we see him gradually becoming resentful of the camera he had earlier accepted and welcomed; and because of this we see more clearly below the surface of a man who lived to win and who lost—precisely because, when Sachs was no longer lost in his own task, the camera became an intrusive element.

It was perhaps remembering this that led Leacock and Gregory Shuker to make a fatal mistake in *Nehru.** At the outset they had undertaken not to interfere or intrude in any way—except by being there. In return for permission to follow Nehru, they promised to ask no questions and make no demands of any kind. But in editing the film, Leacock has said, they found themselves without any dramatic material, without the usual elements of narrative conflict. They had just faithfully followed and recorded the work of an extraordinary man over a short period. But in looking for some threat to tie together the various parts they concluded that the key was in the promise they had made to Nehru—a promise they had, in the end, broken. Thus, in the film (broadcast May 31 on KHJ-TV, Los Angeles, and like the other "Living Camera" films available for other TV bookings) they keep pointing to this sequence, building it up, and then finishing the film with it. Unfortunately it is a complete fizzle. Shuker asks Nehru a question or two, Nehru answers them, in a perfectly straight conversational tone. Nothing much is said—we learn little new. It is as bad a gimmick as in Gitlin's *The Comedian* in which a perfectly straightforward account of Shelley Berman opening a show in Florida is tricked up by promises of fireworks in the last act—when Berman's act is "ruined" by an off-stage tele-

*As we go to press, Sachs has just been killed in the 1964 race, and headlines announce Nehru's death.

phone ringing. What, left to itself, could have been a savage little moment, is dressed up as melodrama and then flops.

These errors of judgment are a hold-over from the conservative classical drama. They ought to be totally unnecessary. It ought to be enough to spend fifteen days with Nehru (or, more questionably, three of four with Berman), so long as the film-maker is telling us something we did not know before, and probably could not know very readily by any other means. Thus both *Primary* (1960) and *Crisis* (1963) by the "Living Camera" teams did show us a part of politics that went beyond simple screen journalism. In *Primary* we are following the Humphrey-Kennedy battle in Wisconsin. In *Crisis* the subject is the Kennedy-Governor Wallace battle over the token integration of higher education in Alabama. The *New York Times* editorialized against the latter film on the grounds of improper interference with the due processes of government. Crucial to their argument was the contention that Leacock *et al.* could not witness the President, the Attorney-General and others without materially affecting their work and decisions. Again, on the screen, we can tell when Robert Kennedy is putting on an act. It is hard to believe that the act substantially alters what he would have done in the same situation if the cameras had been absent. The great service of the film is that it successfully captures a few moments in the problems of government. By having one crew with the Attorney-General in Washington and another in Alabama the film-makers were able to cover the conflict with a thoroughness which was not really matched at the time by any of the participants. We see Kennedy hesitating over a decision, needing information from Alabama which the cameras have already (in the edited film) shown to us in the audience. The result is to dramatize the complexity of the situation, and to clarify the nature of the crisis and the difficulty in arriving at a correct and tactically appropriate decision. This was editing of a more traditional sort—juxtaposition to force a certain interpretation—but it was arrived at by the simple device of extending the reportage situation from one location to two.

After *On the Pole*, I find *Football* and *Petey and Johnny* the most interesting of the Drew Associates' films. (I belong to the minority not liking *The Chair*). *Football* exploits a situation of straightforward conflict. Given extroverts in front of the camera a skilled crew cannot miss. But *Petey and Johnny* is a failure—defeated by the dilemma which all *cinéma-vérité* must face up to in the end: how to be faithful to a subject which does *not* fit neatly into the structural patterns of conventional drama, without betraying the audience. Drew chose what he considered the best of two betrayals. He slicked up the situation, concentrated on a gang member's marriage to provide a focus point, wrote narration for the social worker (the film was shot in Harlem), and threw away hours of taped conversation recorded wild on the streets.

The French, and French-Canadians, have different problems. Michel Brault (and Pierre Perrault) walked into a small Quebec fishing village and documented the villagers' decision to take up again the hunt for the white whale that had formerly provided them with their principal source of income. It so happened they caught a whale, and that these men, and their families, had a natural grace and wit which Brault and his recordist Carrière could catch. But there is also a strong "traditional" element to *Pour la Suite du Monde*—the scenes, though not directed, are set and the camera always tries to place the people in their landscape. The film ends up by being as close to Zavattini as to Flaherty and, with a minimum of narration, is a victory for the naturalist cinema. The Brault-Jutra-Carrière film *La Lutte* (on professional wrestling in Montreal) and Wolf Koenig's *Lonely Boy* manage at the same time to be accurate documents of their subjects and (without narration) scathing commentaries on the society which nurtures them.

By comparison, the Ballentine-Shepherd production *The Most* is contrived and rigged, although also enjoyable. It is only if you insist, with Graham, that all films must meet the same standards that we have to choose between *The Most* and *Lonely Boy*. To say you like both is not to admit to a collapse of critical judgment, but to suggest that critical ideas may need broadening.

Rouch began as an ethnographer and fell into the cinema. He has always had to contend with the effect that his shooting is having on his subjects — in *Moi, Un Noir* "Edward G. Robinson" went into prison, in *Chronique d'un Eté* the Renault worker *does* lose his job. But if this is irresponsibility, as Graham suggests, it is irresponsibility of a very special kind. Rouch is not a callous observer. He is no more indifferent than he is detached. It is possibly his lack of detachment that flaws his films, but it also gives them much of their excitement. I think Graham completely misreads his intentions in *Chronique* and is deaf to Rouch's own protestations of failure. All *cinéma-vérité* worth the name reveals its conventions to its audience. Thus it is in character for Leacock and Shuker to introduce *Nehru* with an explanation of their methods—what they shouldn't do is reprint shots (Nehru climbing on to a platform; Paul Crump's warden walking down the prison corridor to test the electrocution equipment—although this last was Drew's doing). Rouch may not be making a "film" in *Chronique*, but definitions never stopped something as dynamic as the cinema from moving on. Rouch makes his methods elaborately clear, and puts us in a perfect position to judge. So also, I would have thought, does Ruspoli in *Regards sur la Folie*. Graham suggested in correspondence that I must have had definite views about madness before seeing Ruspoli's film and that this is why I find the film richly informative and suggestive. I do not think the weeks spent as a nurse in a Glasgow asylum told me very much but in any case Ruspoli does *not* leave us totally at sea. First with one style (interview) then another (reportage, witness) we get a picture of the life the inmates of the hospital lead. The experience for an audience is emotional rather than intellectual, but it is certainly not totally vague and indeterminate. In *Les Inconnus de la Terre* (a better film), Ruspoli talks with farmers who don't want to move off the land and go into the city—and from time to time moves his camera far enough away so that we see the recordist sitting with his gear across from the men in the fields. There is no reason for this, except to remind us that we are, in part, watching a record—that Ruspoli's film, interpretative in part, is also rooted in the fact of these peoples' lives.

But where Graham is totally unsympathetic to a new mood in the cinema is with Jean Herman's brilliant *Chemin de la Mauvaise Route* (formerly called *Bon Pour La Vie Civile*. Here the film-maker is found guilty of mixing his styles—of recording lengthy interviews and then presenting them out of continuity, of interpreting his interviews with iconographic material and reportage; he also stages some scenes with his two principals and re-enacts others. This might be called "using the resources of the cinema"—it is also very easy to follow (apart from the alarming rapidity of some of the cutting) because it declares itself as it goes along—nothing is hidden, or faked. In the end, I suppose, we must count heads—Graham's sympathy is smothered, mine is not. What I see as a series of devices to render coherent something which came out in a garbled, inarticulate way, Graham sees as marionetting. For in fact the more the young gypsy and his mistress appear like the figures they emulate the more I sympathize with them —because Herman has also taken the precaution to make us like them, not in the first place, but gradually as the film progresses. It is so obviously a document about these two people that this fact holds together the other threads Herman develops. Marker does it brilliantly in *Le Joli Mai* too, but Herman's film stands as a

[continued on page 40]

tions, is not practicable in *cinéma-vérité*, as long as one is to be true to *cinéma-vérité's* basic assumptions of what is truth.

What seems to have happened is that important technological advances in film-making have become, for some, a magic key to the truth of the world. All of the nonsense about the film-maker, armed with camera and recorder, being able to exercise a passive "Christ-like vision" and find the real nature of the world appears to be a suitably elaborate rationale for the fact that some of the films made in this style cannot do justice to their subjects. Objectivity, in film, remains as big a myth as it ever was. An enormously promising way of treating certain kinds of subjects, i.e., those with strong internal structure, in which optimal spontaneity can reveal meaning hitherto inaccessible, is well on its way to becoming a mystique of technological existentialism, with appropriate overtones of Zen nonpreconception.

But we cannot assume as c-v seems to, that there is a universal or absolute truth about objects and events—in short, that there is a real nitty-gritty—and thus we must face up the fact that, to paraphrase Euclid on mathematics, there is no royal road to the real nitty-gritty.

YOUNG ON CINÉMA-VÉRITÉ (CONT'D)

fascinating prototype for a possible series of films which an American film-maker might do well to consider, if, and this is an important reservation, he can ever hope to get the confidence of his subjects as Herman clearly did here.

The Maysles brothers, Albert and David, are a special case. They consider themselves the purists of the movement—in *Showman* (about distributor-producer Joe Levine) and *The Beatles* they attempt to present their subjects completely without bias. As for the first, I have been told (in Hollywood) that the film is too critical of the "industry" and of Levine, and (in New York) that the film is a whitewash of the industry *and* Levine. I suppose, then, that the Maysles suceeded. Those who don't like *Showman* say they learn no more when it is over than after ten minutes—that it stays on the surface. The same would be said of *The Beatles*. The Maysles think that they should not interfere in shooting, that they should never set things up—the sequence in *Showman* with Susskind arguing at Levine in a Boston radio station just happened—for to do so would break the deal with their subject and, equally important, upset their own equilibrium as observers.

None of the film-makers discussed above would agree that he has been making superficial films. I am not even convinced this is the crucial point. An American philosopher called Mrs. Ladd Franklin once said she was surprised she rarely met another solipsist. The idealist critics should not run away when they meet an empirical film-maker. He is neither obscene nor dangerous. He is merely exploring a part of the cinema—the part Kracauer claimed (falsely) is the whole.

PETER GRAHAM

Cinéma-Vérité in France

Three years ago, few people had heard of the term *cinéma-vérité*, and only those familiar with Dziga-Vertov's 1924 communist manifesto on the cinema knew what it meant. Since then, *cinéma-vérité* has become such a household word that its adherents have already been satirized (albeit rather insipidly) in Jacques Baratier's *Dragées au Poivre*, a film intended not for a select audience of initiates but for the general public. *Cinéma-vérité* has been hailed by some as a great new art form, branded by others as "still-borne" or "a lie." Few controversies have produced such violent verbal clashes. One of the reasons for this, of course, is that no one ever took the trouble to define what was meant by the term, which was thus taken to cover many divergent methods and ideologies.

As so often, the film critics are guilty of much of this confusion. Three years ago, the shrewd producer of Jean Rouch's *Chronique d'un Eté* dug out Vertov's term and gave it a new lease on life in his skillfully launched publicity for the film. The journalists, avid for new catch-phrases, began to extend its meaning to include film-makers as different from Rouch as Drew and Leacock, Reichenbach, Marker, and even Flaherty—who was claimed at the 1962 Tours short-film festival as the father of the movement. The designation spread like wildfire: home movies, Italian neorealism, direct TV reportage and (in the opinion of Jean Douchet) even *Advise and Consent* were all *cinéma-vérité*. *Tot homines, tot sententiae*. Everyone felt comfortable in their judgments of the movement, for everyone had a different conception of it. And the film-makers themselves, as was the case with the Angry Young Men and the Nouvelle Vague, had much less sense of brotherhood than outsiders liked to suppose.

They do have one quality in common: they all use reality as a *means* to their various ends. That is to say, they are anti-fictional, they dispense with a scenario, actors, and studio, and use film of *real* people, *actual* events. Although all such directors aim at the truth, this of course does not mean that the end is automatically any truer than a film using fictional or artificial means. It is, I think, far more difficult to avoid deliberate or accidental distortion when one is using nonfictional material. The persuasive power of the cinema is such that any tendency, conscious or otherwise, to distort or deceive can easily pass unnoticed. It is in their attitude to their material that such film-makers stand or fall.

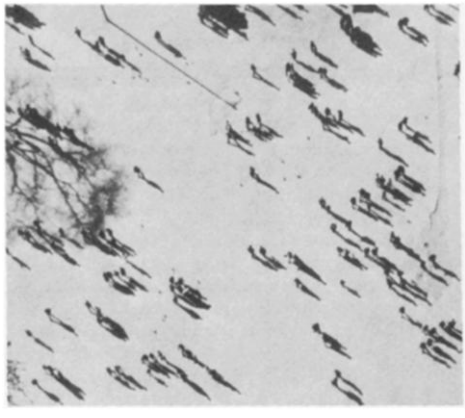
Take Jean Rouch and Mario Ruspoli, the two directors most commonly associated with *cinéma-vérité* in France. Rouch made several excellent films in Africa as an ethnographer. He became increasingly interested in the cinema as a medium, and subsequently, using his light and efficient equipment as an ornithologist uses binoculars, he focused in *Chronique d'un Eté* on the typical Parisian. "What is happiness?" he and his collaborator Edgar Morin asked, hoping that the bluntness of the question would provoke their subjects to reveal their inner preoccupations, their anxieties and their passions in the twitch of an eyelid, the fidgeting of a hand. Rouch at first wanted to efface his role as a director and allow the ineluctable power of the camera to do its work. Objectivity was his sole aim. But this resulted in a tentative approach and a hesitant film. Worshipping the objectivity of the camera as recording instrument in his interviews, he forfeits the chance and the responsibility to impose on the material a view of life which is his own. Thus none of Rouch's films reaches a higher level than that of interesting experimen-

tation, as does Chris Marker in *Le Joli Mai*, for instance, which combines interview and personal evocation in a novel way.

Ruspoli too, in his film about a lunatic asylum, *Regards sur la Folie*, was trying to be objective. He wanted to confront the spectator, in the starkest manner possible, with madness. In his interviews with the inmates he allowed nothing to taint the purity of the question-answer procedure. He refused to distort the purely visual presence of a madman with a commentary which would necessarily have given it a particular slant.

How is it, then, that neither Rouch nor Ruspoli succeeds in being "objective"? Evidently because they have failed to understand either the purpose or the innate qualities of the cinema. If film is an art, its purpose is not merely to record, but to select, organize, and alchemize what is recorded.* Watching the material that Rouch and Ruspoli collected, in spite of its undeniable interest, is like being allowed to see only the palette of a painter who is producing a masterpiece; it has all the elements that could go to make a work of art, but is never more than a tantalizing suggestion of what one might have seen.

But *Regards sur la Folie* and *Chronique d'un Eté* are more than harmless might-have-beens. For in their quest for objectivity, Rouch and Ruspoli overlooked one of the paradoxes of the cinema, which applies as much to fictional as to documentary films. Although the camera can be absolutely true to an event in its external manifestation (actions, words, gestures) it can never, alone, be true to the meaning of that event, which is always dependent upon the selection and arrangement of the context. This was crudely proved by Kuleshov's now rather tiresomely renowned experiment with the same actor's face in three different contexts, leading viewers to attribute three different expressions to it. But it applies minutely and subtly to every film. In *Regards sur la Folie*, Ruspoli leaves us deliberately at sea. The viewer's reactions to insanity vary according to his prejudices or his indifference, for no context is provided. The psychiatrist who revolutionized the methods of the hospital where the film was shot felt that the document would be a true picture of life in a mental institution only if projected to psychiatrists, who could fill in the gaps and draw their own expert conclusions. This is a damning judgment on a film aimed at a larger audience. In fact, through his deliberate detachment and refusal to communicate with his subjects, Ruspoli has (unintentionally I am sure) shorn the film of sympathy and warmth, generating in the mind of the lay spectator a reactionary attitude to mental illness.



Marker's LE JOLI MAI.

Ruspoli's film does not fail because he did not organize or select; the fact that he picked certain camera set-ups, certain rhythms in the editing, means that he must have made a *choice*. It fails because he *attempted* to make no choice, which is attempting the impossible.

*Jean-Luc Godard argues in his sharp and (I think) largely incorrect attack on Leacock in the *Cahiers* "American Cinema" number (150-151): "Leacock and his team do not take account (and the cinema is nothing but the taking of account) that their eye in the act of looking through the viewer is at once more and less than the registering apparatus which serves the eye . . . Deprived of consciousness, thus, Leacock's camera, despite its honesty, loses the two fundamental qualities of a camera: intelligence and sensibility. . . . His lack of subjectivity, in the last analysis, leads Leacock to lack objectivity."

The same is true of *Chronique d'un Eté*. When one realizes that the total material shot amounted to 25 hours before cutting and 1½ hours after cutting, one sees the enormous process of selection involved. Thus Rouch must admit that the presentation of the characters in the film must have been conditioned by his own view of them. He retained what *he* though was interesting or revealing, but still seeks to pass it off as a somehow totally objective portrayal.

Indeed, behind Rouch's scientific facade there lurks the frustrated dramaturge. In the scene in *Chronique* where Marceline and Jean-Pierre talk together on the jetty at St. Tropez, Rouch actually had them prepare what they were going to say and rehearse it before he set the camera going. And in his latest film, *Liberté*, he gave some friends of his (non-actors) one or two themes on which to meditate (liberty, love, etc.), and then filmed them in the throes—the word is chosen on purpose—of improvising dialogue. In his own words, he was aiming at a kind of cinematographic *commedia dell'arte*. What he achieved was an uneasy hybrid. The characteristics of the live documentary or television report (wobbly camera, bad sound, hesitancy) rub shoulders with the accoutrements of the traditional fictional film (J. C. Bach and quotations from Sade on the soundtrack). The most interesting aspect of the film lies on a multiconscious level. One is aware from time to time that the "actors'" inspiration is drying up. Their embarrassment breaks the tenor of the film, but is psychologically interesting. Rouch tells us that the man in the film with a shaven head was extremely nervous in front of the camera. Curiously enough, he is the only individual who imposes himself as a presence, instead of being a half-baked character. This unpredictable transition from life to film makes a mockery of Rouch's intentions.

Rouch's CHRONIQUE D'UN ÉTÉ.

There has been much discussion about the camera's relationship with its subjects in *Chronique*. Rouch showed the filmed material to the subjects months later, and filmed them again as they discussed their reactions to seeing themselves. Sometimes their behavior before the camera changed. Marilou wept, not in a normal healthy way, but self-indulgently, as a means of exhibitionistic catharsis. Sometimes the course of their lives was changed. Angelo had difficult problems, both personal and connected with his job (he was fired). This participation of the cinema in life has had great claims made for it. But this type of procedure creates exceptional circumstances; it is not every day that one has the opportunity of coming so nakedly face to face with oneself. I feel that the experience is not universal enough to be of real interest to anyone but a trained psychologist. And in the case of Angelo, where the camera changed the course of his life, questions of moral responsibility must be raised; Big Brother is not so far away.

Responsibility, moral or otherwise, is what Rouch and Ruspoli shirk by their approach. They have not the courage of their convictions. They cannot accept the inevitable: that the film-maker cannot be objective and must mould reality according to his personal beliefs. Two other French directors, François Reichenbach and Jean Herman, whose latest films are sometimes dubbed *cinéma-vérité*, are not afraid to impose their own views. Both have the right approach. But unfortunately their films, though full of interest, are marred by what one might call a lack of honesty or respect toward their subjects.

In *Un Coeur Gros Comme Ça*, Reichenbach gives a picture of a young Negro, Abdoulaye

Faye, who comes to Paris to study and to box. We see his encounter with Parisian life, his disappointment in the ring; we hear his letters back home. Much of the time, Faye did not realize or particularly care that the camera was filming him, and hence a large part of the film, thanks to Reichenbach's perceptive eye, captures Faye's innocence and charm. Unfortunately Reichenbach oversteps the mark. In one sequence he yields to the temptation of giving one of Faye's favorite songs about Paris a poetical visual setting. This evocation of Paris, however, has nothing to do with Faye; it is an insertion of Reichenbach's own imagination. On its own terms it would be perfectly valid, but it only irritates here.

In *Le Chemin de la Mauvaise Route,* Jean Herman focuses on two juvenile delinquents, Jean-Claude and Colette. He questions them on prison, love, death, happiness, etc. He obtains a great frankness, and the interviews not only record the callous cynicism of their attitudes but also suggest, very strongly, their vulnerability. Herman wanted also to show the kind of world in which they live, so he interpolated shots of pop singers, leatherjackets, motorcyclists, and the like. It is a pity that Herman has a cinematic tic; his whirlwind editing rarely allows a shot to last more than a second or two, and the long-term effect leaves one breathless. With this comes the awareness that, like Reichenbach, Herman imposes his own vision too harshly and indiscriminately—whole sequences of *Le Chemin* are virtually indistinguishable from his earlier frenetic shorts, *Actua-Tilt* and *Twist Parade.* And by the end of the film any sympathy for the young people is, for me, effectively smothered, for Herman makes them as puppet-like as the pop singers they adulate. In one long sequence at the end, Colette opens her heart; her lacquerhard surface dissolves, and she is revealed as an ordinary, rather sentimental girl. She even weeps. But Herman chops up this confession and reshuffles the pieces; in a glut of jumpcuts, he shows her one moment with tears in her eyes, the next without; her laughter, her seriousness, her swearing pass in such rapid succession that she jerks like a marionette on strings.

The question of the film-maker's respect for his material arises very crucially in the case of compilation films. By these I mean (in Marcel Martin's definition) films "resulting from a combination of documents which had a separate existence beforehand and were not filmed with this use in view." In other words, films like *Mein Kampf* and *The Life of Adolf Hitler.* Owing to the immense shortage of material, historical events are difficult to reconstruct satisfactorily. The temptation is always, in the case of a famous battle for instance, to use any striking pieces of newsreel which are not inconsistent with shots of the battle in question. And if fact, even the best compilation films, such as Aurel's 14-18 and the Thorndykes' *The German Story,* occasionally have to resort to this. If this kind of film were kept strictly within the limits of its definition, it would be silent; for the sound nearly always has to be added afterwards from other sources. When we are fortunate enough to fall upon a document as self-sufficient as the film taken by the Nazis of the Warsaw Ghetto, silence tells. This extraordinarily pathetic record, shot on 16mm, was due to be edited into a propaganda film to extol the efficiency of the Germans' solution of the "Jewish problem." The images brought back by the cameramen were so unflattering that the Germans abandoned the idea. When the spectator is aware of the film's history, the searing silence generates its own

Reichenbach's UN COEUR GROS COMME ÇA.

terrible irony. Similar at first sight in its pathos is a shot in Rossif's account of the Spanish Civil War, *Mourir à Madrid,* of a small, shivering child perched on a heap of rubble. What a quirk of fortune, one thinks, that a cameraman happened to catch so poignant an image. But then comes the realization that the shot is too consciously well composed, that the grain of the film is too fine to have been taken before the war by a newsreel cameraman. In fact this shot, like many others in the film, was taken by Rossif himself. No doubt the child is Spanish, and perhaps Franco is the cause of its shivering; but such a tacit insertion of specially filmed material into a context of newsreel shots is dishonest. Dishonest because it deceives, whereas Resnais, in his masterly juxtaposition of past and present in *Night and Fog*, threw his own work into relief by shooting it in color.

The two essential qualities of the good *cinéma-vérité* or compilation film, artistic honesty and the courage of one's convictions, are to be found in the work of two American teams, Robert Drew and Richard Leacock, and the brothers David and Albert Maysles, and a Frenchman, Chris Marker.

The Americans have made considerable technical advances: handy silent cameras; quick, precise exposure settings; fast film; portable recorders synchronized electronically with the camera. With this equipment they can approximate quite closely the flexibility of the human senses. This opens up whole new fields of experience; they can follow their subjects almost anywhere, and because of their unobtrusiveness (they need no artificial lighting) people soon forget the presence of the camera and attain surprising naturalness.

In *Showman*, the Maysles investigate that phenomenon Joe Levine, the American film producer. They show his life from day to day: his work at his office, his reunion with old friends, his public and private life. Like Leacock, the Maysles *say* they aim at objectivity. And in the sense that they did not tamper with events they might loosely be called objective. But through their selection of incident and their editing they transformed their material into an artistic unity. This results not simply in a destructive attack on Levine (though he is open enough to criticism) but in true satire. As in Juvenal or Nathaniel West, its savagery does not induce one to recoil in disgust; it asks one to understand. One of the reasons for this lies, I think, in yet another curious paradox. The camera, by focussing on a particular rectangle of reality, heightens it—thus producing a kind of distancing effect between the image and the spectator. This is why ordinary people seem more ridiculous on the screen than they would in real life. For instance, in John Schlesinger's film *Terminus* there is a sequence where people apply to a lost-luggage office. The reaction of an audience to their timid inquiries is helpless laughter. No doubt the scene, witnessed by someone on the spot, would have been droll, but it would hardly have seemed hilarious as it did on the screen.

In *Showman* there is a scene where Levine reminisces about his childhood. He uses sentimental language and becomes emotionally quite carried away. In a fictional film, such a scene would be intolerably maudlin. But because it is real, it takes on a secondary meaning. It shows Levine to be an average, rather sentimental, and not particularly intelligent man: the ruthless film mogul is reduced to human proportions. Even in the most satirical sequences (when he is giving orders over the telephone, or talking to Sophia Loren, who dwarfs him) he never becomes merely an image of capitalism. He is at once a symbol and a man.

Drew and Leacock, in their less successful films, do not show as much restraint and sensibility. There is an almost Rouchian overtone of the romanesque in *Susan Starr* and *Jane*. The former is an account of a concert pianist's ordeal at an international competition. She fails to win the prize, and in an attempt to give the film a happy ending, the film-makers overemphasize her friendship (is it really love?) with another pianist. In *Jane*, we see Jane Fonda's first appearance in a Broadway play: the rehearsals, the tension, her emotional difficulties, and cruelly, the complete flop of the

play. Throughout, one has the impression that Jane is *acting* rather than being. And, as in *Susan Starr,* emotional attachments seem curiously forced. But there is one moment in the film when the mask falls and we see the true, vulnerable, young actress—when the camera fixes relentlessly on her face as she reads out the notices which damn both the play and her performance.

The Drew-Leacock approach is better suited to events over which they have little control—as in *Primary* (electioneering), *Football,* or *The Chair.* Here, especially in the first two, the film-makers limit their role to presenting facts as they see them. But they never allow themselves to become mere neutral recording agents who press buttons. Drew has said that he may not know for sure what will happen, but he will have a pretty good idea of what he is after. Thus, in *Football* for instance, by lightning zooms into a contorted face, or hands clasped in prayer, the film-makers pinpoint the particular aspect of the subject they wish to emphasize.

The French critic André Bazin once wrote that he found the few, undramatic images of the early stages of Scott's antarctic expedition, actually shot by one of the expedition members, more compelling than all the suspense and excitement of the feature *Scott of the Antarctic.* They provided, he said, a more direct link with the experience itself. The same is true of *The Chair* when compared with *I Want to Live.* We are brought as close as we can ever come to the hideous apparatus of capital punishment. The long tracking shot down labyrinthine corridors to the death chamber, where the electric chair waits like some shiny black insect, has few parallels in the history of the cinema.* Nearly the whole film was shot before Crump was pardoned, at a time when no one knew whether he would be allowed to live or not. We see the drawn face of the prison warden, Crump's friend but potential executioner—it was he who would have to pull the switch. We *relive* an experience. The moral impact is enormous.

Drew is basically a journalist. His aim is to lay bare the facts and make a rational indictment. This is also the aim of the anonymously made *Octobre à Paris,* an account of the bloody clashes between Algerians and the Paris police in October, 1961. Although I have read the script, I have not yet been able to see the film (it is seized by the police whenever they get wind of a clandestine showing), but by all accounts it is a courageous document.

Chris Marker's more personal approach is different from that of Drew-Leacock or the Maysles. In films such as *Cuba Si!* and *Le Joli Mai,* he examines his own conscience in a poetical rather than analytical way. This kind of method is full of hazards, as the films of Herman and Reichenbach show by their faults. But Marker's sensibility and control are such that he never once puts a foot wrong. In *Le Joli Mai* (1962), he treats the same subject (Parisians) and uses the same technique (flexible equipment, interviews, etc.) as Rouch in *Chronique.* But here the result *is* a work of art. Straight conversations with all kinds of Parisians (shopgirls, an Algerian, an OAS sympathizer, a worker priest, engineers and so on) are combined with more lyrical linking passages where Marker evokes his own vision of the city. For him, the expressive resources of the cinema are not anathema. Shots and sequences are not strung sloppily one after another in misguided imitation of reality, but form part of an organic whole: each section contains groups of interviews which are relevant to each other, and the first part shows us the romantic visionary aspect of aspiring Parisians, the second goes on to more political questions. The music also plays an important and subtle part. For example, Marker discreetly adds some faintly nostalgic music to part of an interview (with a soldier and his fiancée) and this combination of the actual scene and the musical comment produces, through the depth of the associations it evokes, a true poetic image. Whereas with Rouch the commentary is virtually abjured, with Marker it constitutes the binding element; subdued but

full of sinew, it guides the spectator persuasively through the film and up to its moving conclusion. Like his earlier film on Castro's Cuba, *Le Joli Mai* is the lucid yet passionate essay of a man who believes in and cares about his fellow men.

The films of Marker, the Maysles, and Drew and Leacock justify themselves by what they are. They have no need of a catchy label to bolster up their intentions. These film-makers present not *the* truth, but *their* truth. The term *cinéma-vérité*, by postulating some absolute truth, is only a monumental red herring. The sooner it is buried and forgotten, the better.

HENRY BREITROSE

On the Search for the Real Nitty-Gritty: Problems & Possibilities in *Cinéma-Vérité*

Ask a nonacademic about the *allgemeine Wahrheit* or the *Ding an sich* and he will probably look at you as if you are quite out of your head. Ask about the "real nitty-gritty" and he'll dig. He may not answer, but dig he must. He'll know that what you are asking is *what is really going on,* what is the basis, what is the truth, what is the essence of things. In the nitty-gritty world, truth and meaning turn up, more often than not, without benefit of an ideological matrix. The questions "what, why, and how" are admissable, but the answers are to be found only in the object or event itself. The trick is to be able to see them.

Cinéma-vérité, in its various manifestations, seems to be an attempt to get at the nitty-gritty of the world by observing people in the process of some crucial interactions with each other. The truth about them, the answer to "what is life really like?" is thought to be there, somewhere, and the way to tease it out is through the use of battery-powered sync camera linked to a portable sync recorder. One looks at the world through an Eclair Coutant or a modified Auricon, and listens to it through a Nagra or Perfectone recorder—and its uniqueness is, somehow, bound to be revealed. And sometimes it is.

Iris Barry's statement that "film is a way of seeing more than meets the eye" has been preached to an infinite number of film students, and bromidic as it may be at this time, it still suggests in a precise way that film-making is more than bearing witness. Through the manipulation of images something transcending witnessing may come about. One may argue that with editing the "truth" is distorted by the selective processes involved. The fallacy that the camera "never lies" comes easiest to those who know least about camera work. Any tyro cameraman knows which lenses to use to get the right "effect," to adjust the visible age of an actress, to pick a man out of the crowd, to get a favorable portrait. Camera angle and placement also select, emphasize, modify and distort, as do any number of other tricks of the camera profession. To argue that editing distorts the "truth" any more than camera work does would seem to be a silly argument. The reasons why *Operation Abolition* was untruthful about an event have much more to do with the intent of its producers than with the fact

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that it was "edited." Conversely, without invoking intent one is hard put to find the *vérité* in *cinéma-vérité*, or, for that matter, the "Pravda" in *Kino Pravda*, its slavic god parent.

At its best, *cinéma-vérité* can get close to an object or event. It can give more than witnessing or even vicarious participation. When skillfully done, an audience member can, more than with any other style of production, get to know the subject in a way approaching, in intensity and distortion, the literary metaphor of knowing as carnal knowledge. In the best work the camera can penetrate the world of the participants, can interact with them, and can serve the functions of illuminating and revealing their world. In much *cinéma-vérité* work, however, there is the feeling of the outsider unable to gain entry into the group, who stands at the edge, disassociated, alien, but not yet alienated. He looks, he forms compositions in his mind's eye, he postulates comments on what is going on, but being outside he can't really see what is going on. Being alien, he could not understand even if he could see and hear and understand.

In the Drew Associate "*Living Camera*" film *Nehru*, the latter situation applies. We are told that together with Ricky Leacock and Gregory Shuker, camera and recorder team, we will intimately witness the world of Nehru. The problem is that nothing happens, or at least nothing that is understandable to the "Living Camera" team. There is no conflict, no crisis, save for the fear that Nehru will be mobbed by the throngs of Indians who turn out to hear him talk. Nehru doesn't get mobbed. Shuker almost does: the crucial event turns out to be not about Nehru at all, but rather about the film-maker. Ultimately, the relatively calm and rather dull (write this off to the "alien" explanation) witnessing of Nehru takes on a new structure. The interaction between the camera-recorder team and Nehru emerges as the focus of the film. The stress, crisis, conflict and resolution depend on whether the noninterference pact between Nehru and Leacock-Shuker will be abrogated. Will the camera and recorder be noticed? Will Leacock and Shuker intrude? The answer is, of course, yes. The resolution is that Nehru really doesn't mind. We find out quite a bit about the "Living Camera" technique, but little about Nehru.

The differentiation between revelation and observation is really the difference between conceiving of the camera and recorder as extensions of creative personality and perceptual apparatus of the film makers and thinking about them in terms of some magical mechanical toy. Jargon like neo-pilotton, Wildum's plastic blimp, resolver, sound spot, accutron sync, and allusions to Kudelski's long-awaited something-or-other, and Arriflex's forthcoming model S are current and choice in c-v shop talk. One often wonders whether films are made by men using machines because there is no other way to state or explore that which they feel to be salient and significant or by machines alone. Does deus *ever* arrive ex machina?

Traditionally, if one can talk about tradition in this field, documentary has been concerned with revealing man and his enviornment, as opposed to merely recording events on film. Although the social conditions and technological means of documentary have changed enormously in the relatively recent past films are still made by men, and often are about other men.

The "Living Camera" film *Eddie* (original title: *On the Pole*) manages to tell us more about the racing car driver Eddie Sachs, his goals, ambitions, and style of life than he probably can verbalize; not that he doesn't talk, but rather that his actions are more eloquent than his verbal statements. In his relationship with his wife, with his driver colleagues, with his automobile, his pit crew, and the Indianapolis 500-mile race, Eddie emerges as a complex and often contradictory personality. The crucial action in the film is, of course, the race. Until the race, Eddie is sure that this will be his last. He will win and retire. He has come close to winning before and this time he has the coveted pole position. Tension and expectation are built up. The race

begins, concludes, and Eddie loses. After the race, his thoughts of retiring are gone. He will, of course, try again. Why does he race? He never tells us, but we know, in an intimate and complex way that defies verbalization. We know because we have been close to Eddie Sachs during a crisis in his life.

Taken as a group, the "Living Camera" films share one curious and all-pervasive trait. In a way reminiscent of traditional well-made drama, they dote on conflict and resolution. Interestingly, whereas traditionally photographed feature-film production has come to the point of eschewing fundamentally 19th-century dramatic narrative style, the technically radical "Living Camera" films make it a stock in trade for documentary. Antonioni, Godard, and even Fellini break loose from the well-made play concept, but Drew, Leacock and their collaborators use the same traditional dramatic and narrative structuring device.

The struggle for human souls seems to be a structuring device for at least three "Living Camera" films. In *David,* the struggle takes place at Synanon House in Santa Monica, California. David is a junkie trying to stay clean. Synanon is a narcotics treatment center, run by former addicts without benefit of official medical sanction or police approval. David's special problem is that his wife and child are, in the eyes of the people in charge of Synanon, interfering with his withdrawal from drugs. His responsibilities toward them are used as a rationale for possible leaving. The detrimental effects of leaving are indicated by examination of pictures of people who were made to leave by unsympathetic authorities and are now either imprisoned or dead. Soon, the struggle is for three souls. A man who left before his time returns, and we are told that he is "almost dead from massive injections of hereoin." A neophyte girl arrives to kick the habit, publicly, in the living room, as is the custom. Instantly one crisis becomes three. Will David leave? Will Synanon be able to hold on to Jimmy, the returned prodigal? Will Marguerita kick "cold turkey" and stay in Synanon for complete rehabilitation? The results are two noes and a yes. David does indeed stay, after reaching some sort of understanding with his wife. Jimmy and Marguerita leave. Visually, the most moving portions of the film are David's two good-byes to his wife: one after her first visit in the film is close to the point of intimacy, and lengthy far past audience embarrassment. It makes the point, in a subtle and complex way, that David's relationship with his wife is a strong and dependent one, and rationalizes the statement by one of the other residents in a group therapy-cum-discussion session called a "synanon," that David is an infantile person who has difficulty interacting with other persons on an adult level, and whose drug problem is intimately tied up with his problems of dependence. Perhaps the weakest point of the film, and the most obvious one, is the sequence of Marguerita "kicking cold turkey" in the living room. The narrator assures the audience that she is in need of "all of the sympathy she can get" and the camera shows us David and another resident accompanying her discomfort with a slow blues-y kind of song. It is as if the style screams to the audience "Isn't this poetic and moving!" It very well may have been, but the qualities of poesy and emotion are destroyed by its obviousness. A close second in disappointment is what is advertised by the narrator as a "violent and often explosive synanon." We are told that it works and that professionals in the field are stumped as to why; but what we see is an almost conventional discussion, reminiscent of a rather tame group therapy session. In the few instances in which reaction shots are cut in the sequence picks up in intensity, but generally one is stumped, not as to why the session works, but rather as to why the narrator advertises something that the film does not deliver. The "Living Camera" does not preclude intrusive, omniscient narration.

In *Petey and Johnny,* the struggle is by a youth worker for a teen-age kid, certifiable as a juvenile delinquent by those so inclined. The relationship of the worker with the kid, of the kid with other kids, and of the youth worker with the other kids in the area, are shown with

considerable warmth, and the wonder of this film is that the film makers could gain this kind of entré into the street world of slum teenagers. In *The Chair*, the struggle is for the life of Paul Crump, whose reformation while in prison was unrecognized by some, held irrelevant by others, and championed by the few who thought of prison as a means for rehabilitation, rather than as an instrument of social vengeance. *The Chair* is probably the most publicized of the "Living Camera" films and possibly the best. In any event, it deserves somewhat longer treatment than is possible in this article.

The "Living Camera" technique becomes doubly complex, doubly promising, and doubly disappointing in *Mooney vs. Fowle* (original title: *A Tale of Two Coaches*). The film concerns itself with an annual football game, played before thousands of spectators at night in the Orange Bowl. The competing teams are from two local high schools, and the spectators, players, students, and coaches take their football seriously indeed. The film attempts to set up a parallelism between the two schools, both in themselves and in the personalities of the two coaches. A kind of grimness and humorless determination permeates the relationships among the players and between coach and team. In a large measure, the football game becomes a microcosm of the world in which the players will soon have to participate. The object is not to play the game, but rather to win, and both coaches hammer this home to their charges in a manner calculated to make Marine basic training look like a Summerhill school. The film indulges in the pre-game pep rallies and in the half-time marching and drum-majorette-ing with appropriate attention to immediately postpubescent sexuality. I believe it was Marshall McLuhan who described the drum majorette as the apotheosis of contemporary fetishism, combining organization, militarism, youth, and sex. Close-ups of behinds cut into the sequence and distorted shots using an extreme wide-angle lens let the spectator know where the living camera's mind happens to be wandering at the time. The problem with the film is that the parallelism doesn't really work. Close-up shots of the facial tic of one of the coaches are referred to again and again in order to build tension as the game nears its close. The problem is that this is the coach of the winning team, which by the time the tic is cut in is so far ahead that victory is all but guaranteed. The most telling and horrifying shots in the film are in the dressing room of the winning team, before the game and during half time. The coach, in his pep talk to the boys, picks up a piece of wood and with it demonstrates how to deal with the opposition by beating it savagely on a bench, while shouting to his team. After the game, in the winning team's dressing room, one of the boys on the team recapitulates these instructions with a soft drink carton as he beats it ecstatically on the concrete floor.

Ultimately, critical judgement about the "Living Camera" films becomes trapped into dependence on the nature of the subject. The films, generally, are as good as their subjects are interesting. But "interesting" implies only a kind of pragmatic tautology. Subjects "work" in "Living Camera" if they have within them enough structure so that the film itself takes on a natural rather than an enforced continuity, such as that of traditional dramatic conflict. The problem is really whether the subject fits the form, which is the reverse of looking at the form-content relationship from the more traditional and perhaps more sensible point of view of fitting the treatment to the subject. The "truth" of an event, then, can be seen using the *cinéma-vérité* technique only when the event is such that its meaning is externally evident and self-structured. The juxtaposition of sequences to generate new levels of meaning, whether as practiced by Eisenstein or Basil Wright or Humphrey Jennings or George Stoney, isn't part of the rhetoric of *cinéma-vérité*. People in c-v are contrasted in real time and real space, and only if they are normally there to begin with. Relating them in filmic time and space, albeit interesting and practical in terms of films whose form is dictated by content considera-

tions, is not practicable in *cinéma-vérité*, as long as one is to be true to *cinéma-vérité's* basic assumptions of what is truth.

What seems to have happened is that important technological advances in film-making have become, for some, a magic key to the truth of the world. All of the nonsense about the film-maker, armed with camera and recorder, being able to exercise a passive "Christ-like vision" and find the real nature of the world appears to be a suitably elaborate rationale for the fact that some of the films made in this style cannot do justice to their subjects. Objectivity, in film, remains as big a myth as it ever was. An enormously promising way of treating certain kinds of subjects, i.e., those with strong internal structure, in which optimal spontaneity can reveal meaning hitherto inaccessible, is well on its way to becoming a mystique of technological existentialism, with appropriate overtones of Zen nonpreconception.

But we cannot assume as c-v seems to, that there is a universal or absolute truth about objects and events—in short, that there is a real nitty-gritty—and thus we must face up the fact that, to paraphrase Euclid on mathematics, there is no royal road to the real nitty-gritty.

YOUNG ON CINÉMA-VÉRITÉ (CONT'D)

fascinating prototype for a possible series of films which an American film-maker might do well to consider, if, and this is an important reservation, he can ever hope to get the confidence of his subjects as Herman clearly did here.

The Maysles brothers, Albert and David, are a special case. They consider themselves the purists of the movement—in *Showman* (about distributor-producer Joe Levine) and *The Beatles* they attempt to present their subjects completely without bias. As for the first, I have been told (in Hollywood) that the film is too critical of the "industry" and of Levine, and (in New York) that the film is a whitewash of the industry *and* Levine. I suppose, then, that the Maysles suceeded. Those who don't like *Showman* say they learn no more when it is over than after ten minutes—that it stays on the surface. The same would be said of *The Beatles*. The Maysles think that they should not interfere in shooting, that they should never set things up—the sequence in *Showman* with Susskind arguing at Levine in a Boston radio station just happened—for to do so would break the deal with their subject and, equally important, upset their own equilibrium as observers.

None of the film-makers discussed above would agree that he has been making superficial films. I am not even convinced this is the crucial point. An American philosopher called Mrs. Ladd Franklin once said she was surprised she rarely met another solipsist. The idealist critics should not run away when they meet an empirical film-maker. He is neither obscene nor dangerous. He is merely exploring a part of the cinema—the part Kracauer claimed (falsely) is the whole.

Above: AMERICA, AMERICA [*see page* 55].

Film Reviews

THE EASY LIFE

(Original title: *Il Sorpasso*—The Overtaking ["Passing"]) Director: Dino Risi. Script: Ettore Scola and Ruggero Maccari. Camera: Alfio Contini. Music: Riz Ortolani. With Vittorio Gassman and Jean-Louis Trintignant.

Commencing with *The Bicycle Thief*, postwar Italian films have tended towards the picaresque, using the wanderer motif as the basis for a search into existence. This has been true even of films like *La Dolce Vita, L'Avventura, La Notte,* and *8½*, where the characters move (or are moved) from one static episode to another, a plot pattern that might well be

called "arrested picaresque": time, as in a Faulkner novel, is tacked upon a dissection board.

The slow-motion picaro in many cases has been Marcello Mastroianni, whose expression of stunned wonder is suited to this particular genre. In him, the existentialist directors have found their absurd hero, the cinema's counterpart to Meursault, or the wandering narrator of *Nausea*: an Italian J. Alfred Prufrock.

A more traditional picaro can be found in recent films starring Vittorio Gassman. In *La Grande Guerra* he was a chronic Army goof-off, in *Big Deal on Madonna Street* he darted through a slapstick gauntlet of criminal misadventures, and in *Love and Larceny* he played a con-man running through life at a 40-degree angle, changing costumes as he went. At this frantic pace, Gassman somewhat resembles the "other" Charlie Chaplin, the villain-clown we tend to forget in favor of the charming tramp. In *The Easy Life* Gassman plays a similar role, but one with more sinister implications.

Unlike the baffled-looking, intellectual Mastroianni, Gassman is an archetypal picaro, with a narrow, hungry face and satanic good-looks. His eyes are small and without much expression, hiding all thought, but his face betrays his rapaciousness, his appetite for experience—the picaro's main diet. In *The Easy Life*, Gassman is a trickster, but something more as well. Perhaps The Trickster.

Bruno charms the family at the farm.

The picture opens with Bruno (Gassman) driving his Aurelia sportscar madly about the Roman outskirts, searching for a telephone so that he can call a girl who has (we later learn) been waiting over an hour for him to show up. Because it is a holiday, all the shops are closed. He tries, at one point, to squeeze his arm through a grating and put a coin into a wall phone, but he cannot quite reach the slot. These images, of a frantic, unsuccessful search through an empty town, and of a vain attempt to put through a call—to reach somebody—are a symbolic prelude to the subsequent action: the theme music, suitable but nonetheless a cliché, is fast-tempo jazz.

The main action starts when Bruno stops. In the quiet suburbs, he gets out of his car to drink at a faucet. Spying a young man looking at him from a window, he asks him to call the girl, but ends up in the young man's apartment, calling her himself. By this time she has left, and Bruno—apparently at a loss as to how to kill the rest of the day—takes it upon himself to strike up a conversation with the young man, a law student named Roberto (played by Jean Louis Trintignant). These first few minutes of their encounter, in which Bruno's pushy self-assertiveness is played off against Roberto's timidity and indecisiveness, establishes the pattern for the rest of the picture. Against his will, Roberto is invited out of his apartment for a "drink" (he neither smokes nor drinks), which turns into a "meal" (which he tries to decline), which turns into a two-day excursion.

At length, Roberto begins to relax somewhat. Resigned to being taken for a ride (his wallet, as well as he, is in Bruno's hands), he cannot but admire the sureness and verve of his strange companion. Soon he enters into the spirit of things, and attempts to emulate Bruno's carefree attitude. He no longer cringes as the little sportcar hurtles past slower vehicles, its horn tooting like the pipes of a Pan gone mad.

Apparently random, the picaresque action carries the two through episodes of high and

low life, silly and tragic events. Bruno attempts to make a quick dollar from merchandise spilled in a fatal highway crash. He and Roberto follow two German girls into a cemetery, but are put off by the environment. They stop at a roadside restaurant, and Roberto is accidentally locked in the men's room as Bruno tries to make time with the cashier. Finally they eat, in a seaside inn, and Roberto almost escapes while Bruno is attempting to get the waitress into bed upstairs. But Bruno overtakes him, and they go on to the farm of Roberto's childhood. As Roberto wanders through the house, Bruno charms the family with his enthusiasm and energy, usurping Roberto's place as the center of attention. Through asides, he reveals that the beloved old family retainer is a homosexual, that the "handsome" uncle is ugly and a cuckold, and that Roberto's "cousin" (a stolid, Fascistic lawyer) is really the bastard son of the tenant farmer; finally, one presumes, he seduces Roberto's maiden aunt, a handsome woman whom Roberto has idolized into a madonna. In less than an hour, Bruno has ripped up Roberto's nostalgic dream like an old photograph, and they roar on down the highway, passing everyone.

Still, Roberto is not unwilling that this should happen. Confronted with the insufferable cousin—who wants him to "settle down, like me"—he prefers his new friend. He begins, shyly, to welcome the adventures that follow. In a fancy club, Bruno makes up to the buxom blonde wife of a business acquaintance as Roberto makes embarrassed eyes at a bored girl nearby. Two men that Bruno has crowded off the road with his Aurelia show up, and a fight follows in which Roberto joins. Much shoving and screaming ensues, and the two comrades celebrate the outcome by getting drunk, and in this condition arrive at the home of Bruno's estranged wife.

At this point, with Roberto sodden and silly, the story begins to concentrate on Bruno's history. The pace remains brisk, maintained by a series of vignettes which begin in mid-action, but our idea of Bruno undergoes a radical change. We learn that his wife despises him and that his teenage daughter is about to find the security he never gave her by marrying "Bibi," a businessman old enough, as Bruno puts it, "to have a daughter *I* could take out." He no longer seems so sure of himself, so much in control of life. During the next day, at the seashore, he waterskis, swims, hops about, laughs, jokes, tries to put the touch on Bibi for 50,000 lire—but all of it is strained, desperate, competitive: a gloss on his earlier gaiety. Like Roberto at the farm, he is given an opportunity to discover the truth about his past, but he laughs and dances on. Like Willy Loman, the tragic salesman, "comical" Bruno refuses to abandon his dream. His journey, we begin to perceive, is a flight from truth. When he beats Bibi at pingpong, winning his daughter's admiration (and 50,000 lire), it is a sad victory. He pays back Roberto's loans, but he is still in debt to himself.

Roberto, meanwhile, has been wandering about the beach. He phones the girl Valeria, but she is out. He talks with Bruno's daughter, and it is clear that she is attracted to him. The Italian title of the film, which has until now apparently referred to Bruno's reckless driving, now seems applicable to Roberto's transformation. When the two finally head toward Rome, it is Roberto who is hilarious, declaring that these have been the happiest days of his life. At his urging, Bruno drives faster, racing with a stubborn car side by side until, at the crest of a hill, they meet a truck coming head on. Swerving with a cry (the camera never leaves Bruno from this moment), Bruno slides the Aurelia broadside into the truck, and is hurled out of the car onto the shoulder. Roberto, caught in the car, is killed when it plunges over a cliff. The picture ends with Bruno, face drained of hunger, looking down at the wreckage. At this moment all the earlier tokens—the near-misses, the near-connections, the unsuccessful phone calls, the road-side wreck, the graveyard, the futile quest, Roberto's laughter—telescope into his drawn, empty face. Death, too, is hungry, and Bruno, the agent of Roberto's transcendence, has been Death's agent. It is he who cannot change, who is left

to go on passing others without surpassing himself.

Unlike the Mastroianni films, *The Easy Life* is empty of reflective dialogue. It is the action, symbolically conceived, which speaks: the editing of the film and the camera work are aimed at an almost unceasing rush of event. Only in an occasional rare moment does the camera "think," as in a lovely interlude when Roberto walks to the phone to call Valeria, passing slowly through the self-absorbed, beautiful faces of girls doing the Twist. Because the camera is on Roberto's head, it excises the ugly, debased movements of the dance (which are accentuated in other episodes): all we see are faces, weaving rhythmically, with an almost beatific concentration of each dancer in her dance. Like flowery crystals under a lens, they pass in and out of focus, an intense matrix of beauty from which Roberto, like a butterfly, is emerging.

But these moments are few. Most of the time the camera is used objectively, to record events. The editing, with its abrupt and yet harmonious transitions, does the talking, together with the faces of the actors. Roberto's youthful, blond, but somewhat weak good looks (he is called "Hamlet" by Bruno's daughter), relaxes from suspicion into a shy eagerness to awaken. Bruno's hard, almost wolfish jollity tightens into something like fear. Roberto, rising, passes Bruno descending, but the implication is purely dramatic: the passing, like Roberto's moment of truth, is silent.

A final objection. Director Risi felt it necessary to parade a series of hip-wobbling chippies through various scenes. This is distasteful, and detracts (in any way you like) from the picture. This voyeurist display of thrusting backsides cheapens the tone of the film, and calls the viewer's unwilling attention to the world of demiwhores that attaches itself to any movie colony, rather than to the characters and the story. Only at the beach, where wiggling flesh is standard equipment, along with boats and balls, do these bit players settle into place—and even there with some resistance. A traditional element of the picaresque is its bawdiness, but this is mere decoration, not intrinsic to the action. It is like the pornographic covers on cheap paperbacks: irrelevant to the text, they are there to sell the books. This film may be no *Gil Blas,* but it does not need such "selling." —JOHN SEELYE

IL POSTO

(*The Job.* Released in U. S. as *The Sound of Trumpets.*) Written and directed by Ermanno Olmi. Photography: Lamberto Caimi.

Il Posto was Olmi's second feature; like *I Fidanzati,* it shows strongly the imprint of his documentary training. (He made something like 30 short sponsored films before his first feature, *Il Tiempo sie fermato—Time Stood Still.*) In this evolution Olmi may be interestingly compared with, say, John Schlesinger—Schlesinger's documentaries, such as *Terminus,* also earned him a try at features; but in the British situation he has been forced into far more "theatrical" forms than has Olmi.

Olmi's minute observation of ordinary life is, of course, poetically selected and arranged, or nobody would sit through it. It is no doubt easy to overrate his factuality and consequently, in a way, underrate him as an artist. *Il Posto* is, on the surface, a careful and sometimes droll record of how an Italian boy hunts for a job in a large, secure corporation, which he expects to take care of him for life. He meets a girl also applying for a job, and gets very interested in her. They are tested, interviewed, and finally assigned to posts. Shyly, he has never really made a play for her, and he loses track of her, then sees her going off to lunch with a man from her office. Finally, because of a death, he gets the clerk's job he was after, and settles down at his desk as a man might lie down in his coffin.

Oddly enough, the tone of *Il Posto* is reminiscent of those films by young Americans who hope to hold the cinematic mirror up to the seaminess of urban American life, but have not

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yet learned the techniques of "making things interesting." Like the young Americans, Olmi knows that this chilly, massive, frightening scene is *not* interesting (that is the whole point about it—that it is an inhuman way of life); but unlike them, he has something else on which to structure his films—a close and sympathetic observation of character, and in particular of *suffering*. Domenico in *Il Posto* is being impinged upon by the world: this is the "drama" which holds our attention. If every film has some underlying question as its impelling thread, which the viewer wants to see unravelled, in *Il Posto* it is something like "Will he be able to stand it?" Domenico is extremely touching in his shyness, his softness, what the girl calls his oldfashioned air, his plaintive hopes for a quiet doomed existence (or for love).

Il Posto rests, then, squarely upon the shoulders of the boy. In this stripped-down, meticulous style, this Chayevskyism deromanticized, if we do not like him and sympathize with him the film will be *merely* an ordeal, rather than the ordeal artistically ordered which Olmi intended. Olmi has been lucky in his protagonist, for Sandro Panzieri plays Domenico faultlessly in a somber minor key. He is helped, however, by the general style of the film, which is such as to reawaken a level of curiosity not usually touched by ordinary films. Olmi includes a lot of documentary material: long-lens street footage, a careful record of the job physical exam, cafeteria eating scenes in which food is a revolting animal necessity. There are also the strange passages showing the awful cramped lives of the other clerks, which Olmi inserts midway in the film to make perfectly clear what it is that Domenico is really headed for. (These are followed by an excruciating pan shot going entirely around the room where the clerks sit all day.) Though Olmi is a poet, he is not a romantic; hence he is able to integrate his "found" material perfectly with his story (such as it is) without the discomfiting slight shifts in tone that characterized *Cleo from 5 to 7*. This gives us a kind of confidence in the reality of the film we do not usually have, and helps us to feel for Domenico.

One curious aspect of the film is its sound track, which is very subdued—with long periods of hush. I am sure that, even in the industrial north of Italy, this agonizing quietness is far from "documentary." Sometimes the sense of silence is oppressive because it is a kind of homage to the corporation the young people are applying to; in the anterooms of the gods one grows silent. But Olmi has generalized this throughout the film. Eyes speak, especially Domenico's; but the voices say little, and then guardedly. . . .

Actually, however, this is another aspect of the spare stylistic tone of the film as a whole. "This is all there is," is Olmi's basic position: these young people searching for jobs they will soon despise, wandering amid impersonal skyscrapers, stores jammed with expensive goods, inscrutable bureaucratic tyrannies. The only thing worth any serious attention is the occasional solitary person. It is because his stylistic tone matches so well his concern for lonely people—isolated, blocked from gratifying action of any kind—that Olmi is a first-class filmmaker. Like Antonioni, he is an artist of the last-ditch stand being waged, in all the industrialized cities of the world, against the civilization we have created.—ERNEST CALLENBACH

THIS SPORTING LIFE

Director: Lindsay Anderson. Producer: Karel Reisz. Screenplay by David Storey, based on his novel. Photography: Denys Coop. Music: Roberto Gerhard. Continental.

American and European critics have become used to the pleasures of looking down their noses at the British cinema: poor Tony Richardson trying to be cinematic (when he is only a consummate director of actors), or poor David Lean (enshrining Lawrence in a celluloid pyramid), or poor Carol Reed ("where *is* Carol Reed?"). Anderson openly challenged this national fall from grace in an attempt to

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make a film that was as lively and innovative as the New Wave. So he was practically bound to be knocked by all those committed against "commitment," and convinced that no British director, and especially no leftwing British director, could possibly know anything about art.

Our efforts to secure a definitive early review of this film were unsuccessful. Much has by now been written about it, and a regular review hardly seems necessary. But some of the circumstances of its reception and what I take to be misunderstandings of it still deserve comment. Partisan reactions to *Sporting Life* were of course predictable, because of Anderson's role in the *Sequence* generation, the commitment debate, and the program of "Free Cinema." The release of the film caused a certain amount of consternation, however, because it was far from the social moralizing most people expected of Anderson. Relieved, Peter Baker of *Films & Filming* roundly declared that if it was not successful "there is no hope for British cinema." *Movie* came out "AGAINST *Sporting Life*," interpreting it as an aborted tragedy in which Frank Machin is supposed to be "noble" or "heroic" and worrying because he isn't. And even in quarters sympathetic or neutral to Anderson there has been a curious inability to take the film simply as what it is.

To briefly clear away some misconceptions is thus the first order of business; knowing what the film is *not*, we may then perhaps see what it is.

It is not hard to follow, for one thing. Its flashback structure is strongly introduced through the anesthesia scene, and though it thereafter becomes more briskly fluid, it never departs from a perspicuous associative line, and indeed for the most part the fundamental line of the film is chronological.

It is not a study of North England working-class life. Machin rants about the life on Mrs. Hammond's street once, but we actually see almost nothing of it. What we do see is the closed world of the Hammond household, with excursions to a dance, a pub, a tony restaurant, a mansion, a stadium, etc.—hardly the stuff of which a *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* is made. Machin has a brief dream flash of his work as a miner; on the reality levels occupied by most of the film, his only "work" is playing rugby.

As a corollary to this, it is not a portrait of The Worker as Epic Hero. Inevitably, a certain amount of British comment dealt with this class problem: whether Machin was "inflated" to epic proportions, whether this was a Bad Thing, etc., etc. Now Machin in the film is a man whose distinction from other men, in his objective life, arises only from his physical skill and lack of scruples on the playing field. From a working-class perspective this makes him a "sport" in the scientific sense: and it is this feeling which makes him wary of the abandonment of his former job. More conclusively, the dialogue passages in which the players are likened to great apes, or proxy "heroes," makes serious argument on this point ludicrous; the film's perspective is far more complex than the terms in which it has been discussed.

Nor is *Sporting Life* a tract against the corrupt upper classes. In this as in much else, the film simply takes Machin's viewpoint: the Weavers and their associates are brute facts of life, inscrutable in their business dealings (Machin does not really know if he has much chance of getting his thousand pounds), baffling in their switching of roles (he is taken aback by Mrs. Weaver's advances, and surprised to discover the reversal in the club ownership feuds). The attitude of the film toward the Weavers is that which Machin might express if you asked him what he thought of them.

Nor is the film a private entertainment for homosexuals. It is hardly news that there are homosexual components in the horseplay of athletes, or in the relations between elderly men and young men they are in positions to promote. Anderson has not shirked these aspects of his subject; neither has he, as has been hinted in some quarters, drooled over them.

What does this leave us with, then?

I maintain that *This Sporting Life* is a portrait of a miserable neurotic impasse, from approximately (though not rigorously) Machin's point of view. More precisely, it might be subtitled what the National Film Board called one of its shorts: *The Feeling of Rejection.* I do not mean that it has no social implications at all; the most trivial film has some; but in the manner of the contemporary cinema, what one may conclude about the society surrounding the central figures is incidental to the main concerns of the film. What Anderson spends his time on is a minute delineation of Machin's state of mind.

He does this, however, using a visible surface tone which, within the flashback framework, is almost entirely flat realism, with no other distancing devices such as the narrator in *Jules and Jim* or the part-titles in *Vivre Sa Vie.* Moreover, he leads the viewer astray by lax construction in occasionally deviating from what Machin sees, knows, or feels; and some people have clearly seen the film as an omniscient third-person narration, despite the flashback structure with its abrupt switches, and despite other obvious difficulties.

For instance, if the film were an omniscient narration of the usual sort, it would include many more facts than we get. Mrs. Hammond's curious history would be explained in plain terms, and the reasons for the demands Frank makes on her would be spelled out. (This would, of course, make it an entirely different sort of film, with a different emotional focus and different kinds of "action.") In fact, we see Mrs. Hammond almost exclusively through Machin's eyes. Within this limitation we see her clear, but we do not see her whole. This is most obvious, perhaps, in the handling of the children. The film shows Frank playing with them in a sibling way or bringing them gifts in an avuncular way; it never shows us Mrs. Hammond dealing with them in a motherly way—evidently because this is not something Frank really perceives. Frank, indeed, seeks mothering himself: he tries endlessly to persuade her that he *needs* her. Since this is precisely what frightens her the most, their verbal struggles have the dismal and frustrated tone of the neurotic relationship—and so well have Anderson, Richard Harris, and Rachel Roberts caught this that the film will probably someday be used in psychology classes.

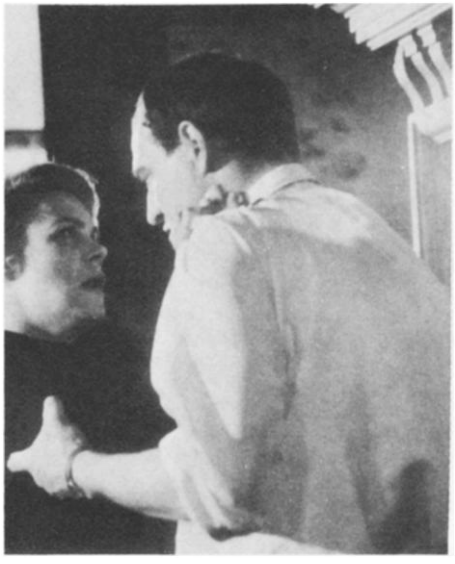
I find it curious that the feelings of a man whose demands upon a woman are refused, and whose life is thereby destroyed, also formed the central concern of *Il Grido.* In Antonioni's film the rejection arises, inscrutably, just from the changing of sentiments with time; in Anderson's we surmise it is from some fairly complex psychopathology, but we cannot be sure. After all, perhaps Mr. Hammond died a purely accidental death, and Weaver's hint was subtly malicious; perhaps it is simply the ferocity of Machin's lunges toward her which casue her recoil. In this, as in much else, Anderson has left the film richly ambiguous. We do not really know, for instance, whether the turnabout among the owners is because Weaver has found out about Frank's session with Mrs. Weaver—or, if it is, whether it is because he believes she succeeded or because he knows she failed. (His role in the club may have been partly the procuring of players for her purposes as well as his own.) Nor do we know precisely how peculiar is the relation between Frank and the old man. Probably Mrs. Hammond's outburst against the latter is some kind of tic; on the other hand, why did Frank go to the old man's rooming house when he left the Hammond house?

Taking some such approach, the stylistic questions raised by *Movie* can be seen in a sensible light. Anderson keeps us close-up to Machin, "forces Machin upon us" in *Movie's* terms; we have no apparently objective, spacious world in which to take his measure, as we would seem to in a film using a third-person structure; *Sporting Life* is not ironic, as such a film would have to be. The estimate of Machin which Anderson permits us is "merely" like the estimates we form of ourselves in difficult emotional situations: tentative, with awful gaps, capable of sudden reverses or surprises. This is a different emotional end-

point than is sought by films of the kind *Movie* writers chiefly like; and in this case Ian Cameron felt, wrongly, that he was being asked to "admire" Machin since the film led him to unwillingly "identify" with him. But a film is not better or worse for having such an objective rather than another.

The flaws in the work arise when Anderson departs, in either of two directions, from his central strategy. In the restaurant scene, which has been widely and rightly criticized, he makes Machin unbearably boorish. The result is that the film is in effect asking us to excuse him, on some hypothetical shared distaste for middleclass stuffiness. This scene, in other words, flows too far into the objective world of public behavior, manners, politics, etc. (The dance scene has similar tendencies, though not pushed so far.) On the other hand is the kind of mistake involved with the spider of the ending. Though this may not be derivative of Bergman (the spider is a well-established multicultural death symbol, after all) its appearance is so startlingly off-key that we are astonished and distracted. Mrs. Hammond is evidently dying, and Machin is in anguish: how the hell did that spider get in there? Machin's crushing of it is as risible as the wildly unmedical spurt of blood from Mrs. Hammond's mouth. Anderson does recover himself immediately afterward; and the last scene, when Machin hangs—like the ape she has called him—from the doorway, and then falls to the floor and curls up like a baby, would have carried the ending with far more power *sans* spider. The error here was to enter too far "into" Machin—expecting to invest the spider with a certain subjective horror. This may work for a few viewers; but for most it remains just a nasty-looking spider and a silly digression. By contrast, be it noted, the use made of Machin's teeth being smashed is discreet and powerful; teeth are, in the dream-interpretation game, one of the few invariant genital symbols.

Mrs. Hammond and Frank: the neurotic impasse.



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IN THE FRENCH STYLE

Director: Robert Parrish. Producer and scriptwriter: Irwin Shaw. (Based on his stories "In the French Style" and "A Year to Learn the Language.") Photography: Michel Kelber. Music: Joseph Kosma. Columbia.

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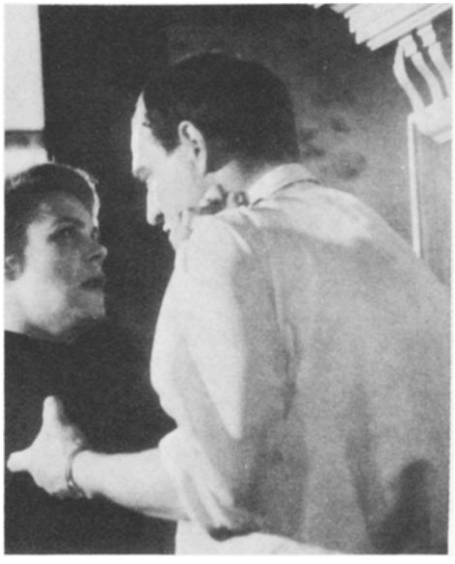

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planes preparing for departure. In the foreground, a protruding stairway bisects the otherwise empty frame, creating an atmosphere of desolation and solitude. The camera begins a slow crane upwards, ending in a high, oblique angle. An extreme close-up follows of journalist Walter Beddoes (Stanley Baker), who is speaking to Christina James (Jean Seberg). "I've gone every place I was sent, without hesitation, without regret," he tells Christina. "I've never let anything stand in my way. Not fear, or weariness, or possessions. Or love. It's my life, my value. It's what I live by." His words reflect the internal struggle confronting Christina James: the absence of any moral values, an absence which catalyzes her everpresent feelings of emptiness and alienation. The scene is also crucial in that it begins a crisis in Christina's way of life. For when Beddoes leaves on his assignment to Algeria, she will enter an intense period of self-critical evaluation, emerging only when she realizes that for four years she has been living in Paris without direction or meaning, living like an emotional transient. Her newly acquired awareness gives her the strength to leave Paris, her lover, and return to America engaged to a mild-mannered, colloquial doctor, determined to live a sedate life in San Francisco. The scene is short, yet it sets the tone: Shaw is out to depict an American response to the moral ambiguity of our times.

In the French Style is Irwin Shaw's first film as writer-producer, and marks the first time (he gleefully admits) that he has been able to exercise complete control over what he has written. He has been an articulate voice on the contemporary scene for more than twenty years. He is a prolific writer, not a great one; he endures because he is a kind of sociological touchstone, mirroring particular needs and emotions of the times. His characters are a pithy, selfish, disenchanted group of men and women incapacitated in life because they lack any stringent set of values. But as sentient beings they remain unfulfilled; Shaw's hand always hovers in the background carefully manipulating his players in controlled and contrived environments. For "Book-of-the Month Club" readers, however, his especial appeal lies in his ability to embellish his creations with slickness and sentimentality, blithely presented as social awareness and human understanding.

It is not surprising then, to find *In the French Style* adhering to the precepts of Shaw's thematic canon, which thus illuminates its basic weakness: his characters, with the exception of Walter Beddoes, are two-dimensional; they lack motivation and awareness. Incidents seem contrived, episodic, and artificial. Within the broad spectrum of cinematic plasticity, Shaw's little excursion is anemic, a tale told a thousand different times in a thousand different ways, possessing neither sound nor fury. Robert Parrish's direction is bland and pedestrian, a sanctimonious display of pap and fodder. It is incongruous, then, to say that *In the French Style* is solid and vital testimony about contemporary society. Yet this is what Irwin Shaw has achieved in spite of his intention.

Christina James, a young, romantic exile and would-be painter, spends four years in Paris bent on self-expression, independence, and love. She is a girl who, she says, suffers the pangs of "being more in love with people than they are with me. . . ." Aptly described in the short story from which the film derives its title, she is breathtakingly beautiful, but a "girl of whom your grandmother was not likely to approve, but she was . . . an ornament to the wandering and troubled years of the second half of the twentieth century." The film emerges through the personality of Christina, Parrish insisting the camera assiduously follow every move, adoring every action, reaction, and eventually, her isolation. Her first bittersweet experience in love with Guy (Philippe Forquet) is abruptly punctured when she finds him to be three years younger than she;

Jean Seberg and Stanley Baker.

he has tried to woo her only to impress his friends. Her faith shaken, she attempts to avoid emotional involvements by donning the mask of indifference, and, in the French style (so she thinks), cynically comes to consider love an illusion. Yet she never relinquishes her need to love, and actually revels in her dependent independency. Bill (Jack Hedley) dallies with her, then throws her over for "his Greek girl." And Beddoes, her last and most intense "amour," finds that he is forced to choose between love or denigrating his moral standards, and idealistically remains true to his own ethic.

When Beddoes returns from Algeria he finds that Christina has decided to marry Doctor Haislip (James Leo Herlihy—author of *All Fall Down*, who should stick to writing and not indulge in acting) because, as she says: "I'm tired of airports and I'm tired of seeing people off. I'm tired of not being allowed to cry until the plane leaves the ground. I'm tired of being handed around the group. I'm tired of being more in love with people than they are with me. . . ." Despite her decision, she is still torn between her attachment to Beddoes and her desire to end a way of life. "Would you leave him now and run away with me?" Beddoes asks her. "Yes," she replies, "but I can't. I want to be loved for once, and he loves me." And so, after many empty affairs, she has been able to glean enough perspective and strength to flee from what she now knows to be a destructive pattern.

It is by her decision to leave, however, that Shaw is able to complete his little literary formula. Christina has taken the first step toward salvation; it does not matter that she will marry a man she does not love, whom she has known only six weeks. For Shaw her commitment to change her way of life suffices to resolve the problem: she *will* leave Paris, she *will* marry Haislip, she *will* learn to love him, and thus find the love she has sought so desperately.

Shaw indicates her character change by having Christina alter her habits and physical appearance: instead of ordering scotch, hot tea; her style of dress is subdued, her hair color has returned to its natural shade. Throughout the film he has carefully tried to accentuate the fact that Christina has been the one who has loved, who has given herself in relationships which fail only because her feelings are not reciprocated. Yet despite Shaw's efforts, the dénouement somehow seems blurred, like a photograph slightly out of focus. We suddenly realize that this effect—which is the key to the film as a whole—is generated by the fact that what Christina James *says* she will do is exactly the opposite of what Jean Seberg *projects* Christina James will do.

Shaw's intent in this film hinges on Christina being *able* to love; but Seberg nullifies the script point by her acting. She neither communicates love, nor embodies it. As an actress she does not have the conviction or depth which imbues a characterization with urgency, meaning, sincerity. Her marvellously contemporary vacancy is anchored in not being able to respond to situation or character; she neither listens to dialogue nor does she react to it. It is not that she does not communicate with the *audience*—she can, and magnificently (if perhaps unintentionally) as *Breathless* proves; but what she communicates

is that she has nothing to say, or nothing to give. And this seeming paradox is her particular attraction, beginning with her performance as Patricia in *Breathless.*

It might well be argued that Christina derives from Patricia. Patricia, like Christina, comes to Paris ostensibly to get an education in Living, perhaps become a reporter, and lose her ingrained midwestern scruples about making love. And, like Christina, her moral consciousness is neither strong enough, nor sufficiently defined to sustain her; she remains emotionally complacent and immobile, fortified only by her myopic ego. Both characters imply that life is nothing more than convenience, a sandwich wrapped in cellophane layers of experience. When Patricia is faced with a crucial moral decision, whether or not to turn Michel over to the police, she proves unable to cope with herself and her predicament. After she betrays him, she cannot comprehend his bitter and just pronouncement upon her as a human being: "Tu es dégueulasse," he cries in outrage. In *Five Day Lover* Seberg carries this same banner; when she rushes into her lover's arms it never occurs to her that she should question her behavior.

Whether these roles reflect Jean Seberg as a person, or simply reflect her professional style is an intriguing but irrelevant question. But one wonders what might have happened if Patricia had returned to America as Christina does: is *In the French Style* an attempted "answer" to *Breathless?*

Jean Seberg has inadvertently invested Christina James with an abysmal emptiness comparable to that of Valentina in Antonioni's *La Notte.* Both are victims of a time where communication, on all levels, has broken down; both experience the anguish and frustration born of need to touch, to feel, to love. Valentina is aware of her isolation, but is powerless to take any meaningful action to overcome it. Christina will always remain outside the spinning wheel of human contact, condemned by her own lack of perception. Christina is the embodiment of what Lionel Trilling appropriately terms "the morality of inertia." The ineluctable evidence of the film leads to one conclusion: her life will remain empty, unfulfilled, without direction or meaning, no matter what resolutions she may make. Her character in San Francisco will remain her character.

The final irony is rich: "I became a producer," says Shaw, "to protect what I had written."—SYDNEY FIELD

LADY WITH THE DOG

Director: Josef Heifetz. Photography: A. Moskvin and D. Meishiev. Score: N. Simonyan. With Iya Savvina and Alexei Batalov. Artkino.

A film uses its medium fully when its form accomplishes what another medium can never achieve. *Lady with the Dog* is such a film, a rare work of art which makes a haunting study of nostalgia. Although the film was made in 1959, it recreates faithfully the late-nineteenth-century milieu Chekhov originally envisaged. Nostalgia is a feeling-state peculiarly redolent of the nineteenth century—a form of *Sehnsucht,* a yearning to recapture something which has somehow irrevocably been lost. Chekhov is the master of nostalgia; he conjuries it up in his plays and short stories with a turn of a phrase, the slightest allusion; he evokes it instinctively in his distracted, melancholy people.

Lady with the Dog (DAMA C COBACHKOI), written in 1899,* is a tale told with classic simplicity. It is an unfulfilled love story of a man and woman (already married) who meet by chance, fall in love, and cannot liberate themselves to make a life together. They steal time to meet furtively and struggle against the inevitable futility of their relationship. It is a story of three cities: they meet at Yalta, a Crimean resort town; Dimitri Dimitrich Gomov sees a lady with a little dog pass by. They

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have an affair. Anna Sergueyevna returns to her husband in the provinces; Dimitri Dimitrich goes back to his wife and children in Moscow. His wife is a woman with intellectual and musical pretensions, a comic portrait. Her husband is a municipal servant, an obsequious gentleman, an equally comic portrait. Dimitri tries to forget Anna but pursues her to her native village when he cannot forget her. He dares to follow her and her husband to the theater and speaks to her during the intermission. She is frightend but he soon convinces her to continue the relationship. They meet furtively from time to time. The years pass. He is conscious of his age. They are overwhelmed with the futility of their love . . .

"Don't cry, my darling," he said. "You have cried enough . . . Now let us talk and see if we can't find some way out." Then they talked it all over, and tried to discover some means of avoiding the necessity for concealment and deception, and the torment of living in different towns, and of not seeing each other for a long time. How could they shake off these intolerable fetters? "How? How?" he asked, holding his head in his hands. "How?" And it seemed that in a little while the solution would be found and there would begin a lovely new life; and to both of them it was clear that the end was still very far off, and that their hardest and most difficult period was only just beginning."

This tenuous and passionate tale is recounted with Chekhov's characteristic brevity. It takes barely more than fifteen pages.

The film encompasses the story in two hours without adding any events and keeping the dialogue down to a bare minimum. The camera accomplishes the subtle progressions in the story and the development is mirrored especially in the close-ups of the characters as they react to each other; the camera lingers patiently on all the faces, taking the time to register their varying and vacillating emotions. A lush nineteenth-century rhapsodic musical background helps to create the mood and nourish the slowly building nostalgic tension.

The pace of the film is so slow that it succeeds in creating that same timelessness which is to be found in the films of Kurosawa and Ingmar Bergman. (It is not surprising that Bergman called it one of the great films of all time.) The simplest moments take on this haunting quality as the camera pauses to capture an essence. Dimitri walks in the cold winter snow with his daughter and tries to forget his preoccupations as she chatters gaily on. Dimitri sits in his club and tries to interest himself in his friends' card games and incessant meaningless conversation. His wife goes into ecstasies over his piano playing at a musical soirée; he can only think of his beloved Anna while he plays. Dimitri and Anna sit watching a sunset and wonder about their lives. At last they alternately sit and stand uncomfortably in the hotel room they share together whenever they meet and have the conversation quoted above in which they try to reach an answer to their dilemma. We do not hear this conversation. We look in at them through the window of their room, high above the street. We watch their anguished faces as one or the other stares out. Then Dimitri leaves and walks down into the street. He pauses for a moment to look high up at her hotel window, the music soars, and he walks off into the night. She stands there, her face at the window, in pain. Their nostalgia for an impossible love is underscored by the almost too strident violins. The film ends as the story does, at a crisis point, before the resolution. We, the spectators, know in our hearts what the ending must eventually be.

That such a film could have come from the Soviet Union in 1959 is a singular mystery. Josef Heifetz, the director, has until now not been known for any major cinematic efforts. There is not a trace of socialist realism in the film. It is pure late-nineteenth-century romanticism, finely tempered by the ironic subtlety of Chekhov. The film was received with apathy in Russia, then won a Cannes festival prize. Because of the praise lavished upon it abroad, its director was evidently almost disgraced: he had produced an unacceptable anomaly, a nonpolitical masterwork. Chekhov's magic simplicity had somehow been distilled into this quiet film. Alexei Batalov, a dignified actor with great sensitivity and humor, was made up to look like Chekhov himself. This added to the feeling that the story was probably highly autobiographical.

The strength of the film is in its lingering camera work, the deliberate intensity with which it focuses on the feeling states of Dimitri and Anna. We are reminded of Gloria Swanson's statement in *Sunset Boulevard* about the superiority of the silent films over talkies: "In those days we had *faces!*" Josef Heifetz has trained his camera on the faces of the actors and shown us all the unspoken nuances of their feelings. By the end of the film, the nostalgia is almost unbearable. Heifetz has definitively recreated the story and shown us what a story can only barely suggest: the heartbreaking image of those who lived it.

—ALEX SZOGYI

SANSHO DAYU

Screenplay by Fuji Yahiro and Yoshikata Yoda, based on the novel by Ogai Mori. Photographed by Kazuo Miyagawa. Music by Fumio Hayasaka. Cast: Kinuyo Tanaka, Yoshiaki Hanayagi, Kyoko Kagawa, Eitaro Shindo, Ichiro Sugai. Brandon Films.

Sansho Dayu, the film which opened the Museum of Modern Art's section of the recent New York Film Festival, was the revelation of the Festival. Kenji Mizoguchi is known to most of us in this country only by his *Ugetsu*, which was so greatly praised when it was seen here in 1954. Yet Mizoguchi had a long film career, from about 1922 until his death in 1956, making some eighty-odd films, and those who know his work place him with Kurosawa at the very height of the Japanese cinema. On the basis of *Ugetsu* and now *Sansho Dayu*, I think we will come to agree with this estimate. There surely are other Mizoguchi films well worth discovery by distributors here. *Sansho Dayu* has been obtained by a distibutor and is to appear in theaters this year. It is also available to film societies in areas where theatrical showings are unlikely.

Sansho Dayu is a Japanese legend set in the Heian period, 11th century, constructed by Mizoguchi into a visible poem of timeless beauty and interpreted with the humanism for which he was noted. Mizoguchi discards the romanticism and heroics which are usually associated with the period film. There is no grandiose sword-play. A brother and sister of noble blood are sold into slavery under the tyrant Sansho. The horrors of this life tend to brutalize the young man. In keeping with Mizoguchi's favorite theme of woman as spiritual guide, the sister recalls the brother to the teachings of their father, exiled for his acts of kindness which are in opposition to the feudal society. The sister sacrifices herself to help her brother escape from bondage, and he is enabled to live to pass on the spark of human mercy in a heartless world.

Misoguchi's haunting images create an atmosphere in which the film comes perhaps as close as it can come to the pity and terror of the classic Greek tragedy. The Japanese cinema in general emphasizes landscape and phenomena of nature, found indeed in western cinema, but used by the Japanese as easily understood symbols which are common to the whole culture. Mizoguchi goes even further and uses the enviornment as the chief actor in his film. Mizoguchi's extraordinary eye, trained in youth in an art school, finds just that setting which will give meaning to the

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dramatic scene to be enacted there. He uses a small number of set-ups, each carefully composed and held for a long period of time. He is sparing of his close-ups, which helps the spectator to accept the reality of an earlier age. The abduction of the children, torn from their mother, takes place on the shores of a misty body of water, in a beautiful and terrifying scene. The boat drifting from shore and out of sight is shown in long shot, holding the viewer's emotions to the last frame.

The scenes unfold one from another like scroll paintings. These highly charged scenes are a far cry from the films of our own directors of the pictorial style, which are too often merely decorative or pretentious. Japan's own *Gate of Hell*, with its beautiful color photography, has not the power and the richness of *Sansho Dayu*, photographed in black and white by Kazuo Miyagawa, who was responsible for the camerawork in *Rashomon*. *Sansho Dayu* is an oriental work of art with qualities of universality that make it a deeply moving experience for a western audience. It is removed from current film-making trends, and it represents even in Japan an older school, but I hope there will continue to be a place still for this controlled and precise kind of film-making.—EILEEN BOWSER

NIGHT TIDE

Direction and screenplay: Curtis Harrington. Production: Aram Kantarian. Distrubution: American-International. Music: David Raksin. Photography: Vilis Lapenieks. Editing: Jodie Copelan. Design: Paul Mathison.

In 1942 the literary advisor and assistant of a famous producer set out on his own to produce a low-budget horror film of a new, artistic type, based on the power of suggestion and emphasizing atmosphere and psychology instead of made-up monsters. His film told of a clean-cut young American who falls in love with a strange, beautiful brunette from the Balkans, now living in a modern U.S. city but continuing to dread the ancient legend that she is descended from an evil race of half-animal creatures, and how their love is tragically destroyed by this superstitution and by a suave but sinister Englishman who tries to force his unwanted affection upon the girl.

Val Lewton's production of *The Cat People* proved to be one of the big sleepers, artistically and financially, of the decade. It also made a big impression on a teen-age film enthusiast named Curtis Harrington, who a decade later was to write perhaps the first serious analysis of the horror genre (*Hollywood Quarterly*, Winter, 1952), in which he stressed Lewton's contribution to the psychological fantasy-thriller. And now the wheel comes full circle, as Harrington has strikingly recapitulated the above history with his intriguing little feature, *Night Tide*, in which he succeeds admirably in his stated aim "to do a film in the Val Lewton tradition."

Not that *Night Tide* will set the world on fire (*Cat People* had its weaknesses and dull spots too, as I discovered on seeing it this year shortly after *Night Tide*), but Harrington, thanks to imaginative direction, has created several exciting scenes and moments of superb cinema, and in addition has nice performances, especially from Dennis Hopper—whose appealing directness and mannerisms are reminiscent of Montgomery Clift when he was breaking in. Considering that *Night Tide* was made away from the studios and their control, for "less than $100,000," one expects that Harrington's future pictures will bear as much watching and study as Lewton's splendid thrillers.

It is fascinating to compare the two films and note their many similarities—some of which, I hear from Harrington, were not consciously intended, but which probably reveal the depth of Lewton's influence on his early cinematic outlook. The story line (transposed from a Serbian cat-legend to a Greek mermaid-myth) and the stylistic approach (a quiet, leisurely pace, concentrating on the characters in interesting but realistic surroundings, crea-

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tion of scare effects not on the screen but in the viewers' imagination through cinematic techniques such as shock cuts, camera zooms, bits of spooky music, and hints dropped in dialogue) are of course pure Lewton, as are the central characters. In both pictures we find the exotic, cursed girl (the Simone Simon role, somewhat woodenly played by newcomer Linda Lawson as Mora), her sincere but unimaginative boy-friend (Hopper's "Method" conception of the young sailor gives the part real immediacy), the older man who wants to have Mora for himself (Gavin Muir in a role distantly related to Tom Conway's in *Cat People*), a sympathetic girl-next-door who is around to console the hero (a very winning performance by Luana Anders), and last but not least, a strange, eery foreign woman who appears in a cafe and says something frightening to the heroine in her native language (enacted by the lady painter Cameron).

Among the many other *Cat People* touches reflected in *Night Tide* are Lewton's beloved literary quotations (Harrington borrows the last four lines of Poe's "Annabelle Lee" for his end-title), a dream sequence (Harrington has two), a phone ringing and then no one at the other end of the line, a clever silent opening which leads to the first meeting of the two principals (*Night Tide's* opening, however, is much richer in atmosphere, having been shot —like much of the film—on location at an amusement pier, as compared with Lewton's studio zoo). Lewton's famous "bus" effect (where the audience is given a shock by a loud noise accompanying the sudden appearance of some object) is also utilized on occasion by Harrington, as in the scene under the pier when the heroine's scream suddenly attracts our attention to her just as she is being swamped by a crashing wave. This whole episode incidentally, builds up real tension for several minutes before we know what is happening, with tracks down the hall, shadows, echoes, etc., and reveals (as in several other sequences) more directorial ingenuity than its analogue, the swimming pool scene of *Cat People*. It also substantiates Harrington's contention (in his 1952 article) that "the terror of *waiting* for the final revelation, not the seeing of it, is the most powerful dramatic stimulus toward tension and fright."

Thus in some respects Harrington improves on what he inherits from Lewton, while in others—the shock cut to the whirling, screaming people on an amusement ride, or the character of the charming old fortune teller (played by Marjorie Eaton), or David Raksin's spooky musical themes ("Tell-Tale Harp," etc.), the writer-director owes nothing to Lewton, and demonstrates that plenty of independent filmic ingenuity went into the making of *Night Tide*, which has its interest apart from all the connections with its illustrious predecessor, and despite structural and technical flaws, such as can only be expected in any first feature. —STEVEN P. HILL

AMERICA, AMERICA

Written, produced, and directed by Elia Kazan. Photography: Haskell Wexler. Music: Manos Hadjidakis. Warners.

Like Tony Richardson, Kazan is a director who gets powerful performances from his actors, and in Brando and James Dean he has worked with two of the most striking postwar talents. Where he has had strong scripts also, as in *Streetcar Named Desire*, the under-rated *East of Eden*, or *On the Waterfront*, his particular kind of talent has come through extraordinarily well; these are films which will last, though none of them is a really great work. Even Kazan's worst films are by no means the filmed plays turned out by lesser men coming from television or the stage; in fact, in avoiding that danger, Kazan tends to fall into a decoratively "cinematic" style in which strong effects are a little too obviously worked for, rather than allowed to rise out of the material, out of the structure of the work itself. In a nutshell, Kazan is a "pushy" director; his best films have been those in which he had a good story and good actors to push against.

In *America, America* he had total free rein; it is a personal film in every sense of the word. And hence I am forced to the unwilling conclusion that Kazan is not a director who gains by producing, writing, and directing, at least not on material so close to him.

tion of scare effects not on the screen but in the viewers' imagination through cinematic techniques such as shock cuts, camera zooms, bits of spooky music, and hints dropped in dialogue) are of course pure Lewton, as are the central characters. In both pictures we find the exotic, cursed girl (the Simone Simon role, somewhat woodenly played by newcomer Linda Lawson as Mora), her sincere but unimaginative boy-friend (Hopper's "Method" conception of the young sailor gives the part real immediacy), the older man who wants to have Mora for himself (Gavin Muir in a role distantly related to Tom Conway's in *Cat People*), a sympathetic girl-next-door who is around to console the hero (a very winning performance by Luana Anders), and last but not least, a strange, eery foreign woman who appears in a cafe and says something frightening to the heroine in her native language (enacted by the lady painter Cameron).

Among the many other *Cat People* touches reflected in *Night Tide* are Lewton's beloved literary quotations (Harrington borrows the last four lines of Poe's "Annabelle Lee" for his end-title), a dream sequence (Harrington has two), a phone ringing and then no one at the other end of the line, a clever silent opening which leads to the first meeting of the two principals (*Night Tide's* opening, however, is much richer in atmosphere, having been shot —like much of the film—on location at an amusement pier, as compared with Lewton's studio zoo). Lewton's famous "bus" effect (where the audience is given a shock by a loud noise accompanying the sudden appearance of some object) is also utilized on occasion by Harrington, as in the scene under the pier when the heroine's scream suddenly attracts our attention to her just as she is being swamped by a crashing wave. This whole episode incidentally, builds up real tension for several minutes before we know what is happening, with tracks down the hall, shadows, echoes, etc., and reveals (as in several other sequences) more directorial ingenuity than its analogue, the swimming pool scene of *Cat People*. It also substantiates Harrington's contention (in his 1952 article) that "the terror of *waiting* for the final revelation, not the seeing of it, is the most powerful dramatic stimulus toward tension and fright."

Thus in some respects Harrington improves on what he inherits from Lewton, while in others—the shock cut to the whirling, screaming people on an amusement ride, or the character of the charming old fortune teller (played by Marjorie Eaton), or David Raksin's spooky musical themes ("Tell-Tale Harp," etc.), the writer-director owes nothing to Lewton, and demonstrates that plenty of independent filmic ingenuity went into the making of *Night Tide*, which has its interest apart from all the connections with its illustrious predecessor, and despite structural and technical flaws, such as can only be expected in any first feature. —STEVEN P. HILL

AMERICA, AMERICA

Written, produced, and directed by Elia Kazan. Photography: Haskell Wexler. Music: Manos Hadjidakis. Warners.

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Like Mankiewicz in *Barefoot Contessa*, or Foreman in *The Victors*, or Kramer in practically anything, Kazan here seems to have needed the harsh discipline of the check-and-balance system of filming. This method does not allow idiosyncratic masterpieces, and on this count the Hollywood producer certainly deserves the villainous character he has acquired; but at least it prevents excesses. And most of the troubles with *America, America* are excesses.

In a work which swings erratically from epic drama to psychological analysis, Kazan asks an excessive sympathy for his young hero with the "Anatolian smile"—Stavros is a stupid, gullible, vacantly ambitious, incompetently cynical youth, whose irrepressible smile turns out to be a mask rather than a redeeming naive virtue. (Good luck ultimately saves Stavros, but his own incorrigible schmuckery causes almost all his troubles.) Kazan asks us to follow Stavros' adventures for an excessive three hours: he sees his father cringe to the Turks, and sees in the Armenian massacres the likely fate of the Greeks in Turkey; sent off on his redemptive mission to America with all the family wealth, he is robbed successively by one raftsman, one itinerant con-man, one prostitute; he is shot and left for dead during a police attack on a revolutionist meeting; he courts a plain wealthy girl to use the dowry for passage money, but can't stick it; finally he gets on shipboard as the paid lover of a woman married to a rich American; and even then he almost gets sent back to Go, being saved only by the benevolent suicide of a tubercular fellow-seeker.

We are asked to take an excessive interest in this hardly epic tale, and with progressively less reason. The grail Stavros seeks perhaps qualifies as epical, being suitably vague and ambiguous: America is at first a haven from oppression, but Stavros soon thinks of it chiefly as a place where he will be cleansed of all the sins he has committed in order to get there. His ill-starred jousts and reluctant wooing of maidens might have made a comic epic. But Kazan is being serious: he has drawn us Stavros the idiot hero, apt for all manner of lunacy, while thinking he was making a sentimental gesture toward his ancestors.

Indeed, one comes uncomfortably close to feeling that the film's real, latent subject is precisely the failures and humiliations which Stavros so largely brings upon himself. Kazan gives these episodes full dramatic play, with his accustomed energy. It is, of course, not unknown for minority group members to have a kind of fixation on traits that cause them grief; and one may grant Kazan many mixed feelings about his real-life uncle Stavros and his lost innocence. But why, then, the persistence in a heroic tone?

With such uncertainties of conception at its heart, it is no wonder that the film wanders unsurely and lacks balance. Individual episodes are impressive, but have a way of countering each other. The initial sequences of Turkish oppression and Greek family life, for instance, constitute an effective opening, with a solidly documentary feel in Haskell Wexler's photography. This generates a certain (perhaps cliché) sympathy for Stavros and his mission. The second episode, that with the con-man, in which he is gulled, tricked, robbed, and driven to murder because he can think of no other way to get rid of the guy, veers off toward inadvertent comedy, and leaves us viewing Stavros as a hopeless incompetent. The Constantinople episodes similarly add confusion: the dockside experiences convince us that Stavros is a dolt, the revolutionist episode is so scantily presented that we can make nothing of it, except that it was another of Stavros' mistakes; and the courtship episode shows that he is a cad without either the courage of his ambitions or the unprincipled intelligence to recognize a good thing when he sees it—in the form of the girl (who is, as usual in such situations, not bad-looking after all) or of the life of ease, money, and security she offers.

The playing further accentuates the unevenness. Stavros speaks in a slight and not unpleasant Greek accent. The others speak purest American, and the effect is like that of a badly dubbed foreign film; one keeps wishing there were subtitles instead. Thus Kazan's documentary good intentions turn against him. Nor is this merely a linguistic problem. Since the other actors are Americans, they mostly *move* like Americans; and this is surely one of the unconscious factors which lead one to feel, throughout *America, America*, that one is in the presence of a worthy but lamentably irritating enterprise.

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POINT OF ORDER

Director: Emile de Antonio. Producers: Emile de Antonio and Daniel Talbot. Editorial consultants: David Bazelon and Richard Rovere. Editor: Robert Duncan. 97 minutes.

Writing about a film on a congressional investigating committee from the San Francisco Bay Area is writing from sanctuary. Here HUAC, on its last incursion outside Washington, met a solid wall of public resentment—which culminated in the City Hall "riot," provided the material for a notorious film called *Op-*

Above: AMERICA, AMERICA [*see page* 55].

Film Reviews

THE EASY LIFE

(Original title: *Il Sorpasso*—The Overtaking ["Passing"]) Director: Dino Risi. Script: Ettore Scola and Ruggero Maccari. Camera: Alfio Contini. Music: Riz Ortolani. With Vittorio Gassman and Jean-Louis Trintignant.

Commencing with *The Bicycle Thief*, postwar Italian films have tended towards the picaresque, using the wanderer motif as the basis for a search into existence. This has been true even of films like *La Dolce Vita, L'Avventura, La Notte,* and *8½*, where the characters move (or are moved) from one static episode to another, a plot pattern that might well be

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eration Abolition, gave J. Edgar Hoover occasion to say several things that were false, led to a court proceeding which invalidated police reports, and generally sowed consternation. The conservative mayor was reported to have remarked that next time the Committee would have to provide its own army; and the Committee has not returned.

However, the investigating committee remains a fundamental feature of American political life, and this is the importance of *Point of Order,* which is a documentary in a sense which has become rare lately: it is a record, heavily condensed but still a record, of a great national disgrace: the so-called McCarthy-Army hearings. The film, which is composed of eight major episodes, has been edited as smoothly as allowed by the television kinescopes which were its raw material. That the result is nonetheless a kind of dramatic form arises from the fact that the hearings were themselves a drama—though a sordid and dismaying one.

It is a drama with no heroes. Even in this brief record, and in its own nonpolitical terms, everyone in it has something important to be ashamed of. There is McCarthy himself, with his switchblade smile, the note of hysteria in his voice, his arrogance and his determination to remain outside the usual political rules; there is McClellan with his asides to his old Senate buddy "Joe"; there is the cunning Boston lawyer, Joseph Welch, bringing out a battery of courtroom tricks and at one point contributing a soap-opera speech that rivals another dramatic high-point of that era, Nixon's tearful cloth-coat speech. There is Secretary of the Army Stevens, who may have been a good golf companion but lacked any other qualification for high office; there is Eisenhower whose late letter attempted unsuccessfully to protect executive personnel from the Committee; there is Roy Cohn, McCarthy's assistant, a surly intelligence; and, though never seen in person, there is David Shine, the fairhaired boy whose Army privileges were, with characteristic irrelevance, the immediate issue upon which the hearings turned.—Altogether, a cast which makes Fidel Castro look like a dignified television statesman.

In these hearings the political life of a great nation was revealed as a morass of personal vendettas, hidden influence, irresponsible accusations, and an incredible lack of regular procedure and intellectual relevance. (*Point of Order* is a chillingly ironic title.) The hearings were, though we only dimly perceived it as they came over the TV sets, an epic farce melodrama. In the best American tradition of government by men, not ideas, the hearings amounted in the end to a trial of personalities through television. (The nature of this basic contest was divined most effectively by Welch, who shamelessly played to the real jury, the TV audience, and won.) No political issue was ever illuminated by the hearings, and there is of course no political significance in the film, which will seem mostly a ludicrous display of highly charged personal quibbling to anyone who did not live through those times. McClellan at one point attempted to bring some focus to a major political question, the conflict between the Eisenhower order and congressional powers; Welch and Symington tried to put McCarthy on the spot about his personal privileges of secrecy. (It is perhaps needless to add that no unknown subversion was revealed.) The real political lesson of the hearings was never spoken of.

Point of Order may seem tame to young people who have just seen *The Manchurian Candidate, Dr. Strangelove,* or *Seven Days in May.* But it is, after all, a kind of re-run; and the climate in which the recent films have been made is to a goodly extent the aftermath of the hearings. *Point of Order,* like the new films, portrays a world in which only a thin veneer of order remains over the cauldron of plots, counterplots, corruption, deception, and public hysteria; in which the faceless electorate judges on apparent personality rather than ideas or performance, and is shamelessly manipulated by all hands; in which the national life is controlled by irresponsible and emotionally unstable men—in short, a political life of a deplorably Roman type. The success of these movies testifies that this is hardly an unheard-of view of things.

As *Point of Order* is edited, it is Welch's "Have you *no* sense of decency?" which sets up the coup de grace administered by Symington. At the end McCarthy is heard raving on, as the hearing adjourns confusedly around him. Perhaps, by that time, the TV audience too had become bored, and were ready to switch to another channel. (That at least, in these procedureless hearings, is one procedure we need not cringe to approve.)

It remains to be said that the film bends over backwards in being fair to McCarthy (his stubbly jowl has been supressed throughout, and little of his sinister hysteria appears) and that the technical quality of the material is astonishingly good considering the number of electronic and photographic generations behind the 35mm prints. However depressing this instance of the TV-record method may be, it is one which clearly will bear much further fruit.

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Entertainments

R. M. HODGENS*

All the Way Home is based on a play which was based on James Agee's *Death in the Family*; but its remote ancestry barely shows in Alex Segal's film, which looks merely like an ordinary, competent adaptation from the stage. The boy is played with hardly a lapse by Michael Kearny, and occasionally (notably in a scene where he is introduced to his senile great-grandmother) some of Agee's peculiar combination of nostalgia and insight comes through. For the rest, it is pretty Jean Simmons and handsome Robert Preston going through tired old play routines: finding it hard to tell the boy of the mother's pregnancy, hearing the news of father's accident on the telephone, learning to live with grief, etc.—E.C.

Becket; or, unrequited love. To playwright Jean Anouilh and adapter Peter Anhalt, the trouble between Archbishop Becket (Richard Burton) and King Henry (Peter O'Toole) is much less a conflict of secular church and diffident state over the law than it is a personal misunderstanding. This Becket is a collaborator with the Existential problem who falls in love with "the honor of God," while Henry is a hysterical clown in love with the Archbishop. This is Absurd, of course, but even if it were true it would remain uninteresting. It is unfair besides, and especially disappointing from a playwright who had the tact to refrain from claiming that Joan of Arc was really a boy. Director Peter Glenville's style might be described as repressive; the result is that one can appreciate the ritual, and Burton in the role of a man playing a role, but there's little relief from the anachronistic witticism and romance.

Cry of Battle. A callow youth (James MacArthur), stranded in the Philippines when the Japanese invade, becomes a dull "animal's" (Van Heflin's) protegé. Before the inevitable estrangement, they go through an awful lot to illustrate their essential differences in love (mostly with Rita Moreno) and war (as the youth learns to be a soldier, and the man proves to be a bandit). The cast is good, and Irving Lerner's direction is at least efficient.

From Russia, with Love. The vulgarization of an Ian Fleming novel can't be easy work, but they've done it again. What made reasonable sense as SMERSH's *konspiratsia* to kill James Bond and his reputation does not do as well as SPECTRE's plot to steal a Lektor and avenge Dr. No. This alteration—brought about by Lotte Lenya's defection from SMERSH to SPECTRE—gives the film version an actual and potential continuity which already seems tedious, an ironic complication, more neutral political implication, and the fantastic air of *Dr. No.* In short, it is pointless. But the chief defects of the film seem to be the result of its makers' contempt for their material and their audience; thus things keep happening for "strong sensation" alone and poor Bond (Sean Connery again, of course) keeps mouthing stupidities that assert their superiority to the tastes they hope to gratify. Fortunately, the production is slicker this time, and Terence Young's more careful direction keeps it moving at a pace that overcomes asinine action and unpleasant tone, creating considerable dramatic excitement, and the strong sensations are editorial, if not musical. Some of the violence, it turns out, is called for, and not much of it displays excessive ferocity in the manner of recent work by Ford, Frankenheimer, and Hitchcock.

Man's Favorite Sport? is two hours of relaxed (or dull), semi-improvisational (or dull) romantic comedy from producer-director Howard Hawks. The plot—involving fishing expert Rock Hudson, who cannot fish, caught up in a tournament—promises some amusement but delivers little, becomes tediously repetitious and for climax turns to irritation—as he wins but disqualifies himself to make up for his phoniness, and the snivelling heroine (Paula Prentiss) flees to her double sleeping-bag, and what looks like a bright final moment is finally merely silly. The acting is also curiously dull; Miss Prentiss overplays anxiously, but nobody else does much playing at all.

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Shock Treatment. Denis Sanders and Sydney Boehm have pieced together a pastiche of the Psychiatric Film with bones from Sam Fuller's *Shock Corridor* and flesh grafted from anything at hand. The clichés and obligatory sequences of this genre wink by: the murder with garden shears, the absurd psychiatric testimony in court, the hospital dance, the patient in treatment, the sexual assault on the sane by the insane, the snap-in-the-head turning attendant into attended. Stuart Whitman feigns insanity in order to discover where a mad killer (Roddy McDowall) has hidden a load of money. Commitment proves easy and he is soon among rather pleasant company which includes Prince Mike Romanoff who pops in as guest patient. Whitman's success is threatened by Dr. Edwina Beighley (Lauren Bacall) who desperately needs the money because neither the government nor the foundations will support her research. She diverts him by slamming 100 volts through his brain and then injecting her experimental drug to induce catatonia. All seems lost but soon enough her success turns to ashes and Whitman wanders off with the lovely young patient (Carol Lynley) whose only problem was a phobia about being touched. All this should indicate that *Shock Treatment* could have been a romp. Unfortunately Sanders has only managed a sporadically amusing, but frequently limp and sagging, film. —JESSE SMITH

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CANADIAN FILM INSTITUTE

1762 Carling Avenue, Ottawa 3, Canada

In 1958 a grant from the Canada Council enabled the Canadian Film Institute to develop its Library and Information Service. The reference library now consists of 1,000 books on the film, 400 film periodicals, of which 183 are current, and files housing approximately 15,000 pamphlets, catalogues of major film distributors in Canada, USA, and Europe, and a large collection of classified material on every aspect of film. The documentation work carried out by the Library staff involves the compilation of the Film-Title-Index, the Location Index, and the Biographical Index, the cataloguing of books and pamphlets on the film and the continuous scanning and indexing of periodicals, and the maintenance of vertical files composed largely of newspaper clippings, program notes, and reviews. The Film-Title-Index provides detailed information on 30,000 titles (e.g., gives year of production, producer, running time, versions, synopsis, reviews in current literature, awards, etc.). The Location Index provides a source of prints in both 16mm and 35mm in major film libraries in Canada. The Biographical Index is a detailed record of directors and film personalities, their films listed with dates of production, reviews of their work in the film literature and supplemented with further references to vertical file material. The cataloguing and classification of the books and pamphlets in the Library parallels the master Film-Title-Index so that scripts, story source, and biographical works may all be used for further reference. Twenty-five periodicals are indexed currently for film reviews, articles on the film, and biographical reviews. Indexing covers the whole motion picture industry with special attention to developments in the Canadian field. These analytical entries for periodicals are amalgamated with the Book and Periodical Card Index to assist in preparing comprehensive bibliographies on any given aspect.

In recent months the Information Service at the Canadian Film Institute has provided information on foreign film festivals, a current censorship case, 8mm sound and its prospects, history of cinema in many countries, and details of film schools throughout the world. It has also been a constant source of information for film societies and their program directors.

While no Canadian film archive has been established certain positive steps have been taken. The CFI Archives Committee, a voluntary body, is a provisional member of Fédération Internationale des Archives du Film. It has preserved some 400,000 feet of early Canadian film, although lack of finances has prevented adequate documentation of this material. Other valuable historical works of film art are available for study purposes through the Canadian Film Institute and the Canadian Federation of Film Societies. Among CFI's collection of over 7,000 films is a large number of documentaries of historical importance. The CFFS circulating library includes a number of early silent short and feature films which are available for study by film groups.

The most encouraging recent development in the field of archives is "Connaissance du Cinéma," a group centered in Montreal, which is planning to present a number of film classics gathered from the world's film archives. It is hoped that "Connaissance du Cinéma" will be an additional stimulant to the formation of the Canadian Film Archive by 1967, Canada's Centennial year.

Apart from the Canadian Film Institute, a number of other centers in Canada offer resources for film scholarship. Among these are the libraries at Office Catholique National des Techniques de Diffusion in Montreal which has a large collection of information about film, and the Collège des Jésuites in Quebec which incorporates its film collection in the main college library. L'Office Catholique National des Techniques de Diffusion has a wide range of publications including *fiches filmographiques* and certain select bibliographies.

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Possibly because few feature films have been produced in Canada, and because of the ready availability of United States resources, Canadian resources for film scholarship have developed only slowly. However, the significant contribution of our volunteer cineastes and the encouraging development of the organizations described above are evidence of Canada's ability to make its own contribution to North American resources for film scholarship. — PETER MORRIS AND SHIRLEY WEBB

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INDIAN FILM

By Erik Barnouw and S. Krishnaswamy. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963. $7.50)

This is not the first book which has attempted to survey the Indian cinema, but it is the first which might be called post-Ray in its perspective.* *Indian Film* covers the history of film production in India from its beginnings, 50 years ago, under British rule. Its portrait of the forces that have molded the Indian film, and especially of particular difficulties such as language barriers, a virulent star system, a fragmented and undercapitalized entrepreneurial class, and an extremely strict censorship, is clear and dismal. The authors have done a thorough job of research, analysis, and comment. To the reader of their book it will now be plain why one of the world's largest film-producer nations was able to produce only a tiny handful of quality films until recently.

There are anomalies of surprising strength behind the sorry record of the Indian film. The song-and-dance tradition, which still holds directors by the throat, is not just some weird temporary aberration; it goes back 2,000 years through the long association of Indian drama with song and dance. One can understand this with some films. An Indian producer once sent me his *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* for possible distribution in the U.S. About seven minutes had been unreeled when Ali Baba went into a song and dance with a girl friend who had been introduced into the story. Songs recurred throughout the film. But even modern stories, of a serious sort, routinely contain songs and dances; in fact, it was not until 1954–23 years after the introduction of sound film in India–that a motion picture in Hindi was produced without them. (This was *Munna*, written and produced by K. A. Abbas; though critically acclaimed it was not a box-office success.)

Stars have the industry more at their mercy even than their U.S. counterparts: many stars get half the production budget, and as it is the custom to work on as many as seven films at once, they may give a week or two to a film and then not be able to resume work on it for six months. There are instances where a film has taken three years to produce.

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Barnouw and Krishnaswamy observe that one man, Satyajit Ray, has made the world conscious of India's movie industry. They devote a long and appreciative chapter to a biographical account of Ray and the problems he had to surmount. Practically everything about Ray's work was revolutionary for Indian films: his family's cultural background, his careful and conscious self-education in the film culture of the world (he helped organize the Calcutta Film Society), his reliance on personal finance to begin shooting *Pather Panchali*, his success with nonprofessionals in both cast and crew (now developed into one of the world's best "stock companies"), his infinite pains with every detail, and his steadfast dedication to art rather than profitability. The international success of his films has now given a chance to a number of talented young men in West Bengal to make films that otherwise would have found no backers. Ray's success also awakened the interest of commercial producers, in Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras, in the export market—particularly the United States. Many of these latter imagine that all they have to do is eliminate the songs from their pictures in order to score great American coups. But at least Ray has blazed the way, and others will learn to follow. And this book, which might not have been written at this time but for Ray, will probably hasten the trend.—EDWARD HARRISON

THE PERSONAL VISION OF INGMAR BERGMAN

By Jorn Donner. (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1964. $5.95)

This is a comprehensive appraisal of the Bergman canon, by a fellow Swede who has recently made his first feature film. Its tone is far from the adulatory one customary in such books; in fact some readers may conclude that Donner doesn't much like Bergman's films. Donner is harsh on the bravura aspects of Bergman's work, and wishes that Bergman was a more directly "social" director. He also under-rates the comic side of Bergman's genius, and hence gives a curiously flat estimate of a film like *Smiles of a Summer Night*. Still, in attempting a strictly dispassionate analysis (he refers to the director throughout simply as "B" and confines all biographical materials to an appendix) Donner manages to present a reasonably coherent picture of Bergman's development from the possessive yet often piqued perspective Swedes have on him. Donner's elaboration of the Christian and post-Christian questions which have obsessed Bergman is thorough, and his stylistic analysis is usually lucid, though brisk. He deals fully and matter-of-factly with influences upon Bergman. There is a large bibliography. Despite its chilly tone, this is a useful survey of Bergman's work to date, and it comes at an appropriate time: when he has finished his trilogy (with *The Silence*) and will doubtless embark on new things.—E.C.

THEORIE DER MASSENMEDIEN

(Theory of the Mass Media) by Erich Feldmann. (Munich and Basle: Reinhardt, 1962. 210 pages. DM 13.)

This ambitious book undertakes to define the scope and purpose of an autonomous "science" (Wissenschaft) of the mass media, especially of film and television; it emphasizes the need for a special academic discipline devoted to the study of the principles and practices of the mass communication media as a branch of "Kulturwissenschaft"; it proposes an epistemological and phenomenological examination of the motion picture (and television) as a branch

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Barnouw and Krishnaswamy observe that one man, Satyajit Ray, has made the world conscious of India's movie industry. They devote a long and appreciative chapter to a biographical account of Ray and the problems he had to surmount. Practically everything about Ray's work was revolutionary for Indian films: his family's cultural background, his careful and conscious self-education in the film culture of the world (he helped organize the Calcutta Film Society), his reliance on personal finance to begin shooting *Pather Panchali*, his success with nonprofessionals in both cast and crew (now developed into one of the world's best "stock companies"), his infinite pains with every detail, and his steadfast dedication to art rather than profitability. The international success of his films has now given a chance to a number of talented young men in West Bengal to make films that otherwise would have found no backers. Ray's success also awakened the interest of commercial producers, in Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras, in the export market—particularly the United States. Many of these latter imagine that all they have to do is eliminate the songs from their pictures in order to score great American coups. But at least Ray has blazed the way, and others will learn to follow. And this book, which might not have been written at this time but for Ray, will probably hasten the trend.—EDWARD HARRISON

THE PERSONAL VISION OF INGMAR BERGMAN

By Jorn Donner. (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1964. $5.95)

This is a comprehensive appraisal of the Bergman canon, by a fellow Swede who has recently made his first feature film. Its tone is far from the adulatory one customary in such books; in fact some readers may conclude that Donner doesn't much like Bergman's films. Donner is harsh on the bravura aspects of Bergman's work, and wishes that Bergman was a more directly "social" director. He also under-rates the comic side of Bergman's genius, and hence gives a curiously flat estimate of a film like *Smiles of a Summer Night*. Still, in attempting a strictly dispassionate analysis (he refers to the director throughout simply as "B" and confines all biographical materials to an appendix) Donner manages to present a reasonably coherent picture of Bergman's development from the possessive yet often piqued perspective Swedes have on him. Donner's elaboration of the Christian and post-Christian questions which have obsessed Bergman is thorough, and his stylistic analysis is usually lucid, though brisk. He deals fully and matter-of-factly with influences upon Bergman. There is a large bibliography. Despite its chilly tone, this is a useful survey of Bergman's work to date, and it comes at an appropriate time: when he has finished his trilogy (with *The Silence*) and will doubtless embark on new things.—E.C.

THEORIE DER MASSENMEDIEN

(Theory of the Mass Media) by Erich Feldmann. (Munich and Basle: Reinhardt, 1962. 210 pages. DM 13.)

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THE ART OF THE FILM

By Ernest Lindgren. (New York: Macmillan, 1963. Revised and enlarged edition. $7.50)

Reissue of a methodically reasoned statement of the aesthetics of film, as practiced roughly from Griffith to the advent of the widescreen style. An added section on film criticism interestingly applies Collingwood's distinctions between amusement art, art as magic, and art proper to the "commitment" debate. Often ponderous, and certainly not a brilliant book, this is nonetheless the best single work for people just getting seriously interested in how films work.

A MILLION AND ONE NIGHTS
A History of the Motion Picture Through 1925

By Terry Ramsaye. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1964. $10.00 cloth, $3.95 paperback)

Ramsaye's genial account of the invention of the motion picture machinery—which accepted Edison's own version of events—has been disproved in essential respects by Gordon Hendricks, in *The Edison Motion Picture Myth* (University of California Press, 1961—$4.00). Other shortcomings may well exist in the work, but in a field where study of original sources is scandalously rare, Ramsaye's volume remains a landmark, and will continue to set the stage for other and more painstaking researchers. The original edition has been out of print for a long time and in recent years has brought high prices. This reprint, which reproduces the original (including the pictures) in a slightly smaller format and in one thick volume, is extremely valuable, making this fundamental document in film history once more available to all.—E.C.

Listings

We have reluctantly decided to curtail our book-review coverage to allow more space for film reviews. Some of the volumes which will be given brief annotations in the listings below are valuable works which could be discussed at length if space allowed.

Michelangelo Antonioni.
By Pierre Leprohon. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1963. $4.50 cloth, $1.95 paper) Translation from the "Cinema d'aujourd'hui" series. Leprohon is a terrible sentimentalist, and hence far from a good critic of Antonioni, especially on *Il Grido*; he correctly says that this film is underestimated, but gives it an obstinately far-fetched interpretation that flies in the face of Antonioni's own statements, as well as the evidence of the film. He is not very good on *L'Avventura* or *La Notte* either, and Ian Cameron's monograph remains a better survey of Antonioni's work. However, the brief quotations from Antonioni and the other materials appended are informative.

The Story Of "The Misfits."
By James Goode. (New York: Bobbs Merrill, 1963. $5.00) A naive and often embarrassing "popular" account; nonetheless, an interesting portrayal of the manufacture of a curious movie. Badly printed, including the Magnum pictures.

The Technique Of Documentary Film Production.
By W. Hugh Baddely. (New York: Hastings House-Focal Press, 1963. $10.00) In certain respects this volume is more up-to-date than Spottiswoode's *Film and Its Techniques*: notably in its coverage of magnetic sound. The British terminology is a definite drawback, however.

Agee On Film: Volume I, Reviews and Comments.
By James Agee. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964. Paperback, $2.45) It is excellent to have this volume, which contains the largest body of

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first-rate film reviews ever written in the United States—and possibly anywhere else—in an inexpensive edition.

Agee On Film: Volume II, Five Film Scripts.
By James Agee. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964. Paperback, $2.75) Contents: Foreword by John Huston; *Noa Noa*; *The African Queen*; *The Night of the Hunter*; *The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky*; *The Blue Hotel.*

Censorship: Government And Obscenity.
By Terrence J. Murphy. (Baltimore: Helicon, 1963. $5.50) This volume, though it bears a *Nihil Obstat* and *Imprimatur*, and quotes J. Edgar Hoover with a straight face, does nothing to elevate the arguments about obscenity laws from the generally ludicrous level on which they are phrased and, though with increasing difficulty and rarity, enforced.

Contemporary Polish Cinematography.
(Warsaw: Polonia Publishing House, 1962. No price given.) A survey by a team of writers of the history and current situation of the Polish film.

The Films Of Greta Garbo.
Compiled by Michael Conway, Dion McGregor, and Mark Ricci. Introduction by Parker Tyler. (New York: Citadel Press, 1963. $5.95) Gives credits, synopsis, and excerpts from critical reactions to each Garbo film.

Las Doce Sillas.
By Thomas Gutierrez Alea and Ugo Olive. (Habana: I.C.A.I.C., 1963). Since we cannot see Cuban films in this country, a printed script such as this carries more than ordinary interest.

Luis Bunuel.
By Ado Kyrou. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1963. $4.50 cloth, $1.95 paper). Translation from the "Cinéma d'oujourd'hui" series. Kyrou's essay is sometimes woolly, but the script extracts, critical notes, letters, and interviews also included in the volume are a valuable compact source of information.

Antonioni.
Par Roger Tailleur et P. L. Thirard. (Paris: Editions Universitaires, 1963)

Le Droit de Regard.
Par Jean Cayrol at Claude Durand. (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1963) Philosophical essays exploring various aesthetic issues raised by films, especially shorts. Includes several scripts; illustrated.

Esthétique et Psychologie du Cinéma. Vol. I: Les Structures.
Par Jean Mitry. (Paris: Editions Universitaires, 1963) An ambitious attempt to develop a philosophically sophisticated aesthetics. To be reviewed (Vol. II due shortly).

Internationale Film-Bibliographie, 1952-1962.
Edited by H. P. Manz. (Zurich: Verlag Hans Rohr, 1962. No price given) A 260-page bibliography that will fill about half the gap since *The Film as Art*. Lists books in Western languages, and periodicals; some entries have very brief annotations, most have none. Completely indexed.

Theatre Books in Print.
By A. E. Santaniello. (New York: Drama Book Shop, 150 West 52nd Street, 1963) Annotated survey of books now available, including a section on film books. Useful for libraries, drama departments, teachers.