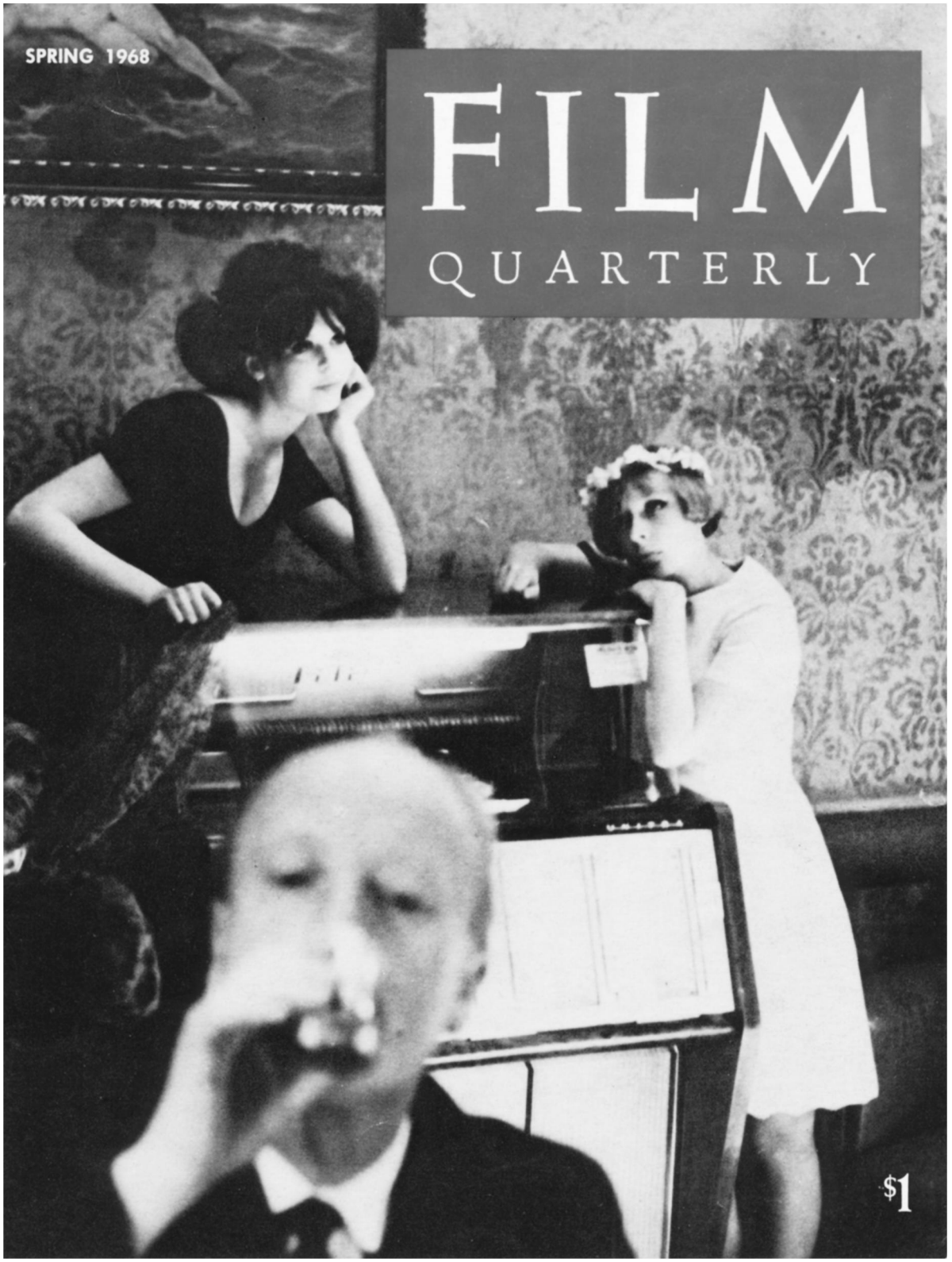
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FILM
QUARTERLY
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COVER: Jitka Cerhova and Joana Karbanova in *Daisies*, a film by Vera Chitylova.

Editor's Notebook

. . . Vive Langlois . . .

For reasons not yet clearly revealed, the French government has deposed Henri Langlois as head of the Cinémathèque Française, and appointed Pierre Barbin of the Tours Festival in his place. The Cinémathèque was largely Langlois's personal creation—though Georges Franju was his collaborator in the early years—and it seems no overstatement to say that between them Langlois and the critic André Bazin were the two key figures in the development of that extraordinary hothouse atmosphere which has made postwar Paris the capital of world film-consciousness.

Langlois had enemies, for he was one of those free-booters and horse-traders who have built certain of the world's film archives through a combination of cunning, ruthlessness, and the instincts of a pack-rat. (He withdrew in pique from the sober international federation of film archives.) He had detractors; his tastes were more than catholic, they were omnivorous; and he blithely maintained, in the face of the anguish of fellow curators trying to stretch budgets, that a proper archive should simply attempt to save *everything*. (At least by reports, his preservation practices were primitive, and seemed to rely on faith that a well-loved and frequently projected print will somehow survive.) In the overwhelming cornucopia of exhibitions that flowed from his various theaters, he followed a similar policy of preferring to court surfeit rather than risk omissions. His boundless, generous enthusiasm for seeing and talking about films set an example for other museums and for the many cinéclubs and film societies throughout the world which have staged Langlois-style retrospectives and series showings of relatively obscure or neglected film-makers. Quite literally, we will not see his like again.

But as anyone knows who has watched him preside over an evening, the Cinémathèque was a one-man show. Langlois was its founder, its guid-

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ing spirit, its memory, its inspiration. If he never actually said, "La Cinémathèque, c'est moi," he well might have—despite his devoted aides. Apparently, this individual cultural entrepreneurship did not endear him to accountants and government bureaucrats. In recent years the Cinémathèque had grown beyond its rather seedy but passion-filled early quarters, reportedly on the strength of largesse conveyed by the Minister of Culture, André Malraux; but apparently that lover of films, previously embarrassed by the unfortunate affair of *La Religieuse,* could not or would not save Langlois from his fate.

The Cinémathèque is now closed, and according to Jean-Luc Godard in Berkeley, it is likely to remain so, since an attempt to re-open it would be met "with bombs." Moreover, the canny Langlois obtained many of the Cinémathèque's immense collection of prints on a personal basis, and they seem to be his property. It is quite possible, thus, that the Cinémathèque literally cannot be operated without him, and that he will ultimately be re-installed.

An attempt to bring this about is being made by a virtually unanimous united front of French film-makers, with whom many international film personages have joined. Public demonstrations have been greeted by the Paris police with clubbings, whose victims include Godard and Truffaut. Expressions of support for Langlois can be sent to *FQ* for forwarding to Paris, or sent direct to *Cahiers du Cinéma.*

CONTRIBUTORS

Raymond Banacki lives in New York City. Claire Clouzot writes for various film journals. R. C. Dale teaches French and film at the University of Washington. Mary Evans writes for the Japan Times. Stephen Farber and Estelle Changas study film at UCLA; he is now our Los Angeles Editor. Dennis Hunt is a graduate student at Berkeley. Norman Kagan is a young New York scriptwriter. Margot S. Kernan lives in Washington, D.C. James Michael Martin is a film student at UCLA. Patricia Marton has been doing film research in Brussels and elsewhere in Europe. William D. Routt is writing a dissertation on film at the University of Chicago. Robert Siegler is a student film-maker at San Francisco State College. Richard Whitehall writes for many periodicals, and lives in Los Angeles. Forrest Williams, who teaches philosophy at the University of Colorado, is living in New York for a year and working on a book.

ERNEST CALLENBACH AND
ALBERT JOHNSON

The Danger Is Seduction: An Interview with Haskell Wexler

Haskell Wexler, who has photographed* Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, In the Heat of the Night, America, America, *and other films, is one of the most talented cameramen of the postwar years in Hollywood. His career, moreover, opened somewhat unusually for an American feature film photographer, and his work with natural lighting, dating back to Irvin Kershner's* Stakeout on Dope Street *and* Hoodlum Priest, *has been an important sign of changing attitudes in the American film.

EC: Could you tell us how you first became interested in films?
HW: Well, if you want me to be logical–
EC: No, no!
HW: Most logic, most intellectualizing is, I think, rationalizing; so to answer that question I will now invent how I *think* I got into it . . . My father used to have an old Bell & Howell camera. We traveled around the world, he was a good fisherman. I used to take the family home movies. I was always very competitive with my father and always at the losing end of the competition; but with the movies I took, I got a great deal of approval at home. That probably had something to do with it, if you want to be Freudian.

I went to sea during the war for about 4½ years as a merchant seaman, had a few adventures, and after the war, Barney Rosset–a friend of mine, who later went into the publishing business–he and I decided we wanted to make movies. We both came from Chicago where we went to school together; only he wanted to live in New York. His girl friend was in New York, mine was in Chicago; that is how we decided where we lived.

He made a film called *Strange Victory,* after WW II, which was a rather prophetic film now that I think back on it. He had a lot of actual war footage, and the idea of the film was: this was the war, and what kind of victory will it be, will it be a strange victory or will we do all the things we said we would after winning the war. He had a lot of trouble making the film. He had an editor who took too long and he ran out of money. I loaned him some, which he paid back. Around then I decided *I* wanted to be in films. There was a cartoon in the *New Yorker,* showing a guy sitting with his father at a desk, saying "Pop, I want $25,000 to make my own film," and I did something like that. I decided to be a film-maker and in order to be a film-maker you had to have a studio, so I told my father I wanted a studio. He bought for me, or rather we rebuilt, an armory in Desplaines, Illinois.

I didn't know anything. I got all kinds of misinformation as to what kind of electricity to install; I looked at catalogues and I bought lights without knowing their specific purpose. I had a fancy office designed by an avant-garde artist friend of mine, Alfonse Ianelli–great offices

with glass things, and I was concentrating on that, and finally when I considered myself set, I announced to the world that I was ready to make a film. And nothing happened. Then I became a little desperate, if only because my father told me I *should* be desperate.

Anyway, a friend of my father's owned a cotton mill in Opelika, Alabama, so my father sold him the goods. It was the 50th anniversary of the Opelika Cotton Mills and my father explained to him how tax-wise it would cost him nothing for me to make a $25,000 film. So I went to Alabama for a month, took notes, met all the guys, and prepared to make the kind of documentary that I had envisioned. I wrote a very short treatment for the mill owner. He didn't even read it; and I proceeded to make the film. It was a damn good film because I knew the people. I didn't doublecross the mill, but I did show how the life of the whole town, a cotton-mill town, revolved around the mill. Families were working around the clock. The father would come home from night shift and have breakfast with the kids; the kids would go to school and the mother would go to the mill. It was that kind of a family arrangement. The houses were small, clean, and lined up like a cotton-mill town.

AJ: What was it called?

HW: *A Half Century with Cotton.* I had the owner of the mill come to New York to see the completed film. He saw it and said, "What's all this shit about the kids in school and the breakfast stuff? I want to see my mill. I've got 52 carding machines that cost $4,800 apiece and I want to see them!"

For the processes of the mill I had done everything sort of abstract, with the cotton coming off the carding machine, all close shots, just the beginning and the end, the raw cotton and the finished product.

I didn't know what to do and I talked with my father who said I had to square things away. So I went back down there, shooting long shots. That was before Tri-X stock. Each day cost me $1,000; I had to get a union crew because the unions were onto me, and I shot four long shots on each floor of the mill. Then the mill owner didn't like the narration, and I had to get a real selling narration. I was getting chopped down, and going way over my budget. Anyway, that was my commercial experience. The hardest thing was to realize how much I didn't know. So I closed the studio and went to work as an assistant cameraman.

EC: In Chicago?

HW: Yes, I worked as an assistant cameraman for a while on documentaries, and made a number of documentaries with John Barnes directing, one with Gordon Weisenborn. He was at EBF, where he did *People Along the Mississippi.* We made a film called *The Living City,* which was nominated for an Academy Award. I shot that. Urban renewal was the subject. Then I made films on the Packing House Workers strike on my own. Got some great stuff.

After that I just kept making documentaries, many in the South—one with the Highlander Folk School. Then I wanted to make features. While I was in California, in Los Angeles, visiting friends, watching television, I saw a show called *Confidential File.* There was some fantastic photography in it, you know, hand held, great stuff. My friend told me he knew the photographer, so I met Irv Kershner, who was shooting these for Paul Coates. Very good, very cinematic. We talked about life, and it turned out that both of us wanted to make features.

AJ: You worked with Kirshner on his first film?

HW: Yes, my brother acted in it and we also invested money.

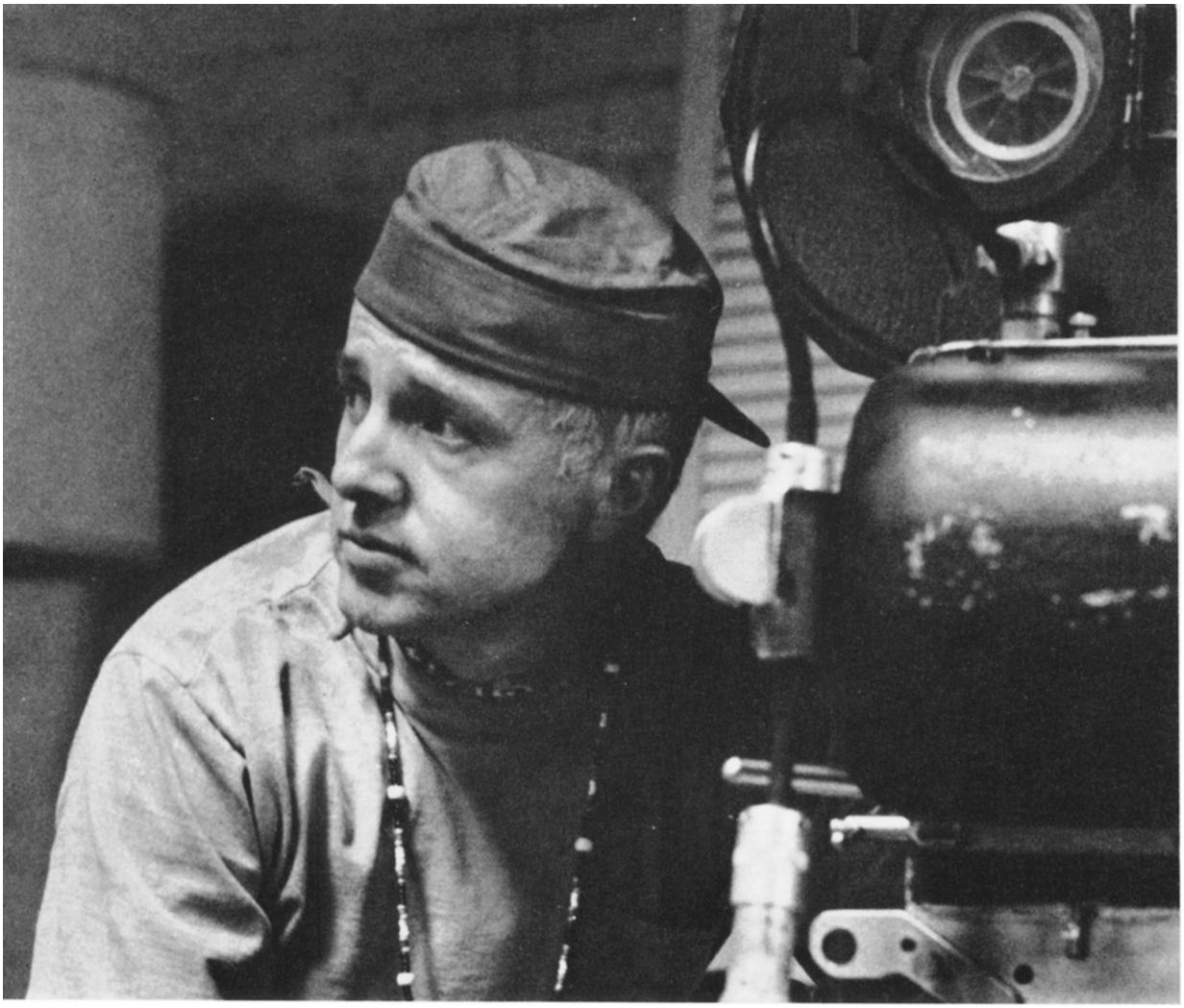
AJ: What about *The Young Captives*?

HW: I didn't do that because that's when they went straight. I was not in the union, my identity was not known; in fact when the union men would come around I would hide under the scenery.

AJ: *Stakeout on Dope Street* is interesting. It seems to be one of the first of a new wave of American films in terms of photography and also subject matter—drugs, and the first use of garbage dumps as a place of action, which has since come up many times. Also the lighting of the film is very interesting.

EC: What were your ideas on lighting?

HW: All I knew was reality, the documentary.



So my ignorance of the other way sort of helped. In the garbage dump all we did was tell the kids what to do and I ran in there with my Eclair and shot it. We had to do it fast because we were not supposed to be there. Then I did *The Savage Eye*, for about a year and a half. Joe Strick would call on Thursday and say that on Friday we were going out to the wrestling matches.

EC: Was a lot of that shot off-the-cuff without knowing what they were going to do with it?

HW: It was very badly planned. There is a point where impromptu improvisation is good, and a point where it begins to hurt; and in that film it hurt. Originally it was supposed to be *Hogarth Looks at Los Angeles* and we had all kinds of Hogarth sketches on the board, and then it got changed and all the stuff of Barbara Baxley was sort of superimposed.

EC: It had that feel, that it had been tacked on.

HW: It was. As I speak now I remember my excitement and enthusiasm. It was a good time, better in some ways than being "successful," which I am beginning to resent!

EC: What was the role of the union in all this? I guess after a while you couldn't work that way any more.

HW: Well, I could. You see I was a member of the Chicago union, where I had served a

long apprenticeship. That was IATSE, only a different local, and I wanted to transfer. Since I was able to work in the Midwest, I put in some time as an assistant on the West Coast where they had no one available, no one competent, and that helped build up some time. But then I worked in St. Louis, which is Chicago union territory, and I shot a film called *Angel Baby,* in Florida. Then I went to Greece to shoot *America, America.* By that time, with my producer going to bat for me, I was able to shoot *The Best Man.* This was my first legal-connected film.

AJ: Were you a member of the American Society of Cinematographers?

HW: The ASC is something of an elite club, into which you are invited and for which you pay $1,000. You sit around with cocktails and talk about the old days.

AJ: Were there any cinematographers whom you had admired, in your early days?

HW: I always liked Jimmy Howe's work, and of course Gregg Toland. In fact I shot the second unit on *Picnic* and I met Jimmy Howe. I shot the helicopter scene at the end and some of the game sequences, and I remember sitting in on the dailies with Josh Logan and Jimmy Howe, and after he saw what I had shot, he said "Very good, very good." To me at that time, that was *it*! I think he's 68, in perfect physical shape, still trying new things. People say he is ornery and mean, but he's had to fight all the way—and wait to see his *Heart Is a Lonely Hunter.* A fabulous man!

EC: Do you ever do your own camera operating?

HW: Very often, but I'm told it's against the union rules. I have ignored that and get brought up on charges, but nothing bad has happened yet.

EC: As long as you actually have an operator on the crew, why can they really complain?

HW: I asked them that. You see there is a certain internal union logic for it. If producers see a first-man operating all the time, they can say "What the hell do we need an operator for?", and actually an operator *is* an aid. It is sort of fashionable to knock the Hollywood unions. But if you talk to some of the old-timers and find out how they used to work, the hours and conditions, then you can see why the rules came into being.

AJ: What other films did you do with Kershner?

HW: We did *The Hoodlum Priest* and we did a film in Italy called *Face in the Rain.* On *Hoodlum Priest,* there again we could use documentary because we shot 95% of it on real locations. It seems to help.

AJ: How much freedom do you have in creating a visual style? Do you sit down with Kershner and discuss the visual side, or does he have it definitely set in his mind?

HW: Well, you have put your finger on it. A lot depends on the director. But usually, for what I think of as good directors, the visual things are not specific; we'll talk about emotional and psychological things, maybe a generalized idea of a look for a scene. But, particularly when you work on location, there are so many decisions you make on the spot. You may decide to shoot a certain sequence on a certain day and it rains, or there are suddenly a lot of trucks going by. Well, you might decide to use the trucks—go across the street, use the long lens and see the people through the holes in the traffic. Usually the story you are telling determines the form or the look.

EC: Do you always look at the script beforehand?

HW: Always! Always have and always will. I don't just *look* at it, I actually rewrite it because it makes me understand what is there; I have trouble reading them.

EC: Are you concerned with detailed problems or—

HW: Well for example, take *Heat of the Night* which had a mediocre script—a fake sociological script, with little understanding of today's South. I resent films that talk about subjects that I'm interested in and pretend to be on the good side but are superficial. I had met Norman Jewison and knew his heart was in the right place, I liked him, and he encouraged me to contribute what I could to the script. The Sidney Poitier character, he was just a plain smart-

ass—unsympathetic, one-dimensional Mr. Negro. It's like having a flag; if you like the flag then you salute it. Well that's not drama. It has to be a man, and he was certainly capable as an actor of being more than just a symbol. I wrote the opening, just the visual. A little plastic Jesus on the dashboard, a transistor radio playing country-and-western music.

EC: Do you work on the dialogue?

HW: I stick my nose in everywhere; but a lot depends on the director. He is the boss.

AJ: All those little touches in *The Heat of the Night,* the little diner, the fly under the cake cover, things like that—were those in the script?

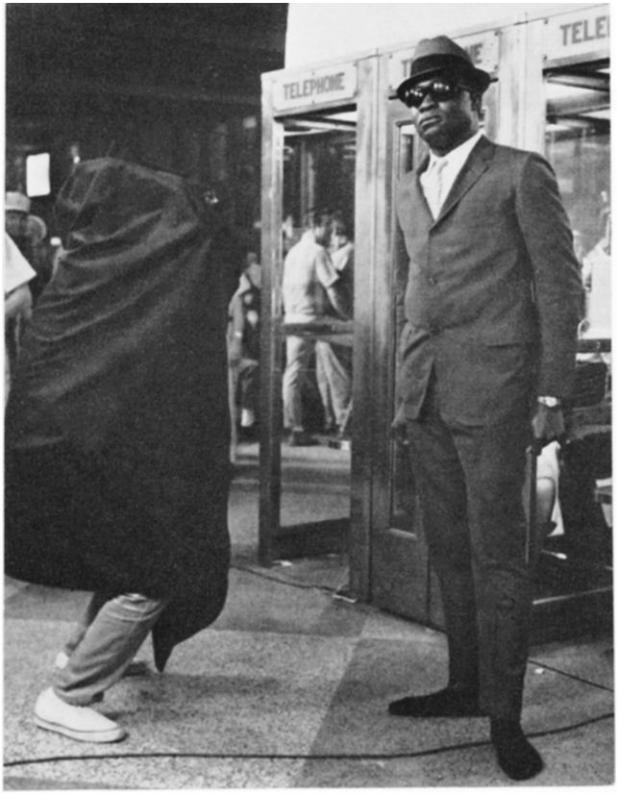
HW: No, the fly under the cake cover—you should have seen the fly wranglers when we had to do that shot! We had the fly for the calendar, it was actually on top of the cake so we tried to get him inside. It was funny, 25 grown men trying to get a fly. When we finally succeeded, the guy jammed down the cover and yelled "OK, let's get rolling."

There are many films I have worked on, where the making of the film was far more interesting than the film itself, more complex, more revealing about characters. I shot a film once called *Five Bold Women* down in Texas. There were five fantastic-looking broads and the story was about a ranger who had to bring these women from one prison to another, as prisoners. Well, the activity at the hotels at night, and the intrigue between the crew and the girls and the husbands, from different parts of the country, was incredible. Also when you go on location in a small town—like on *In the Heat of the Night,* we were in Sparta, Illinois, which is supposed to be Sparta, Mississippi. Nothing ever happens in a town like that. It's a center of about 125 people. In come guys with loud sport shirts and Hollywood weather-beaten faces, baseball hats; you know the whole routine, the honey wagons, coffee and doughnuts, and it changes the whole metabolism of the town, particularly the young guys of the crew were all dating girls. Actually it is terrific film material. Movies are sort of instant business. A movie will go into a place and spend in eight weeks a million dollars—they will spend in eight weeks what a factory in the town will perhaps turn over in a lifetime. And of course that kind of invasion pretty obviously changes the lives of the people in the town. But at the same time it has some effect on the film-makers and to that extent sometimes reflects itself in the film they are making, if the film has to do with that actual locale. I think it would be fantastic to make a film about the relationship between a film company in a specific place and the interaction between the two.

EC: I remember on Carl Foreman's *The Victors,* Dennis Mitchell made a 16mm film about making it, and I thought that the little film, offhand and impromptu, was much better than the big one.

HW: Well, they talk about what the new techniques can do. A friend of mine, Fred Wiseman, made a film called *Titticut Follies,* for which I arranged to get distribution with Barney Rosset, who now owns the Grove Press. Barney is going into 16mm stuff big. It's a fantastic film, it makes you see what *cinéma-vérité* can do. John Marshall was the cameraman—I hadn't heard of him before.* You see, the problems of shooting *cinéma-vérité* are so different. Not just the shooting but the cutting too. Ordinarily when you are shooting, when things stop happening you cut the camera. Even when a green *cinéma-vérité* camera man is working, he knows he has just so much film and doesn't want to reload. So when people, things seem to get cooled off, you cut and either reload or talk to the soundman or get yourself set for the next thing that happens. Well, what really good *cinéma-vérité* guys do—or learn to sense—what John Marshall does—is when things seem to have stopped, you keep rolling, and move in a little on a face, and about four or five times in the film everything would stop, he would move in on a face and then you would *see* the change happening, and then something would start again. When you get that moment, I don't think there is anything in films that I have ever seen, that can match it. Also there's the physi-

* Marshall previously made an outstanding ethnographic film, *The Hunters.*



Haskell Wexler (in bag, to kill reflections in phone booth and on Yaphet Kotto's shades).

cal factor, because you're hand-holding and when things stop happening your arm is a little tired, so you want to cut too. . . .

It's interesting that films like *Warrendale* and *Titticut Follies,* which seem to cause some stir, are institution films. One of the things that intrigues me about *Titticut Follies* is that if you analyze our institutions carefully, they are in a way microcosms—they show the bones of our society in sort of naked ways, which you can't see if you are out there amongst them. And to me, *Titticut Follies* is not just about that particular institution for the criminally insane; it's like us. The guards are not just like cops, but like authorities. And the inmates, just the fact that men are walking around naked—it strips society into the relationships of forces.

EC: How did they get permission to make it?

It seems to me as if this would be very hard. Are there legal problems?

HW: Well, they thought the legal problems were resolved, but before it was shown (this was last week) they had restraining orders from the state of Massachusetts, they had all kinds of injunctions put against them.*

I was involved in a similar problem a long time ago, with *The Savage Eye*—it was an early documentary. There was a scene in a temple, where people were faith-healed. Women were going into paroxysms, screaming and yelling in tongues, with the guy saying "Heal!" The deal that Joe Strick had made with the people of the Angelus temple was that after we had photographed, we would give them a 16mm print and they would sign a release, and we were worried about it, but they saw the print and thought it was marvelous, wonderful.

EC: They saw the finished film?

HW: No, they saw the rough footage, and I think that must have been the case with Fred Wiseman, who is a lawyer, incidentally.

EC: That would probably be a better way to do it, I suppose, on the whole, then you don't get involved in the question of point of view, you get purely what is *there* on the film.

HW: Well, it's always best to be as honest as possible, because your interpretation—as for example when Ricky Leacock made the film on the Quints. I am sure that the people associated with that film don't look upon it as social satire. They just think there is mother, and she is just

* Since this interview was recorded, the state of Massachusetts has stopped the distribution of the film, and it is not known whether it will ever get exhibited. Opponents of the film charge it invades the privacy of inmates, defenders of the film reply that the institution had already destroyed their privacy. The film was also apparently caught in a state political struggle between those who recognize the inhumanity of the prison and wish to reform it (which includes some of its officials) and the forces in the state which have made the prison what it is. It is not yet clear what lessons, if any, the case offers for film-makers who attempt to use film to convey the reality of our institutions.

buying all those clothes for these kids. In other words, what is satire to one group is just fact to another.

EC: I have noticed that with a lot of those films–I think it's one of the most wonderful things about them. You know that film on Hugh Hefner, *The Most*? Apparently Hefner thought the film was perfectly all right when he saw it and it wasn't until reports began to come back to him that some people thought it made him look ridiculous, that he began to worry about it, and I think he took steps to keep it from being distributed. It seems to be out now. When I saw it at the Festival here a couple of years ago, half the audience was laughing its head off and the other half was trying to hush them because they thought it was a serious document of an important philosophical stance. Have you seen that very early one that Leacock did (called sometimes *Eddy Sachs), On the Pole*?

HW: Oh yes, I saw that, it was good. Unfortunately it was made so partially because Eddy Sachs died, he was killed in a car accident. Most of those films are really dependent on the subject. For instance, the Maysles made one on Joe Levine. It was a lousy film, not because they were not talented, but because if you pick your major subject, the subject writes your script. So if they are interesting and exciting, you have a film. If not, you are in trouble.

EC: What kind of a ratio do you have to have in order to feel easy in your mind about not skimping on film? A lot of these ratios are very high?

HW: You never feel easy in your mind. You just have to work instinctively. You don't know who is interesting, nor do you know when you put the camera on someone whether he is going to sit there and do absolutely nothing, or whether he will start throwing bombs or making radical speeches. You never know what is going to happen. So by the nature of it, you shoot a lot and hope that your instincts take you to the right places. That is why much of the creativity is in the editing; also many of the hang-ups.

For instance, when you cut in a normal film, you cut on dramatic movement. Someone will say something like "I'm going to leave this room and rip out every book in it." Cut to something else. In *cinéma-vérité* if you cut on the dramatic, it loses its *vérité* because the character really will say "I am going to leave this room and rip out every book in it" and then there will be some tapering off. It will taper off and maybe go into something else that dovetails back into it. In other words, it's a little more complex, so that sometimes much *cinéma-vérité* seems long or loosely cut, but it's partly that which gives it its veracity. When you see a film cut on the dramatic–when you see cut, cut–subconsciously you feel the hand of the filmmaker; and in good *cinéma-vérité* it is a constant battle to keep it so that it has some pace and some dramatic construction–because it still has to be dramatic.

EC: On *Virginia Woolf*, what were the advance preparations like.

HW: Well, I didn't get enough preparation. Harry Stradling was supposed to do the film. I was going to do *A Fine Madness* with Kershner and we were in a screening room to see *8½*. Harry Stradling was with Mike Nichols and I was with Kershner, and when we left Mike was in tears, affected by the film and probably empathizing with the task ahead of him: the director not sure! I think Mike had a few words with Harry Stradling, apparently the culmination of some disagreement, nothing specific, but on how to look at the world, so to speak, and Harry said "I think Guido's a shit." That bothered Mike, particularly since he was in tears. Shortly after that Mike asked me to shoot the film; they were to start the following week. I said that I couldn't because I was supposed to do the film with Kershner. He said "Don't worry, I'll take care of that." Then Jack Warner called me up and said "You have to do this film." I told him I'm doing one with Kershner and he said "I'll take care of it. You must do the film, the director wants you," all that kind of crap. To make a long story short, I had a couple of meetings with Kershner and Jerry Helman, the producer, which on the surface were very pleasant, but for a while Kershner did not talk to me.

Well anyway, I watched rehearsals on the set with Richard, Elizabeth, and Mike for four days, and we shot some tests.

One of the problems was that Mike felt Harry Stradling was making Elizabeth look too good. So my job was to make Elizabeth look bad. It was difficult because she couldn't be made up so that you could see the make-up. So much of it depended on her facial expressions. Very quickly I discovered also that her profile couldn't be disguised; in profile shots she *always* looked good, so I worked out in my mind rather quickly how I could uglify her.

EC: Did she get in on the discussions on this?

HW: Yes, she did. As a matter of fact, early, when the discussion was out in the open about making her look ugly, she whispered to me "Don't do too good a job." But she was very serious about the part. (I think she enjoyed gaining the weight!)

But in answer to your first question, I did not get a chance to prepare properly and I was a little in awe of the situation; not at first, but when I saw all the deference to Richard and Elizabeth, which they personally did not demand, but which seemed just to come by their existence, I felt a little uncomfortable. I was not really too used to studio pictures. Of course at Warners I had all of Harry Stradling's crew, who were nice old cockers, and every time I tried something they would look around as if to say "What the hell is he doing!" It was always difficult. And it was difficult with Mike too, because photography is a difficult thing to discuss. The only way to discuss it is for the cameraman and the director to see a lot of films together. Then they have a frame of reference and can say remember the film with Bette Davis, etc. But when they start talking about contrasts and don't know what contrasts mean, or talk about blacks and don't know where the blacks should be—it's very subjective. So Mike and I didn't have that. During the film, though, I had an idea about the over-all pattern, which always worked out like a graph, some ideas of whiteness and dark and how to respond to it. But often in the dailies Mike would complain and gripe. He was not used to seeing one-light prints and one day the lab would print things one way and the next day some other way. He knew that in his mind, but he is such a perfectionist. When he saw a shot on the screen that didn't seem to look like the shot of three days ago. . . .

Also we shot completely in sequence. So I would light one corner of the room, shoot the scene, then tear that down, pull a wall down and shoot in the opposite direction—knowing that three days later I had to shoot back in the same corner of the room. This meant I had tc match everything precisely, so that I would have to know how many footcandles were on the corner of the bookcase, that I had a baby with a double open end, and a stick going through—I knew all the books in the bookcase. It was complicated, and I wasn't used to complications, of that kind.

EC: Did you go back and reshoot when there was something he didn't like?

HW: Once or twice, but mostly because of performance. But Mike has an uncanny understanding, since he understood the play so well, of when he wanted to be how close, which is awfully important for a director. Many new directors seem to want to gobble down the person's throat—close-ups of eye balls, noses. Mike knew he had to save certain things, which was very perceptive for a man who had never seen anyone make a film, let alone made one.

EC: There is one thing that I'm curious about because it struck me as being out of tone, and that is where she picks up the lighter and there is quite a close-up.

HW: Oh yeah. I know that shot *very* well! You see I was getting bored looking at their faces all the time, and since she was sort of making up to George Segal at the time, lighting the cigarette, we started the shot as a close-up of the lighter, the lighter comes up right in front of the face and bang! the light goes on, there is a movement with the lighter which is blurred. And if it didn't work, I will definitely take full blame for it. In fact Mike disagreed with me on it. But I felt the need for something cinematic.

I think it probably showed itself off too much because there was very little else like that in the film.

On a film many things happen which you could call accidents, and that's one of the things that bugs me about film criticism, it's hard to say who does what in a film. It really is hard to say. I don't think it's that important, but it bugs a lot of people that somebody else gets credit for some of their work, or the wrong people get blamed. I don't know how to get around that.

EC: The film has a nice balance of space in it. In fact, I would have thought that you had shot a great deal of it with your own hand because it has that kind of feel.

HW: Actually when I work with a director, I have a finder and I do it as if I were doing it with my 16mm Eclair, and then we go in with the regular camera and do it that way.

AJ: I would like to ask you some questions about *The Bus*. What attracted you to do that film and what were the problems in actually shooting it in that bus, in terms of keeping the spectator interested? Obviously everybody knew that the film was being made, what the purpose of the film was. Did they tense up? Did they talk naturally? How did you get them to relax in that situation?

HW: I think my experience is probably characteristic of most people who make that kind of film, *cinéma-vérité* films. I was interested in the civil rights movement, I had worked in the South a long time ago when there was no civil rights movement, and I had not done anything except follow the box score, so to speak. I thought the best way for me to re-acquaint myself with what the young people were doing, what was going on, was to make this film.

Actually they didn't know who I was and some people are shy at the idea of being photographed. Frederika, the young lady who in the beginning told them where they were going to go, told them who I, Mike Butler, and Nell Cox were. But for the first half day they *were* self-conscious; and we left some self-conscious scenes in because we thought it might show the change. One of the things, I think, that allowed them to free up is that I never stopped working—I never sat down, I didn't sleep at night, and after a while they probably figured that I was either a nut or so dedicated that the only thing to do was to ignore me. Also when you have the camera up there all the time it just becomes a part of you, like a guy with two heads. I would have the camera rolling even while talking to someone, so they figured he is that kind of freak.

WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF?

I didn't sleep at all. To me it was a good experience. Actually that's one of the things I miss in making regular films. They're like washing your feet with your socks on or making love with all your clothes on. There is a certain detachment; no matter how good—it's such a machine. In a film like *The Bus* there is just you and your sound man and whatever else there is going on, there is a terrific sexual feeling of just getting in here, you know.

EC: Do you feel you could go back and make another film like that?

HW: I'm going to. That's the only way. The problem is that when you make them you may have to eat them, and even a cheap one means $40,000 to $50,000.

AJ: Do you have a project in mind?

HW: Well, I have been talking to Peter Watkins about a project. Actually I have divided feelings because I would like to make features, go out and see the people, and I would like to

find some wedding between features and *cinéma-vérité*. I have very strong opinions about us and the world, and I don't know how in hell to put them all in one basket.

I was thinking about making a film about the draft. But I feel all documentaries have to be dramatic, have to have a dramatic construction; the days of just filling out a documentary from A to Z were just too boring.

EC: I'm interested in the idea about the draft because what really needs to be done is show what the war is doing to *this* country, in everyday life, and the draft is certainly central to that.

AJ: It could be done perhaps in the way Rouch approaches it. He did a series of films about Negroes studying in Paris or in Canada—you had two or three people, they were the hero or heroine, and you followed them around, but it was documentary and the dialogue was very natural; but by arranging, editing and juxtaposing time you do get a story.

HW: There was one called *Chronicle of a Summer* and another one called *The Human Pyramid*. The whole idea of films within films, or even if you showed some guy who is about to go into the army, a segment of a film about a guy who is to be drafted, or refused to be drafted, and had him comment on that guy—sort of chasing each other's tails around, that could be interesting.

AJ: What was it like to work with Kazan on *America, America*, which is really so much a part of his life, a magnum opus; how much freedom did you have, what kind of experience was it?

HW: That was one of the toughest experiences of my life.

EC: He has very precise ideas about what he wants to do?

HW: He was precise but he gave me quite a bit of freedom—that's not the right word because it assumes that I have my ideas, he has his, and one wins and one loses. I did not feel visually restrained in working with him and I learned a great deal from him. One of the difficulties was that the film was so personal to him and he was so intense and intent. Also it was just plain physically difficult—a rather primitive situation, a rather low budget for us at the time. Of course Warners came in with money later on. But I greatly enjoyed it—all-Italian crew, I learned to speak Italian. Good spirits, fabulous spirits. Deedee Allan was the cutter, I spent some time in the cutting room with her. She can even make bad photography look good.

EC: Do you like to have a look at the cutting?

HW: Oh yes, I do all the time. Partly, I think, it's a selfish thing because I'm interested in a shot or a couple of the scenes—always afraid, almost like narcissistic actors whose best performance ends up on the cutting-room floor! I would like to say that it's my interest in the film but I think it begins with the other. . . .

To tell the truth, nothing photographically is too difficult. I think the hard thing for me now is not to show off. I've got a good bag of tricks and I am always developing them. What I have to do now is use restraint, trying to concentrate on the story and make sure that what I am doing with the camera is not exhibitionism. You see I would like to make my own film. I want to direct. Everybody wants to direct. But I haven't found a script. Recently I've seen about five scripts, all about hippies, but they are all written by people who don't know anything about them.

AJ: Do you feel there is something in Hollywood film-making that tries to prevent the rise of the cameraman-director?

HW: Do I feel there's a conspiracy against me?

AJ: No, I have talked to a number of cameramen who say, "Well, you know they don't want a cameraman to get too big." As if the cameraman who can write and direct, and maybe act, would be too much.

HW: I can answer in this way. In Hollywood they like to put labels on people; so-and-so is an editor, so-and-so is a cameraman, and particularly if you have a certain position in that skill, there is a certain comfort in leaving it that way; why be something else? Often guys who have not directed anything, or one TV show, or one stage play, can get a job in Hollywood directing a film before I could, for that very reason.

What I consider the *big* problem, which is not strictly a Hollywood problem, rather it's a communication problem (it happens in films, in TV), is that we are ignoring the world as it is. Occasionally they salute the superficial changes that take place in the world, like making films on the hippies, or allusions to war or to racial issues, but only as a way of stating that they know it exists. It is characteristic of our whole society that we live one life as it is, and we create our dream world in our films and in TV, not even as we think it should be but in another way.

AJ: We want to be entertained.

HW: But you see there *is* entertainment! Just as a stupid statement I'll say, what film have you seen in the last ten years about an American guy who works for a living, really works, doesn't go to the office, or whose kids go upstairs to bed when he comes home. Or take the kitchen, the kitchen in most American films (and certainly in TV) has that same kind of refrigerator, the same sink, even the look of the wife has a certain sameness; there is a certain ordinariness, a presentation as though we were presenting ourselves to the outside world. I think we are ignoring ourselves.

You mention entertainment. I think it is possible to make just as entertaining a film about a guy who works on building the Golden Gate Bridge. The problem is that the producer sitting by the pool in Beverly Hills is not going to know about that guy. He is going to know about agents, about big-business people, about playboys, about Tony Curtises, or at best he will be a guy who used to live in New York and he will know what it was like in the thirties in New York, which is as far away as you could get.

EC: Do you think the *cinéma-vérité* impulse is strong enough to crack some of that?

HW: Possibly, but it's a double-edged problem. Guys get seduced. Someone makes a terrific *cinéma-vérité* film like *Titticut Follies,* so some big company in Hollywood says, "He's got it! Let's give him a rough story with the actors improvised; we'll only give him a million bucks, what the hell, he can't hurt us, we can't lose anything." (A million dollars in Hollywood is nothing.) The problem is that in a sense they're saying, "We want the new wave but we want it in our Beverly Hills swimming pool." Somehow what happens is that the waves get polluted. And it isn't censorship in the sense that the Hollywood producer says you *must* do this or that—it's sort of self-censorship that happens. It's an unwritten, felt response to the fact that now I'm in the big time, now it must be slick, now I can't step on that guy's toes. When the film-maker who might have been anti-establishment is accepted, this acceptance is often loaded with a misguided gratitude. The danger, to me, is not so much censorship, it's *seduction.* I feel it myself, in my own work, and you have to resist it.

EC: Do you think making a film of your own, from time to time, will be a big part of fighting it?

HW: Sure, but it's terrifying because to make a film of your own you have to put yourself on the line as far as your own money, your own resources are concerned. When I go to work now I get paid a lot of money, for working on a film which I'll talk myself into believing is a better film than it really is. If I go in myself it means taking some money I saved and getting rid of one of my houses or selling one of my race cars—or some unimportant object which seems important.

It's not a simple problem. In the first place, a guy has to have a passion to want to say or do something. Often you find producers or directors in Hollywood who have a passion to assert themselves, but that's ordinary ego or power assertion. But to have independence to assert yourself because you believe in something is not as much a part of our culture, at least not up till now, as it is in European culture. So that it's not just the outside pressing on the creative artist, it's the lethargy of the creative artist. It's also the seduction which I mentioned before; you can't underestimate that because it's not just in movies, it's in everything. The guy starts thinking of his boat or his vacation, you know the whole idea of TGIF, thank God it's Friday. We should *love* films, should want to work even

on Saturday and Sunday because we are making something great! Well, that's what we don't have. And it's not just the guys who work on film, it's part of our whole system.

EC: I wanted to ask about your attitude toward the use of candid or concealed cameras—some *cinéma-vérité* people seem to think it's almost voyeuristic.

HW: Well I'm not against voyeurism. I think that part of the basic attraction of movies, good movies, *is* that feeling of a voyeur, looking from a darkened room. For example, in *Blow-Up,* the scene where Hemmings works in the darkroom. You see a guy involved in what he knows, you watch him do it, you feel like you are eavesdropping, you are peeking in on him. So I'm not against it. The Steve McQueen picture, a bank robbery which I just did, I shot it with concealed cameras. We had the guys rob a bank. There was a big Negro with sunglasses on, waving a gun, and a pack of money in his hand, loading a station wagon. This is on the streets and people did things you wouldn't believe. A lady walked by, she looked, and you could see her perplexed—should I get involved, should I say something? Then she shrugged her shoulders and walked on. This was shot in Boston. Many times I used three or four cameras, concealed them in trucks, in windows. I see nothing wrong in this. The Maysles are purists—they say if it's real, it belongs to the film, it's true. I don't think anything is true, because when you decide to make a film, the fact that you choose a certain subject is an aesthetic decision, and whom you point the camera at, when you turn it off, everything. Even before you reach the point of cutting. So it's still art, it's still control, manipulation.

AJ: Have you ever been attracted to working on a super epic like *Spartacus,* or *The Greatest Story Ever Told*?

HW: No, I don't think so. That goes back to what I was saying. We photograph and depict a charade of our life, of our society. Underneath that thin crust, if I can mix metaphors, is a fantastic, dramatic world, which is totally ignored by film-makers, by TV, by writers, by everybody. And it's going to take some real gutsy reporters to get out and meet the people and really know what is going on, not just look at the surface, and try to put that on film.

I feel terribly frustrated because, well for example, my Academy Award really bothers me. The people whom I respect and who are interested in me, the young people, the college students I know and have talked with, they think of me as if I've arrived. They call me "Mister." I don't want to feel that way, I don't think that way. I feel that I've just got to start to do something, and it really bugs me, annoys me. And also the invitations to make a lot of money, big pictures. There are guys on the set just to shove chairs under you, and that's my only concession to try to keep my independence—I'll never sit down!

EC: Maybe independent work would be more feasible if it's done not entirely individually—one guy is the promoter, raises money, the other concentrates on the films.

HW: That's a tough combination, it presupposes a community of interests not usually present when one man is business-oriented and the other is not. It's a question of attitude. I have friends who have been seduced. They talk great films, but don't have the feeling about their own work that someone I would look up to would have. A good film-maker, if he can't make films the way he wants to, should want to write pamphlets, or write a book, should want to get on a damn TV program and *say* something. He has to have something burning. In the end that's the only defense against what we're all afraid of. The seduction. Everybody wants approval, the proper places to give you approval.

ROBERT SIEGLER

Masquage

An Extrapolation of Eisenstein's Theory of Montage-as-Conflict to the Multi-Image Film

Once upon a time, a film was something that was projected upon a single screen before an audience seated on fixed seats. But in recent years the old assumptions have been called increasingly into question. In 1958 the Czechs sent to the Brussels Exhibition their Poly-Ecran system—images were simultaneously projected on many separate screens, scattered about the auditorium, from a series of projectors. At the New York World's Fair, the audience for one film show found themselves seated in a monstrous elevator, which took them into a simulated rocket to witness a film of their "flight." Francis Thompson and Alexander Hammid, in **To Be Alive!**, ***showed the potentialities of the triptych screen. In Expo '67 at Montreal, the many film exhibitions included several experiments with novel forms: in*** **Labyrinth** ***the audience walked from room to room, and was confronted with a wall-screen/floor-screen combination and a multiple-screen film in the shape of a cross [see FQ, Fall, 1967]; in the Canada Pavilion the audience area rotated during the presentation; and in the Ontario Pavilion a 70mm projector threw onto a single very large screen a multiple-image film, the basis for the following article, whose individual images could move, grow, shrink, change shape, within a complex system of moving masks.***

In his article "The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram"* Eisenstein gives cogent reasons for accepting the principle of montage-as-collision, rather than -as-linkage; and he goes on to assert that the montage principle applies both to film sequences and to their components, montage cells or individual shots. *A Place to Stand,* the film shown in the Ontario Pavilion at Expo '67, with its multiple images on a single screen, suggests that Eisenstein's montage principles may be applied on another filmic level: that of the mask.

The mask is the surrounding, delimiting area about the picture or illuminated area. In filmmaker's language, the mask is the area outside the frame-line. Eisenstein's films, like virtually all films to date, used one mask: that which surrounded the screen, separating it from the darkened theater. Certain types of iris effects

* *Film Form* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1949; Meridian Books paperback, 1957), pp. 37–40. Compact expressions of Eisenstein's montage theory may also be found in "A Dialectic Approach to Film Forms" and "Methods of Montage," in the same volume.

and isolated (hence disturbing) constrictions of active viewing area were used by Griffith and other early film-makers. But the viewing area otherwise remained constant save for experiments in enlarging screen size (in the finales of spectacles such as *Hell's Angels* and *Samson and Delilah*), experiments in different screen ratios, and Gance's multiple-screen *Napoleon*. The multiple-mask film of the Ontario Pavilion alone and first brings systematically into play what I here propose to call the principle of *masquage*.

There is, first of all, a certain semantic confusion in the indeterminate use of the terms *screen* (or viewing area) as opposed to *image*. A given image may or may not occupy the entire screen. By saying that the screen is multiply divided, or using the term multi-image film, I mean that the multiple division has been achieved in the film laboratory, *on the film itself*, rather than by employing multiple projectors, as in the multi-screen film. We assume the technical means to have been achieved; our concern is with the result. Some practical application and procedures will be pointed out later.

Eisenstein's motive for comparing the montage cell to a molecule is two-fold: to prove the montage principle on both a simple and a complex level and to provide a scientific analogy (and thus order) for the new art of the film. If the individual shot is analogous to a molecule of a substance, then the total montage can be seen as a complex substance—a higher combination of these molecules.

With the assimilation of the multiple-image screen and the birth of the *masquage* principle, Eisenstein's analogy will have to be altered: the montage cell is to be seen as the atom, the basic structure, while it is the mask, through masquage, that is the molecular form, the intermediary structure between the montage cell and the montage complex.

Eisenstein strongly demarcates his version of montage from Pudovkin's: conflict, as opposed to linkage. Montage-as-conflict implies a dynamic medium, one capable of plastic change, in which the parts equal the whole: the rising of the lions, in *Potemkin*, depends as much on the fast cutting, on the implication of movement, as on the juxtaposition of sharply *contrasted* forms. Montage-as-linkage presumes a structure of events *greater* than its filmic parts: the usual montage sequence in which someone is run down by a car, quoted by Pudovkin himself, is typical, with its fast cutting between busy street, feet crossing the street, car wheels, car approaching the camera head-on, etc. None of the component parts are self-sustaining, but are linked together and cut with a certain tempo so as to gain an artificial form or a shape, both filmically and emotionally. It is this element of the architectonic arising from montage-as-linkage that implies also a rigidity. Montage-as-collision implies fluidity of componential structures, in terms of a counterpoint, a music: the famous mounting of Kerensky up the stairs and the inter-cutting with the peacock and the statues, by multiple juxtapositions *within* a sequence, give a certain inner form to that part of the sequence. If montage-as-collision cells may be seen as analogous to a contrapuntal melody, the total montage becomes the musical structure (fugue, *passacaglia, ricercare*); and *masquage* becomes the instrumental timbre or timbres chosen to play the melody, *to articulate the form.* Just as instrumental technique pertains to a process of articulating music (melody), so can *masquage* articulate the montage cell.

Linkage bricks and elements denote rigidity and subservience to a whole, a commune greater than its parts—a solidified structure dependent on architectural rigidity. (I say this only from a theoretical point of view; Pudovkin's films are anything but rigid and some of Eisenstein's certainly are!) Montage-as-collision cells, atoms, molecules denote living matter and inner movement of parts (the Odessa Steps sequence is comprised of inner movements and groupings each quite independent, yet not anarchistic to the total shape or form.) Montage forms are non-fixed, though the art-form necessarily dictates limitations; even with the limitation of the fixed, single-mask screen there is a certain allowed chaos that is possible (the dis-

parate montage cells); and there are recognizable forms, but leading to unkown, mysterious shapes (the gathering of the Odessa populace, the ships on the water, the sense of tension, impending action, and the over-all emotional tone of this sequence).

> . . . montage is conflict.
>
> Conflict within the shot is potential montage, in the development of its intensity shattering the quadrilateral cage of the shot and exploding its conflict into montage impulses between the montage pieces.
>
> To regard the frame as a particular, as it were, molecular case of montage, makes possible the direct application of montage practice to the theory of the shot.
>
> —S. M. EISENSTEIN

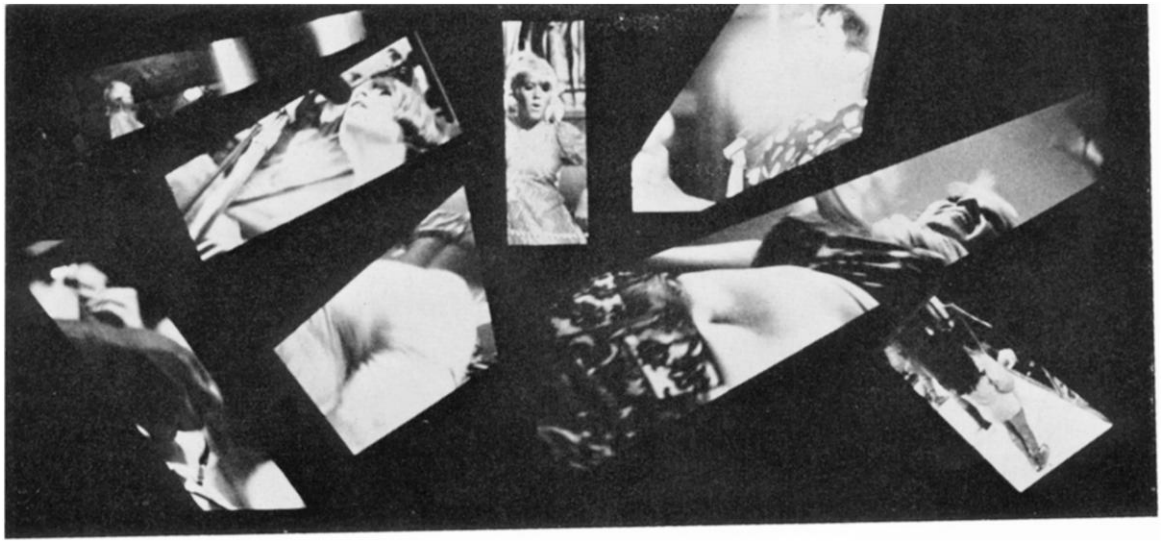
All this is now complicated by the multiple-image screen; all that pertained to the montage elements and cells, now applies to the mask through the *masquage* principle.

Masquage depends on the conflict between the darkened viewing area, the total screen area, and the illuminated image area(s). The masked section may be thought to be analogous to the montage cell. Everything that Eisenstein postulated about the montage cell, the shot, may now apply to the handling of the mask. This application may be to the single mask of a single, undivided screen; to the multiple masks of multiple-image screen; or to the various masks of a multiple-screen film. Eisenstein's theories would apply to an individual mask or to a complex use of many masks over one or more screen areas.

Masks may be varied in shape, size, or content. Masks may or may not remain fixed in position or size: they may move across the screen, carrying with them a primary image. An example of this occurs in the Ontario Pavilion film: a full-screen shot of a single image, that of a motor boat crossing a wilderness lake, is cropped down so that the mask is close around the boat and moves with the boat across the blackened screen area, the masked area comprising about 1/10 of the original and immensely more effective for its condensation of the original, and also because of the focal conflict between the illumined and the darkened screen areas.

Masks may move, even when there is no movement implied in the image, as demonstrated in the same film: in another sequence, along with various other shots of wooded areas, there is a real pan in one mask-area, which is artificially continued by having the masked area then move away from two other adjacent masks (which fade out). The remaining areas then serves as a connecting device to the following sequence. Ideally, in the midst of an emotional scene, one could have a large, centered, square mask, containing the scene of the action, break down into component masks (varying in size, shape, ratio, etc.) and move apart or literally fly apart; they could either continue off the screen, or fade out, or come to rest at various positions on the screen—a heightening of the fragmentation of the emotional moment. The reverse process could be used in a scene of coherence, discovery, etc. The conflict of the mask area with the darkened screen is heightened by the physical shift of the mask from one viewing area to another, this shift being similar to instrumental shifts in a symphony orchestra, as from double basses in the rear to a single violin in the foreground. Visual-physical phenomena occur which may be related to the *phi* phenomenon and our visual threshholds. Possible, then, are the jump-mask, dissolve-mask, etc.—an image may vanish from one position but simultaneously reappear in another, or fade out in one position as it reappears elsewhere. All the devices presently utilized to vary the montage cell may now relate to masks, as well as all those devices obtained by optical printing.

Moreover, all the montage conflicts Eisenstein formulated are applicable (conflicts of scales, volumes, masses, depths, directions, lights, duration) by a plastic use of the mask: conflict of mask shapes and sizes, mask ratios or



Fractured dance-hall images from A PLACE TO STAND. *(Camera: J. Seckeresh and Les George. Director: Dave MacKay.)*

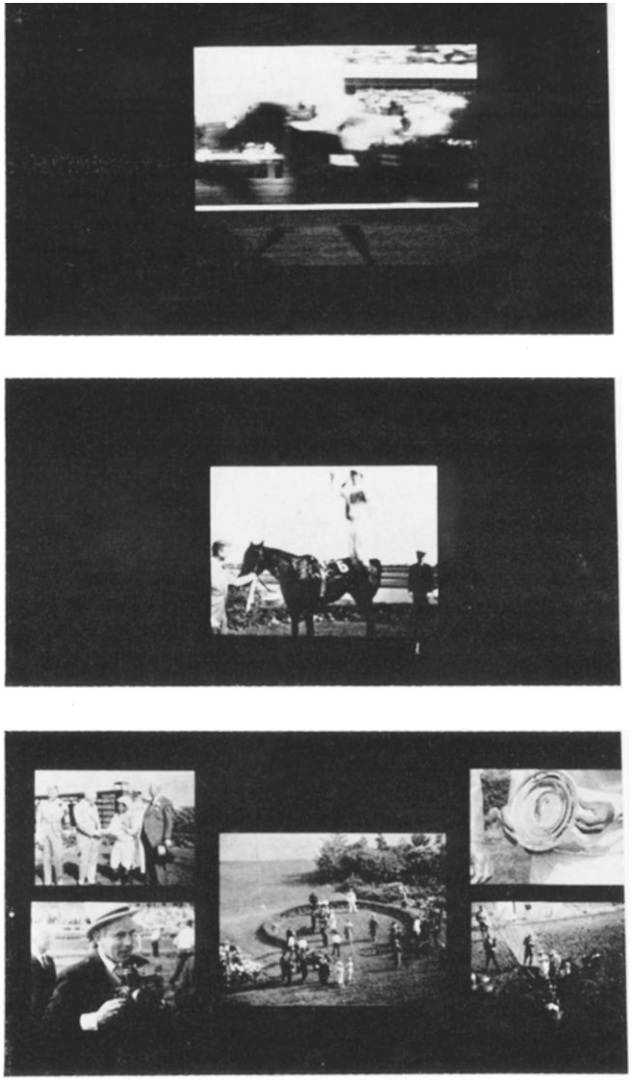
proportions, mask geometries, symmetries of mask placements. Beyond this is the possibility of animating the mask, the continual changing of mask dimensions and shape, and the movement of these masks from place to place; possible are polymorphous masks, their animation and manipulation, moving in non-geometrical, asymmetrical relationships. Finally, the mask may seem to dissolve, whether through a regular or a non-regular edge-of-image, in the manner of a static collage. This highest form would assimilate both masquage and montage principles, in all their applications, to produce a constantly changing picture-edge without simple defining masks—a film of the highest visual threshold, for some future audience.

To illustrate, let us take *Marienbad,* that most non-linear of the pre-masquage films (for, as the reader has no doubt already guessed: the masquage principle is one of simultaneity and non-linearity, and the multiple-image screen is a mosiac). Resnais, in certain scenes of remembrance, included a hierarchy of continually added detail (the moulding of Seyrig's bedroom, the furnishings, the light, her dress, etc.) Utilizing masquage principles, he could have started with a primary image—of the man, before the memory—occupying the full screen. The first memory, being hazy, amorphous, could occur while the prime viewing area, centralized on the screen, began to shrink, cropping down to the man's face; in the upper, left corner would begin an amorphous fade-in mask, free-form, somewhat globular, containing the long shot of the near-empty room, never fading in clearly, then fading out—while at the lower right corner, the same shot, but enlarged, faded in, moving from off-screen onto it and fading out as it came into conflict with the prime viewing area, which then grew back to its original size. As the memories became more and more complex, more and more structured, the central viewing area's mask would grow smaller and smaller, the satellite masks more definite in structure (square, rectangle, either vertical or horizontal, pyramidal, etc.)—more geometric. Images would vary, within the masks: close-ups of the moulding in the bedroom; medium close-ups of Seyrig on her bed; the shots might include multiplications of the same shot, reproduced in the same geometric form (as was done in *Grand Prix*), perhaps in a cluster in one specific area. In contrast, a rather CinemaScope-like mask could lie across the bottom of the viewing area, including those encompassing views of the room which that proportion captures so well. By having *all* the images of the same geometric proportions, especially noncircular forms, a sense of harsh order could be implied; in contrast, having a conglomerate of

non-repeated shapes and sizes during this nemonic process, fading in and out, moving in random about the screen, could magnify the variety of the stream of memory. Resnais's flash shots of Seyrig on the bed could be replaced by a jump-mask: the prime image centered on the screen, suddenly blacking out and the woman's image, in some *necessarily contrasting* mask proportion or geometry, appearing in a different physical area, and then the original image returning, in reverse—a direct cut between two physical locations. The physical motion of looking away from the expected area of viewing, the possibility that any segment of the total screen, whether momentarily black, illumined with an image, or even blank, white, might become a working area, and the possibility that any part of the whole might become important, are aspects of masquage which relate it to montage and demonstrate the elements of linkage and collision within masquage.

The animated mask, the continually changing border, is utilized in a primitive manner in the Ontario Pavilion film, in an extremely wide-angle, medium shot of horses, which come down a race track past the centrally stationed camera, and on past. The mask is tightly cropped down on the horses, neglecting the surroundings; it moves from right to left with the race, but as the horses reach the center, they grow larger and less distorted (due to the wide-angle lens). The mask approaches with them, also growing larger, until it reaches dead center, when it continues panning, but grows smaller. The effect is not unlike the circularly distorted mask which Griffith used in some of the Babylon sequences in *Intolerance*: a peculiar focusing, imposed on the audience's perception.

This element of focus peculiar to masquage should be contrasted with the visual limitations of the CinemaScope-Cinerama screen areas: since the latter are constant in their masks, subtle or effective manipulations cannot occur without unnerving disparities occurring (gigantic close-ups, the chopping-off of heads and feet, etc.) or without having to show a continual stream of master scenes, infrequently altered with meaningful close-ups. Masquage opens up



A PLACE TO STAND. *Top: Mask moves across screen at same rate as camera pans. Middle: Camera pans but mask stays still. Bottom: Expansion into multiple image. (Camera: Les George. Director: Dave MacKay.)*

completely the possibility of any film ratio being utilized, any subdivision of the screen being pertinent—changes between subdivisions, screen ratios, and proportions are obtainable, according to the subject-matter and the emotional tone. The epic quality of the larger screens can now be subdivided, by masquage, for intimate close-ups, personal scenes, scenes of a more

complex nature: imagine the confusion of a battle scene, shown by simultaneously changing masks, each individually cut but all interrelated. (The complexities of sound for such films are too vast for this tentative discussion.)

The film-collage would be the ideal means by which Joyce's work could be translated to the screen. The high perceptual complexity of the film collage would make it, at first, an experimental form, perhaps a gimmick; but though the Ontario Pavilion film is also a kind of gimmick (a rather simple-minded bit of travelogue-propaganda of a distinctly scenic province) it should be taken for what it is: a prediction of future film form and technique, a *Great Train Robbery* of the school of masquage.

Masquage and the manipulation of the mask are visual technical tools, as is the cropping of still photographs. For film, masquage will become a tool for implementing style, form, and content.

Screen ratios and proportions have an inherent emotional content by their size and shape; early experiments in varying screen shapes now have renewed validity after years of neglect. The film-maker, wisely using masquage, must judge for himself which combination or combinations to use within the film structure, without overloading his subject-matter (no huge skin-pores in CinemaScope and no cramping of multitudinous details into a small viewing area—and yet . . .)

In argument with those claiming masquage to be an artificial, confusing technique, it should be pointed out that man's threshhold of perception and consciousness is continuously changing rather than constant. One daydreams while walking, is suddenly brought awake by a pretty girl passing, bumps into a friend and begins an argument, while in reverse order, the memories of the girl and of the daydream diminish, continue on another level, etc. Our threshholds of perception and our areas of focus—not only those of the visual sense, but of the other senses, and those of time and space continuities —continually change, increasing, decreasing, inter-combining. Even more complicated are those combinations of conscious, subconscious, imagination, perception, and creation. Thus the element of change inherent in masquage holds an overwhelming artistic and technical potential for the art of the film.

The most obvious practical advantage to the masquage film is that only one camera will be needed, and only one projector and screen for the viewing of the film. The masquage film will be, at first, quite expensive due to the necessity of special optical printing and effects. But, such films theoretically could be shown in 16mm. There is no reason why simple masquage couldn't be adapted for making 16mm or even 8mm films. The masking would not always have to be done by optical printing: one could construct interchangeable fixed masks to fit into cameras and shoot through these. Given reflex lenses, the ability of good 8mm cameras to back-wind, fade in or out, and to dissolve, there is no reason why the technique could not be applicable. Moving masks could be shot with a zoom lens or on an animation stand, and used in A & B-roll sandwich printing. The most important element in such primitive applications would be to keep aware of the exact physical placement of the mask-openings, unless overlay of images were desired. The use of deliberate overlay, multiple images, color mask-edges, filters, I leave to the reader's imagination.

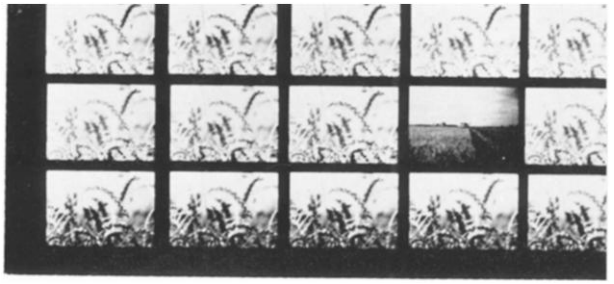
When the home-movie camera is replaced by a miniaturized and simplified video-tape camera, capable of recording both image and sound onto micro-sound/image tape and of storing magnetic impulses not only on surface layers, but in molecular depth, a set of sophisticated masks will be available and special grid lines, worked on the reflex viewplate and on the masks, will coordinate the image.

Those who criticize masquage as calling for superhuman creative and imaginative powers, due to its complexity ("Just how do you know where each image should go and what to do with it") can be answered by this speculation: the story board, the camera viewfinder, and the work-print will all contain a standard series of grid lines. Juxtaposition of the film with the

story board—perhaps direct projection onto the story board—will make editing physically much easier. Perhaps these grid lines could be similar to the latent edge-numbers now used to coordinate film editing. The effect might be compared to the blocking-out of action for a stage presentation. Once again, film combines the aesthetic-imaginative with the distinctly physical, but this enigma of what is and what isn't reaches back as far as the history of films.

There has been no complex and satisfying use of masquage to date. In no way can masquage substitute for content; like montage, masquage can be used to make a shallow film flashy and like montage, the technique can destroy film style and content by over-use.

Ideally, montage (both linkage and conflict) and masquage are to be used in combination,



A PLACE TO STAND. *Repeated identical images, with a zoom-through of one image. (Camera: Barry Gordon.)*

in a sensible and restrained manner. With the higher threshholds (visual awareness, color response, sound textures, etc.) called for by new film-makers, and with the multiple-screen and masquage film, audience response will become more complex, more highly structured, potentially more sensitive. In turn, the complexity of the medium will demand of the film-maker an integrity of content and technique, on a more complex level of visual sensibility.

FORREST WILLIAMS

Fellini's Voices

For all the reviews of *Giulietta degli Spiriti,* Federico Fellini's film has not been singled out for its special contribution to the practical issue of the relations between screen and soundtrack, or more exactly, between screen and dialogue. Ever since the soundtrack threatened to turn most cinema productions into what Eisenstein in 1928 called "talking pictures," and then for the most part went on to fulfill his unhappy foreboding, critical opinion has been largely in agreement, from the "visual-above-all" school of Rudolf Arnheim's *Film As Art* to the "impurist" school of the late André Bazin, that dialogue introduces special problems requiring conscious resolution for any film seeking artistic unity. The most persistent trap consists in the mere recording of verbal exchanges on the soundtrack while the camera either waits on the speakers like a footman, or else breaks up the monotony of such a vigil with arbitrary angles, movements, and cuts. The discussion in the garden between the king and Thomas More in *A Man For All Seasons* is a recent example by an accomplished director of a bit of both of these prosaic makeshifts. Moreover, the difficulty of integration may compound rapidly because dialogue readily introduces or emphasizes subjects that the camera cannot get much purchase on, such as complicated conceptual processes and the intricate dialectic of wills, one of which is more satisfactorily developed on the pages of the novel, the other on the stage. The narrative and dramatic issues thus generated tend to require even more dialogue

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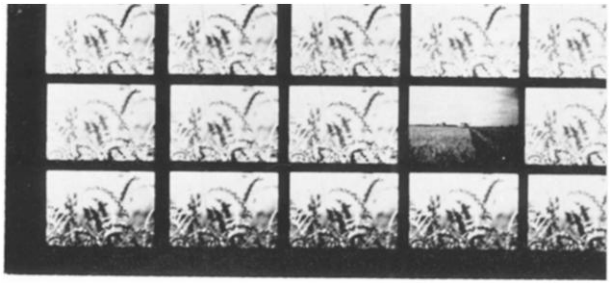

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to develop and resolve them satisfactorily, and visual factors, such as composition, pacing, lighting, and editing style tend to become auxiliary. The first half of Luchino Visconti's film of Camus's *The Stranger,* for example, conveys brilliantly the philosophical spirit of the novel, but when Visconti took up in the second half the conceptual issues which invited verbal formulation, the dialogue ran away with the film, and the closing sequence between Meursault and the chaplain is a contest in which the soundtrack leaves everything else far behind.

Various solutions have been found, of course, to the difficulty—or the opportunity, depending on how the film-maker is affected—in the many years since Eisenstein's prediction. American comedies of the thirties could and did embrace the opportunity to pack the soundtrack with fast, witty dialogue which accorded perfectly with the Hollywoodian intrigues of sophisticated, "nothing-sacred" plots. But comedy is perhaps a special case in all the arts, since its primary appeal, and hence its unity, is the somewhat looser one of an amusing idea rather than the more strictly artistic unity of sustained imagery. By and large, it seems, the finest films have had to place one sort of limit or another on the use of the soundtrack for dialogue, although those limits do not necessarily mean a quota on the number of lines delivered, but may well be ways of muting their importance as verbal information. For example, the deliberately repetitive commentator and dialogue of *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* finally renders the words, by their familiarity, rather *less* than more obtrusive. In *Journal d'un curé de campagne,* as Susan Sontag has pointed out in *Against Interpretation,* Robert Bresson tends to eschew dialogue, at the same time making extensive use of the soundtrack for off-screen autobiographical commentary which inhibits unwonted dramatic effects as it underscores the emotional effects of the priest's spiritual quest. In *Hiroshima mon amour,* Riva's reply to a personal question by Okada, which cannot fail to arouse our curiosity, is drowned out by a passing motorcycle. (I believe the question was whether she had any children, but Resnais's device was so effective that in the absence of the answer I may have forgotten the question as well.) In *Citizen Kane,* the frequent overlapping of dialogue from different parts of the set tended to reduce some of it to mere noise and murmur. Thus, in one way or another, accomplished film-makers seem to show a clear awareness of a continuing necessity for special handling of dialogue, if its introduction into film is not to be like the camel's nose in the tent.

Fellini seems to have managed in *Giulietta,* interestingly enough, to turn dialogue to artistic use, not by decreasing the quantity, but by increasing it until the words acquire a special function which fits the visual imagery rather than distracting from it. This is an interesting and I think successful experiment, which merits more notice than it has received, and which may well affect one's over-all appraisal of the film. When *Giulietta* was released in the United States, a chorus of reviews judged it a superficial work because of its visual playfulness, which most critics found wearisome. One critic termed it visual froufrou, and another, with an adroit sense of its significantly Italianate nature, *spumone.* To be sure, taken by themselves these reels of dazzling visual images may well come to seem gratuitous and even tiresome. A terribly earnest and pathetically ingenuous wife makes her psychological journey through facts and hallucinations in sequences of astonishing exoticism. The scenes are often not so much in color as coloristic, and the settings, both actual and hallucinated—with no particularly insistent demarcation—are not so much extravagant as extravaganza-ed. Virtually every shot has a contrived air, to the spent and twitching point of mannerism. Hence the frequent characterization of the film as "baroque." But the dialogue, precisely by being just as "froufrou," just as "*spumone,*" as the visual style, does something other than provide information and develop a story. Dialogue turns out to be a way of life in Giulietta's milieu, or more exactly, a way of *escape* from a genuine life of action for the people who surround her. The dialogue, which is nothing less than frenetic from the

Giulietta Massina in GIULIETTA DEGLI SPIRITI

start, thus becomes a substantive force within the film, and indeed, a redoubtable antagonist of Giulietta.

Fellini's strategy for accomplishing this mutual reinforcement of dialogue and image is not to emphasize to any abnormal degree *what* things are said, but to emphasize more than usual the *ways* in which they are said. Almost every utterance that falls on Giulietta's and our ears is affected, phony, humanly meaningless. Fellini would have us listen, it would seem, not merely in the general sense of following the words, but in the more immediate sense of experiencing the people in the film as spinners of words. When the visual exoticism is thus taken in conjunction with the unremitting dialogue, it ceases to look gratuitously mannered or exaggerated; for together they are the warp and the woof of a major theme of Fellini's work: the incessant conflict between the comparative concreteness of Giulietta's responses, however ingenuous and even hallucinatory they may sometimes be, and the triviality of her milieu. The theme itself, of course, is not new to Fellini, as he worked with it in a humorous vein in *Lo Sciecco Bianco,* where a girl from the provinces was dazed by a bernoused mediocrity in the person of a comic-strip "sheik." In a more general way, *Giulietta* rejoins a motif recurrent in so many Fellini films, from *Variety Lights* to *La Strada* to *8½.* We live partly in a stagey, illusionistic world. Though the ending of *Giulietta* seems for once to be a wholly negative verdict on the world of semblances.

Another theme of the film, as has been frequently noted, is the conflict in Giulietta between the sentimentalized asceticism of her convent childhood and the sexual libertinism of the Italian bourgeoisie—which includes her own repressed, bourgeois fantasies. But Fellini has set this erotic disturbance in a context of deafening glibness that gives to the personal dilemma of Giulietta a larger and unusual social setting. Words themselves, if you like, are one of the chief problems of Giulietta's life with her "grand openings" husband and well-heeled friends.

The abrupt "grand opening" of the film startles our ears with a confusion of female chatter in Giulietta's boudoir, as the household makes lack-minute preparations for an anniversary supper. Our eyes are dazzled by striking visual effects and ultra-rapid cuts; but our ears are no less assailed and diverted by sound from the start. Giulietta's rotogravurely handsome husband has, of course, forgotten their anniversary, and immediately ushers in an ear-splitting gaggle of cocktail-party companions, who present for the microphones some of the most agile verbalizing in the history of sound cinema. (Equal contenders are perhaps the cocktail parties in *Breakfast at Tiffany's* and *A Hard Day's Night.*) Even more than by appearance and gesture, Fellini proceeds to sketch each figure for us quickly and surely by cadences and intonations. A nymphomaniacal sculptress with lip-licking words, a suave-timbred face-card husband, an occultist who places minuscule and arbitrary emphases like cats' paws on certain syllables. . . . In the midst of these varied, mannered utterances stands Giulietta, bright-eyed, slightly foolish, and almost tongue-tied.

The role of dialogue as a false mode of behavior, as *a substitute for action,* rather than as a means of effective communication of ideas and feelings, is thus firmly established from the outset, and returns again and again throughout the narrative. A narcissistic Spanish *don,* who views a turn with his bulls as a literary event, momentarily spellbinds Giulietta with his verbal courting, assisted by quotations from Lorca. The director of the detective agency, who ex-

cels in judicious phrasing of "delicate matters," manages by verbal sleight-of-hand to make what plainly is, seem just conceivably not that at all. (His most damning evidence, appropriately enough, is not the jumpy film footage he produces, but a tape-recording.) The hermaphroditic guru, endowed with a consummately disgusting voice, dominates a major sequence as he-she alternately croaks and falsettos about love in a dehumanized rote from the classic Hindu manual. Even when Giulietta finally attempts to confront her husband's lover in person, she finds herself, while standing in the lady's own apartment, having to address a voice emanating from a telephone receiver. Her rival remains a mere voice, in a world of mere voices, where the hallucinated ones are ironically enough somewhat less unreal than the physical ones.

In her dogged if frightened way, Giulietta clings as tightly as possible to her emotions throughout this prodigious cacophony; and, under the added strain of her husband's infidelity and diffidence, at least has the goodness to fly off into authentic hallucinations. She is, if less clever than her entourage, at least unable to accommodate herself or stoop to the rhetoric of their so-called world, which is in fact a confusion of affected babble. In one of her moments of insight, while those around her are paining and confusing her with their incessant glibness, Giulietta cries out in distress that her life "is full of people who talk, talk, talk!"

The film is thus about, not only infidelity, eroticism, and childhood repression, but a profound and far less explored evil, personal and social, having nothing directly to do with sex as such. Dante, I suggest, would have placed Giulietta's entourage, with his famed sense for the really relevant fault, not in the upper circles among the lustful, but deep in the malbowges, where are punished abusers of words, sinners against one of the highest of human faculties.

The dialogue thus provides, it would seem, the social context of the film at least as strikingly and satirically as do the visible settings. Fellini has produced an auditory Inferno which exactly parallels the visual phantasmagoria, and his Giulietta emerges as a kind of sacred fool in a perfectly hellish world of talk, talk, talk.

Glibness, with all it requires in the way of gifts of diction, rhythm, emphasis, intonation, and even a certain habit of semantical seduction, may become an autonomous form of life and the chief undertaking of social and personal conduct. Somewhat as, among the *précieuses* of Versailles, life had become a perpetual costume-ball, so existence may be reduced to tireless elocution. One may live and die entirely as a word-spinner. This unhealthy phenomenon, which is central to Giulietta's predicament, is far from peculiar to the particular bourgeoisie-aristocracy in which she finds herself, of course.

There are perhaps good historical reasons, however, for a director from Italy having been the artist prompted to deal so fully with this serious cultural theme.

The best of Italian theater and cinema, as Alberto Moravia pointed out a few years ago in *L'Espresso,* has had to rely heavily on dialect drama, which reflects the expressiveness and vitality of regional speech. Italians have never had a vital *national* language, rooted in daily life and spoken by all or most Italians. A Venetian to this day may be almost unintelligible to a Florentine, and a Florentine to a Neapolitan. "Italy," a British diplomat remarked not so many decades ago with insular condescension, but also with a modicum of truth, "is only a geographical expression." Politically unified for a century, it remains for the most part an extraordinary linguistic agglomerate. The notorious Fascist experiment was among other things an irrational attempt to deny this underlying diversity by fantasying some profound continuity between modern Italians and the unity of a storybook Rome.

However, there has grown up in contemporary Italy, hand in hand with its rapid technological advance, an educated and highly mobile *haute bourgeoisie.* Unlike its earlier French counterpart, this Italian social class has little sense of cultural identity. Its diction is mainly what is sometimes facetiously called "*RAI-itali-*

ano," after the broadcasting corporation that is gradually accustoming its listeners from Sicily to the Adige to understand a standard vocabulary and pronunciation which are neither *napoletano* nor *toscano,* neither *abbruzzese* nor *piemontese.* This rather artificial, superimposed language has very little important theater or fiction couched in its relatively colorless idiom. Emerging after the war from the pall of the "white telephone" productions of the Mussolini era, and confronted by this peculiar linguistic state of affairs, the best Italian cinema seems to have concentrated on two types of serious films. On the one hand, of course, there has been the neorealism of Visconti, Rossellini, Di Sica, Rosi, Pasolini, and others. By their quasi-documentary orientation, these have of necessity been examples of dialect cinema steeped in regional speech and manners. Even the titles of several of the most notable—*Paisà, Sciusciá, Accatone*—are dialect or slang. On the other hand there have been films in the new, "standard" Italian. The best of these have been critical social scrutinies, whether satirical or compassionate, of the alienation of the Italian *haut monde* that speaks that language.

The singular virtue of *Giulietta* with respect to this latter type of cinema is to have introduced as a major theme and quasi-personage the dialogue itself which characterizes this social class, satirizing it on the soundtrack as a corrupt and sophistical phenomenon into which most of Giulietta's entourage dissolve without remainder. The mannered and "superficial" visual style thus acquires an additional intensity, and a certain substance, from its vivid echoes in the mannered dialogue which surrounds Giulietta. Fellini's film is in great part about superficiality. Because it reflects that superficiality on two levels simultaneously, the visual and the auditory, it parlays the dialogue, if I may be permitted the pun, into something substantial but not distracting, and brings image and dialogue into an artistic unity. No doubt, this particular solution to the question of dialogue in relation to image depends too much on the specific content of *Giulietta degli Spiriti* to be applied very widely; but it makes of Fellini's film a far more serious and interesting work than has been generally recognized, and a perhaps unique contribution to experiments with the integration of dialogue and screen imagery.

WILLIAM D. ROUTT

One Man's Truth . . . Another Man's Poison

The trap was finally sprung for me at the 1967 Tours Short Film Festival. Three films there stuck me with the "What is a documentary?" question in no uncertain terms: one because it was supposed to be and wasn't, one because it was and it might not have been, and the last one because it couldn't be but it was. The whole thing is simple on the face of it. A documentary is a "film of fact." Other movies are not. The difficulty comes when you try to say what "fact" is. As new, sometimes "documentary" concepts are being applied to the fiction film and forcing a more appropriate definition of fiction, so new ideas and techniques are

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pushing viewers to the realization that even such seemingly sacrosanct criteria as "objectivity" will not do in describing the documentary. We must examine our ideas about what facts are, what we mean when we distinguish between reality and illusion, what we mean, in short, by the term "documentary."

The most prosaic of the three touchstones to thought is Scott Robson's *Low Water*. On the face of it *Low Water* is a well-made documentary that conforms to most of the rules. It is about a man and his job, the effects of the latter upon the former; it has a vaguely bitter social message the way that angry British films do; it is shot on location, shows the man's everyday life, and I don't really think that there is much that could be called factually "untrue" in the movie at all. The film was popular with the Festival audience—a young and critical one—and it copped one of the most important prizes, that for a "First Work."

But despite this, despite the fact that the film was excellently realized and held my attention throughout, I found that by the end of it I positively detested it. Worse than that, I did not *believe* the film. By this I do not mean that I did not believe that there were men who live by shovelling coal up from the sea or that they live in much the way the film shows them living—I just did not believe that *Low Water* really showed me such a man and such a life. I felt cheated.

Low Water pretends to be about reality, about something that really happens, about real people in a real situation. It pretends to be a documentary in the commonest sense of the word. For me the pretense does not succeed, and I believe that the reason it does not has to do with the very perfection that compels my admiration from another point of view. The problem here is a generic one. By the time the film is finished you know damn well that what happened in it was the result of careful scripting and painstaking camerawork, that the whole thing, shot by shot, was thought-out in advance, that nothing happened "by chance" in front of the camera. There are too many different shots from too many different angles in the key scenes in the film (the fight between sea-coal men on the beach, the pick-up and trailer seduction that ends the film) for this not to be so. And, as if to add emphasis to this aspect of the film, the viewer is inflicted with a tedious "poetic" commentary that even Odets would have repudiated—a commentary whose tone is just a little too suspiciously "right" for the whole film.

The "fictionalized documentary" is not an unknown species by any manner of means. Almost all documentaries, even those by the Great Masters of the genre, have been phonied up in one way or another: stories have been added, scenes have been staged, footage has been suppressed. Yet in all cases outside of those films which have been made primarily for propaganda purposes (and they are not truly documentaries in any case), the impression of reality has been left, the viewer remains convinced that what he sees on the screen really did happen and that its importance to him is as the importance of reality itself. Think of Grierson's films . . . *Night Mail*, for instance. Now, that just could not have been done with *cinéma-vérité* techniques, could it? A lot of what you see must have been staged for the camera. Yet there is never any doubt in your mind about the reality of what you see, is there? Take Jenning's *Listen to Britain* as a contrast. That one doesn't *look* phony when you move in close to every scene—but it sure seems phony the way it has been put together. Go on down the line, from *Nanook* to *Pour le Mistral*. Ringers in every one. But in some you never notice them, while in others they seem to be the essence of the experience. Every documentary has some "fictionalization" in it—even if it is only the fiction that pretends we can capture reality on film—but some documentaries are definitely more "fictionalized" than others. Some just never make it as bits of reality at all. Fictionalization can go too far, can wind up by destroying the illusion of reality that is the documentary's *raison d'être*. This is precisely what has happened in *Low Water*.

But it is too simple to say that the failure of *Low Water* is a result of the misapplication of

technique. Robson's film shows too much intelligence for him to have made an error of this nature. Rather, we are dealing here with a basic misperception of the genre, a fundamental difference of opinion about the meaning of reality in the cinema. To take another classic case of fictionalization, *Louisiana Story*—with all its romantic plot and raccoons in danger—would never have been made had there not been swamps and boys and drillers for oil. *Low Water*, on the other hand, would never have been made if there had not been alienation in modern Britain. The difference is one between specific, concrete, *real* things and generalized, abstract, *unreal* ideas. Behind *Low Water* there is lurking always an *a priori* conception of the way such economically trapped men as the sea-coalers must live and think—day-to-day, violently, unthinkingly, as outcasts. It is irrelevant that there are men who *do* live and think like that, for that is not what this film intends to show. *Low Water* is intended to present us with a damning social theory, not with any kind of reality. Any man in any job would have done as well, so long as he could be made to fit into Robson's unhappy vision of modern life (and one imagines, after *Low Water*, that virtually anyone could be made to fit—except possibly the all-seeing Robson himself).

Thus, the film is propaganda. Unfortunately, as my remarks may have indicated, it fails to convince even as propaganda. The wildest polemic, to have any lasting effect at all upon those not already indoctrinated, must touch reality, must demonstrate its validity by the inductive method. But *Low Water* nowhere touches reality. It is completely and hermetically organized around its *a priori* social hypothesis. The bulk of the film, indeed what makes it a film rather than a two-line verbal exhortation, is thus rendered irrelevant. It becomes fiction not only because it has been treated as fiction, but because we don't *care* about whether it is true or not. For the purposes of the film it does not *matter* whether there are sea-coal men or whether they live alienated lives. The reality of their existence can never touch us, we can never make the equation between their lives and ours, because the overpowering influence of Robson's abstract thesis has destroyed any claim to reality that they may have and rendered the factual basis of their existence impotent to support the very argument the film advocates. We are left with an isolated technical exercise—nearly perfect of its kind, and undoubtedly satisfying to those who already believe that the life of man is nasty, brutish and short—and I, at least, am left rather curious about these sea-coal men and rather sad that there will probably be no more films based upon the way they live.

Of course technical excellence alone is not sufficient evidence for damning a documentary. It is the *kind* of proficiency that is in question here. When a movie has a studio sheen to it, when it is polished and elegant, it loses a lot of its force and conviction as a document of reality. Technical expertise however, is not something to be measured solely in gloss and "production values." A movie can abound in bravura technique, with lots of cinematic gimmicks and sly tricks, and never lose an ounce of its realistic impact—provided the techniques used are appropriate to conveying reality, that they are the sort that are applied "after the fact," as it were.

I do not mean to be understood literally with this "after the fact" jazz, unless we are all very clear about what fact I am speaking. What is *not* meant is that in True Documentary one takes the footage first, interfering as little as possible with reality as it deigns to unfold before the Camera Eye, and then applies a battery of fancy effects to the raw material. Neither the footage nor the event is the "fact" that I mean. Once again our attention must be focused on the actual *subject* of the film. It is *this* "fact" after-which-all and before-which-nothing. And, as we have seen, the subject of a proper documentary is of a limited nature: specific, concrete, and real. I would suggest that once a legitimate subject has been chosen, any techniques at all can be applied to it, so long as the film-maker never loses sight of the subject itself amid his filmic forest of effects.

If superb technique alone were enough to

condemn any film to the realm of fiction I should have to withdraw Agnes Varda's beautiful *Elsa* from consideration here, and that would be a terrible pity, since *Elsa* raises another problem about reality and cinema that seems particularly relevant to the documentary genre. *Elsa,* as might be expected from such a talented director, is positively reeking with the kinds of technical effects that originally made the New Wave such a controversial happening. There is a lot of jump-cutting, a lot of repeated action, a lot of talking directly to the camera, a lot of jiggling-hand-held shots. Pictures are used to evoke an atmosphere of time past, the principal characters—now old and somewhat stiff in the joints—re-enact certain key scenes in their mutual past, and the film ends with an unabashedly romantic sequence, as patently unreal as anything in *Low Water*—or even in *Peter Ibbetson* for that matter.

Yet in *Elsa* the technique never gets in the way of one's appreciation of Varda's subject. As it should always be, here technique—even such "intrusive" technique as this—does not hinder the illusion of reality that the film is intended to convey. On the contrary, all of Varda's tricks and gimmicks are put to the service of her subject, and each admirably serves its function of giving that subject a real existence in the minds of her audience. The difficulty with the film has really nothing to do with the proper use of the cinematic vocabulary; rather, it has to do with recognizing the subject of the film itself and not being put off by the usual notions concerning what movies, and particularly documentaries, are about.

Varda's film has a story—of sorts. It relates what we must presume to be the most significant events in the lives of Louis Aragon and Elsa Treolet in the period before the war. But this cannot truly be called the subject of the film, for a film on this story could have been much more efficiently and effectively made with actors and a pre-written script. *Elsa* was shown along with several other films, supposed to be of the same sub-genre, as a "film portrait" —but to classify Varda's work in that way is to ignore the fact that Aragon has a part in the film quite as meaningful as Elsa's, that we learn quite as much about him as about her, and that there is a "story" which only takes in a tiny portion of Elsa's long life.

Elsa is, in fact, the first documentary that I have seen that wasn't about some*thing* or some*body*. The usual documentary subject is fairly close to that of the newsreel: simply an event or series of events. *Nanook* is about "the way Eskimos live," *Night Mail* is about "the journey of a mail train." These films are intended, it seems to me, almost as historical documents, as records of definite factual *things.* In the same way, films like *The River* or *Pour le Mistral* are about *things,* although in a more direct and obvious way. And there certainly are documentaries about people: *Lonely Boy, Adolescence.* But even Chris Marker, who has certainly twisted the conventional documentary subject matter way out of joint *(Cuba Si!, Letter from Siberia, The Koumiko Mystery,* etc.) has always based his films upon such tangible realities as people or places or events. Varda's subject, although every bit as real as anything tangible, cannot be called a factual thing in the sense that that term usually implies. For Varda's subject is love.

This really is not surprising when you think about it, for Varda's best films have been about love *(L'Opéra Mouffe, Cleo de 5 à 7, Le Bonheur,* and the loveliest parts of *Les Creatures),* and the consistent tendency of the New Wave has been to move away from the conventional cinematic story-line and subject matter and closer and closer to the cinematic *essai,* to broaden both the medium's techniques and its audiences' perceptions until it will indeed be possible to use the camera as a pen in all the many ways a pen may be used. Varda has done this—under a false smoke-screen of "film portrait," it is true—in *Elsa;* just as Godard has in more ambitious and "fictional" form in *Deux ou Trois Choses Que Je Sais d'Elle*—using the New Wave, Marina Vlady, and his own reputation as his camouflage.

Once this unusual subject is admitted—and until one has seen the film I imagine it will be hard to conceive of a movie about some-

thing as apparently abstract as an emotion—the battery of techniques that Varda uses fall into their proper perspective. Any emotion must be more or less subjective, and to deal with an emotion in its *reality,* rather than as a generalized, abstract, unreal idea (and thus no fit subject for documentary), the subjectivity of the emotion must be an integral part of the cinematic realization of it. Thus Varda uses many personal, almost idiosyncratic, film techniques which, when viewed without prejudice, permit the viewer to get much closer to the subject by seeing it much more closely "as the film maker sees it." Varda's technical subjectivity, by overtly and obviously introducing a subjective point of view, gives a receptive viewer the opportunity to see an emotion *in toto:* in this case as historic and literary fact (both Aragon and Elsa wrote poems about their love) and as something personal, undefinable, alive and ultimately mysterious and beautiful. Paradoxically perhaps, the use of subjectivity here is the only way in which a truly "objective" or realistic treatment of such a subject could have been attained.

One half of a serious critical question remains. It is fairly obvious that I believe that the subject of *Elsa* is not "generalized, abstract, and *unreal*" as was the subject of *Low Water.* In fact, I think that it is "specific, concrete, and *real.*" It was indicated above that only by introducing subjectivity can one bring an emotion down to the real level—and indeed, by introducing subjectivity you will realize that the abstract, general, unreal idea we usually mean by "love" does become both specific and concrete as well as real. If this were not enough, and perhaps it will not be enough for some, I would remind the reader that *Elsa* is about the love of Aragon and Elsa—and I would submit that one cannot get any more specific and concrete and real about any emotion than to tie it down to specific and concrete and real people.

The other half of this serious question is unanswerable because it involves a totally divergent philosophic stand to the one we have taken in the bulk of this discussion. If "love" is an intellectual concept, like alienation, rather than a reality, like mankind, then my whole argument for Varda's success flies out of the window and *Elsa* must be put with other propaganda movies. As a propaganda movie I found it quite successful, for both the obvious reality and unrehearsed action of the principals (at times; at other times they acted very much rehearsed), and the unsettling nature of many of the techniques of the film combined to lend it sufficient of an aura of reality to capture me and lull my suspicions entirely.

Another plausible argument that sounds quite a bit like this one at first stresses the subjective nature of love (incorrectly, as it happens) and wonders aloud whether a True Documentary can be made about something so personal. The real question that this argument makes is whether any *essai* can be a True Documentary. The problem is not the subjective nature of love, it is the subjective nature of the treatment of love in this film. This argument too, may be unanswerable when it is espoused by those who see a firm unyielding line between the subjective and the objective. When dealing with persons a mite more mature it is a fairly simple matter to point out that there are some cultural universals in men's minds, that these universals are just as "objective" as any concrete facts, being accepted and dealt with in much the same way, and that films like *Elsa* base their "subjectivity" upon such "objectively established" universals, and are thus every bit as much a True Documentary as the longest and dullest of hidden-camera FBI reports.

It is at this point that the lovers of True Documentary had better begin to desert the ship. There has been some trouble with *Elsa*—but all in all, I am personally convinced both of its beauty and of its truth. I think that *Elsa* is not merely a successful documentary, but both a unique and a great one, and I do not think that there are really too many others who would disagree about its being a documentary —at least, not after having seen it. However, as we begin to come within sight—or better, within spitting distance—of Claude Guillemot's

Dialectique, I realize more and more that I am being awfully dishonest in calling it a documentary—or at least that you will think me dishonest for doing so. And I don't think that I will be able to weasel out of it this time.

Dialectique also won a prize at Tours—one of the three Grand Prizes, in fact—and it was hissed and booed and cheered as few films in my experience have been. While I was cheering I kept on wondering if anybody else thought it was a documentary and whether, if they did, they were booing or cheering. It is that kind of film.

It is also a very *au courant* movie. Last winter's primary topic of conversation among Parisian film buffs was the relation of the image and the soundtrack (and what are we doing talking about reality when that was settled long ago?). *Dialectique* is *all* about the relation of the image to the soundtrack—and that is what makes it so much fun. To make matters worse, the film is quite obviously something of a *tour de force* and it presents itself as such without any modesty or scruples. Claude Guillemot has made quite certain that whoever is watching the film will be perfectly aware that what he is watching is something unique and different and unusual. Monsieur Guillemot is not one to sneak up behind the viewer in the middle of a good car chase and quickly introduce a few purely cinematic devices so that the average guy doesn't even notice them. No, he takes the opposite approach. Even at the risk of becoming a bore about it, Monsieur Guillemot takes one by the shoulders and virtually rubs one's nose in the fact that he has made a motion picture and what are *you* going to do about it?

This sort of attitude coupled with the timely nature of the image-soundtrack controversy would have been enough to insure a certain amount of hoopla at the Festival. Guillemot's insolence, however, would not let him stop there. He has been quoted as saying that he wanted to make a film about two fellows going duck-hunting—a documentary in fact (and that is one good reason for considering it as a documentary here, I suppose). He was stumped about what to have on the soundtrack. He didn't want music, he wanted talk. Finally he hit upon the perfect solution. One of his characters spends most of the film describing how to set up the perfect state. The dialogue is by Plato. The words are the words of Socrates in *The Republic*. At last pure philosophy has been brought to the silver screen. Neither Athens nor Hollywood can ever be the same aagin.

One cannot be certain of how Plato himself might have regarded this use of his immortal words, but there is no doubt that Hegel would have approved. *Dialectique* is indeed a Hegelian dialectic, having for its thesis the reality of the image, for its antithesis the reality of Plato's words, and for its synthesis the reality of the film itself.

This plays havoc, as indeed it was intended to, with our notion of documentary. The duck-hunt which makes up the visual part of the film is an event the reality of which must be its only possible interpretation. Two men drive up in a car, change their clothes, go out into the marshes, wait all night, don't get anything, and finally go back again, encountering a garrulous shepherd along the way. A simple event that is told with great economy and aplomb, as it happens. But all the while one of them, the shorter, funnier one, keeps on babbling about the ideal state. He never stops talking about it until finally the shepherd shuts him up with a long tale of his own.

Now, what on earth do you call a film like that? A lot of the audience had names of their own, but they did not correspond to any acceptable generic classification of films that I knew. *Dialectique* may be, on one level, a documentary about duck-hunting. Even though it is clear almost from the outset that everything that goes on in the film is as carefully staged as anything in *Low Water*, it seems equally clear that Guillemot's *a priori* conception was simply to show the actions of a duck-hunt, to be faithful to reality, to depict a specific, concrete, real thing. And the film would have been an unqualified documentary by any rule-of-

thumb standards if only the dialogue had been something like, "Hey George, where are the ducks? Gimme apieca bread. Jeeze, it's cold enough to freeze the balls off a pawn shop, aw haw haw," and so forth. But, in changing the dialogue, Guillemot seems to have changed the whole film. It seems to be neither reality nor fiction, neither an essay nor a short story. It is simply, baldly, insolently, uncompromisingly, *cinema.*

With supreme French logic Guillemot has pushed two verbal concepts to their extreme and come back with something that cannot be verbalized. The game has turned into a matter of vital seriousness. So long as we regard cinema as merely another form of literature (Astruc's *"caméra stylo")* we will merely be able to look at *Dialectique* with amusement and appreciation for its masterful craft—and that is presuming that we take a positive stance. We can run through a gamut of interpretations that will lend the film a literary air: both Plato and the bourgeois existence are being satirized as they are shown mutually inappropriate, both Plato and the bourgeois existence are being exalted as we see that wisdom and idealism may exist even in the constantly put-upon mind of a duck-hunter. Unfortunately, the interpretation that seems to fit the tone of the film most closely is something much more like the fifty apes and fifty typewriters theory of great literature. Guillemot seems to suggest that if you leave a little bourgeois duck-hunter alone for long enough he just might construct the ideal Socratic state (in dialogue only, of course). The odds are probably more in favor of this than they are in favor of the monkeys getting a coherent sentence down before they all died. It matters very little, for none of these interpretations has anything to do with *Dialectique.* They are just a way of saving face.

It is only if we abandon the limited and verbal foundation of Astruc's ideas, and come out and admit flatly that cinema is, after all is said and done, cinema, that *Dialectique* will be able to emerge in all its glory and irreverent enjoyability. The "reasons behind" the choice

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of Plato as dialogue for a duck-hunt will become unimportant, and only the result will remain. The "interpretation" of that result will be less important than the experience of it.

And reality? . . . Reality blends into the image itself, into the film itself. It is no longer artificially kept apart as an attribute only proper to the subject matter of a film, but is now given its due place as one aspect of the cinematic image itself. That image is more than simply a "medium": it too is real and must be recognized as real. *Dialectique* forces that recognition on us, for *Dialectique* attains the illusion of reality through itself and for itself. It is not the duck-hunt that is real here, not Plato's words—it is the film itself, reflecting in its isolated and enigmatic nature the very qualities of reality that serve to keep it always distinct from the creations of mankind.

One future for the documentary, if we are to take *Dialectique* as something more than merely playful, lies in its death and resurrection as cinema. What will be conserved in this phoenix-like transformation once it takes place, will be the essentially ambiguous, non-interpretable essence of reality that will allow it, when used like paint or the notes in a musical score, to enshrine the mystery that lies indeed at the heart of any artistic creation as it does in the soul of reality itself.

PATRICIA MARTON

Nothing New at Knokke II

Knokke-le-Zoute at Christmastime is a chilly, partially shuttered resort on the grey, cloud-heavy Belgian North Sea. Battered Christmas trees sway in the wind and rain along the Zeedijk. However, during Christmas Week 1967 the Fourth International Experimental Film Festival made its headquarters in the low, white Casino facing the Albert-Plage, and the 8-day activities provided a controversial distraction from the out-of-season torpor of this middle-class Belgian town.

Inside the rather respectably elegant Casino, the stretches of red carpet were littered with empty glasses, cigarette ends, and film-makers from varying countries who sprawled on the staircases leading to the main viewing auditorium. Inside, they could sit on uncomfortable, straight-backed chairs facing the screen placed beneath a gold proscenium, and be visually and aurally assaulted at all hours of the day and night. Outside, a canopied bar provided alcoholic fortification and cigarette smoke clogged the air. If harassed, they could also clear their minds somewhat by dashing through the puddles gathering on the tiled promenade before the Casino to stand on the beach and breathe deeply, which was often a necessity after the kaleidoscopic goings-on inside. Jacques Ledoux, Secretary of the Festival, and his overworked staff from the Royal Film Archive of Belgium, were also on constant call at the reception area to accommodate guests who complained about poor hotel facilities or lost passes to get by the stoical, grey-suited guards at the entrance.

The program of events was centered around the 90 in-competition films from 16 different countries, chosen by an incorrigibly efficient all-Belgian jury from 335 entries. Thirty-six finalists were from the United States (also leading the entries with 108 films), followed by Germany (14), Belgium (9), and Great Britain (5), all competing for the 13 prizes—particularly the 5 major ones totalling $12,000 ($4,000 for the Grand Prix, $2,000 each for the remaining 4).

If one had sufficient energy and eyesight left after viewing these official entries, it was also possible to attend numerous private and arranged out-of-competition showings, in and out of the Casino—in hotel, cafés, or wherever an ambitious cinéaste could run down an empty room for screening. Among other events, the Théâtre de Poche of Brussels put on a special performance of Jean Van Itallie's "America Hurrah" in the Magritte Room, one could sample a special Carpano Experimental Cocktail in the Room Behind the Mirror, go to concerts of electronic music by Mauricio Kagel, or gaze at the mechanical art forms of Michelangelo Pistoletto at the far end of the downstairs foyer.

In choosing the in-competition films, the term experimental was intended to cover works "which give evidence of an effort to regenerate or extend the film as a medium of cinematographic expression." In the Festival sense, this was interpreted in practice as a catch-all phrase that included erotic animated cartoons, documentary-style interviews, humorous shorts, and lengthy real-life studies. The screen in the auditorium was filled with dancing and bleeding eggs; flashing, dashing lines and circles; varying degrees and shades of sex; male and female nudity, with an emphasis on the former. The images were often in bright colors—over-, under-, double- and multi-exposed; the sound was generally discordant and loud. (At one time, not surprisingly, the sound system temporarily broke down, which gave some relief to the ears of the audience.) In short, little was at-

tempted that hasn't already been initiated by earlier film-makers, save perhaps for some computer-devised entries.

The audience, composed primarily of film-makers, responded in kind with whistles, catcalls, screams, and impromptu speeches—some adventurous souls even mounted the stage during one screening equipped with glowing sparklers to put on their own live show. There was also occasional appreciative silence followed by generous applause, paradoxically for films that were often the simplest, thereby standing out from the excess of pretention and self-indulgence. Two short, straightforward, later prize-winning entries are specific cases in point.

In *Selbstschusse,* Lutz Mommartz from Düsseldorf presents a zany 6-minute, black-and-white self-portrait, accompanied by rollicking music and natural sound. The film begins with a view of a shadow on the ground, gradually revealing the legs, body, and face of the subject (Mommartz himself) ambling, running, and dodging the camera lens across a meadow. The spoof finally ends with the camera being repeatedly thrown into the air, to photograph the director at a dizzying, swirling high angle. Equally as amusing is New Yorker Martin Scorsese's *The Big Shave,* a 5-minute comic color short about the dire hazards of shaving. After a straightforward introduction of the subject and his to-be-lethal tool via a series of establishing shots in a gleaming bathroom, an ordinary shaving session turns into a bloodbath, with the incompetent victim's face and neck rapidly becoming a slashed and bleeding mess, to the droning music (c. 1937) of Bunny Berigan's band. The film was given the *Age d'Or* Prize.

After 25 hours of in-competition entries, long and short, complicated and uncomplicated, the selection of the major prizewinners was finally announced on New Year's Day. A 4-member jury of film-makers including Shirley Clarke (US), Vera Chytilova (Czechoslovakia), Walerian Borowczyk (Poland-France), and Edgar Reitz (Germany) stated their decision "to give precedence to new film-makers" who showed "new trends," thereby not considering "certain accomplished works," specifically mentioning Gregory Markopoulos' forceful, complex, and extremely well-produced, though over-long (90 minutes) *Illiac Passion.* This also apparently explains the award of the Grand Prix, donated by Gevaert-Agfa, to New Yorker Michael Snow's *Wavelength,* a 45-minute zoom shot slowly moving in on one windowed wall of a bare loft, varying color and focus and relieved by 4 human entrances and exits. The bulk of the sound background, an electronic sine wave that steadily increases in pitch, has to be heard to be believed—but not for long. San Francisco's Robert Nelson won the Baron Lambert Prize for *Grateful Dead,* an energetic 7½ minute interpretation of a pop group that out-Lesters Lester in its supple use of color and camerawork. *Besoket,* by Sweden's Ake Arenhill, a stunning black-and-white study of an outer-space balloon visit to earth, with fantastically garbed figures drifting across a burnt-out background, was awarded the Belgian Radio and Television Prize, and Mommartz won the Bell Telephone Prize for the previously mentioned *Selbstschusse.* New Yorker Stephen Dwoskin, now resident in London, provided the coup of the Festival by winning the Solvay Prize for all of his entries (*Soliloquy, Chinese Checkers,* and *Naissant),* three short, personal studies of women shot in extreme close-up and black and white —*Soliloquy* focusing intently for 9 minutes on the hand and face of the solitary subject, with her rambling thoughts on life as the sound background.

However, Ledoux was unable to give his special *film maudit* award at this session, unlike 1963 (the date of the last Knokke festival) when the showing and non-showing of Jack Smith's *Flaming Creatures* raised such a fury. Word was spread, perhaps by a publicity-conscious Film Archive staff, that a Japanese entry entitled *Embryo* by Koji Wakamatsu might cause trouble for its sadistic content, but the film, conventionally photographed in black and white, only proves that 72 minutes of flagellation ultimately becomes a bore for the audience.

The winners have their prizes and whatever

acclaim may come with them. Fine. But what of the non-winners? The entries of two non-accoladed young film-makers show enough imagination and professional expertise to augur well for the future. Well-presented and ambitious (perhaps overly so) is *Line of Apogee,* a 46-minute stream-of-consciousness excursion through the mind of a young man, who is first glimpsed dreaming in close-up. Lloyd Michael Williams (another New Yorker) fills the screen with beautifully devised and photographed images, fluently moving between reality and unreality; past, present and future. Boy, man, and elder confront each other: the child sleeping by a misty stream; the youth facing love and marriage; the puckish gentleman chasing butterflies across a dazzling emerald-green lawn. Color changes with mood: the small boy scolded by his mother is shown in black and white, presumably as a representation of reality; as a contrast, the aged astronomer gazing hopefully through his telescope sees coagulating and moving iridescent colors and forms. Actuality blends into fantasy when the small boy filming the funeral procession of child-monks at the burial of his pet dog opens the coffin to see himself as the flower-decked corpse. Often the choice of such images is a bit obvious (as in the juxtaposition of a Temple wedding sequence with breaking eggs and spiders crawling from shattered glass) but the actual visualization is an effective recompense. Original music by Vladimir Ussachevsky and natural sound are deftly used. The film is evidently a labor of love (5 years in production), and the aesthetically pleasing qualities make up for the lengthiness (for the subject) and tendencies towards self-consciousness.

More succinctly presented is Franz Winzentsen's 11-minute *Erlebnisse der Puppe,* which amusingly and cynically develops the enclosed world of a clumping puppet-child, playing its clumsy games of skip-rope and hop-scotch and shattering objects within its reach. Unable to come to terms with death and destruction, it flees from the sight of a duck's severed head and crumbling buildings to unconcernedly continue on its blundering way—a final retreat symbolically depicted when it plucks a dancing eye from the sky to use first as a hat, then as a kite. Made primarily from animated collages of black-and-white photographs, the film also uses a short color sequence in a cinema, which becomes a momentary bright and beautiful opiate into which the child can escape from the drabness of its world—the rough futuristic decor of stark buildings and harsh landscape only too typical of the contemporary wasteland. The real-life sequence of the ducks also enhances the disparity between the child's withdrawal and its surroundings. The Hamburg film-maker further points up his essay by the use of ominous natural sound with the sad strains of a children's song played by sitar, flute, and guitar.

Perhaps because the cinematic offerings provided few elements of controversy and no real revelations were in order, the audience began to turn its interests elsewhere—to protests, political and otherwise, after a few earlier mild scuffles as prelude. This gathered full momentum on New Year's Day during the debate on films in competition which followed the final afternoon's screening. A political and artistic free-for-all took place beneath the grossly elaborate chandelier in the Magritte Room, with slogans, banners, and speeches proclaiming anti-war, anti-monarchy, anti-experiment, and even "Vive le cinéma," all crusaders managing dexterously to get in the range of the omnipresent photographers and television cameramen, who were having a field day. But a culminating Festival event was the second "Moviemovie" presentation later in the evening, when an enormous plastic balloon was inflated in the Casino foyer to a dazzling four-way projection of colored lights and movies on its surface, with devastating sound resembling the ascent of a giant jet plane. The occasion so unsettled some members of the audience that they ran inside the transparent casing, stripped off their clothes and provided their own nude show, gratis. It was probably the most spontaneous and lively event of the entire week, but the audience was too jaded by then to fully appreciate it.

Film Reviews

DAISIES

Director: Vera Chytilova. Script: Vera Chytilova, Ester Krumbachova and Pavel Juracek. Camera: Jaroslav Kucera. Music: Jiri Suchy and Jiri Sust. With: Ivana Karbanova, Jitka Cherova, Julius Albert, Jan Klusak.

"To all those whose indignation is limited to a smashed-up salad." Such is the post-dedication of Vera Chytilova's *Daisies.* This woman, at 39 the "dean" of the new Czech cinéastes, has surprised everybody, including her compatriots, by making the most uncompromising and mature work ever to come out of the Barrandov studios: a shattering "philosophical documentary take-off," as she calls it, a tale of devastation and nihilism. With *Daisies,* she personifies the coming to maturity of the young Czech school. Her first short *The Ceiling* (1961) marked its beginning, her last its nadir. But whereas the first was liked and proclaimed as "openers," her last has been banned from the Czech screens by the censors, and Europeans and Americans alike are luckier than her fellow-countrymen in being permitted to see it.

Neither her preceding feature *Something Else* (translated *Another Way of Life* in Jan Zalman's article of the last issue), nor any of her three shorts, including the sketch *At the 'World' Cafeteria* (1965) she made for the collective *Pearls at the Bottom,* could really prepare us for the shock of *Daisies.* However, some elements of *Daisies* are forecast in her earlier works. Humor was the asset of *The Bag of Fleas* (1962), her second short, which was a hilarious description à la Milos Forman (but preceding *Loves of a Blonde* by three years) of working girls in a dorm. Pessimism and baroquism were both present in the interesting failure *At the 'World' Cafeteria,* which brought together two simultaneous although unrelated events: a wedding banquet and the suicide of a waitress in a cheap cafeteria, with a bizzarre ending scene in decomposed slow motion of a man tearing apart the bride's dress during a rainstorm. And oddly enough, her most accessible feature, *Something Else,* which depicted in a straightforward manner the contrapuntal and parallel lives of two women (a housewife and a gymnast), revealed her *objective vision* which is the dominant trait of *Daisies.* In spite of the apparent psychological set-up of *Something Else,* an unfaithful wife and an ambitious athlete, the objectivity of camera and story was kept throughout. The two lives did not meet and no sociological or moralistic conclusion was drawn by the author on the state of the female in a socialist country. Vera Chytilova's camera was merely scrutinizing two samples of women. Her eye was compassionate and aggressive, piercing and ironical.

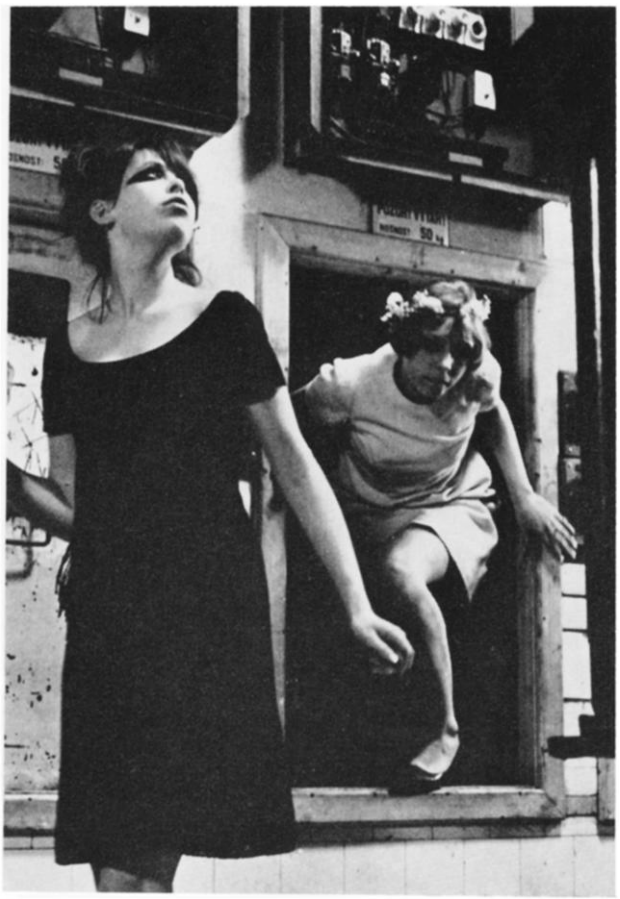
In *Daisies,* compassion has disappeared and the piercing and ironical eye has become diabolical. There is no involvement, no conventional chronology, no psychological development, in other words, no narration.

The events of the film, a succession of "happenings" revolving around the same leitmotiv, are variations on a single theme: food. Two seventeen-year-old screwy girls (played by two nonprofessionals, one a men's hat salesgirl, the other a student) live off old and not-so-old men by sponging meals as numerous and as abundant as possible. They inevitably drop the men upon embarking with them on trains, they steal, cheat, try to attract attention, and ultimately destroy each other and everything around them. But most of the time, they are shown devouring, gorging themselves, stuffing themselves with cakes, fish, sausages, bananas, pickles and bread, going to ladies' rooms, giggling and starting again to cram, chew, masticate, swallow anything edible and within reach in their inimitable messy, egotistical, vulgar and irreverent lack of manners. Roughly, the film is a series of fluctuations between gorging and de-gorging, a come-and-go between de luxe restaurants and ladies' rooms. Our entire civilization could not be mocked more brutally.

This scatological earthiness would hardly be worth viewing though if the running theme of

death and destruction were not transcending *Daisies*. The equation consumption = destruction is hinted at in the beginning and closing images of the picture, a few distorted but recognizable frames of bombed destroyers, submarines, and buildings, the latter being intermixed with the first shots of the girls deciding "since everything is rotten in this world, we too shall be rotten . . ." In the course of the film, it is reaffirmed by the attempted suicide of the blonde girl; and the havoc finally culminates when (1) the girls pretend they are cutting each other apart with big scissors and (2) they engulf and mess up a huge banquet in no time at all and tread on patés and poultry with their spiked heels.

Gluttony and devastation are linked as an indication that consumption and destruction might not be that far apart, but Chytilova does not proclaim her film has one single interpretation. It seems that the greedy little creatures are specimens of the capitalistic (or, for that matter, socialist) drive for acquisition, the rage for appropriation; the connoting factor that they are "schnorrers" or "spongers" brings in the idea of social or economic parasitism. The post-dedication mentioned at the beginning of this article makes sense now: the "smashed-up salad" is what the "Daisies" produce; if they were governments, they would manufacture the bomb of Hiroshima!



◀ Daisies

So grave a problem is treated in the lightest of tones. It could hardly have been expressed in other than stylized terms; this is how a materialistic social criticism can be turned into a poetic parable.

In audio-visual inventiveness, Vera Chytilova, her main script-writer and designer Ester Krumbachova, the cinematographer Jaroslav Kucera, and the two musicians Jiri Suchy and Jiri Sust have spared nothing. By comparison, *Zazie dans le Métro* is a "flat" film.

The marriage of rhythm, decor, color, and soundtrack is indivisible and with constant unexpected results. The filters, the fancy lab processing of the Eastmancolor where Kucera manipulated the colors to obtain certain loud and ugly tones, the hide-and-seek between black-and-white and various tints, the use of animation technique as in the mechanized ballet of disembodied bodies flying all over the screen when the girls cut each other up, set the humorous pace which makes for the beauty of *Daisies*. The decors display the genius of Krumbachova to combine *fin de siècle* and pop art and dispose the body of the suicidal blonde in the midst of a green symphony of gigantic callalily leaves, acid apples, and a piece of turf which is as beautiful as a Douanier Rousseau. But the most truly original element of the film is the soundtrack, an incredible blend of canned music from Wagner's "Götterdämmerung" to "Plaisir d'Amour," animation noises, jazz songs and murmurs which, contrary to what happens in the disparity of *The Gospel According to St. Matthew,* work not against the film but *for* it.

The score bursts forth from the atonality of the images. The most extraordinary passage is a trio where the instruments are respectively a man's voice, the noise of a typewriter, and orchestra strings which could easily have a place in a concert of contemporary music. And at the end, the amplified whispering of the girls trying to straighten out their own pillage of the banquet, accentuates the mysterious and somber atmosphere of universal destruction the film reflects.

So much complex richness is naturally offensive and offensive for two reasons, one depending on the viewer and the other on the filmmaker.

In spite of the efforts of the Underground cinéastes, we are not accustomed enough to speed, accelerated rhythm, abrupt changes of colors, jump cuts and all that pertains to trick photography. We still are lacking training in optical gymnastics.

Vera Chytilova's contribution to the difficulty—and I believe a justifiable one—is the nature of her subject. Instead of literary or verbal terms, she has chosen to use a purely cinematographic language. This means a recourse to all the disruptive and uncomfortable means of cinema to render explicit the purpose of the film. Hence animation, hence collages and some frames too fast to be really visible. It is surprising actually that, given its mutilating significance, the film does not end with its own dissolution, with the film physically turning to ashes on the screen instead of the final shot of a pseudo-mushroom explosion. As it is, it does not include the viewer in the general extinction.

Jan Zalman dwelt at length on the "splitting" of the Czech new wave, and European critics speak of a Czech "crisis." If we are to judge by Vera Chytilova's *Daisies* and Jan Nemec's *Report on the Party and the Guests,* the two ill-fated masterpieces of Czechoslovak production, it rather seems that the Czech cinema, having gone ahead of the rest of the world can, for a while, rest on these laurels.—CLAIRE CLOUZOT

THE GRADUATE

Director: Mike Nichols. Producer: Lawrence Turman. Screenplay by Calder Willingham & Buck Henry, from the novel by Charles Webb. Songs: Simon & Garfunkel. Photography: Robert Surtees. Embassy.

Mike Nichols's name is so magical today that even if *The Graduate* had been the worst movie of the year, people would be buzzing reverently about it. As it is, *The Graduate* is only the most cleverly fashionable and confused movie of the year—and the responses, from critics and customers alike, have been ecstatic. We expected a lot—we're young, and so is Nichols; in addition to youth, he has money, talent, intelligence, irreverence. And after lots of quickie exploitation films about teenyboppers and acidheads, *The Graduate* might have been the first movie about today's youth to tell it like it is. But Nichols has too much at stake to risk involving us. He's adored because he's hip and safe at the same time; his audiences know that he won't go too far.

The Graduate opens promisingly enough. Ben, a successful young Eastern college graduate, is returning home to Los Angeles, and Nichols immediately and effectively conveys his isolation by focusing exclusively on Dustin Hoffman's apprehensive face moving through the crowded LA airport. Nichols has said that he chose the thirty-year-old Hoffman (a talented comedian—to get that out of the way) to play his callow young hero because he had a face that suggested suffering. Hoffman himself thought there was something strange about the choice; he felt he wasn't suited to the part, which he described as "a young, conventional, squarejawed *Time* Magazine Man of the Year type." Hoffman was right of course. We soon learn that Ben, for all of his credentials and in spite of his vulnerable face, is clean-cut and stupid. He's supposed to be a champion college debater, but he can hardly form a sentence. In the first scenes he's thrown into his rich parents' cocktail and poolside parties; it's easy enough to caricature suburban phoniness, and

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we see quickly—Nichols provides a slick, superficial summary of anti-bourgeois satire of the last decade—everything that's wrong with LA society. But what does Ben see? He gapes a lot, but he never looks more than bewildered by what's going on. He certainly can't articulate any sort of protest. All he knows is that he wants his future to be "well . . . different. . . ." He really sweats to get that word out, but he doesn't seem capable of going further. When he's troubled, he stares into his bedroom aquarium.

Of course we're supposed to like Ben because he's victimized by all of those nasty, aging country clubbers. In the face of their boozing and their twaddle, he has a chunky innocence that is to endear him to us. Nothing is going on in his head, but because he's "mixed up," as he says at one point, and abused by his parents, audiences cluck over him and rush to give him credit for understanding anxieties that are actually beyond his grasp.

Nichols does use a few fine Simon and Garfunkel songs (written long before the film was conceived) to pump poetic and intellectual content into *The Graduate*. Because the songs, especially "The Sounds of Silence," are so concise, lyrical, eloquent, we're tempted to believe that the film contains their insights and that Ben understands them. We're supposed to assume that Ben shares Paul Simon's perceptions of "people talking without speaking, people hearing without listening" in a world whose "words of the prophet are written on the subway walls," but in truth Ben couldn't *begin* putting the world in that kind of order. He's only a beer-drinking *Time* magazine type, as Hoffman recognized, rather harmlessly stupid and awkward, but tricked up with a suffering face and an *Angst*-ridden song intent on persuading us that he's an alienated generational hero. And audiences eager to believe that all young people are sensitive and alienated and that all old people are sell-outs or monsters gratefully permit Hoffman's mannerisms and Paul Simon's poetry to convince them of a depth in Ben that the part, as written, simply does not contain.

The film's best scenes are the early ones in which Ben is seduced by the wife of his father's partner (superbly played by Anne Bancroft—her performance is reason enough to see the film). Bancroft, a young man's deliciously provocative sexual fantasy come to life, makes us aware that there *is* something to be said for women over thirty. When she's on, Ben might just as well roll over and play dead. Bancroft is engagingly wicked as Mrs. Robinson; she is at once supremely confident of her sexual power and mercilessly casual in the face of Ben's adolescent fear of her. Alone with him in her house, she takes calm delight in exposing her legs, while he ejaculates moral misgivings. Her sophistication enables her to see through his repeated protests: "You *want* me to seduce you, is that what you're trying to tell me, Benjamin?" she chants in poker-faced style. And finally, having trapped him in her daughter's bedroom, she remains utterly cool, while her daring flirtatious assault, comically caught by rapid cuts from bare bosom to Ben's anguished face, leaves him helplessly gasping, "Jesus Christ, Mrs. Robinson!"

Unfortunately, this is about the only scene which allows us to see that Ben is sexually attracted to Mrs. Robinson. Most of the time Nichols insists that Mrs. Robinson is repulsive because she is sexual and Benjamin lovable because he is not. Sheer boredom, Ben confesses, is the only thing which brings him to her time after time. And later he explains that bedding down with Mrs. Robinson meant nothing; it was "just another thing that happened to me . . . just like shaking hands." Apparently we are to believe, as Stanley Kauffman has written, that Ben "sees the older woman's advances as a syndrome of a suspect society," and that he deserves congratulations for his indifference; what seems an astonishing blindness to Mrs. Robinson's very real sexiness is to be taken as a moral victory.

Ben's voice of morality, though, is rather unpleasantly self-righteous: "Do you think I'm proud that I spend my time with a broken-down alcoholic?" The scene in which he tries to liven up their evenings by getting Mrs. Robinson to

THE GRADUATE

talk to him has been much praised, and it *is* an interesting scene, though not for the reasons given, but because it presents Mrs. Robinson with more complexity than usual. When, in the middle of their abortive conversation, she orders Ben not to take out her daughter, the only reason he can guess for the command is that she thinks he isn't good enough for Elaine, and he announces angrily that he considers this liaison "sick and perverted." Bancroft's face, marvelously expressive of deeply rooted social and personal discontents, makes clear to us that this is *not* Mrs. Robinson's reason, that her reasons are much more intense and tortured than Ben suspects—mostly, presumably, an envy of youth and a fear of being cast off for her daughter—and deserve his sympathy, not his moralistic outrage. Ben is too insensitive to see that when she seems to acknowledge that she thinks her daughter too good for him, it's only out of desperation and confusion; she has feelings more intricate and disturbed than she knows how to explain to him. His rejection of her at this moment may look moral, but given the depth and the anguish of her emotional experience, it's a pretty ugly, unfeeling response. Mrs. Robinson's answer to Ben's plea that she talk to him—"I don't think we have much to say to each other"—proves to be quite accurate, but it doesn't expose her shallowness, as Nichols seems to have intended, it exposes *Ben's*. She has so much more self-awareness than he, and so many more real problems, why *should* she talk to him? Anne Bancroft is really too interesting for Nichol's sentimentalities about the generational gap, so he treats her characterization with no respect; after this scene, he turns her into a hideous witch, an evil Furie maniacally insistent on keeping Ben and her daughter apart. This goes along with the current urge to see the generational conflict as a coloring-book morality play—the young in white, the old in black—but it's a cheap dramatic trick.

What really wins the young audience to Ben is his compulsive pursuit of Mrs. Robinson's daughter Elaine in the second half of the film. His single-minded dedication to securing the girl he pines after may be the oldest staple of movie romance, but it is also manna to today's Love Generation. Elaine, though, is a problem. She's gorgeous, all right, she's earnest, and she smiles nicely, but what Ben sees in her beyond her lovely face is kept a secret from us. She does seem to be as clean-cut and stupid as he is. But since she wears her hair long and uncombed and goes to Berkeley (another put-on, much like Hoffman's suffering face), we're to assume that she's an extraordinary catch. Doesn't the fact that she dates and almost marries a smooth, starched medical student confirm the opposite? Ben, incidentally, doesn't even admit her physical attractiveness; his excuse for wanting her so desperately is that at last he has found someone he can talk to. What two such uninteresting people could talk about is a real stumper; and Nichols must have thought so too, for he bars us from one of their few conversations, placing them behind the windshield of Ben's convertible. Perhaps if Nichols were a more experienced film director, he could have convinced us of the vitality of Ben's and Elaine's love with some pungent, seductive visuals; but he relies only on modish out-of-focus shots of flowers and foliage (shots that looked a lot prettier in *Two for the Road* anyway).

All that does express their love is an old-fashioned Hollywood Kiss. On their first date, after treating her quite wretchedly, Ben tries to get her to stop crying and kisses her. And that does it. She forgets her humiliation and smiles. It's love at first sight, just like in the

movies, but because the actors look casual and sensitive and alienated, audiences think their instant jello of a romance is "real." A little later Elaine learns of Ben's affair with her mother and flees back to Berkeley; he follows her there, and she comes to his room at night to ask why. But first she asks him to kiss her once more, and when he does, she's satisfied; her doubts are erased, and she's ready to marry him. It's all very reminiscent of Betty Grable cheerleader movies. And it's interesting that there seems to be no real sexual attraction between Ben and Elaine. Even their two or three kisses are awfully restrained. After receiving her second kiss, which looks about as exciting as a late-night cup of hot chocolate, Elaine darts quickly out of Ben's door. The movie is rather offensively prudish in splitting sex and love, implying that sexual relationships are sick and perverted, but that in a healthful Young Love relationship—why, sex is the furthest thing from the kids' minds. In this respect the film fits nicely with the flower talk about love, which for all of the bubbles and incense and the boast of promiscuity, is equally insipid, passionless, ultimately quite as sexless.

How bizarre it is that the vacuous Elaine, who has been so easily conned into marrying the fraternity's ace make-out king, can cause such a cataclysmic change in Ben. He throws off his lethargy, chases after her and breaks up her wedding at the last minute, bellowing an anguished "Elaine" as he beats against the glass that separates him from the congregation. A minute later, when Ben punches Elaine's father in the stomach, when he beats off the suburbanites with a giant cross and locks the door with it, the audience cheers vigorously—and to give Nichols his due, it's a pleasing, outrageous image. But it's much too glib to turn Ben suddenly into a rebel hero—this same Ben who's spent most of the film staring blankly into his aquarium and lounging by his pool, transformed by a kiss from a sweet little coed into a fighter for his generation. The motivation may be phony, but we can all laugh at how the old folks get theirs in the end.

The Graduate, like Nichol's film of *Virginia Woolf*, has been applauded for its boldness—never before in an American movie, it is said, could a hero have slept with a woman and married her daughter. The premise *is* arresting, but it's interesting how Nichols blunts it, makes it as easy as possible for his audiences to accept the outrageous. By minimizing Ben's participation in the affair with Mrs. Robinson, by suggesting that it's boring and unpleasant to him, and then by leaving sex out of the relationship with Elaine altogether, the film scampers away from a situation that would be truly challenging and compelling—a young man with strong sexual desire for mother and daughter. Ben doesn't have any sexual desires, apparently, and his unwilling involvement in the affair with Mrs. Robinson lets us off too comfortably. And at a time of much irrelevant nudity and bedroom talk in the movies, this is one film that's entirely too fastidious; the absence of sex in *The Graduate* is a real failure (as it was in *The Family Way*) because the film is, to a large extent, *about* sexuality. But the urgency of Ben's triangular predicament is lost because we don't know much about what goes on in the bedroom, or even in Ben's fantasies. The incestuous longings that lie beneath the surface of the relationships are too uneasily sketched to carry much force. Any development of the oedipal rivalry between mother and daughter is also skimped. This hostility must be behind Mrs. Robinson's command that Ben not see Elaine, and if Elaine is human, she would have certain feelings of jealousy toward her mother. By making her outrage at Ben's affair *purely moral*, by ignoring its psychological content, the film misses an opportunity to explore its potentially explosive situation with depth and humanity—just as it cheated earlier by defining Ben's response to Mrs. Robinson in purely moral terms. Nichols titillates us with an intrigue that we haven't seen before in a movie, but he never gets close to feelings that would upset us. He knows how to startle, but he also knows how to please.

The movie as a whole is a Youth-grooving movie for old people. Nichol's young people have senile virtues—they're clean, innocent, up-

right, and cute too. Tired rich audiences can relax and say, "So *that's* what this youthful rebellion is all about; the kids want just what you and I want, Daddy—a happy marriage, a nice home, and they're really so well-behaved." Nichols doesn't risk showing young people who are doing truly daring, irreverent things, or even young people intelligent enough to seriously challenge the way old people live. All that ennobles Ben, after four years of college, is his virginity. He and Elaine are very bland, and that suits the old folks just fine; bankers and dowagers know that it's "in" to celebrate the young, and in *The Graduate* they can join the celebration with a minimum of fret or identification. The film is actually an insult to the young who aren't so goody-goody—young people who have complicated conflicts of loyalty and affection and who aren't able to make such a decisive moral rejection before they marry the most beautiful sweetheart of Sigma Chi.

Yet young people are falling for the film along with the old people, because it satisfies their most infantile fantasies of alienation and purity in a hostile world, their most simplistic notions of the generational gap, and their mushiest daydreams about the saving power of love. The movie swings on their side, though from a safe, rather patronizing position, and bleats that even when the middle-aged degenerates are cruelest, all you need is a closed-mouth kiss.

As for Nichols's film sense, he does seem to be learning. He still holds shots much too long or dresses them up much too self-consciously—as in the scuba-diving episode, a good idea ruined by clumsy direction. His images are mostly clichéd—not just blurs of flowers and sun-rippled water and car headlights reflecting on his lens, but even monkeys in the San Francisco zoo. He's good when you feel he's enjoying an unpretentiously silly, charming comic touch for its own sake, and he shows a nice eye for good-natured satiric detail (he's hardly a caustic talent)—Mrs. Robinson watching *The Newlywed Game* on TV, a daffy, myopic lady organist at Elaine's wedding. And perhaps it's not fair to give the impression that the film fails because of expediency and calculated compromise; it may be that Nichols actually did not know what he was doing. He has stated recently, in an interview, that Ben and Elaine are not to be envied at film's conclusion, and that Ben will end up exactly like his parents—which suggests attempts at a more harshly sardonic point of view than the film manages to convey. Why do people cheer so exuberantly and walk out so happily if the film means to criticize Ben? Have they all missed the point? Whatever Nichol's intentions, *The Graduate* never really seems to be attacking the young people; all that can be said is that it celebrates them with a strange lack of conviction, which may once have been meant as savage irony, but comes across only as particularly hollow and ineffective film-making. Along with his handling of actors, Nichol's only real success in the movie is with the same sort of lighthearted, inconsequential farce routines he's provided for Neil Simon's comedies on Broadway; there's no point in encouraging him to believe that he's the seriocomic prophet of the plastic generation. Maybe Nichols does have the talent to do something more important—so far he has the energy and the ambition—but we're not going to find out as long as an evasive gimmicky hoax like *The Graduate* is trumpeted as a milestone in American film history.

—Stephen Farber and Estelle Changas

LOVE AFFAIR: OR, THE CASE OF THE MISSING SWITCHBOARD OPERATOR

Director: Dusan Makavejev. Producer: Avala Films. Screenplay: Dusan Makavejev. Photography: Aleksander Petkovic. Editor: Katarina Stojanovic. Brandon Films.

"Will man be remodeled? Will future man preserve certain old organs?" These words flash on the screen at the beginning of this new film from Yugoslavia. For a minute you wonder—is this going to be another of those philosophical films about Man And His Society?

And the first person you see on the screen is a character right out of a cultural seminar. Dr.

right, and cute too. Tired rich audiences can relax and say, "So *that's* what this youthful rebellion is all about; the kids want just what you and I want, Daddy—a happy marriage, a nice home, and they're really so well-behaved." Nichols doesn't risk showing young people who are doing truly daring, irreverent things, or even young people intelligent enough to seriously challenge the way old people live. All that ennobles Ben, after four years of college, is his virginity. He and Elaine are very bland, and that suits the old folks just fine; bankers and dowagers know that it's "in" to celebrate the young, and in *The Graduate* they can join the celebration with a minimum of fret or identification. The film is actually an insult to the young who aren't so goody-goody—young people who have complicated conflicts of loyalty and affection and who aren't able to make such a decisive moral rejection before they marry the most beautiful sweetheart of Sigma Chi.

Yet young people are falling for the film along with the old people, because it satisfies their most infantile fantasies of alienation and purity in a hostile world, their most simplistic notions of the generational gap, and their mushiest daydreams about the saving power of love. The movie swings on their side, though from a safe, rather patronizing position, and bleats that even when the middle-aged degenerates are cruelest, all you need is a closed-mouth kiss.

As for Nichols's film sense, he does seem to be learning. He still holds shots much too long or dresses them up much too self-consciously—as in the scuba-diving episode, a good idea ruined by clumsy direction. His images are mostly clichéd—not just blurs of flowers and sun-rippled water and car headlights reflecting on his lens, but even monkeys in the San Francisco zoo. He's good when you feel he's enjoying an unpretentiously silly, charming comic touch for its own sake, and he shows a nice eye for good-natured satiric detail (he's hardly a caustic talent)—Mrs. Robinson watching *The Newlywed Game* on TV, a daffy, myopic lady organist at Elaine's wedding. And perhaps it's not fair to give the impression that the film fails because of expediency and calculated compromise; it may be that Nichols actually did not know what he was doing. He has stated recently, in an interview, that Ben and Elaine are not to be envied at film's conclusion, and that Ben will end up exactly like his parents—which suggests attempts at a more harshly sardonic point of view than the film manages to convey. Why do people cheer so exuberantly and walk out so happily if the film means to criticize Ben? Have they all missed the point? Whatever Nichol's intentions, *The Graduate* never really seems to be attacking the young people; all that can be said is that it celebrates them with a strange lack of conviction, which may once have been meant as savage irony, but comes across only as particularly hollow and ineffective film-making. Along with his handling of actors, Nichol's only real success in the movie is with the same sort of lighthearted, inconsequential farce routines he's provided for Neil Simon's comedies on Broadway; there's no point in encouraging him to believe that he's the seriocomic prophet of the plastic generation. Maybe Nichols does have the talent to do something more important—so far he has the energy and the ambition—but we're not going to find out as long as an evasive gimmicky hoax like *The Graduate* is trumpeted as a milestone in American film history.

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Eva Ras as Isabelle in LOVE AFFAIR.

Aleksander Kostic, a jolly, white-haired sexologist, stands in his study and tells us about sexual rites in the good old days. He talks of festivals where "phallobat" priests did acrobatics as maidens escorted 180-foot phalli through the streets. We see illustrations of these festivities. Then, to the accompaniment of a tinkly music box tune, nineteenth-century erotic engravings flash on the screen: Leda under the swan, whores waiting for customers, sex through the peephole, a folk-art drawing of two tiny lovers discovered together on a huge sofa.

This odd erotic assemblage cuts the seminar mood, and the film adopts a straight narrative style. Makavejev, who wrote and directed the film, introduces the characters in their milieu, and we soon become aware of his fascination with the mythology of society, a mythology expressed through media and technology. Makavejev uses the images of mass culture as background for a straightforward story about two luckless people. The film illustrates McLuhan's idea that man becomes the reproductive organ of the technological world.

The characters in the film lead ordinary lives, quite oblivious of the abstractions of technology. As the film opens, we meet two switchboard girls and follow them around Belgrade. They boast about the sexual prowess of their lovers, and chat about pop stars, eat, get their corns pared and their shoes fixed. They climb around street excavations and wander past political posters: a jolly avuncular Mao and a giant godlike Lenin. A parade goes by, with pretty models riding on motorized floats advertising enormous phallic toothpaste tubes. A military chorus sings a marching song. Isabelle, the prettier of the two girls, meets a man, Ahmed, and they go into a café for a beer.

Cut to absolute darkness. A torch lights up the scene and shows us Isabelle's body being dragged out of an underground well. As it is hauled up the shaft, a voice on the soundtrack describes, in matter-of-fact fashion, the scientific techniques of identifying corpses. A cut to this expert in his study. The criminologist, Dr. Zivojin Aleksic, stands in front of a neatly catalogued display of knives, ropes, murder photographs, and other grim souvenirs.

"As crime becomes perfected, it becomes a function of the brain, not the muscles and fists," he tells us. As he talks calmly of criminal theory and act, he shows us a human skull, and the scene cuts to a close-up of Ahmed's hands as he sits in Isabelle's apartment.

Makavejev shows us the mythology of society as transmitted through visual textures. News photographs, posters, erotic diagrams, patriotic songs, archaic blue movies, and cartoons are deftly inserted into the narrative. He further complicates matters by shifting the narrative backwards and forwards in time. The signals and messages of a media-riddled society keep interrupting and modifying the narrative in the odd "natural" way that they do in real

life. Compared with the abstractions of technology, the humdrum lives of Ahmed and Isabelle become remarkable, even heroic.

The shape of the film emerges out of the bits and pieces of data we are given. When Isabelle and Ahmed meet in the bedroom for the first time, they watch "The Fall of the Romanovs" on television. Instead of showing us the lovers in bed, the camera chooses the wonderfully exuberant ikon-smashing sequence from Vertov's *Enthusiasm.* This film segment ends with a shot of a giant statue of a Communist worker, and next we see Ahmed and Isabelle in bed. The lovers talk, get up, wander around the room. The scene cuts to the autopsy room. An elevator hums and Isabelle's body is wheeled forward for dissection.

The complexity of the film results from the interplay of metaphor and narrative. Makavejev intersperses patterns of visual data with a story told in a straightforward, almost documentary style. With the detachment of an anthropologist, Makavejec looks at the people in his native city as though he were examining a remote foreign culture, noting charms and peculiarities and documenting rituals and artifacts. He sees his lovers without sentimentality. Isabelle is a nice ordinary girl, passionate and domestic. Ahmed, slope-shouldered, serious, is a sanitarian who hunts rats in all corners of the natural world—from granaries to slaughterhouses.

The combination of documentary and fiction gives the film its rich texture—it becomes a collage of comic, tragic, and iconic images, like an American newspaper page where horror, human courage, and trivia are all mixed in together. Makavejev speaks English well. In conversation he referred to America as "the country of my childhood," for his early gods and heroes were found in the Serbo-Croatian versions of Mandrake the Magician, Secret Agent X9, and other American comic strips. He finds the ragged textures and glossy untruths of the American newspaper an accurate paradigm of contemporary human experience. And he uses a direct, reportorial camera style. There are no lyrical mannerisms, dissolves, speed-ups, or freeze frames. The actors, Eva Ras as Isabelle and Slobodan Aligrudic as Ahmed, are casual and unselfconscious. The interludes with the visiting experts are presented without theatrical emphasis: the men simply look into the camera and talk.

Comparing the structure of the film to the collage qualities of the American newspaper illustrates how Makavejev exploits the metaphoric character of media. Choosing a switchboard operator as a central character is another McLuhan touch, for the switchboard translates human beings into numbers and links them together electrically. The operator manipulates numbers, and by extension, people. Even the number 69, which comes across the movie switchboard, becomes a circuit figure. These abstractions are processed and transmitted by technology. A photograph record of a propaganda song supplies instant patriotism. The past is televised and can be retrieved at the flick of a dial.

Makavejev shows us the ironic contrasts between the way people live and the way they think they live. Ahmed's little army of rat hunters goes to work, and we are told, in prose and poetry, about their global significance. Isabelle makes pastry, breaking an egg into flour, rolling out the dough until it is tissue-thin, and winding it into a roll with berries in the middle. The scene cuts to a remote wintry chicken coop. Inside is Dr. Kostic. "Ah!" he says, holding up a hen's egg. "I've found what I was looking for!" He then gives a short and moving little speech about the perfection of this egg as a generative organism. "Hens' eggs mean more than scrambled eggs," he concludes fervently. We smile at the intensity of his scientific enthusiasms. The expert is holding up another model. But as we remember the threats to birth and regeneration transmitted by the myths of technology, the mysteries of fertility become perceptible again. The code is unscrambled.

Ironic, witty, stylized, this film about a socialist culture has perhaps more to say to Americans about codification and abstraction. We who are most battered by the patterns of technology seem unable to muster the detach-

ment necessary to make works of art which will function as interpretive models, except perhaps in the fields of painting and sculpture.

"Will man be remodeled? Will future man retain certain old organs?" Makavejev has assembled a film that demonstrates their durability. The lives of Ahmed and Isabelle remain impervious to myth and abstraction. As Wallace Stevens writes of "the motive for metaphor," Makavejev shows us people existing on their own terms, defined only by "the sharp flash, the vital, arrogant, fatal dominant X."

—MARGOT S. KERNAN

THE SLEEPING CAR MURDER

(Compartiment Tueurs) Director: Costa Gavras. Screenplay by Gavras and Sabastian Japrisot, from the novel by Japrisot. Photography: Jean Tournier. Music: Michael Magne. PECF Productions, distributed by Seven Arts-Paramount.

Costa Gavras's *The Sleeping Car Murder* is so polished a first film as to put off "serious" critics who become easily chagrined by slickness—a quality all too often confused with a fault (technique at the expense of substance). *Compartiment Tueurs* is admittedly the sort of picture that makes the same "art houses" which cater to the Vadim clientele, and the movie *is* undeniably glossy. But this gloss, this balance and control, is understandable, considering Gavras's background: born in Greece to Russian parents, he studied in Paris at the IDHEC and worked as assistant to such accomplished film-makers as René Clair, Jacques Demy, and René Clément. Gavras has now completed his second feature, *Un homme de trop,* and if the new film fulfills the promise of the director's initial effort, one can safely say that Gavras took all of his homework seriously.

The Sleeping Car Murder is a tight (92-minute), economic film, shot anamorphic and little influenced by the New Wave. (I suppose the use of 'Scope and the director's preference for a more traditional style have furnished the same "serious" critics with added fodder for their bombastic cannons.) A pedigreed movie, *The Sleeping Car Murder* is much in the traditions of both the American gangster-detective film and the early post-War French thrillers, particularly the Maigret movies and the works of Clouzot. In some respects, we might say that Gavras has been highly rewarded by his association with Clair, whose works are characterized by their sense of organization, direction, and lucidity. And, like the better thrillers of Clément, this first film is quickly paced, has clearly defined characterizations, and provides some sort of comment on man.

Those familiar with the better mystery-suspense fiction of authors like Raymond Chandler, Ed McBain, and Patricia Highsmith, will perhaps think the plot somewhat conventional at first. Sometime during the night on a train run from the provinces to Paris one of the passengers in a Pullman car is brutally, and with no apparent motive, strangled to death. The inspector in charge of tracking down the killer is Yves Montand, who is as much at odds with his influenza as with crime. His job is made increasingly difficult due to the attempted systematic elimination of all possible witnesses —the other occupants of the compartment: three men, including a rebellious young student named Daniel (Jacques Perrin), and a mentally disturbed nonentity known as Cabourg (Michel Piccoli), and two other women, a gifted but has-been actress named Elaine Darres (Simone Signoret), and an attractive young office worker known as Bambi (Catherine Allegret). The third man, of whom little is known, is the first to be assassinated; Piccoli and Miss Signoret soon follow. The killer, finally tracked down and shot, turns out to be none other than Montand's own assistant Jean-Lou. (I divulge this information readily with the feeling that most readers have seen the film by now.) Gavras skillfully manages to conceal the identity of his murderer until the climax, when, as the bits and pieces of the truth slowly seep through the mysteries which conceal them, we suddenly discover that the sleeping car murder may not be quite as motiveless as believed, or that, actually, the crime *is* motiveless, but for a good reason. The

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killer is a policeman, a man with firsthand knowledge of the logic which guides a criminologist; his advantage lies in his position to operate on both sides of the law. His *modus operandi* is ingenious: he uses the sleeping car murder as a decoy to prevent suspicion of anyone who might have motive for killing the true object of his villainy: Elaine Darres, one of the witnesses. The motive soon becomes clear: the actress has been having an affair with the homosexual assassin-detective's boyfriend (Jean-Louis Trintignant), who is tired of her. "Things were getting difficult," Trintignant later tells the police. "I was sick of her possessiveness."

Gavras takes almost nothing for granted, although the mystery story (like the one in *Blow-Up*) becomes something of a means to an end. The film-maker seems less concerned with how than with *why* such crimes are committed, and with the intricate, sometimes inspired, and often abstract workings of both the criminal and detective minds. As in the best of police films—movies like *Detective Story* and *High and Low* — the daily routine of flatfooting is never rendered *en passant*, but as significant, vital detail. The chief's seemingly incidental description of his son ("quite a problem, that boy") becomes a commentary on Daniel (Perrin), who travels with a portmanteau containing a small conga drum, boxing gloves, and a copy of *Das Capital*—but no change of underwear. ("A boy like me must be a great burden on a family like mine," says Perrin. Only moments later, the chief, after speaking angrily of *his* son, admits ". . . I love him.")

The similarity of Perrin to the chief's description of his son strikes me as neither adventitious nor without design. Gavras draws other comparisons between characters in the film; indeed, the picture appears to be structured so that both parallels and antitheses become obvious. Mostly, the relationships in the complex pattern of affinities are of a psychosexual nature. As in Roman Polanski's *Repulsion* and the novels of Alexander Trocchi, virtually every type of sexual attitude is represented. The sleeping car seems at first a kind of microcosm of sexual contrasts. Bambi bears a remarkable resemblance to Elaine Darres (Miss Allegret is the daughter of Simone Signoret; Gavras uses their likeness to good effect); she might *be* Miss Darres as a young woman. But Perrin is the opposite of Piccoli, the civil servant: the youth is chaste before his experience with Bambi, and the older man is characterized as depraved. ("Forty years old and my knees still turn to jelly when I see a woman," Piccoli thinks at one point.) There are, in addition, implications that the third male passenger (the first witness to be assassinated) indulged in extra-marital affairs of a sordid nature, and that the murder victim herself was perhaps a lesbian. The libidinal imagery is thoroughly subtle up to this point, just as it is mostly free of naive psychoanalysis. And, most important, Gavras uses these sexual characteristics primarily as motivations.

Consider the case of Piccoli, a grubby, balding little man who runs his finger tips over a penknife carving (in the woodwork next to a telephone) of a woman's breasts. Since he was once picked up on a morals charge, Piccoli becomes a prime suspect in the case. Jean Tournier's camera, hand-held so that it captures the erratic course of the man's behavior, follows him everywhere: into an alley where he stumbles onto, and runs, trembling, from a grotesque prostitute; across the boulevards, where he scoffs at young couples innocently kissing in public, and into the washroom of a sports arena, where he is violently murdered by someone of an undetermined sex. (A lady friend of mine insists that the assailant is either a woman or a man in drag.) It is in such sequences that Gavras demonstrates not simply a mastery of film technique, but of film art: when the sex-starved civil servant has erotic thoughts about the victim of the sleeping car murder, his sexual fantasies are rendered visually in a highly stylized sequence. We see the woman lying prostrate on a revolving brass bed, confronted by a series of young, virile lovers who touch, fondle, and caress her, but never stay long enough to have sex with her. Piccoli

seems compelled to reduce all women to the status of whores, no matter how high their station in life. Yet he is shown to be completely impotent. Erotism and fantasy supplant actual gratification: *Playboy* and graffiti are the sexual substitutes of our times. (I was reminded of the only great line in *The Savage Eye,* ending with the words ". . . masturbation by proxy.") Piccoli has to assure himself that the murdered woman was a slut, that "anyone could have had her"; but he asks himself, a bit defensively, "Where would I bring her? . . . To this filthy hole of an apartment?"

Gavras might be suggesting that there is something of the perverse in all of us. Perhaps. But I think he is up to something more positive. The sexual antitheses are extended beyond the train milieu. Not merely for the sake of story-telling, Gavras has Bambi accidentally walk off with Miss Darres's purse; later, she and Daniel discover a letter in the bag. They make love, talk quite frankly (even flippantly) about this, their first experience, then read the letter—from Miss Darres to her lover. With calculated precision, Gavras cuts from one scene of love-making (innocent) to another (corrupt): as Bambi reads the letter, the accompanying images depict the actress's first encounter with Eric, the switch-hitter; their growing dependence upon each other, and their gradual alienation. They meet each other at a veterinary hospital where Eric is a student and intern. The atmosphere of the place is sterile in more ways than one: the head professor appears to be something of a cross between Mr. Joyboy and Gorgeous George, and the other students seem far more interested in each other than in the caged and dying animals. Later, Eric and the actress have a rendezvous at an odd café frequented by an assortment of unusual types—including what I can only describe as a bald hermaphrodite. As Bambi reads the diary-like correspondence, her voice is actually dissolved into that of Miss Darres, who goes on to describe the changes in Eric's temperament. ("I began to wonder," she says, "if there was . . . someone else." And there *is:* a man.) In what must be the most subtle and remarkable scene in the film, Gavras shows us glimpses of their typical bedroom activity. Eric, who has been sitting in the actress's bed waiting for her return from a rehearsal, has his head buried between the covers of a male physique magazine. The actress comes in and goes to bed with him. Instead of showing them having sex, Gavras depicts the act symbolically: Trintignant pulls off the woman's hair piece, which he sticks to his chin for a beard, then bites off her false eyebrows, which he uses for a mustache, all as though perhaps he were borrowing something from her—to make himself more masculine somehow. Only by the sex act can the effeminate male be made something more of a man. Eric has been using the actress, just as Daniel has been using Bambi—but for different reasons, one of which is perverted and dishonest; the other, normal and sincere.

Gavras has not been influenced by Freud so much as by Krafft-Ebing. Like Hitchcock, he is something of a moralist; but he has chosen more to observe than condemn. He has the objectivity of a sociologist without the scientist's cold academicism and lack of understanding of individual problems. *The Sleeping Car Murder* condemns only our Victorian naiveté, which denies natural, normal drives and urges, painting in young minds an image of premarital (if not *all*) sexual relations as immoral and unclean. The Erics and Jean-Lou's of this world are products of this Victorian attitude, and the very element of society which so often condemns them is that which is most responsible for them.—JAMES MICHAEL MARTIN.

MAHANAGAR

(The Great City) Direction, script, and music: Satyajit Ray. Photography: Subrata Mitra. Producer: R. D. Barsal. Edward Harrison Films.

Although it has only reached us so far through the San Francisco Festival, *Mahanagar* was a box-office success in India, and it is easy to see why: like Japanese films about "modern girls," or the early Bardot movies, it dramatizes

seems compelled to reduce all women to the status of whores, no matter how high their station in life. Yet he is shown to be completely impotent. Erotism and fantasy supplant actual gratification: *Playboy* and graffiti are the sexual substitutes of our times. (I was reminded of the only great line in *The Savage Eye,* ending with the words ". . . masturbation by proxy.") Piccoli has to assure himself that the murdered woman was a slut, that "anyone could have had her"; but he asks himself, a bit defensively, "Where would I bring her? . . . To this filthy hole of an apartment?"

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a disconcerting shift in the roles of women, and hence in the patterns of family life and emotional life generally. The Bengali heroine, charmingly aghast at her own audacity, goes out of the home to work. Her husband is a badly paid bank clerk and they cannot afford grandfather's spectacles or grandma's spices. So she starts selling knitting-machines door-to-door. The older generation mutters; the wife is tempted by her surprising success and the revolution in attitudes it lays open to her; but in the end the husband, though he has lost his own job, puts his foot down and they revert to happy traditional poverty.

American viewers, living in a culture which went through the emergence of women from the home a generation ago, will mostly find the film sentimental, and for them its appeal will be largely ethnographic: Ray is very good at catching the atmosphere of the Bengali household, the small glances and movements by which the inhabitants of the crowded apartment convey their love or disapproval or resentment. But this "humanist" appeal is not enough to preserve the film from charges of being an exotic soap-opera. However, what exactly *is* a soap-opera? The term need not be merely derisory; for, as astute observers have found in studying the radio serials which have now metamorphosed into television shows, these humdrum accounts of domestic emotional crises, neighborhood scandals, and feminine problems generally have fulfilled a sort of mass-therapy function; they have given American women a fictional world in which they could practice how to confront some of the difficulties of their existence. That these difficulties seemed banal to sophisticated persons, and their solutions generally Polly-annaish, is to condemn the media institution and its managers and collaborators, but not necessarily the form. What ultimately condemned the form in radio and TV, and condemns it when it appears in film, is that, although it pretends to operate on a level of sociological observation, it achieves neither really veristic documentation (whether startling or humdrum) nor the peculiar luminescence we call art; the soap-opera occupies the housewife's fantasy world, but it fails to enlarge it; it is so perfectly, listlessly in tune with the conventional world of its particular moment in history that, like an old newspaper, it can no longer be interesting until it becomes Camp.

The comparison between Ray's *Charulata* and his preceding film *Mahanagar* shows how thin the dividing line may sometimes be. These films have the same actress at their center, the very talented and beautiful Madhabi Mukherjee; they are both "women's pictures," focused on the domestic relations of husband and wife; they share Ray's gently humorous observation of manners. Such films stand or fall, then, on how delicately and intriguingly they are managed: how rich is the invention of character and incident, how skillful and nuanced the playing and dialogue, how interesting the *mise-en-scène*. *Mahanagar,* whether useful or regressive in its relation to the modernizing trend of present-day India, is simpler and more banal than the rather complexly ironic *Charulata* on the first two counts. It has, moreover, a fatal lapse in casting and playing, in the role of the Anglo-Indian girl who forms the chief pole of attraction drawing the wife from her old habits. But it is also dismaying to see that the director who once insisted on the minutest material reality of the village setting for *Pather Panchali* will now settle for shaky back-projection in office scenes shot in a studio. The camera positioning is lax and routine; the loving care which usually goes into Ray's lighting and framing is gone, and the handheld camera which follows the wife to her job interview is as shaky as anything out of New York. These weaknesses are unnerving in a director like Ray, whose *Music Room* is a quietly glorious masterpiece of the cameraman's art—the richness and fluidity of Subrata Mitra's lighting and camera work in that film being unsurpassed anywhere. And, unfortunately, such weaknesses produce a tedium which undermines the remarkable moments when, as often in Ray's films, small events take on large import: the wife sniffing the money in her first pay-envelope, her dispensing of presents to compensate her son for the loss of her presence, her husband's wry reaction to her

success on the job. (He remarks, in an English-language comment of the kind Ray's over-educated, under-paid characters tend to use with barbed self-consciousness: "Exit husband, enter wife.") These are in reality telling human events; what *Mahanagar* lacks is a fit telling of them.—ERNEST CALLENBACH

Short Films

PHENOMENA and SAMADHI

By Jordan Belson.

It was unfair to write about Belson's new films when, because of his resolute resistance to ordinary theatrical presentation, only his earlier *Allures* (Janus "New Cinema" program) could be seen by the public. But, like some remarkable diamond sequestered by a millionaire, they deserve discussion even if they cannot be inspected. And now we hear that *Phenomena* will be included in the "Kinetic Art" programs of shorts Brant Sloan has collected for Universal.

Re-Entry was the beginning of the looser style which has followed *Allures;* its images are suggestive of space travel, cosmic forces, rebirth, mystical or drug states. *Phenomena* (1965) carries this kind of imagery to what seems a more systematic level. It begins with relatively mundane matters: there is even—unique in Belson's work—a recognizable though distorted image of a singer, with rock on the track; this is followed by a section of garbled *Lieder,* and evidently they constitute Belson's consideration of culture, Pop or Official. The utterly nonverbal nature of the films, which of course is one of the chief signs of Belson's immense skill as an artist, makes them impossible to render on paper. *Phenomena* contains dots of color, fluted shapes suggestive of organ pipes, multiply repeated small arch-like shapes, cloudy intermixing forms melting into one another like visible gases, flame-like sinking shapes; its sounds are hisses, shrieks, whirs. But such a description cannot hope to call up the uncanny emotions the films arouse, which are those of some kind of mystical experience.

What are the films "about"? Belson emphasizes that the films are the record of their own discovery; making them provides the focus of his extraordinarily ascetic life. The films are at once the results and the devices of contemplation. Hence Belson's reluctance to have his films treated as public amusements, even within the so-called underground cinema. The films have nothing to do, I hastily add, with the "psychedelic" films now current; they are very carefully structured, impeccable in craftsmanship (Belson has even designed his own leader for focusing), and magical in their effects. Belson is not using the medium as an exhibitionist plaything; he is interested in what makes the soul reverberate at its deepest levels; and films with this aim, he believes, should be seen privately or not at all.

It turns out that many of the images (and sounds) in Belson's films have counterparts in the descriptions of mystical experiences reported, for instance, in Hatha Yoga. And *Samadhi* (1967) is Belson's most direct approach to such forbidding material. "Samadhi" is Sanskrit for "that state of consciousness in which the individual soul merges with the universal soul." This ultimate condition of consciousness is hence nonsensorial; the film is about approaches to it. It begins with a blast of red-yellow cloud, with huge wind noises—the turmoil of creation? Blue cloudy shapes emerge, revolving in space. Slowly a strong central orientation develops in the images: holes which transform into spherical shapes, whirls of filamented gaseous forms. A globular mass of light, insubstantial yet solid, liquescent, with boundaries yet impossible of definition, slowly and majestically revolves. This echoes

success on the job. (He remarks, in an English-language comment of the kind Ray's over-educated, under-paid characters tend to use with barbed self-consciousness: "Exit husband, enter wife.") These are in reality telling human events; what *Mahanagar* lacks is a fit telling of them.—ERNEST CALLENBACH

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the last image of *Phenomena,* which was, Belson says, what gave him courage to attempt *Samadhi.* This magical shape is perhaps the world, or is it an atom or some other elemental particle? It spins with an implacable grace . . . Then it is surrounded by a blazing ring of unbearably intense red; flames and pulses of movement pour out, with loud shrieks and gong-like noises on the track; the colors become incredibly delicate and lovely, and we see through a hole—the eye of the world? Then the whole screen is in huge movement, turning. Belson says the film is structured by the breathing movement of inhalation and exhalation crucial to yoga disciplines. At several points, the screen grows brighter and brighter, with light yellow tones, like looking into the sun—a strange and powerful experience. (In yoga, Samadhi is prefaced by blinding white lights; light perceptions, "tattric lights," are thought to be produced by energies flowing through certain nerve centers or "chakras." And the thunderous roaring, bell-sounds, hums, and so on of Belson's tracks have explicit yoga counterparts too.)

It needs emphasizing that Belson is an abstract film-maker but *not* an animator. His images derive entirely from live photography, which he does himself. (He is by now a formidable technician, though his studio-living quarters are plain and inexpensively equipped; he entirely controls his light intensities in shooting, for instance, rather than relying on imperfect lab techniques.) Belson is not "making things up"—he is searching *in reality* for the elements to comprise the finished films. No matter how complex the transformational process, this contact with the world strongly affects the films. Viewing *Samadhi,* you might take it to be the fantasies of a disembodied dream-state. But what is most remarkable about Belson is his ability to connect such apparently abstract material with our feelings—which must, on some level, mean our experiences as well as his. It is this which makes him our greatest abstract film poet: he has found how to combine the vision of the outer and inner eye.

—Ernest Callenbach

NOW THAT THE BUFFALO'S GONE

By Burton Gershfield. Distribution: Theater Arts Dept., UCLA, Los Angeles 90024.

As originally conceived, *Now That The Buffalo's Gone* was to have been a visual interpretation of one of Buffy Sainte-Marie's Indian songs, "My Country, 'Tis Of Thy People You're Dying." In a way it still is. In form and atmosphere, in its hauntingly sad elegy to the lost heritage of the plains Indian, the film still has a structure taken from the music. But somewhere between conception and completion Burton Gershfield went beyond a visualization of the song (not used, incidentally, in the completed film) to compose his own beautiful requiem to the Indian.

"Compose" is here used advisedly, since it is the way Gershfield, a student film-maker at UCLA, has composed his visuals, rather than the intrinsic value of his basic material, that gives the work its glowing originality. Using stills, superimpositions, live action, passages from old westerns photographed from the television screen, Gershfield has woven myth, ritual, history, actuality into something approaching that form of epic-documentary of the American scene evolved by Bruce Baillie for *Mass* and *Quixote.*

As with Baillie, the images possess a symbolic meaning above and beyond their actual values as record; they exist simultaneously on several levels in much the same way the one-dimensional figures in prehistoric cave paintings exist as both reality and symbol. Through the techniques he has utilized Gershfield has been able to present an outline of history that, while it runs a mere seven minutes, still covers all the salient mythic and historical points, and divides naturally into three sections: the freedom of the Indian before the coming of the white man . . . the battle for survival against settler and soldier . . . the defeat and degradation of the Indian peoples.

The first section, scored to an Indian chant and to the natural sounds of wind, water, and the hunt, uses color footage contact-printed onto a color negative stock. This not only re-

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verses the original image but, more importantly, it drastically alters the original color combinations, distorting some, eliminating others. Thus, while the action is documentary footage of tribal life, the images themselves move dreamlike across the screen in strange, oxydized colorings, and the sequence ends on ghostly warriors, filmed in elegiac Fordian close-ups, riding out under burnt-orange skies to hunt the phantom herds of white buffalo.

But even as the warriors ride to the hunt the drums of the military are on the soundtrack and the second section, the Indian Wars, has begun. Using black-and-white footage taken from old westerns, this section of narrative again makes an emotional and symbolic factor of its color manipulations. Negative and positive are woven together, superimposed over each other, with the positive image printed red, and the negative image tinted blue. Thus the myths perpetuated by the movies are reversed by an almost allegorical use of color, and one strongly identifies with the Indian as he goes down in defeat. And then, across the faces of the warriors, are superimposed the symbols of their degradation, the barbed-wire, and the images of their defeat, the treaty-makers, the trains rattling through the land bringing settlers to the pacified prairies and taking the tribes into exile.

The last section is one of mourning. It begins with an assemblage of still photographs of Indian warriors taken from the archives, rapidly alternating between positive and negative frames of the same image. This strobe-like effect and the machine-gun rapidity of the alternating rhythms carries the strong visual feeling of life and hope flickering by. And the film moves to its close with the ritual of a warrior's burial while the death-chant sounds on the track. The chant changes to a heartbeat, is drowned out by thunder, and the images repeat the arid orange/red/green landscapes from the opening of the film.

The beauty of Gershfield's film is that, while its emotional impact is immediate (audiences with whom I've seen it have always applauded at the end) the subtleties of its construction, the compression and power of the visual techniques, its sense of immediacy and compassion, are only comprehended through repeated viewings. It is, I think, one of the loveliest cinematic tributes yet paid to the people on white America's conscience.—RICHARD WHITEHALL

Books

ONE REEL A WEEK

By Fred Balshofer and Arthur C. Miller. (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967. $6.75)

The movies began as a con game, which seems thoroughly appropriate, since the object of the game was to exploit a mechanized illusion. At its heart was a piece of machinery, patented by Edison, for imparting intermittent motion to a strip of perforated celluloid. The Edison patents, though they rested on largely groundless claims, were valid (i.e., enforceable); the effort to enforce them cluttered the Edison payroll with detectives (i.e., spies); and to thwart the salaried curiosity of the spies, entrepreneurs took to hiring very large and substantially muscled adjutants, whose job was "to stand by the camera and discourage anyone from getting too close." A suitable entrepreneur "had been around and was nobody's chump": for instance Charlie Bauman, a former streetcar conductor who "liked to boast of putting a nickel in his pocket out of every four fares he rang up." A

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young man breaking into such a game in 1905 spent much of his time in his employer's basement, making pirated copies of French films ("It required little intelligence to know that this was shady business, but Mr. Lubin carried on the practice as if it were perfectly ordinary and completely legitimate"). The Frenchmen made life difficult for pirates by imprinting a trademark on every frame; the pirate's apprentice accordingly painted it off every frame, with dexterity that would have done credit to an engraver of the Lord's Prayer. And the economic impetus for such mad goings-on came from the insatiable delight of cash customers in a flickering illusion capable of deceiving nobody for an instant. Today we hear about the Art of the Cinema.

Much of what passes for cinema history has depended on an allied art, public relations, amid whose exuberant woody lianas scholars have subsequently had to advance with machetes. Eighty thousand critical words by Gordon Hendricks, honed by more than 300 footnotes, were required to subdue the tangle of allegations which gives Edison credit for anything more than pertinacity in securing patents (*The Edison Motion Picture Myth,* 1961). The present book, however, seems unlikely to exact corrective vigors. It is neither written from old press releases nor intent on bolstering anyone's claims to priority, and though subject like all memoirs to the simplifications of memory, it is pleasantly untainted by flackery's ersatz ozone.

The authors tell, turn and turn about, their vivid tale of how it was to dodge the spies and grind the cameras and make the prints, and what early actors were like and early sets, how dungeon walls were slowly dipped into tanks that flood waters might seem to rise around Pearl White, and how as the movies finally settled in Los Angeles a last wave of entrepreneurs, the toughest of all, not amiable peddlers of basement duplicates nor chisellers of trolley-car nickels but big-money dealers accustomed to being paid heed, consolidated the modern industry out of its handicraft phase. Their day came because the product crafted was from the first so standardized, and so dependent on standardization, that the wills that shaped it grew inevitably obsessed with control.

Control, not content; the industry, not the script; and though latterly the key to effective control was a distribution network, in Balshofer–Miller times it was the camera; hence the pertinence of those Edison patents. First came the oscillating claw and the perforated film, devoted to such two-second trifles as *Fred Ott's Sneeze;* only long afterward came such intellectual refinements (called "story properties") as *The Perils of Pauline* and *The Song of Bernadette* (Miller photographed both of these, thirty years apart). The history of the movies is reducible to a sequence of efforts to (a) safeguard the chance of exploiting an illusion-machine while (b) devising things to do with it, given the mysterious fact that a large public would pay, and pay repeatedly, to watch the shadows flicker. The public was hooked on the machine, not the photoplay, and was at first entranced to glimpse, through a hole in the top of the Kinetoscope, a tiny black-and-white man bowing and raising his hat. Soon batches of several dozen were sitting in front of a white sheet to watch *The Firemen's Parade on Fifth Avenue* and "exciting stories of the dime novel type." To collect repeated admissions from the same people it was only necessary to vary the scenes represented. Narrative excitement was not essential; five years after *The Great Train Robbery* we hear of distributors dickering with Balshofer for exclusive rights on 2,000 feet of Coney Island sights: a boat splashing into the pool, a car looping the loop. The fascinating thing was simply movement, reconstituted in that silvery light. Movement came to mean horses and horses westerns; the essential plot-line, growing directly out of the exigencies of the medium, was the impact of motion (e.g., outlaws) on immobility (e.g., a town). And yet within a few years we begin to heart about an employee called the art director, whose function, with the aid of elaborate drawings and *trompe l'oeil* devices of scale, was to make large sets look utterly realistic.

Films, in short, had begun as early as 1916 to imitate stage drama; the degenerate stage drama, moreover, that exacts of its carpenters individual hand-crafted leaves on property trees, with for preference a few pneumatically operated birds, to make the Forest of Arden look suitably botanical. This sort of thing, as we learn from his *Letters*, was exacerbating the young W. B. Yeats in 1899, though it seems also to have spurred his famous interest in clockwork birds for a mental Byzantium. It was a bad turn for the drama, and a suicidal turn, it would seem, for mechanized moving shadows thrown on a bedsheet.

Such distractions interested neither Chaplin nor Keaton, whose genius flowered during the following decade; but the great clowns proved not to be in the mainstream of the industry, which discarded them as soon as sound gave it an excuse. What on earth was the industry thinking of? Money, certainly; and hence respectability, very likely; a genteel status, remote from peep-show origins. Hence its subjection, at incredible cost in technical painstaking, to the pretensions of Drama. Hence, concurrently with the heyday of the great comedians, the recruitment of the likes of John Barrymore. Hence shoals of adapted plays, including—what now seem Keatonian in their madness—ventures into silent Shakespeare. Hence, after sound, a dreary procession of adapted books, with descriptive passages for the cameras to pick up, and dialogue for the microphones, while America's schoolmarms and librarians clucked approval. The genteel tradition that began in Boston ended its days in Hollywood, a coddled and venerated centenarian, stipulating from its sick-bed that a pool-room shyster like W. C. Fields should be put to decent employment as a supporting player in *David Copperfield.*

Such reflections, a sort of subliminal soundtrack, are apt to accompany the readings of this unique joint memoir. The book's virtue is that is makes no such points; its authors are intent, like the primitive camera, on incidents, which we feel confident have not been shaped by a thesis. Thesis spinning is the reader's privilege, as he encounters Edison spies and energetic grifters, improvised scripts and piano-wired stunts, mummers turned Thespians and taking themselves seriously, mood music on sets and a directors' pecking order keyed to the possession of the largest megaphone, all in an air rendered heady by larger and larger sums of money: while gradually about the frenzied improvisation there forms, quite as though Emily Post had taken in hand the Keystone Kops, a colloidal respectability, setting, thickening. Investments grew simply too large to improvise with, and theaters too sumptuous to contain anything less than the burning of Atlanta. By that time the moving shadows had left off jiggling, and were colored as well, and the screen had ceased to waver in strong drafts; and there were very few left in the theater or on the sound stage to recall the picaresque, far from innocent days of One Reel a Week.

—HUGH KENNER

AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF THE HORROR FILM

By Carlos Clarens. (New York: Putnam's, 1967. $6.95)

Carlos Clarens's new book is certainly the best history of the horror film now available in English. Although it is primarily an extremely comprehensive chronology of the genre from its beginnings to the present, the book also finds plenty of room for astute analysis of many important films. Clarens's remarkable gift of synthesis provides a further, most welcome boon: meaningful descriptions of a number of early "lost" films. The book is rich in fact and in insight, and should prove informative and interesting to everyone from the horror novice to the most accomplished devotee.

My strong admiration for the work as a factual sourcebook is not diminished in the least by my numerous disagreements with Clarens over evaluations, ranging from those of individual films to those of broader stretches of production tradition. Because of space lim-

Films, in short, had begun as early as 1916 to imitate stage drama; the degenerate stage drama, moreover, that exacts of its carpenters individual hand-crafted leaves on property trees, with for preference a few pneumatically operated birds, to make the Forest of Arden look suitably botanical. This sort of thing, as we learn from his *Letters*, was exacerbating the young W. B. Yeats in 1899, though it seems also to have spurred his famous interest in clockwork birds for a mental Byzantium. It was a bad turn for the drama, and a suicidal turn, it would seem, for mechanized moving shadows thrown on a bedsheet.

Such distractions interested neither Chaplin nor Keaton, whose genius flowered during the following decade; but the great clowns proved not to be in the mainstream of the industry, which discarded them as soon as sound gave it an excuse. What on earth was the industry thinking of? Money, certainly; and hence respectability, very likely; a genteel status, remote from peep-show origins. Hence its subjection, at incredible cost in technical painstaking, to the pretensions of Drama. Hence, concurrently with the heyday of the great comedians, the recruitment of the likes of John Barrymore. Hence shoals of adapted plays, including—what now seem Keatonian in their madness—ventures into silent Shakespeare. Hence, after sound, a dreary procession of adapted books, with descriptive passages for the cameras to pick up, and dialogue for the microphones, while America's schoolmarms and librarians clucked approval. The genteel tradition that began in Boston ended its days in Hollywood, a coddled and venerated centenarian, stipulating from its sick-bed that a pool-room shyster like W. C. Fields should be put to decent employment as a supporting player in *David Copperfield.*

Such reflections, a sort of subliminal soundtrack, are apt to accompany the readings of this unique joint memoir. The book's virtue is that is makes no such points; its authors are intent, like the primitive camera, on incidents, which we feel confident have not been shaped by a thesis. Thesis spinning is the reader's privilege, as he encounters Edison spies and energetic grifters, improvised scripts and piano-wired stunts, mummers turned Thespians and taking themselves seriously, mood music on sets and a directors' pecking order keyed to the possession of the largest megaphone, all in an air rendered heady by larger and larger sums of money: while gradually about the frenzied improvisation there forms, quite as though Emily Post had taken in hand the Keystone Kops, a colloidal respectability, setting, thickening. Investments grew simply too large to improvise with, and theaters too sumptuous to contain anything less than the burning of Atlanta. By that time the moving shadows had left off jiggling, and were colored as well, and the screen had ceased to waver in strong drafts; and there were very few left in the theater or on the sound stage to recall the picaresque, far from innocent days of One Reel a Week.

—HUGH KENNER

AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF THE HORROR FILM

By Carlos Clarens. (New York: Putnam's, 1967. $6.95)

Carlos Clarens's new book is certainly the best history of the horror film now available in English. Although it is primarily an extremely comprehensive chronology of the genre from its beginnings to the present, the book also finds plenty of room for astute analysis of many important films. Clarens's remarkable gift of synthesis provides a further, most welcome boon: meaningful descriptions of a number of early "lost" films. The book is rich in fact and in insight, and should prove informative and interesting to everyone from the horror novice to the most accomplished devotee.

My strong admiration for the work as a factual sourcebook is not diminished in the least by my numerous disagreements with Clarens over evaluations, ranging from those of individual films to those of broader stretches of production tradition. Because of space lim-

itations, I'll keep the discussion down to one set of evaluations from each of those categories.

Clarens is one of many Whale aficionados who put *Bride of Frankenstein* above *Frankenstein* among the great achievements of the genre. He calls it "the high point of [Whale's] career," and says that it ". . . remains, along with *King Kong*, Hollywood's finest moment of unbridled imagination." Now, *Bride* has many qualities to recommend it, but very few to recommend it as a successful horror film. There are certainly moments of excellent tense narrative in the style of *Frankenstein*, but they are interlarded with a great deal of campy foolishness (most of it centered around Ernest Thesiger's Dr. Pretorius) that destroys the serious tone of the film. While these sequences are delightfully whimsical in themselves, they produce what is in effect a mixture of genres resulting in a film that is neither fish nor fowl, neither horror nor parody, but something that vacillates rapidly from one narrative attitude to the other. Whale has all of the sequences well under control, but the continual clash of tones among the sequences damages the film very seriously. Then, on top of that, there is a further mismatching that quite does it in: Franz Waxman's incredibly inept score. Waxman ignored or misunderstood Whale's intentions so consistently (and so destructively) throughout the picture that the result could be used as a perfect object lesson for aspiring composers in how to destroy a director who had offended them. Actually, the music is so completely out of tune with the visuals that one can only imagine that Waxman neither saw the film nor talked to Whale prior to composing the score. It appears rather that he worked from a rough story breakdown that gave no indication of what was really going on in each sequence.

Returning to the elements over which Whale had control, we see that the great strength of *Frankenstein* appears exactly in that area where *Bride* fails: tonal unity. In *Frankenstein*, everything is of a piece, Whale has created a completely organic narrative. There is never any doubt about his attitude toward the work he is assembling, and there is none of the troublesome romantic irony that abounds in *Bride*.

A great deal of *Frankenstein's* unity depends on Whale's use of camera and sets to create a consistent visual attitude toward his story. Originally a theater designer himself, Whale undoubtedly took plenty of time to advise on the sets for *Frankenstein*. Practically every set used in the picture has a strong diagonal or horizontal thrust built into it, compositionally dividing into two distinct and threatening parts. Whale has a phenomenal talent for conveying depth and presence through his décor; when he puts his actors into it, he manages to bring us into the rooms right along with them. Even shots that do not emphasize the sets are marvelously balanced. When Henry and Dr. Waldmann converse in the laboratory, a coffeepot on the table changes a potentially dull two-shot into a tense triangular composition. There are only a few scattered moments in the whole picture when the actors are blocked and shot according to ordinary conventions. *Frankenstein* has the visual consistency and angularity of the German-made Lang films, but it surpasses them in Whale's flawless sense of dynamic composition. While a good number of *Bride's* shots show this same sensibility, there are many more to suggest very strongly that Whale didn't much care about putting together another masterpiece along the lines of the original.

The cutting of the two films bears out that impression. *Bride* is rather flabbily cut, largely because it was flabbily shot, while *Frankenstein* is an editorial tour de force, often using a linking principle that can be seen in the early sound Clairs, in Eisenstein's montages, and in much of Resnais. The process involves creation and satisfaction of visual expectation from shot to shot, that is, carrying over the first shot's visual implications into the second shot; a motion begun or implied in the first shot is continued, but with different framing that specifically enhances the motion, in the following shot. The effect is analogous to that produced by an enjambement between two

lines of poetry: it carries us from shot to shot with much more powerful involvement than does ordinary editing. The most obvious example of this technique in *Frankenstein* is found in the sequence in which the monster is first seen alive. With each of his motions, the camera cuts to a new angle and distance, drawing out the revelation of his horrible countenance for as long a time as is dramatically possible. Finally he turns to face the camera, and Whale cuts straight in, in a series of three concentrically framed shots. This sequence was shot with an editor's eye.

Now let us turn from the specific to the general. Clarens passes off the work of Hammer Studios as exercises in sadism rather than good horror, while exalting recent Mexican production as "the last outpost of the old-fashioned, pre-psychological monster-rallying horror show in which science has not come to science fiction but is more the practice of black magicians and spirits of the night." These sets of evaluations seem strange indeed. In the Mexican films, the actors move mechanically (not to say zombie-like) through a number of utterly dull, computerized situations. They constantly tell us they are afraid, that danger lurks around every corner, etc., and it is fairly obvious that the director thinks everything really is pretty fearsome in the film he's putting together, but there is never anything in the film to convince us, to draw us into the purported horror we keep hearing about. Perhaps these pictures amuse those who like to laugh down their noses at contrived, naive imitations, but surely that shouldn't earn them praise as good, old-fashioned horror movies.

The Hammer films, on the other hand, may be too polished, too smoothly executed to please hard-core thirties' horror fans. They may not be naive or clumsy enough to attract one type of viewer, and too mannered and stylized in a rather unfashionable way to please another type. But putting speculation aside, it is hard for me to see how anyone could fail at least to appreciate the Hammer films — the earlier Fisher films, not the most recent ones, which, I must admit, have seriously degenerated—for being tremendously good at creating a completely sustained atmosphere of horror, suspense, and evil. Jimmy Sangster's scripts for such films as *Horror of Dracula* and *Curse of Frankenstein* are impressively literate, showing a fuller understanding of the psychological and philosophical underpinnings of the various tales involved than perhaps any horror film made before their time. The acting is generally excellent, whether Fisher drags it out of a poor actor like Lee or simply lets a brilliant one like Cushing go his own way. The films are indeed jarring and violent, but the jolts are there to serve a purpose: to unsettle and involve the audience, to frighten it, to create suspense and malaise among it. Certainly this technique can degenerate into a sort of exploitation-oriented display of sadism for its own sake (and I think that it has in the most recent Hammers, such as *Dracula, Prince of Darkness*), but neither the simple potential nor the realized potential should have any bearing on our appreciation of the technique when it is integrally and effectively used in any film.

As I said earlier, none of these differences of opinion lessens my admiration for Clarens's book as a chronology and general study. Almost exhaustive in its coverage (it neglects only a few major films, e.g., *Blood and Roses*), it also contains a good number of fascinating stills, many of them quite rare, and an excellent seventy-page appendix covering casts and credits for approximately 400 pictures. This book is, as they say, a must. —R. C. DALE

INTERVIEWS WITH FILM DIRECTORS

Edited by Andrew Sarris. (New York: Bobbs Merrill, 1967. $10.00)

The chief American prophet of the "*auteur* theory" —whose founders at *Cahiers du Cinéma* more modestly and carefully called it a *politique,* or policy—has gathered together 40 interviews with well-known directors. (Several are prepared statements rather than interviews.) The subjects range from the everywhere respectable through the much

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Despite the inevitable scatter of a book by many hands, and translations which do not always serve foreign directors well, the volume contains much that is germane to an understanding of the men creating our contemporary cinema. Oddly enough, too, the matter-of-fact tone many of them take about their work is a helpful corrective to the excesses of unbridled *auteur*-ism. (John Ford: "It is wrong to liken a director to an author. He is more like an architect, if he is creative. . . .")—E.C.

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PERIODICALS

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BARNARD NORRIS, *Manager*, Periodicals Dept.,

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Short Notices

Bedazzled and **Doctor Faustus** are mod and trad versions of the same theme. In the latter, directors Richard Burton and Professor Nevill Coghill avoid tedious overreverence for Marlowe's play, but their busy camera, process shots and *Fantastic Voyage*–style sets rarely strike a cinematic spark. The point made by the film is not so much that Faustus (Burton) gets little satisfaction out of his infernal power—he does at least seem to enjoy Helen of Troy (Elizabeth Taylor)—but that he doesn't really know what to do with it, and has to fall back on petty tricks like blowing raspberries at the Pope. The Faust-figure of *Bedazzled,* a timid little short-order cook (Dudley Moore), knows perfectly well what he wants—mutual bliss with the waitress (Eleanor Bron)—but he too spends much of his time blowing raspberries. This is the emergency signal for annulling his seven wishes if they go wrong—and the cunning Devil (Peter Cook) makes sure that each of them does have a catch in it. Cook and Moore provided the screenplay, which is so solid and inventive that Stanley Donen rarely has a chance to stray into empty arabesques. Verbal wit is to be expected from graduates of "Beyond the Fringe"; but the film also has cinematic wit of a high order, above all in the variety of the wish-worlds in which Moore tries to get his soul's worth of satisfaction.—WILLIAM JOHNSON

Camelot. By rights this ought to be a bore. It runs well over three hours with intermission. Millions of dollars were lavished on inessentials like the huge throne-room set. (The most spectacular scene in the film is the wedding, thanks not to Guenevere's $12,000 dress but to the candles which punctuate the darkness—and it could have been shot in a warehouse.) The stage musical never clicked like *My Fair Lady,* mainly because Lerner and Loewe tried to keep both the farce and tragedy of T. H. White's book while eliminating the gradual transition between the two; and the film does nothing to ease the difficulty. Joshua Logan's directing style is generally ponderous: his use of fashionable jump cuts for "C'est Moi," which spans Lancelot's journey from France to Camelot, makes *The Sound of Music* look positively nimble. And yet, like a raddled and ruinous old trouper as soon as the spotlight hits her, the film commands attention. One reason is the sheer power of the legend as White presented it. Arthur's determination to sustain his ideal against misfortune and the attrition of time touches many chords in today's world. (Some of Arthur's speeches could be applied directly to Vietnam.) The second and third reasons for the film's success are the principals. Richard Harris, having roamed the world in search of good parts, realizes after a few scenes that he's found one at last, and makes the most of it. Vanessa Redgrave gives Guenevere just the right blend of feyness and queenliness. Their duet, "What the Simple Folk Do"—in which, long after Lancelot has come between them, they briefly recapture their old gaiety—becomes one of the most memorable scenes in any screen musical. *Camelot* is Hollywood at its worst and best.

—WILLIAM JOHNSON

Body and Soul was written and directed by Renee Daalder (of Scorpio Films, Amsterdam), a young member of the Dutch "new wave" group (Verstappen, De La Parra, etc.). A sly satire on the dumbstruck world of alienation by that phenomenon of our time—the fulltime bodybuilder—the film shows us a few hours in the life of a physical culturist named Jan (perfectly embodied and played by Gerard Oosterman). The spectator is permitted to observe Jan's somnambulistic, ritual exercises in the gym, where narcissism is disguised as "cool," and one also experiences humor when the narrator comments upon Jan's unspoken thoughts or the consternation of the boy's mother "who liked him as he used to be." The chief dilemma of the hero involves the convention of being clothed, for garments do not seem to fit or they completely disguise the physical attributes that he has striven to make perfect. Daalder uses a party sequence for his climax: Jan is totally ignored until the jaded guests discover that he is a bodybuilder, whereupon they strip him and subject him to a humiliating game in which he is forced to portray Atlas. This action causes Jan to react for the first time in his life—his passivity vanishes, but for an utterly absurd and pathetically childish reason. The abrupt ending takes one off-guard, making the film seem fascinatingly unfinished, but it has been learned that Daalder is making a sequel, which, one supposes, may round out this interlude into a short feature. At any rate, as it stands, *Body and Soul* reveals a bright, promising director with a sharp sense of humor; Daalder is the first to explore the tragicomedy of those men who transform themselves into mute Adonises, admiring their muscles but ignoring those minute outcries from their undeveloped souls.—ALBERT JOHNSON

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Body and Soul was written and directed by Renee Daalder (of Scorpio Films, Amsterdam), a young member of the Dutch "new wave" group (Verstappen, De La Parra, etc.). A sly satire on the dumbstruck world of alienation by that phenomenon of our time—the fulltime bodybuilder—the film shows us a few hours in the life of a physical culturist named Jan (perfectly embodied and played by Gerard Oosterman). The spectator is permitted to observe Jan's somnambulistic, ritual exercises in the gym, where narcissism is disguised as "cool," and one also experiences humor when the narrator comments upon Jan's unspoken thoughts or the consternation of the boy's mother "who liked him as he used to be." The chief dilemma of the hero involves the convention of being clothed, for garments do not seem to fit or they completely disguise the physical attributes that he has striven to make perfect. Daalder uses a party sequence for his climax: Jan is totally ignored until the jaded guests discover that he is a bodybuilder, whereupon they strip him and subject him to a humiliating game in which he is forced to portray Atlas. This action causes Jan to react for the first time in his life—his passivity vanishes, but for an utterly absurd and pathetically childish reason. The abrupt ending takes one off-guard, making the film seem fascinatingly unfinished, but it has been learned that Daalder is making a sequel, which, one supposes, may round out this interlude into a short feature. At any rate, as it stands, *Body and Soul* reveals a bright, promising director with a sharp sense of humor; Daalder is the first to explore the tragicomedy of those men who transform themselves into mute Adonises, admiring their muscles but ignoring those minute outcries from their undeveloped souls.—ALBERT JOHNSON

Short Notices

Bedazzled and **Doctor Faustus** are mod and trad versions of the same theme. In the latter, directors Richard Burton and Professor Nevill Coghill avoid tedious overreverence for Marlowe's play, but their busy camera, process shots and *Fantastic Voyage*–style sets rarely strike a cinematic spark. The point made by the film is not so much that Faustus (Burton) gets little satisfaction out of his infernal power—he does at least seem to enjoy Helen of Troy (Elizabeth Taylor)—but that he doesn't really know what to do with it, and has to fall back on petty tricks like blowing raspberries at the Pope. The Faust-figure of *Bedazzled,* a timid little short-order cook (Dudley Moore), knows perfectly well what he wants—mutual bliss with the waitress (Eleanor Bron)—but he too spends much of his time blowing raspberries. This is the emergency signal for annulling his seven wishes if they go wrong—and the cunning Devil (Peter Cook) makes sure that each of them does have a catch in it. Cook and Moore provided the screenplay, which is so solid and inventive that Stanley Donen rarely has a chance to stray into empty arabesques. Verbal wit is to be expected from graduates of "Beyond the Fringe"; but the film also has cinematic wit of a high order, above all in the variety of the wish-worlds in which Moore tries to get his soul's worth of satisfaction.—WILLIAM JOHNSON

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Dutchman is important because it puts on the screen emotional intensities about black-white relations in America that are strictly verboten in Sidney Poitier vehicles; but it is a failure as a film adaptation from the stage. LeRoi Jones's script is a powerful evocation of the personal encounter between a fascinatingly sick-sensitive white girl and an uneasily cool Negro man she picks up in a deserted subway car. But the film never finds a style: it has no stylistic equivalent that can permit (as did the ingenious conventions devised for *Marat/Sade* and *Virginia Woolf)* the credible utilization of stage dialogue. Only the insinuating, malicious cleverness of Shirley Knight's "Lula" operates on the level of camera reality—and this because the emotional volatility and provocative menace she embodies is a kind of "projection" we *expect* to find faintly suspect; hence we are not surprised when the camera indeed so presents it. Clay, although very well acted by Al Freeman, Jr., strikes us as almost too real; like the flat, too-distant camerawork and the meticulous decor of the subway car, he seems out of joint with the script—which is trying to show us that this is a mythic train transporting the consciences of the races in America. (It is not, despite appearances, a real train which stops, opens its doors, and takes on or discharges passengers—other passengers do appear, but they materialize without ever entering.) But mythic trains cannot be photographed like real ones; the play's assumptions and the camera's assumptions have not been resolved. And the climax, when Lula's goading has driven Clay to be candid about his feelings, is set up as a long, ranting monologue; no actor on the screen could cope with the extended tirade Jones gives Freeman here—or rather, does not *quite* give to him, but partly retains as his own *mots d'auteur.* The startling coda in which Lula stabs Clay, enjoying a maniacal, sexual frenzy as she twists the knife, is extremely powerful and should have been left as the ending; the suggestion of a new identical cycle, while it may be effectively symbolic on the stage, begs too many questions on film. All this does not gainsay, however, that *Dutchman* is one of those remarkable psychodrama-style works which can pound home the emotional heart of matters heretofore untouched in the American film. By comparison, its only real predecessor, *Shadows,* now seems pale and oversimplified; it is a landmark, although not a filmic one.—E.C.

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Fade In is one of those terrible B-movies, seen inadvertently, that prove to have peripheral interest. First, its genesis: This film, made by Paramount, takes place on and around the location set (in Moab, Utah) of a major new Paramount film, *Blue;* it concerns the love affair between an assistant film editor on *Blue* and a Moab cowboy who is hired to drive for the film company. The idea of shooting two movies for practically the price of one, and using one of the movies to advertise the other, is so clever an idea that I wonder why no one thought of it before. Besides, the impact of a big movie company on a small town *is* a promising theme, but this film flops because it never looks beyond A Man and A Woman. (We have now come full circle; Lelouch's imitation of Hollywood movies has itself been imitated by Hollywood—in *Fade In* a driver and a film editor dance through ever-available gorgeous romantic landscapes as a hysterical Lelouch-like camera races around them —though the Americans, by some perverse twist, have added an unhappy ending this time). *Fade In* proves that even cheapie Hollywood movies are through with linearity; this is a primer introduction to the technical experiments of the last several years—shuffling of time, fantasy and reality, color and black-and-white, with the latest, too, in sexual candor—we see the heroine taking her birth-control pills, and we also see lots of fairly explicit lovemaking (though as in most recent European films, the cuts are so fast and the flesh so blurry that you can't tell quite what's going on). For all of its cleverness, the film is still dreadful, because the dialogue is painfully self-conscious, the direction plodding (the photography itself — by William Fraker, one of the best new Hollywood cinematographers—is exquisite, but he hasn't been asked to photograph anything but travel poster sunsets and mountains and desert lakes), and the acting abysmal. Our man and woman are played by Burt Reynolds and Barbara Loden, as unattractive, awkward, tiresome a couple as Hollywood's dating bureau has ever asked us to endure.

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The Fox is an interesting film, because it focuses on an unusual relationship and refuses to make circles around it. Films have been known in the recent past to do the opposite: to "employ" delicate subject-matter, but to devise the most elaborate figurework to avoid it. (*Walk on the Wild Side* is perhaps the supreme example.) This film tells about a lesbic relationship between two young women and its mindless destruction by a young man who falls in love with the older girl. Lewis John Carlino and Howard Koch, who wrote the screenplay, understand their characters to an almost incredible degree, but they're most impressive in exploring the gradual confusion of their emotional resources. The ending is a monumental letdown: it resolves a difficult situation by arranging an accidental death for one of the main characters. It contradicts Carlino and Koch's sensitivity throughout the film. Mark Rydell, the director, is in full command of the material and his use of different textures in the film is remarkable (chintzy coziness for the girls' bedroom; a withering winter landscape for a pathetic search by one of the girls for the other). At first, Sandy Dennis reveals only those annoying mannerisms from *Up the Down Staircase,* but, about mid-point, she grasps her character firmly and gives a fine performance. Keir Dullea is excellent, and Anne Heywood is one of those rarities: an intelligent, perceptive, talented, and commanding actress.—RAYMOND BANACKI

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Fade In is one of those terrible B-movies, seen inadvertently, that prove to have peripheral interest. First, its genesis: This film, made by Paramount, takes place on and around the location set (in Moab, Utah) of a major new Paramount film, *Blue;* it concerns the love affair between an assistant film editor on *Blue* and a Moab cowboy who is hired to drive for the film company. The idea of shooting two movies for practically the price of one, and using one of the movies to advertise the other, is so clever an idea that I wonder why no one thought of it before. Besides, the impact of a big movie company on a small town *is* a promising theme, but this film flops because it never looks beyond A Man and A Woman. (We have now come full circle; Lelouch's imitation of Hollywood movies has itself been imitated by Hollywood—in *Fade In* a driver and a film editor dance through ever-available gorgeous romantic landscapes as a hysterical Lelouch-like camera races around them —though the Americans, by some perverse twist, have added an unhappy ending this time). *Fade In* proves that even cheapie Hollywood movies are through with linearity; this is a primer introduction to the technical experiments of the last several years—shuffling of time, fantasy and reality, color and black-and-white, with the latest, too, in sexual candor—we see the heroine taking her birth-control pills, and we also see lots of fairly explicit lovemaking (though as in most recent European films, the cuts are so fast and the flesh so blurry that you can't tell quite what's going on). For all of its cleverness, the film is still dreadful, because the dialogue is painfully self-conscious, the direction plodding (the photography itself — by William Fraker, one of the best new Hollywood cinematographers—is exquisite, but he hasn't been asked to photograph anything but travel poster sunsets and mountains and desert lakes), and the acting abysmal. Our man and woman are played by Burt Reynolds and Barbara Loden, as unattractive, awkward, tiresome a couple as Hollywood's dating bureau has ever asked us to endure.

—STEPHEN FARBER

The Fox is an interesting film, because it focuses on an unusual relationship and refuses to make circles around it. Films have been known in the recent past to do the opposite: to "employ" delicate subject-matter, but to devise the most elaborate figurework to avoid it. (*Walk on the Wild Side* is perhaps the supreme example.) This film tells about a lesbic relationship between two young women and its mindless destruction by a young man who falls in love with the older girl. Lewis John Carlino and Howard Koch, who wrote the screenplay, understand their characters to an almost incredible degree, but they're most impressive in exploring the gradual confusion of their emotional resources. The ending is a monumental letdown: it resolves a difficult situation by arranging an accidental death for one of the main characters. It contradicts Carlino and Koch's sensitivity throughout the film. Mark Rydell, the director, is in full command of the material and his use of different textures in the film is remarkable (chintzy coziness for the girls' bedroom; a withering winter landscape for a pathetic search by one of the girls for the other). At first, Sandy Dennis reveals only those annoying mannerisms from *Up the Down Staircase,* but, about mid-point, she grasps her character firmly and gives a fine performance. Keir Dullea is excellent, and Anne Heywood is one of those rarities: an intelligent, perceptive, talented, and commanding actress.—RAYMOND BANACKI

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and inspecting enormous mounds of rubble that used to be buildings. It looks and sounds like any documentary on the daily activities in an underdeveloped country, though the color and photography are exceptional, and our empathy is heavy with guilt because our country is responsible for the misery and the ruins. Greene obviously regards the Americans handling the war as bullies and selfish fools who persist in ignoring the fact. What he shows points so firmly against U.S. bombing practices that the film is a joy for doves, who will be moved to curse LBJ and the Pentagon more than once. We mostly see people working in rice fields, on irrigation projects, and in hospitals and classrooms or patching up bombed-out bridges and railroads; or snatching moments of recreation after a rugged day. Frequently, we see them scurrying to individual, man-hole-sized bomb shelters, trying to outrace anti-personnel bombs. It seems that our pilots, who appear so gentle and God-fearing on the recruiting posters, bomb women and babies as readily as they bomb bridges. Greene does not dwell on the dead and wounded, but what little of this that he does include, such as maimed, moaning children, is unnerving. Surprisingly, the people are not worn and discouraged, but are cheerful, confident, and seemingly tireless. It appears certain that bombing, no matter how indiscriminate and widespread, cannot subdue them.

—DENNIS HUNT

Live for Life begins with newsreels of a revolt in China; peasants milling in confusion, dead soldiers sprawled like puppets, desperate hungry faces, all in soft baby-blue tinted stock, all with soft romantic music in the background. Cut to a Paris airport, where Yves Montand emerges from a jet-liner, his face so sad, ironic, and world-weary it makes you think of some middleclass child who's never been allowed to go to the bathroom, but made to watch endless sessions of the UN General Assembly on TV instead. Is this another black comedy? No, something much more fascinating: a director trying to make a film with ideas on topics he is unable to accept. The results, like Norman Bates in *Psycho* trying to make a home movie called "My Mother," are frightening. Lelouch's plot is simple enough: an aging independent film-maker (like Lelouch) who globetrots making exploitation shorts (I can see the tites now: *Mercenary Murderers of the Congo, Our Vietnamese Abattoir*) has been unfaithful to his long-suffering wife; we follow his latest affair with an American Beauty Robot as he boomerangs to the Congo, to Copenhagen (on a farcical second honeymoon), finally to Vietnam, all in spectacular Lelouch photography. Our hero finally marries the girl, but in the end goes back to his wife. She rejects him, but only for fun (or spite); in the last shot he finds her sitting passively in his car as he gets in it to leave, waiting for the next betrayal. It's easy enough to cop sentimentalism and romanticism in today's world, and stupid and useless too. But Lelouch, weirdly, takes nasty, unpleasant subjects like adultery and guerrilla warfare and tries to handle them inside the sentimental, romantic context of *A Man and a Woman*. From the beginning, Lelouch's producer and his wife are unbearable stereotypes. Montand is tired to death, pain wrinkles crowd his face like names on a casualty list, exuding such an air of weariness and emptiness that any girl but an idiotic American beauty (a French convention that goes back to *Breathless*) would be bored with him in hours. After years of infidelity his technique is still so poor he has to race around making telephone calls and jumping onto trains as they roll in, like a world-weary Dagwood Bumstead. His wife laughs: "He doesn't dream I suspect. He's much too self-confident." A look of suffering crosses her face; she's an agonized Blondie. This is bearable, even hilarious in places—I can't forget the scene at the ski-lodge discotheque where Montand sits in with his sad smile while his masochistic wife and her friends are all laughing and trying to have fun. The terrible, terrifying thing is that the whole movie is made through this lens of self-aggrandizement and self-pity. The real case against *Live for Life* is that it trivializes anything outside Montand's corrupt, silly romances: it treats the world's agony like pop happenings and entertainment, with a smug and supercilious shrug. Lelouch's arrogance won't let him play fair, leaving out the wars and miseries and just making entertainment; he must trivialize them to prove the superiority of his hero.—NORMAN KAGAN

More Than A Miracle was obviously intended to be pure escapism. Its script is a simple-minded fairy-tale about the thwarted love between a prince (Omar Sharif) and a peasant girl (Sophia Loren). Yet it is dramatized with amusing, tongue-in-cheek crises, the unhappy prince falls in love with the voluptuous peasant girl, but she rejects him unequivocally; then, she falls in love with him, but he's angry with her, because she used the wrong witch's charm to re-kindle his love (she deadened his senses, instead); next, they do get together, but they must outwit seven princesses who are after the prince's hand; finally, they seem to lose each other

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until a commiserating saint flies down from heaven and saves the day. Francesco Rosi is not contented with the script, though; he tries to broaden it into historical pageant and romance. The period reconstruction is impressive and frequently breathtaking; the color photography seems miraculous, but both these achievements combine to give the film a substantial reality that couldn't be more wrong for the fairy-tale itself. Fairy-tales seems to demand a highly stylized "reality" in order to work successfully, as in Jean Cocteau's *Beauty and the Beast*. Rosi's sensitive undestanding of the peasant girl's indifference, love, frustration, and despair is fine, but its results are too intense, too disturbing, too rooted in modern psychology and film-making to be at home in the underlying fantasy of the storyline. Beauty and the Beast suffered a turbulent emotional life in Cocteau's film, but their responses to each other were understated and subtle and seemed appropriate to the plot. Yet, it is obvious that Rosi, who is known in this country only by *Moment of Truth*, is a highly gifted director: there are sequences in this film that are deeply affecting. Just one example: convinced that she has lost Sharif forever through her own carelessness, Loren runs away and enters a cavernous corridor, which seems to express visually her pained emptiness. As she charges blindly down the corridor, the camera runs hurriedly in front of her. She cries bitterly, she can't see properly, she tears at her borrowed finery, she wants to die. The camera is sympathetic, but, at the same time, it continues to flee, because it is too annihilated by her despair. It is one of the most effective and shattering sequences in recent memory and it is absolutely unforgettable. Let's hope that we see more of Rosi's work.—RAYMOND BANACKI

Our Mother's House, directed by Jack Clayton, promises a chilling vision of a child's world gone mad. Clayton establishes an engrossing drama in the first half of the film: a dying mother whose fanatic religious obsession is the legacy she passes on to her seven young children. Their evening communions with her ghost, the punishments inflicted upon one another—particularly the brutal scene where the youngest girl must have her long hair chopped off because she has been friendly with strangers—create the world of perversion and morbidness in which the children dwell. Fear of being discovered orphans by the outside world forces them into isolation within the old house, where there is no escape from mother's presence and the painful echoes of her grim spiritual commandments. The film is too cleverly and slickly plotted but the psychological truth is compelling. The children's fear of damnation, instilled by the religious frenzy of mother, dehumanizes and perverts them. They survive such terror in the only way they can understand—repression of their youthful emotions and submission to regimenting authority which will protect them. Equally fascinating and chilling is the way in which mother is resurrected in Elsa, the eldest, who epitomizes the perversion of natural and humane impulses. She fights for her right to control the household and conceals her obsessive drive for authority and obedience behind the seductive charm of a touching maternal devotion and concern for the welfare of her siblings. After the appearance of their derelict father, Charlie Hook (Dirk Bogarde), who threatens to overthrow Elsa's position, nothing really happens. The children's neurotic character is quickly dispelled as they enjoy Charlie's attention with innocent delight. The attempt to convince us that they are really normal after all makes bluff of what we have witnessed and points up the confusion of the film's intent. Clayton is so busy making the children sympathetic and charming that we are not allowed to see much of their aberrations. Far from inducing shock or terror, his adept little actors—a beautiful array of the most touching, innocent faces—work a spell of enchantment. These actors make the film enjoyable but prevent it from being a searching or startling experience.

—ESTELLE CHANGAS

The President's Analyst is a loose, often punishing satire which pours salt on some of the wounds of America—the CIA, the FBI, moronic suburbia, and our mania for psychoanalysis, to mention a few. It gets sloppy at times, but it is worth seeing because much of it is hilarious and marvelously on target. James Coburn portrays a chic psychiatrist who has every thing he could ever want—fame, wealth, a sexy pixie (Joan Delaney) for after hours, and a prominent patient (Godfrey Cambridge) who is a hatchet-man for the Central Emergency Agency. Coburn is chosen by the CEA, a pack of cunning infiltrators and killers, to soothe the President's overburdened mind. (Though Coburn is never seen with him, we know that it is Johnson and not a fictitious President because there is a quick shot of Johnson strolling with a cluster of pooches.) As the President's anxieties evaporate, the weight of the problems of state shift to Coburn, who flips under the strain, becomes a peeping-and-hiding paranoiac, and skips town. His

until a commiserating saint flies down from heaven and saves the day. Francesco Rosi is not contented with the script, though; he tries to broaden it into historical pageant and romance. The period reconstruction is impressive and frequently breathtaking; the color photography seems miraculous, but both these achievements combine to give the film a substantial reality that couldn't be more wrong for the fairy-tale itself. Fairy-tales seems to demand a highly stylized "reality" in order to work successfully, as in Jean Cocteau's *Beauty and the Beast*. Rosi's sensitive undestanding of the peasant girl's indifference, love, frustration, and despair is fine, but its results are too intense, too disturbing, too rooted in modern psychology and film-making to be at home in the underlying fantasy of the storyline. Beauty and the Beast suffered a turbulent emotional life in Cocteau's film, but their responses to each other were understated and subtle and seemed appropriate to the plot. Yet, it is obvious that Rosi, who is known in this country only by *Moment of Truth*, is a highly gifted director: there are sequences in this film that are deeply affecting. Just one example: convinced that she has lost Sharif forever through her own carelessness, Loren runs away and enters a cavernous corridor, which seems to express visually her pained emptiness. As she charges blindly down the corridor, the camera runs hurriedly in front of her. She cries bitterly, she can't see properly, she tears at her borrowed finery, she wants to die. The camera is sympathetic, but, at the same time, it continues to flee, because it is too annihilated by her despair. It is one of the most effective and shattering sequences in recent memory and it is absolutely unforgettable. Let's hope that we see more of Rosi's work.—RAYMOND BANACKI

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The President's Analyst is a loose, often punishing satire which pours salt on some of the wounds of America—the CIA, the FBI, moronic suburbia, and our mania for psychoanalysis, to mention a few. It gets sloppy at times, but it is worth seeing because much of it is hilarious and marvelously on target. James Coburn portrays a chic psychiatrist who has every thing he could ever want—fame, wealth, a sexy pixie (Joan Delaney) for after hours, and a prominent patient (Godfrey Cambridge) who is a hatchet-man for the Central Emergency Agency. Coburn is chosen by the CEA, a pack of cunning infiltrators and killers, to soothe the President's overburdened mind. (Though Coburn is never seen with him, we know that it is Johnson and not a fictitious President because there is a quick shot of Johnson strolling with a cluster of pooches.) As the President's anxieties evaporate, the weight of the problems of state shift to Coburn, who flips under the strain, becomes a peeping-and-hiding paranoiac, and skips town. His

until a commiserating saint flies down from heaven and saves the day. Francesco Rosi is not contented with the script, though; he tries to broaden it into historical pageant and romance. The period reconstruction is impressive and frequently breathtaking; the color photography seems miraculous, but both these achievements combine to give the film a substantial reality that couldn't be more wrong for the fairy-tale itself. Fairy-tales seems to demand a highly stylized "reality" in order to work successfully, as in Jean Cocteau's *Beauty and the Beast*. Rosi's sensitive undestanding of the peasant girl's indifference, love, frustration, and despair is fine, but its results are too intense, too disturbing, too rooted in modern psychology and film-making to be at home in the underlying fantasy of the storyline. Beauty and the Beast suffered a turbulent emotional life in Cocteau's film, but their responses to each other were understated and subtle and seemed appropriate to the plot. Yet, it is obvious that Rosi, who is known in this country only by *Moment of Truth*, is a highly gifted director: there are sequences in this film that are deeply affecting. Just one example: convinced that she has lost Sharif forever through her own carelessness, Loren runs away and enters a cavernous corridor, which seems to express visually her pained emptiness. As she charges blindly down the corridor, the camera runs hurriedly in front of her. She cries bitterly, she can't see properly, she tears at her borrowed finery, she wants to die. The camera is sympathetic, but, at the same time, it continues to flee, because it is too annihilated by her despair. It is one of the most effective and shattering sequences in recent memory and it is absolutely unforgettable. Let's hope that we see more of Rosi's work.—RAYMOND BANACKI

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Sebastian begins as a clever, engaging farce about a decoding office filled with girls, and the larky affair between one of the girls (Susannah York) and her eccentric employer, Mr. Sebastian (Dirk Bogarde). But just as we're hooked, the movie shifts gears and slides into something altogether more interesting—a fierce and poignant study of the people in our world who are trapped by their abilities in work that they find morally revolting. Decoding is what Sebastian likes to do, and what he's good at, but he's no longer able to ignore the meaning of the messages he decodes, and the fact that he is serving a British government he knows to be repressive and reactionary. He's not the only one dissatisfied; his chief assistant (a fine performance by Lilli Palmer), more of a political activist than he, decides that she has been passive too long, and releases to the press the content of the code she has just broken—the United States and Britain are supporting a rightwing military coup in an unnamed Latin American country. The dilemma that she and Sebastian face is an urgent, extremely relevant one, and results in some of the finest scenes the movies have yet attempted on the complex relationship of politics and private sensibility—much more interesting treatment of some of the problems Resnais means to raise in *La Guerre Est Finie*. Unfortunately, the movie as a whole is not a success—it changes mood too often, not only back and forth between comedy and political drama, but later in the film, to psychedelic melodrama, and finally, in a monstrous cop-out of an ending, to coy sentimental romance. Only Bogarde is able to survive the film's jaggedness, and to create a brilliant, fully developed portrait of a man of wit and feeling who is disgusted with the people who remind him of his moral obligations, disgusted more with himself for being unable to meet them, neurotically anguished by the hopelessness of trying to mediate among the conflicting demands of self and those of society too. The movie was directed by David Greene, a name I don't know, with a good deal of energy and authority.—Stephen Farber

This Time the World, produced and directed by Marlin Johnson (and distributed by CMC) is an enterprising, absorbing documentary on the American Nazi Party, which impresses one because of its objectivity and the novelty of being on the inside of an incredible caucus of Fascism within a democracy. With a small crew, consisting of his wife and another couple from the San Francisco area, Marlin Johnson joined George Lincoln Rockwell's camp of followers in Arlington, Virginia. The sensational approach is abandoned entirely, and this may be a disappointment for those who expect an inflammatory document. It is, however, all the more foreboding because of its depiction of calm American individuals, propelled through life by deeply rooted racial hatreds; one is directly observing tragedy, played out with real life inevitability. When Johnson's camera focuses upon the faces of youths who have joined the Nazis, permitting each trooper to state his reasons for allegiance, there is a terrible sense of regret and intellectual chagrin on the part of any viewer who has

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experienced the effects of war. The reoccurrence of the term "race-mixing" in their reasoning only makes one more appalled by the widespread contagiousness of fear throughout the South, creating an atmosphere where demagoguery can reign. (The election of Lester Maddox to the governorship of Georgia has clarified this insecure emotional climate.) Perhaps the activities of the Nazi Party are still localized; we see them attempting to disrupt several political rallies, unsuccessfully—and there is the usual picketing outside of the White House against civil rights legislation. The American Nazis are extremely self-confident beings, and listening to Rockwell as he sits behind his desk, one discerns a characteristic mixture of the pompous business-organizer and confused philosopher. On the orator's platform, he is a ranting persuader of the simpler folk, a politician who condescends to the language level of the uneducated, skillfully intertwining folk-humor with his verbal attacks upon Negroes. The political gatherings we see in those little noctural town squares of the South are of people whose faces do not always reflect seriousness; many of them seem to be out on a lark, and they appear to be more entertained by Rockwell than disturbed by him. After all, one holds on to a hope for the sanity of Americans, no matter the region, but the mere existence of a Nazi Party symbolizes how far human misunderstandings have gone. *This Time the World* presents them to us for a brief perusal, and this film (made by courageous non-sympathizers) holds the spectator, then leaves him bewildered by what he has seen and heard. Is it possible that in the future, we will be able to look back upon these anarchic signs of discontent in America of the nineteen-sixties, without experiencing a sense of horror, without recognizing that with a long tradition of personal liberty behind us we managed to create within our shores grimly isolated webs of doom?

Postscript: On August 25, 1967, George Lincoln Rockwell was killed in Arlington by two shots fired from the roof of a laundromat; a few minutes later, John C. Patler, a 29-year-old ex-member of the American Nazi Party was arrested as the assassin. It seems that Patler's racial apprehensiveness had driven him to baiting other Party members on the basis of their fair or dark complexions. He managed to stir up so much antagonism among the storm-troopers that Rockwell removed Patler from his job as chief printer for the group, and later banished him from the organization. When Marlin Johnson, director of *This Time the World* was asked about this, he informed me that Rockwell himself had predicted that if he ever "got nailed," it would be by one of his own men. In the film, Patler can be seen contentedly working the Nazis' printing press and also being thrown from the stage, while attempting to disrupt a Republican rally. Even after death, Rockwell remained a vainglorious outcast; his body was refused burial in a national cemetery by the army because of his Nazi activities, and it was secretly cremated. The sublime and sordid irony: that Rockwell, a man whose chief claim to infamy was airing his noisome views in public, should perish ignominiously while washing his dirty linen in unguarded solitude.—ALBERT JOHNSON

La Vie de Chateau, directed by Jean Philippe Rappeneau, is *not* just another French comedy, but it has no flashy elements to win the public eye. It's a curious, delicate fairy tale with a bizarre setting—Normandy, right before D-Day. But it's this contrast between the violence and sordidness of the war and the hushed pastoral countryside with its lovely, adored chateau princes (Catherine Deneuve), that gives the film its piquancy. In amusing, fragile images the film suggests that even in war men pick apples and dream about the unreachable girl next door; it's a sort of joyful ode to the quirky human resilience that no holocaust can touch. At first we may balk at these characters' absorption in their selfish, trivial loves and jealousies; gradually we realize that their obliviousness to war is the only sane response most people can ever have to war. But as important as any message are the film's technical excellences—the muted, lyrical black-and-white photography, the fine, assured performances. The solutions at the end (the cowardly husband proving his courage) are too easy, even

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for comedy, but most of the film is sharp, and some of it—the family reluctantly turning their chateau over to well-meaning, clumsy German officers—is hilarious as well as human.

—STEPHEN FARBER

Wait Until Dark is a moderately entertaining, impossibly contrived suspense movie, the story of a blind woman cajoled and then terrorized by three criminals who want the heroin that's hidden inside her apartment, in the belly of a doll that her husband unwittingly picked up on an airplane from a lady smuggler who had to get rid of the goods before her accomplice discovered she had doublecrossed him. . . . But that's not the half of it; the plot complications, as the thing progresses, are wildly elaborate and rarely believable. The heroine's blindness — handled with surprising tastefulness—may be just another of the film's innumerable gimmicks, or it may, as some loaded dialogue suggests, have been intended as a metaphor for the helplessness of us all against the powerful forces of violence in our world. If so, it's a heavy-handed metaphor, but it does work rather compellingly in the movie's last half hour, when the heroine must use her ingenuity, her desperation, and the crude weapons within her reach—a can of acid, a kitchen knife—to destroy the most vicious of her adversaries. The climax of this film is harrowing, directed (by Terence Young) with fine Hitchcockian intensity, and it speaks chillingly to a Love Generation of an unpleasant truth they'd rather forget: even the gentlest people can—and must—occasionally, appallingly become butchers. The film originated on stage, and except for a slick introduction and three or four gruesome deaths that the camera relishes sadistically, it has not been "opened up" beyond its single set—which was probably a wise decision for a work whose tension depends on intimacy. Audrey Hepburn overdoes her cute, artificial vocal mannerisms in the film's early scenes, but she's good in her more hysterical moments. Richard Crenna and Jack Weston are fine, too, as the kind-hearted crooks, but Alan Arkin, cleverly cast against type as the evil, soft-spoken archvillain (he also gets to do a couple of amusing Sellers-like impersonations), can't help stealing the picture. Dripping with casual Brooklynese menace, it's a bit too much of a virtuoso performance to really convince you; but then given the exaggerated nature of the whole business, I was grateful for such stylish, winsome theatricality.—STEPHEN FARBER

Waterhole #3 will suffer because it looks a little like *Cat Ballou,* but in fact this tart Western comedy is a much better movie—funnier, more ingeniously plotted, and more substantial too. For one thing, it's not a spoof; it makes fun of recognizable human weaknesses—mainly greed and selfishness, but also the condescension toward women in a male-oriented society—and not merely of other Western movies. Certainly the movie says nothing new, but the relentlessness and hardheadedness of its exposure of people's duplicity is worth some respect. Yet what's pleasing about the film is that it conveys an attitude toward people and experience without ever stopping for messages. The film grabs our attention very artfully: near the start the anti-hero, Lewton Cole, is challenged to a gunfight, and as his adversary stands waiting at one end of a long street, he calmly pulls a rifle from the saddlebag of his horse and shoots the unprepared man dead. A few minutes after that, he meets the heroine when she tries to stop him from stealing her father's horse, and cheerfully rapes her. And he never reforms—at the very end, after a series of misadventures in search of some army gold, he promises marriage to the heroine in order to get the loot from her, and once he has it, leaves her stark naked in the desert, a few minutes ahead of the posse. Joseph Steck, the writer and producer of the film, has called Cole an existentialist hero, which is putting it a bit heavily, though I suppose it's true; Cole is likable just because he believes in nothing and yet enjoys living so very much. James Coburn, as Cole, finally has a part that fits him (he also plays the hero of *The President's Analyst,* with less happy results), and he proves that he is still a talented comedian. Carroll O'Connor, Margaret Blye, Joan Blondell, and James Whitmore support him admirably. The film's best scene is an almost surrealistic, full-scale destruction of the fancily decorated town brothel, which, with impressive comic energy, reveals a good deal about the American relish for violence and the rather healthy, anarchic desire to strip the pretty little rosepetals from life's crudest, most animal urges. *Waterhole's* most *Ballou*-like quality is an offscreen ballad that accompanies the action and wryly dissects it; only gradually do you begin listening hard enough to appreciate the song's wit and subtlety. Yes, the film sometimes runs out of ideas, but not often enough to matter. William Graham directed.—STEPHEN FARBER

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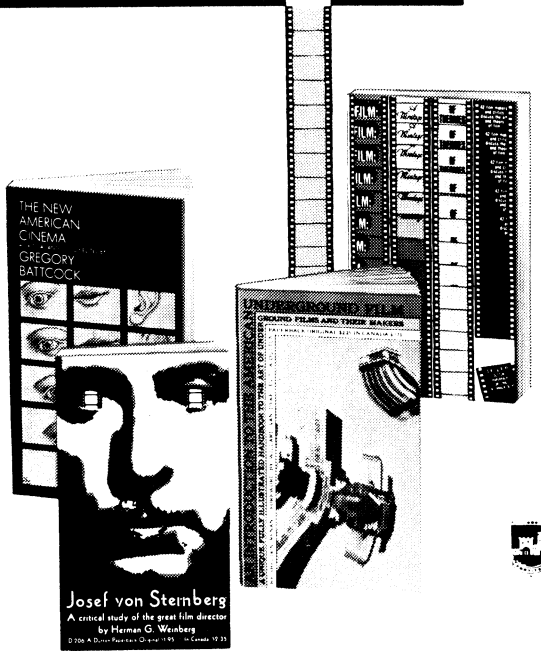

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