Mise-en-Scène

AMERICAN FILM ISSUE

No. 1

$1.35

D.W. GRIFFITH: THE FATHER OF AMERICAN FILM

D. W. Griffith (front) and his cinematographer, Billy Bitzer (behind camera).

Mise-en-Scène

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Mise-en-scene, a term used in the legitimate theatre and the cinema, refers to the arrangement of volumes (objects, actors, sets, etc.) in space within a given area. In the theatre, this arrangement is three-dimensional and is usually confined by the proscenium arch. In movies, the *mise-en-scene* is photographed onto a two-dimensional screen, and is confined by the film frame. the *metteur-en-scene* in both cases the director, but because the theatre is essentially a verbal medium, the stage director acts largely as an illustrator and interpreter of the playwright's ideas. Film is essentially a visual medium, and thus the movie director's *mise-en-scene* is the basic technique of artistic expression, for there are far more individual shots in a film than there are scenes in plays.

The staff of *Mise-en-Scene* hopes to achieve critically what the *metteur-en-scene* achieves artistically: to clarify relationships, establish appropriate contexts, and, in short, to suggest some of the attitudes and techniques that film directors have used in communicating their themes. Published quarterly by the Case Western Reserve University Film Society, the journal is committed to a variety of outlooks, and particularly welcomes essays with a strongly visual emphasis, as well as those stressing interdisciplinary approaches (film and society, film and the other arts, etc.). The staff welcomes queries and suggestions. Letters should be mailed to the address below. Manuscripts (which should be typed, totally double-spaced, and documented when appropriate) must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope, and addressed to: *Mise-en-Scene*, c/o Louis Giannetti, 4080 Crawford Hall, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, 44106.

STAFF

AUDIENCE AS PROTAGONIST IN THREE HITCHCOCK FILMS

By John S. Tumlin

Even Hitchcock's detractors concede that he is a great technician, a complete master of the film medium. The arguments about Hitchcock tend to revolve around whether he is merely an entertainer, a slick manipulator of technique for the purposes of box-office success, or a major film artist, who exploits his technical expertie for the purposes of exploring complex and serious themes. As is often the case with American film makers, it was the French critics who first insisted on Hitchcock's artistic genius. The seminal studies of Francois Truffaut, Claude Chabrol, and Eric Rohmer (who wrote mostly for the influential Cahiers du Cinema*) established beyond a doubt the complexity and seriousness of Hitchcock's best films. But the stodgier American critics remained embarrassed by Hitchcock's enormous popularity with mass audiences: surely such a* successful *film director cannot also be* good. *(One wonders how these critics explain the popularity of Chaplin or Ford — or, for that matter, Shakespeare?) Since the publication of Robin Wood's* Hitchcock's Films, *English speaking critics have been more responsible in dealing with the films of Alfred Hitchcock. In the following essay, John S. Tumlin examines three masterpieces:* REAR WINDOW, NORTH BY NORTHWEST, *and* PSYCHO. *Mr. Tumlin discusses Hitchcock's technical mastery, particularly in his manipulation of point-of-view. Most of Hitchcock's films deal with the theme of complacency, and it is through the manipulation of point-of-view that this theme finds its richest expression.*

The films of Alfred Hitchcock, more than those of any other director working in America, seem to be directed toward creating a response in his audience rather than simply telling a story. This is not to say that Hitchcock ignores story in favor of the cinematic tricks, for his plots are nearly always tightly logical within their basic *genre.* In most of his films, Hitchcock forces the audience to identify strongly with a character, and through this identification, the director manipulates the viewer as well. Thus it becomes important to ascertain some of the ways in which Hitchcock manipulates his audience and the reasons beyond simple suspense he does so.

Robin Wood, one of the most perceptive of the Hitchcock critics, stresses this involvement of the audience in *PSYCHO,* the Hitchcock film in which no central protagonist is immediately apparent. According to Wood, "*Psycho* is Hitchcock's ultimate achievement to date in the technique of audience participation. In a sense, the spectator becomes the chief protagonist, uniting in himself all the characters."(1) In Wood's opinion, identification plays the primary role in this process. By killing off Marion Crane (Janet Leigh), who up to this point has been the central character of the film, Hitchcock leaves his audience with only the murderer. Norman Bates (Anthony Perkins), with whom to identify. "After the murder," says Wood, "Hitchcock uses all the resources of identification technique to make us 'become' Norman."

Since Hitchcock himself, in his conversations with Francois Truffaut,(2) has shown a tendency to belittle the idea of identification in *Psycho,* it would be well to refrain, at least for the moment, from using the term *identification,* and to talk instead about point of view in two of Hitchcock's other films, *REAR WINDOW* and, in greater detail, *NORTH BY NORTHWEST.*

In *REAR WINDOW,* one of Hitchcock's best American films, the camera is confined to the apartment of L. B. Jeffries (James Stewart), the central character. This confinement gave Hitchcock the opportunity for what he calls a "purely cinematic film." Although it has not been given credit, this film might be considered the first major commercial use of the multiple screen idea. The apartment windows facing onto the court with Jeffries' apartment are in effect an array of small screens which compete for the attention and any one of which can be enlarged to fill the whole screen by Jeffries' choice of the lenses through which he peers.

Basically, under this confinement the information the audience receives is restricted to what Jeffries himself can see. The exception to this is the roving of the

camera while Jeffries is asleep; and, although the visual limits are the same as when Jeffries is awake, there is a definite distinction between our point of view and his. This distinction is made in the opening shot, a visual exposition establishing most of what the audience needs to know about the still sleeping Jeffries. A second and more vital distinction is made when we are allowed to see Thorwald (Raymond Burr) leave his apartment with a woman some time after Jeffries hears a scream. Jeffries, who has fallen asleep again, is denied this information

Wood notes that there is no rational reason for the audience to believe that this is not Mrs. Thorwald, and attributes this inclusion to Hitchcock's desire to produce "the uneasiness necessary for us to question the morality of what (Jeffries) is doing."(3) Whether this is the correct interpretation or not, a visual incongruity with Jeffries' point of view has been introduced.

In contrast to its complete confinement in *REAR WINDOW*, the camera in *NORTH BY NORTHWEST* is completely free. The knowledge imparted to the audience is more clearly at odds with that imparted to the main character, Roger Thornhill (Cary Grant). The camera stays with Thornhill, taking his point of view for most of the film, but Hitchcock carefully introduces incongruities with this single point of view for more than simple plot purposes. However, before examining the incongruities, it is best to see first just how closely the camera does stick with Thornhill in the first part of the film.

Once the camera picks Thornhill out of the bustling madness of New York, it keeps his face in the frame from the moment he leaves the elevator with his secretary to the moment he sits down in the bar with friends. In fact it seems likely that a closer reviewing of the film would reveal Thornhill in every frame until he enters the Townsend home, escorted by Vandamm's two thugs. The apparent adoption of Thornhill's point of view continues almost intact until the moment he runs from the U. N. Building. Up to this point there is no information, visual or verbal, which is not available to both Thornhill and the audience alike. Or so, on first viewing, it appears.

Following Thornhill's flight from the U. N., the first obvious point-of-view incongruity — is inserted, and the audience is filled in on some of the background of the Kaplan charade. Also in this sequence the Professor (Leo G. Carroll) is introduced, and an interesting symmetry in the first part of the film becomes apparent.

The professor is a man so concerned with high-level intrigues involving the fate of millions of lives that a single individual life, such as Thornhill's, has become negligible. Thornhill, by contrast, has been so concerned with his own shallow life that we have seen him appropriating taxis called for other people.

The audience now follows Thornhill into the second part of the film with more information than he has. This disruption in point of view continues at intervals throughout this segment. We learn of Eve's (Eva Marie Saint) connection with Vandamm (James Mason) by following her message to his compartment on the train, and of her complicity in the coming attempt on Thornhill's life by seeing (but not hearing, since this would destroy the limitation Hitchcock has put on *our* knowledge) her telephone conversation with Leonard (Martin Landau).

THE BIRDS presented Hitchcock's ultimate metaphor of the terrors which lurk in everyday situations. None of the attacking birds were birds of prey, but ordinary starlings and sparrows.

Thornhill, in addition to being menaced by Vandamm, is "written off" by the Professor, and unjustly accused of murder. When he is apparently betrayed by Eve, Thornhill becomes even more sympathetic as a protagonist. Everything he does seems justifiable since his life is in danger and he has no ally, not even the mythical Kaplan. Whatever reservations we might have had about his character are swept away by his need to survive.

At the end of the middle segment of the film, Hitchcock brings the audience point of view and Thornhill's slamming together when the Professor informs him that Eve is a USIA agent. Our knowledge and his now exactly coincide, and the danger into which he (and by complicity the audience) has put her becomes clear. Hitchcock has added to the impact by allaying earlier in the scene any possible suspicions that Eve is the agent. "His mistress," says the Professor, in answer to Thornhill's query. "We know all about her." It is exactly the kind of statement with which he wrote Thornhill off in the earlier scene.

Until the revelation of Eve's position, our limited knowledge has not allowed us to see Thornhill's actions for what they are — the simple extension of a self-centered personality whose purloining of taxis was a New Yorker's ruthless survival tactic. Now, with

In most of Hitchcock's films, police authorities are portrayed as indifferent, obtuse, or vaguely hostile. In *THE BIRDS*, they are all three. Here, the police officer asks: "What makes you think the birds were attacking you?"

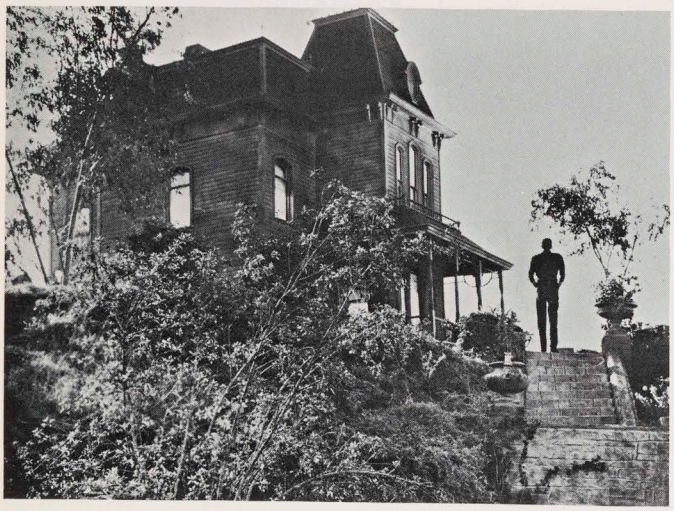
the full exposition, what had been a contrast with the Professor becomes a disturbing similarity. Both men have displayed callousness, Thornhill because of his self-centeredness, the Professor because of his anti-individual institutionalism.(4) Thornhill's righteous denunciation of Eve at the auction, an act which puts him in danger again, becomes simply self-righteous stupidity, which has put her in even graver danger.

The final segment of the film opens at the Mount Rushmore monument with Thornhill for the first time knowing more than the audience; that knowledge is the exact nature of the plan he is about to undertake. Except for this, the final segment seems to be a return to the point of view of the first segment. This is not true, however. When Thornhill escapes from Vandamm's housekeeper, we are with Eve, the object of Thornhill's concern.

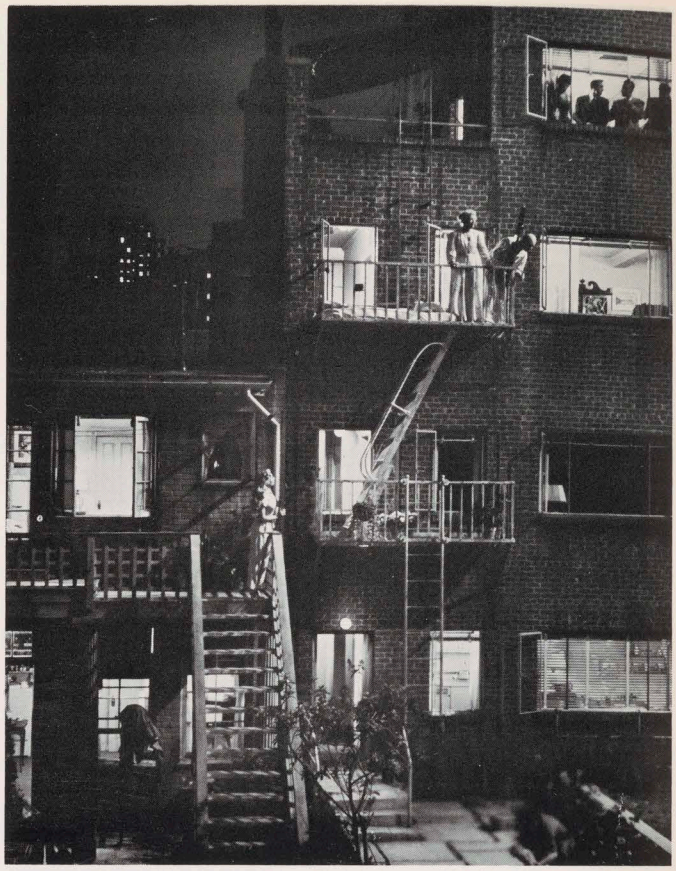
It is in *PSYCHO* that Hitchcock's use of point of view becomes most important. Until she is murdered, Marion Crane is the central character, and the point of view of the film has been limited to hers, even to the inclusion of a kind of interior monologue as she imagines conversations pointing toward her guilt. Her death less than half-way through the film cuts off not only the apparent plot, but the point-of-view reference mark.

The murder of Marion in the shower is followed by a fade to a close-up of Marion's eye from which the camera slowly withdraws. Wood's interpretation, based on his reading of the film, is that both the eye and the drain hole, from which the camera fades to the eye, symbolize "the potentialities for horror that lie in the depths of us all"(p. 121). Although this may be a legitimate interpretation, it is, despite Wood's claims to the contrary, an essentially literary one. The initial impact of this shot on the audience does not lie in its symbolism, but in its direct visual statement.

The shot of the eye follows the quick, slashing montage of the knifing and is, by contrast, slow, almost lethargic, allowing the audience time for conjecture. The eye appears to be the normal eye of a woman, obviously Marion, the only major female character introduced so far. Since cinematic convention usually dictates that the eyes of the dead be closed, Marion is "obviously" still alive, though of course severely wounded. At any moment the voice of a doctor off-camera will tell us that



In *PSYCHO*, Hitchcock deals with the theme of the divided individual by employing the metaphor of schizophrenia. The split personality theme is also found in Hitchcock's *SHADOW OF A DOUBT*, *NOTORIOUS*, *STRANGERS ON A TRAIN*, *THE WRONG MAN*, *REAR WINDOW*, and others.



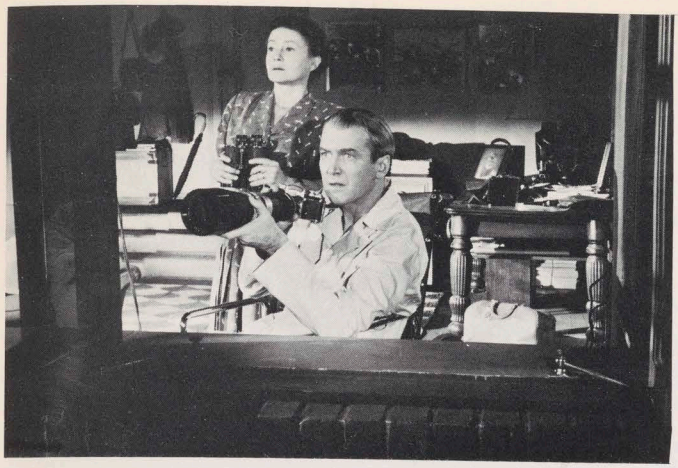
The individual windows of *REAR WINDOW* represent fragments of the protagonist's split personality: they are projections of his own fears and desires, which center around male-female relationships.

she has had a close call, but will live. As the camera retreat further, our expectations seem to be confirmed by a drop of water just beneath the eye, "obviously" a tear. But as the camera continues to withdraw, a disturbing note is introduced when the eye begins to tilt at an odd angle. This, combined with the unblinking eye and the motionless "tear", plays off against our earlier certainty of Marion's survival, a certainty abetted by Janet Leigh's star status. As the eye comes to rest at almost a right angle to the normal position, the bathroom tiles come into view giving us a new frame of reference, which shows us the true relationship of objects in the room. Mercilessly, the camera continues to withdraw, revealing the body of Marion slumped across the rim of the bathtub. The scene is now entirely motionless; throughout the shot only the camera has moved.

The primary effect of this shot is obviously to convince us that Marion is indeed dead, and it is doubtful that the murder would have quite as much impact without this shot. Beyond this, however, it makes clear the fact that our point-of-view reference is gone. There is complete cinematic disorientation, an absoutely motionless scene.

The camera point of view is now associated with Norman Bates. It soom becomes apparent, however, that this point of view is strangely restricted, for the camera cannot follow Norman into his mother's bedroom. Something about Bates makes it impossible for the camera to adopt him as the point of view character, although we do participate in the murder clean-up.

When Arbogast (Martin Balsam),the detective,comes to investigate, the camera has yet another point-of-view character to follow. With the death of Arbogast, pre-



Rather than permitting the star system to exploit him, Hitchcock exploits it. He counts upon the audience identifying with and sharing the values of his protagonists. Yet often these "heroes" behave in highly questionable ways. Jimmy Stewart (wholesome, all American) is a voyeur in *REAR WINDOW*. Cary Grant (suave, polished) is a shallow huckster in *NORTH BY NOTHWEST*. Anthony Perkins (boyish, bashful) is a murderer in *PSYCHO*.

ceded by the sudden cutting away to an extreme high-angle shot, an additional point-of-view character has been killed. Through the deaths of Arbogast and Marion, Hitchcock has made it clear that the conventional assumption, that the point-of-view character will somehow survive everything, no longer holds. Thus the final search of the house by Marion's sister, Lila (Vera Miles), carries with it not only the suspense of a threat on her life, but the threat that our point-of-view character will again be cut off before we, the audience, find the answer to the riddle. In a sense, we are *using* Lila.(5)

Thus in *PSYCHO* Hitchcock forces the audience to participate by eliminating the central point-of-view character. In *REAR WINDOW* and *NORTH BY NORTHWEST*, however, there is always a clear distinction between the point of view of the central character and the point of view of the audience. Though this distinction is sometimes subtle, as in the case of the visual incongruity in *REAR WINDOW*, it is always definite. The distinction is further emphasized by image and montage.

In *NORTH BY NORTHWEST*, when Thornhill is confined in the drawing room of the Townsend home, Hitchcock makes explicit the point that the camera is confined also. In one sequence Thornhill walks indignantly to the door only to find his exit blocked by one of Vandamm's thugs. Shortly thereafter Vandamm leaves the room and the camera dollies to follow him. As he passes through the door, both thugs appear in the doorway and move toward the camera, forcing it to dolly back. Thornhill and the audience have been menaced and confined.

By permitting the audience a separate point of view even in the presence of Thornhill, Hitchcock puts the burden of seeing on us. To emphasize this burden, he deceives the audience twice, once with a single image, once with montage.The deception with image comes near the end of the first part of the film. In the U.N. Building Thornhill shows Townsend a picture of Vandamm. Townsend seems to gasp with sudden recognition. The reaction grows, however, past surprise, becoming grotesquely distorted. Townsend slumps forward and the knife in his back becomes visible.

Under any other director this scene would be a mere surprise-shock for the audience as well as for Thornhill. However, a re-viewing indicates that any surprise is a result of the audience's failure to see. In one of the few deviations from the Thornhill center, this scene is preceded by a montage including the arrival of the thugs at the U.N. the appearance of one of them at the door of the lounge, and finally his drawing on of black gloves. Following this, the encounter between Thornhill and Townsend is shown in one continuous medium-long shot. Its very length, during which the actions of the thug are not shown, should make us nervous, for the preceding montage clearly indicates that something is going to happen, that our attention should be on the darkness surrounding the screen. But the public setting tends to lull us into being complacent passive viewers.

Hitchcock has gone to considerable trouble in this scene to allow us to see Townsend's reaction as either a man surprised by a picture he recognizes or a man surprised by a knife in his back. A careful re-viewing reveals that something does flash through the narrow strip of light between Townsend and the righthand edge of the screen just as Thornhill shows him the picture. It would have been far simpler to have framed the

scene so that this technical effect would have been unnecessary. Hitchcock, however, allows us to select what we see, betting that we will select incorrectly.

In the parallel scene, in which Leonard fires Eve's gun at Vandamm, Hitchcock uses montage to mislead. There is a medium shot of Leonard; the sound of *two* shots; a quick cut to a medium shot of Vandamm, his face frozen in an expression of incredulity; then a cut back to Leonard. The frozen question on the countenance of a man who has just been shot is another cinematic cliche, which Hitchcock exploits here. The next shot, which should show the body relaxing the slumping to the floor, shows instead another shot of the frozen Vandamm. Instead of the movement we expect, Vandamm makes a sudden motion with his arm, asking visually the question which simultaneously becomes our own: roughly translated, "What the hell is going on?"

A re-viewing of this sequence shows clearly that the gun Leonard has is Eve's, already seen in the Mount Rushmore cafeteria scene. Hitchcock even places it dead center in a medium shot when Leonard puts it on the table behind him, exposing it clearly when he opens his palm. Its importance as a gun, however, blinds us to the fact that it is Eve's gun, full of blanks. We are left free to interpret or misinterpret the subsequent montage. This"sleight of hand" is almost a visual inversion of the deception involved in the Townsend murder scene.

Perhaps the most striking example of this misdirection of attention occurs in *REAR WINDOW* when Lisa (Grace Kelly) enters the Thorwald apartment after the murderer has been lured away. Both the Thorwald apartment windows and those of "Miss Lonelyhearts" below are visible on the scene, and attention is torn between the two. Despite the fact that he knows Lisa's position to be dangerous, Jeffries allows his attention to be so diverted by the spinster's story that he forgets to watch for Thorwald until the murderer appears in the hallway, cutting off Lisa's escape. Jeffries has become a passive spectator like the audience.

Of all the Hitchcock heroes, Jeffries is the most closely linked to the audience both in attitude and limitation.The windows on the courtyard are his own private movie screens,an idea enhanced by the flattening effect introduced by the foreshortening of Jeffries' telephoto lens.Lisa's entry into the Thorwald apartment makes her simply another character in one of the several stories displayed on the rack of screens.At this distance, Jeffries' concern for her is no greater than his concern for the spinster below. Similarly, only when Thorwald leaves the two-dimensional world of Jeffries' cinema and intrudes into the "real" world of Jeffries apartment does he assume the three-dimensional character of a pathetic, but dangerous individual who fears that Jeffries plans blackmail. Both the audience and Jeffries really see him for the first time when he intrudes into this audience-world.

The near identification between the audience and Jeffries in *REAR WINDOW* and Hitchcock's manipulation of audiences in his other films are more than a simple, but effective cinematic trick. They are part of what Andrew Sarris calls "the theme of complacency that runs through all his work."(6)

Perhaps the true protagonist of a Hitchcock film is the audience. The normal world into which Hitchcock introduces his melodramatic abnormalities is the viewer's world. Characteristically, the audiences which actually appear in his films are obtuse. A woman attempts to hush Roger Thornhill at the auction in *NORTH BY NORTHWEST*, much as one might attempt to hush an unruly movie-goer in the row behind. Similarly, the small audience of people in the elevator laughs at Mrs. Thornhill's question to the well-dressed thugs, "You men aren't really trying to kill my son are you?" Theirs is a world in which such things are simply impossible.

Because Hitchcock generally observes all the "rules" of horror thrillers (here, in *REAR WINDOW* Raymond Burr is burying his wife's severed head), many viewers assume this surface layer is all there is to Hitchcock's films.

Almost invariably the chief supporters of the "normal" world which makes this compacency possible are the representatives of what Wood Calls the "chaos world." Thorwald and Bates carefully return the world to an orderly appearance of normalcy after their crimes. And it is the well-dressed thugs who generate the laughter which assures the crowd that the world is a place where such things as murder cannot happen. It is also a world in which a Buchenwald or an Auschwitz is equally impossible.

The audience which laughs at Thornhill is the same audience which can be made to believe, if only for an instant, that the coldly vicious Leonard, stooping forward on a Mount Rushmore ledge, his mouth open and brows knitted in an expression for all the world like human compassion, will really answer Thornhill's ill-timed cry for help. If the murder of Marion can make that same audience avoid showers for weeks, Hitchcock has succeeded.

(1)Robin Wood, **Hitchcock's Films** *(A.S. Barnes, 1969), p.119*

(2) **Hitchcock**, *by Francois Truffaut, in collaboration with Helen G. Scott (Simon and Schuster, 1967).*

(3) Wood, p. 65. This assertion is not quite true however, since Mrs. Thorwald is bedridden and the woman who leaves the apartment is walking. Certainly Wood's view is given credence by the strong note of voyeurism in the film, however.

(4) Hitchcock's "signature" shot shows a victim of the union of these attitudes. In one of the opening shots, Hitchcock appearsas a man running to catch a bus. The bus driver, in order to keep his schedule and, presumedly, his job, slams the door in this man's face. The driver is under orders from the city: schedules must be kept, millions of people are dependent upon them.

(5) Jeffries "uses" Lisa as his point-of-view character in **REAR WINDOW** *in a somewhat similar way. The point of view approach in* **PSYCHO**, *however. is eclectic. The truth can be approached, as in Faulkner, only by compilation of various points of view, no one of which can reveal all the information needed. Following Marion's death, the audience always knows more than any one character.*

(6) Andew Sarris, **The American Cinema** *(E.P Duton, 1968), p. 57.*

In *NINOTCHKA* (1939), Lubitsch directed Greta Garbo in her greatest comedy, and in the opinion of many, her greatest film.

Ernst Lubitsch And The Comedy Of The Thirties

By John K. Barry

Of all the great American directors, Ernst Lubitsch is perhaps the least familiar to audiences today. Yet during the thirties, Lubitsch was generally regarded as the most gifted director working in Hollywood. When he arrived in this country from Germany in 1923, the famous "Lubitsch Touch" was already well known. In his Hollywood movies of the early thirties, the witty, ironical, but generous sensibilities of Lubitsch reached artistic perfection — most notably in his masterpiece, TROUBLE IN PARADISE. *As the thirties wore on, Lubitsch seemed to fall behind, for the first time in his career, though there are two delightful respites in* NINOTCHKA *(1939), and* TO BE OR NOT TO BE *(1942), which was widely criticized (and misunderstood) for its "bad taste."*

Ernst Lubitsch had a particular view of the universe that looked for the ridiculous in everything and everyone. The ironic visual metaphor became known as the "Lubitsch Touch," and he continued to use it throughout his career. The reputation which brought him to America was that of the "humanizer of history." In Germany, he had starred in and directed many comedies before his big successes with *MADAME DUBARRY* (1919) and *ANNE BOLEYN* (1920). In these "historical" movies, he employed irony to scrape off the surface of his characters, and he made plain that he valued the admittedly weak but interesting character over the impersonal mass of people or ideas.

History for Lubitsch was not an impersonal play of forces, but a series of cabalist bedroom intrigues. And

Lubitsch satirized Soviet politics and puritanical notions of sex in *NINOTCHKA*.

Perhaps the most popular single comedian of the thirties was W. C. Fields, who reached the perfection of his art only after sound was introduced.

The Marx Brothers in *A NIGHT AT THE OPERA* (1935), directed by Sam Wood. The Marx Brothers are generally considered the greatest of all the team comedians.

when the crowds appeared in his films, they did not represent the force of an idea whose time had come, as in Eisenstein's films. Instead, the crowds were a fearful, plastic force, constantly shifting between passion and disinterest, controlled by one or two individuals. A famous "Lubitsch Touch" from one of his American silents, *FORBIDDEN PARADISE* (1924) sums up his attitude toward history. Adolph Menjou, confronted by a gang of revolutionaries, reaches into his pocket and pulls out — not the expected gun — but a checkbook. The revolutionaries, incidentally, let him write the check. This is an example of the "cynicism" for which Lubitsch was both admired and condemned.

Another favorite Lubitsch theme was sex. Again, the treatment was predictably cynical. Sexual complications seem to bring out, if not the worst in us, at least the most vulnerable and ridiculous. Sex is also a good common denominator, a topic which the greatest number of people will understand, and laugh at. Political irony, for example, especially if it is subtle and witty, might leave a large part of the audience either unknowing or uncaring. Furthermore, political irony tends to date itself quickly, whereas sexual irony is always understandable and almost limitless in its variety.

With its strict moral taboos and tradition of sexual censorship, America particularly lent itself to sexual satire — a fact Lubitsch grasped at once. Though all of Lubitsch's movies exhibited irony and cynicism, it was only when he came to America that he began to deal chiefly with sexual satire. A Lubitsch Touch which best expresses his American Style would be from *MONTE CARLO* (1930), where Jack Buchanan is massaging Jeannette MacDonald's scalp to relieve her tension. She gradually starts to "ooh" and "aah" to express her relaxation, and Lubitsch then cuts to Zazu Pitts, listening outside in tremendous awe at what is "going on" inside.

Money and status also play large parts in Lubitsch's films. *TROUBLE IN PARADISE* (1932) has a great deal to do with money and what people will stoop to in order to get it. The humor of *NINOTCHKA* (1939) derives from Communist yearnings for capitalist wealth. In his brilliant study, *The Lubitsch Touch* (E.P. Dutton, 1968), Herman Weinberg alludes to a famous scene from *MONTE CARLO*. Jeannette MacDonald, before entering a casino, rubs a hunchback's hump for luck, only to have him turn, take off his hat, and say, "fifty francs, please." In Lubitsch's universe, everything has a price.

He also satirized status, perhaps best in the beginning of *TROUBLE IN PARADISE*, when Herbert Marshall and Miriam Hopkins try to pass themselves off as nobility. "One gets so tired of kings and queens, counts and countesses; everybody always talking shop." Or when Charles Ruggles asks Edward Everett Horton, who is playing an aristocratic pompous gentleman, if he has a dinner jacket. In yet another movie, female character says that if she isn't allowed to do as she pleases, she'll marry an American.

Lubitsch's best sound films were probably those in which he was able to combine comments on money, status, and sex. *TROUBLE IN PARADISE* and *NINOTCHKA* come immediately to mind. Perhaps this combination of elements best enabled him to vary his targets. It is certainly true that Herbert Marshall and Miriam Hopkins, who in *TROUBLE IN PARADISE* are

A casting coup for Lubitsch was using Garbo — the most glamorous actress in the history of film — as the austere, humorless Soviet beaurocrat, Ninotchka

concerned with both sex and money, are more likable and multi-dimensional than Kay Francis, who is just after sex.

These themes tended to limit Lubitsch's choice of settings for his movies. American audiences were willing to accept sexual comedy if it took place in Europe or some mythical country where people were presumably naughtier and more decadent. Also, foreign settings gave a sense of the exotic, of a land where "anything could happen," and frequently did. This transporting of setting also served as an escape for a Depression-weary audience. Lubitsch even kidded this use of foreign locales in one movie, when, during the credits, he had a man with a magnifying glass search in vain for the country where the subsequent action was to take place.

Another prevalent Lubitsch theme is the idea of duplicity, especially role-playing. For example, in *TROUBLE IN PARADISE*, a woman at a cocktail party, talking of Herbert Marshall and Kay Francis, says, "He says he's her secretary; she says he's her secretary; maybe I'm wrong; maybe he is her secretary." One of the funniest things about this film is the way that Herbert Marshall parodies the role of the romantic conniving gigolo, and yet manages to fool Kay Francis

MONTE CARLO directed by Lubitsch in 1930, is considered one of his greatest comedies.

Like many of Lubitsch's American films, *MONTE CARLO* satirizes sex and the idle rich — though always with affection and good humor.

throughout the movie. Even while they look at each other with romance in their eyes, he's telling her to "make the check out to cash." But despite the duplicity and superficiality of these people, they are still portrayed as likable and generally competent individuals who know how to cope with a variety of situations.

Where does all this put Lubitsch in relation to thirties comedy? The answer is not simple, because Lubitsch during this period was simultaneously behind, with, and ahead of his times. Thirties comedy was probably the fastest paced of any comedy era. The best of these films provide a maximum amount of sophisticated wit with a minimum amount of labor. They stand in contrast to silent comedies, which tended to lack subtlety, and with forties comedy, which lacked wit and bite. The problem with comedy in the twenties was that whenever it wanted to be hilarious it had to speed up the action, a la Keystone cops and throw subtlety to the wind. When silent comedy wanted to be subtle, it had to slow everything down in order to get things across to the audience with subtitles. Although the lack of sound taught comedians how to use their bodies instead of their mouths, it limited most directors to a rather broad slapstick.

Thirties comedy was tough and hard-boiled. With Mae West spoofing sex. W.C. Fields making fun of the con game, and the Marx Brothers cutting off peoples' ties, it was a decade with few sacred cows. Chief among the objects of attack was, as is natural during a Depression, the rich. Even Paramount, which had a reputation of making films for the "upper classes," had its fair share of this type of satire. Lubitsch, who was Paramount's biggest director, set the tone for his studio with his portrayal of the rich as ridiculous but likable. At other studios, particularly Warner Brothers, the rich did not fare so well.

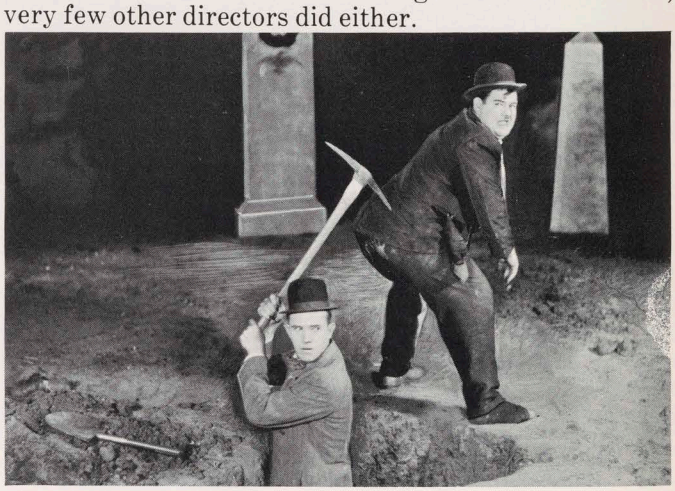
Lubitsch was a master of irony, pace, and use of sound, but he fell somewhat behind in the matter of topicality, a prime thirties asset. This is probably why his reputation declined somewhat in the late thirties, for while most comedy was prancing far afield, Lubitsch was still stuck in the drawing room, far removed from the sassy proletarian humor of other thirties comedies. Although he had good writers during this period (Samson Raphaelson, Ben Hecht, Walter Reisch) much of his cynicism seems to have mellowed, and the thirties became a progressively more cynical era. It was only with *NINOTCHKA* that Lubitsch was able to regain the form that he gradually lost after *TROUBLE IN PARADISE*.

Pauline Kael writes that one of the things that thrilled audiences about Orson Welles' *CITIZEN KANE* when it came out (1941) was the brilliance of its conception. It was, simply, a great idea for a picture. This was the problem with Lubitsch's movies of the late thirties. His conceptions got tired and more bland with the passing years. It was not until *NINOTCHKA* that Lubitsch really came up with a good idea again, so good, in fact, that the movie became the basis for a musical, Rouben Mamoulian's *SILK STOCKINGS* in 1957, starring Fred Astaire.

Lubitsch was to run into problems again in the forties. The comedy of this decade was dominated by the idealism and good-natured humor of the war years. In 1942, Lubitsch made *TO BE OR NOT TO BE*, and ran headlong into the problem of a new outlook in comedy. In this movie, Lubitsch satirized a company of actors and their actions during the Nazi invasion of Poland. He was criticized widely for making fun of the Poles. Actually, he did no such thing, but he certainly didn't make *COMING IN ON A WING AND A PRAYER* either, which is what Hollywood and America wanted. War limits comedy's freedom; it sets up a great many sacred cows. In a *New Yorker* article (February 20, 1971) Pauline Kael puts forth what was the new official attitude:

> In the Forties, the Screen Writers Guild and the Hollywood Writers Mobilization...held conferences at which responsible writers brought the irresponsibles into line. The irresponsibles were told they were part of an army and must "dedicate their creative abilities to the winning of the war"....It was explained to the writers that "catch as catch can", "no holds barred" comedy was a thing of the past.

Indeed it was. In the twenties and early thirties, Lubitsch led the way with his fast pacing, irony, innovative use of the camera and sound, and daring editing techniques. But the cynical thirties, with its emphasis on the tough, funny, wise-cracking proletarians left Lubitsch somewhat behind after *TROUBLE IN PARADISE*. Except for certain touches here and there, and *NINOTCHKA* and *TO BE OR NOT TO BE*, he was never again able to regain that combination of irony and satire which made his best films great. But after 1940, very few other directors did either.



Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy began their career in the silent days, but reached their greatest popularity in the thirties, with the introduction of sound.

FRITZ LANG AND THE FILM NOIR

By Barry Lyons

The film noir *is a predominantly American genre which combines elements of the thriller and the gangster movie. These tightly plotted, fast paced films generally are set in the shadowy night world of our large urban centers — a milieu saturated with violence, anxiety, and corruption. Fate often plays an important role in the melodramatic plots of the* film noir, *the protagonists (who are often cops as well as gangsters) are predestined to defeat and humiliation. Such American classics as John Huston's* THE MALTESE FALCON *and* THE ASPHALT JUNGLE *are in the* film noir *tradition, in addition to Howard Hawks'* SCARFACE *and* THE BIG SLEEP, *Nicholas Ray's* THEY LIVE BY NIGHT, *Alfred Hitchcock's* THE WRONG MAN *and Orson Welles'* TOUCH OF EVIL. *The acknowledged master of the genre, however, is the Austrio-American director, Fritz Lang, who has produced a long string of distinguished movies in this form:* FURY, YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE, HANGMEN ALSO DIE, MINISTRY OF FEAR, SCARLET STREET, CLASH BY NIGHT, *and* THE BIG HEAT, *among others.*

Fritz Lang would be interesting as a director if for no reason other than the fact that he has been involved with movies for such a long time. He began his cinematic career by writing a screenplay *(PEITSCHE)* back in 1916, and continued to be active in film making up until 1963, when he appeared as himself in Jean-Luc Godard's *LE MEPRIS (CONTEMPT)*. Encompassed in this period would be the emergence of the silent film as an accepted art form; the work of Pudovkin and Eisenstein on editing and montage; the introduction of sound, color and widescreen. Politically, the period covers the aftermath of World War I, the rise of totalitarianism, the second World War, and the beginning of the Atomic Age.

It would be interesting to look at the films of any competent hack, just to see the effects of the technical and social changes that occured during this period on his films. With Lang, however, we are dealing with someone who is a major artist, someone whose films go beyond mere technical competence. And yet the curious thing about Lang is that, despite all the changes he has lived through and absorbed, his films really haven't

METROPOLIS (1926), directed by Fritz Lang. The harsh expressionistic contrasts and archetechtonic structures of Lang's German period were modified somewhat in his later American films, which were necessarily more realistic.

Walter Pidgeon and Joan Bennett in *MANHUNT*. Lang's famous sensitivity to textures can be seen here. Note the delicate patterns cast by the lights through a lace curtain, the skin textures (especially Pidgeon's scar) and the rough textures of the wall behind Miss Bennett.

changed much at all. His films from *DER MUDE TOD* (1921, Lang's first major success) right up through *DIE TAUSEND AUGEN DES DR. MABUSE* (1960, the last film Lang directed), are marked by a remarkable consistency in terms of themes and style.

Andrew Sarris points out that "*METROPOLIS* (1927) and *MOONFLEET* (1955) share the same bleak view of the universe where man grapples with his personal destiny and inevitably loses." Perhaps because of Lang's German heritage and his strong anti-fascist views, his vision of the human condition is rather pessimistic. This is evident in all of his films, be they fantasy *(DER MUDE TOD)*, melodrama *(M, FURY, THE BIG HEAT)*, or even his westerns *(RANCHO NOTORIOUS)*. The inexorableness of fate, the fight against an invisible, impersonal (and usually hostile) destiny;the loss of a man's soul; the hopeless struggle against overwhelming odds — these are the elements of the Langian universe.

Lang was born in Austria in 1890. His father was an architect, and Fritz was originally trained to follow in his father's footsteps. Not digging architecture too much (he wanted to study art and see the world), he wound up leaving home to do just that. But as Paul Jensen points out in *The Cinema of Fritz Lang*, though Lang rejected architecture as a career, "his contact with that field prepared him for expressionism and its creative use of physical surroundings."

The study of architecture also gave him a sense of functional structure, which often helped him to keep his pictures uncluttered, austere, and fast moving. In many of his films, Lang uses buildings almost as though they were a microcosm of the universe itself. In *THE THOUSAND EYES OF DR. MABUSE*, for example, the proto-Nazi Dr. Mabuse controls the lives of thousands from his roost in the Luxor Hotel. Through the use of hidden microphones and cameras, he knows everything that goes on in the hotel; and via his underlings, a good deal of what is happening in the outside world as well. With this knowledge, he can exert some control over the environment, leaving little or nothing to chance.

The characters and their environment are carefully structured and laid out in a Fritz Lang movie.

THE THIRTY-NINE STEPS, directed by Alfred Hitchcock. Because of the *film noir* deals with grotesque distortions (usually for symbolic purposes), most of the practitioners of the genre have favored studio sets rather than authentic locations, for the studio permitted directors greater technical control over their effects. Note the stylization of lights, for example, in this "natural" scene.

The heart of his films deal with the struggle for mastery of the environment (or destiny), either by one character over his own life (like Henry Fonda in *YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE)*, or between a master criminal/mad scientist/ political dictator, like Dr. Mabuse.

Certainly Lang's early training in architecture influenced the visual aspects of his films. This is particularly true of his German silent movies, because they were shot entirely on studio-constructed sets. Here, Lang could exercise absolute control over what did and didn't get recorded on film. His grasp of architecture enabled him to construct a semi-stylized world which still resembled the actual outside world in its structural essentials. In most of Lang's films, the presence of rain, fog, and darkness was virtually a signature, and these textural elements could best be photographed in the studio, where they could be controlled.

Some of Lang's most effective scenes achieve their effectiveness largely because of his skill with the visuals. The prison courtyard scene in *YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE*, when Henry Fonda is about to break out, is an excellent example of Lang using more than just the action to get an idea across. We know almost from the start that Fonda is doomed (by fate), but because he was going to be executed for a crime he didn't commit, we sympathize with him. Fonda then shoots the priest who is trying to tell him that his innocence has been established, thus making Fonda actually guilty just as the law had declared his innocence. Lang liked to play around with the idea of the ambiguity of guilt and innocence, just as this is a favorite theme with Alfred Hitchcock.

Visually, this prison scene is magnificent. The indecisive Fonda stands in the prison courtyard with a gun pointed at the doctor: the oppressive fog enshrouds them like a poisonous cloud. High up on the prison walls the warden and the guards are deciding whether or not to open the prison gates and let Fonda loose. They are, in effect, symbols of the coldly calculating fate that has already doomed Fonda, now deciding what will happen to him — whether his struggle is to continue. Destiny in this film is indeed blind, for the entire prison sequence is enveloped in fog-the prison officials don't see the man

whose destiny they are determining, and Fonda doesn't see the "fates" that are still controlling his life. The fog and the prison officials can be taken to represent the idea of an impersonal destiny, a theme which is seen in so many of Lang's films. Fonda's fight against his destiny is hopeless, but he fights anyway.

Lang has said that he considers this "fight against fate" the most important thing in life. In an interview with Peter Bogdanovich (included in *Fritz Lang in America)*, the director states: "I once wrote in an introduction to a book that the *fight* is important — not the result of it, but the revolution itself. Sometimes, maybe, with a strong will, you can change fate, but there's no guarantee that you can. If you just sit still, however, and say, 'Well, I cannot do anything' — bang! At least you have to fight against it." This idea is crucial to the prison scene of *YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE*, and indeed to the whole movie, for the point is not that Fonda has any chance of victory—we know he doesn't—but that he will struggle for his dignity just the same.

The depth that can be found in Lang's films is a tribute to the depth of the man himself. In this sense, although he creates a very ordered world on film, he is, as Jensen notes, somewhat spontaneous. It is this ability to transfer his ideas and personality into a solid, consistent vision that makes his films great, and makes them uniquely Langian. Certainly one would have a hard time mistaking a Fritz Lang film for one by Hitchcock or Huston, who have also worked in the *film noir* genre.

From his early silents right up until his return to Germany, Lang also showed himself to be a master at using textures and structures to give atmosphere to his films. A scene with a Chinese magician from *DER MUDE TOD* is given an eerie mood by the starkly knarled and twisted vegetation, while the bleak sand and mountains and the few dim stars lend an atmosphere of vast loneliness and emptiness in many of the scenes from *DIE FRAU IM MOND*. In *YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE*, Lang uses many extreme low angle shots, giving the settings an awesome dominance, and an air of almost gothic coldness and oppressiveness. In one scene, Fonda awaits his execution in a small cage in the middle of a room that is bare except for one fat guard. Light filters through the bars, casting some unbelievable shadow patterns on Fonda and the floor — this is truly an isolated man, a picture of a thoroughly defeated individual who still doesn't know when to give up.

Paul Muni in *SCARFACE*, directed by Howard Hawks. The brilliance of this shot is due in part to the delicately textured lace curtains in contrast with the stark figures and the expressionistic lighting effects.

Humphrey Bogart in *THE MALTESE FALCON*, directed by John Huston. The *film noir* is not a "pure" genre, for its characteristics are shared by other genres as well: the thriller, the detective mystery, the gangster film, the "woman's film." A number of these genres reached their greatest popularity in the forties.

Nothing much is ever said about the films Lang made when he returned to Germany in 1957, *DAS INDISCHE GRAMBAL, DER TIGER VON ESCHNAPUR,* and *DIE 1000 AUGEN DES DR. MABUSE.* The first two are remakes of an old Joe May film which Lang did for strictly commercial reasons. He wanted to show the producer that he still meant dollars in the drawer so that he could again have the artistic freedom he had when he did his masterpiece, *M.* As a result, these later movies seem dull and hollow, peopled more with a collection of cardboard cutouts than with characters of any depth. *DR. MABUSE* fares much better, but is still very slow and draggy. However, I would argue with anyone who thinks that films like *THE BIG HEAT, MINISTRY OF FEAR,* and *SCARLET STREET* are marks of "an artist's waning star," as has been argued by some critics of Lang's later American period. It is true, however, that in his late German films, Lang doesn't seem interested in surpassing mere technical competence: the old pizazz isn't there.

KEY LARGO, directed by John Huston. The trench coat and soft hat were indispensible props in the *film noir.* Lighting tended to be extreme and stylized, as in this shot, where the lighting from above accentuates the moist roof of the car, and the dust-streaked windshield. The light from within the auto is from below, thus throwing the features of the actors into eerie contrasts.

Like several of Lang's pre-war and wartime films, *MANHUNT* (1941) deals with violence, espionage, and the desperate lengths to which Nazi Germany would go to conquer Britain.

I think the finest quality of Lang's art is that he can make an artistically rich film that is still thoroughly enjoyable as an entertainment. Like a few other directors (Ford, Hitchcock, and Penn come to mind), Lang has successfully integrated his personal artistic vision with the tastes of a mass audience. Were he still making films of the calibre of *M* or *FURY,* he would have (at least in America) the audience that Godard or Bertolucci or even Fellini, Bergman, and Antonioni fail to reach. That a working-class film-goer can find *THE BIG HEAT* a good, rock-em sock-em thriller, and a knowledgeable cinema buff can consider it a profound and subtle work by a great artist is indeed a fine testimonial to the man and his work.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Paul M. Jensen, **The Cinema of Fritz Lang** (A.S. Barnes, 1969).

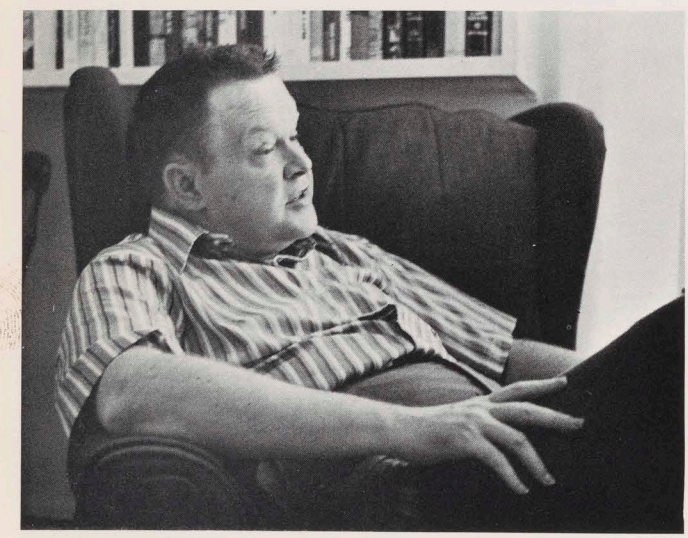
Peter Bogdanovich, **Fritz Lang in America** (Praeger, 1967).

Charles Higham and Joel Greenberg, "Black Cinema," in **Hollywood in the Forties** (A.S. Barnes, 1968).

Based loosely on the life of Al Capone, *SCARFACE* is one of the first (1932) of a long series of gangster films in the thirties. Like the *film noir,* gangster movies emphasized urban settings, unpredictable outbursts of violence, and a nightime milieu.

MY NAME IS

Cleveland's best and most outspoken movie reviewer, Don Robertson, is something of a Renaissance man. He started in his teens as a reporter — a likely enough career for a boy from a newspaper family. In fact, he worked at the Plain Dealer *and at the now defunct* News *as a reporter, copy reader and sports writer until 1966. Currently, he has a column in the* Press *and reviews for WKYC, Channel 3. A fiction writer at heart, he has eight novels under his belt and is finishing a ninth.* Paradise Falls *was a Literary Guild choice. There are also three books on the Civil War, and* Flag Full of Stars *is about the night Truman beat Dewey. Although he has not written a book on film* per se, *some of his characters are movie buffs. In his trilogy on growing up in Cleveland, there is a thirteen year old kid who all but takes a bath in movies. Mr. Robertson is also active in the theatre as a director. His most recent production was* The Time of Your Life, *and this fall, he directs* The Big Knife, *a play about Hollywood. Don Robertson attended Western Reserve University, but as he euphemistically puts it, he was "removed." However, he was undaunted: "I didn't fall on my sword. I knew what I wanted to do — write — and I couldn't see taking pointless, dull courses." He also taught creative writing for a short time at Case Western Reserve University, but quit because he couldn't find a parking space. His all-time favorite film is* CITIZEN KANE. *His current favorite is* THE WILD BUNCH. *This interview was given in Mr. Robertson's home. The questioners were Barbara Paskay and Barbara Driscol. Photographs by Mrs. Driscol. Television photographs by Larry Micohn.*



Q. When did you get interested in films?

A. I was brought up on movies. I spent my childhood in the thirties and that's all we ever did. Where I lived, on Hough and 90th, there was a show that cost a nickel. If you left after one show, they gave you a free candy bar — they cost three cents wholesale, so they made two cents on it. The show changed three times a week and they were all double features. I saw six movies a week. I guess I saw everything made between 1938 and 1946. It was pure entertainment: it was our T.V. People didn't know what they were getting, they just went. Now you get that kind of movie — the programmer, the B film — on T.V. What is *The Lucille Ball Show*, but Andy Hardy with breasts?

Q. In what ways have movies changed?

A. Movies in the past ten years have become more novelistic. You go to them the way you pick a novel to read, because of certain interests. Maybe you've heard about a film, or you like the people in it, or — more importantly to this generation — you like the director. He is the real star. It is his vision. Also the audience is changing; it's much younger and more demanding.

DON ROBERTSON

Q. In what sense?

A. Young people are looking for different things in pictures. My generation used to go to the movie to suck their thumbs. To us, entertainment was something that made you laugh, or Gene Kelly tap-dancing down the stairway to heaven. That's fine. Everyone likes that sort of thing, but it's only part of what entertainment is. You entertain various aspects of yourself and most adults (people over thirty) don't understand that. Now we go to movies the same way we read novels. We're interested in form over content: cinema as an artistic medium.

Q. Have you always been aware of film technique and style, or did you develop this sensitivity after many years?

A. I guess I became artistically aware in my early twenties. But I have a very vivid memory of the first time I saw *CITIZEN KANE*. I was twelve years old, yet I was aware of strange things, like ceilings on sets, jump-cutting, etc. Things I couldn't name then, but was conscious of — all those things that are still avant garde today. But it wasn't until my twenties, when I first began to see foreign films — French, Italian — that I became aware of technique and style. At the time, I was more interested in literary style, that Hemingway and Faulkner wrote in different ways, yet both were certainly valid. Gradually, I began to translate that into film terms.

Q. Is this what interests you as a reviewer?

A. I've always reviewed books and plays — long before my interest in film — by concentrating not on what the artist is saying, but on how he says it. He can be in favor of anything as long as he does it well. But if he's for universal peace and brotherhood and makes the movie clumsily, it's a bad movie. On the other hand, if he's for flagellation or unlimited sodomy and he does it well, it's a good movie. Too many reviewers go into it as if they had to comment on the moral tone of the film. The movie is no good if it's about an immoral or corrupt subject. Well, baloney. If I want moral judgments, I certainly won't ask Tony Mastroianni for them, I'll go to church. All I want to know is, if someone makes a movie about being whipped and leather boots, is it of its type interesting and done with some wit, some style, and some dramatic sense? I'll draw my own moral conclusions. I don't want or need a critic to do that.

Q. Do you see any difference between a reviewer and a critic?

A. I'm a reviewer, not a critic. A critic is someone who goes to a screening room and very thoughtfully watches everything that Howard Hawks has ever done. He takes

THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN, directed by James Whale.

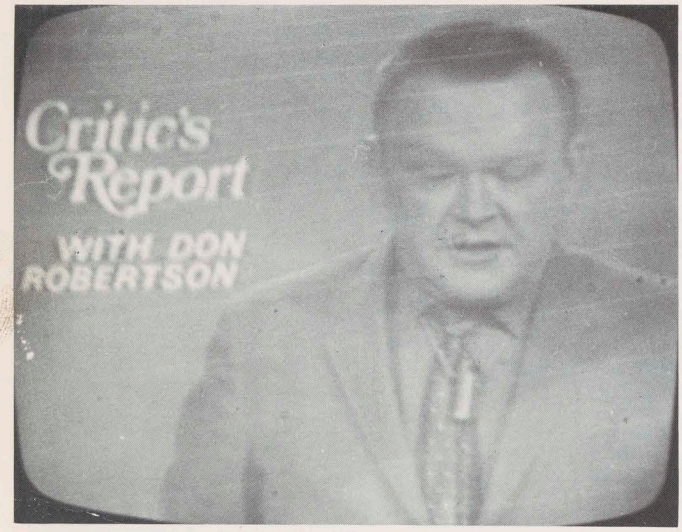
notes and in the fullness of time and with great care he writes about 40,000 words on the things Hawks has made. It's like Edmond Wilson of *The New Yorker* going over the complete works of Fitzgerald and writing a long essay or a book on the historical perspective and so forth. I'm on the air for only about ninety seconds, or about four paragraphs. All I can do is take one or two salient points and talk about them and try to say why I like this movie, and to do it as honestly as I know how within that time limit.

Q. What are you trying to do in a review?

A. I don't care if the public goes along with me. What I try to do is say how the film strikes me and try to cite some reasonably intelligent reasons why I like or dislike a film. I try to make the reviews entertaining without being "clever" at the expense of whatever I'm saying, unless it's so ridiculous that you can't help it. You ought to give a serious movie serious attention, even if it's bad — not make fun of it. I don't know whether I am helping people or not. T.V. is such a curious medium. People come up and say "I didn't go to such-and-such a movie because you *told* me not to." Exhibitors tell me I shouldn't tell people not to go see a movie. I have never told people not to go — I would never presume to tell pople what to do. But, T.V. is such a personal medium.

Q. Do you see any fundamental difference between reviewing plays and films?

A. In this town you can sell a play if you like it.



People who go to the theatre really pay attention to reviews. People who go to the movies, for the most part, could care less. I thought *A NEW LEAF* was a most indifferent movie. I can understand why Elaine May is suing United Artists, who just chopped the films to pieces. It's not her movie. But, my God, the movie is just packing them in — anything with Walter Matthau. Now *THE PROJECTIONIST* is a lovely little film. It played at the Continental for three nights to a total of seven people. I said on the air, "The first five people who get to the theatre and say the magic word get in for free." I doubt if five people showed up to take advantage of that. But that's changing. The reviews on film will have in the next five or six years a large effect. The same people who go to the theatre will be going to more and more movies. I would rather go to a film than a play. In the movies you can see the best people doing the best job, even in Des Moines. Suppose you have the greatest play ever written — *Hamlet* — being put on by the local Little Theatre at the same time a Sam Peckinpah film is playing. I'd rather go see the film because that *is* the Peckinpah film. Whereas the Des Moines idea of *Hamlet* is probably not much good.

THE WILD BUNCH, directed by Sam Peckinpah.

Q. How does you approach differ from other reviewers here in Cleveland?

A. Well, it differs because I don't think these other people have heard of or understand what the *auteur* theory is. (*The principal emphasis of the* auteur *theory is that film is basically a* director's *medium, and that the other artists and technicians — actors, producers, writers, cameramen, etc — are merely collaborators whose talents are subordinated to the director's personal vision. Practitioners of the* auteur *theory stress form over content: a film should be judged not on the basis of* what *is done, but* how *it is done.* —**Eds.**) The other reviewers have a tendency to think that if something the movie is saying is worthwhile, therefore the movie itself is worthwhile. Or if something the movie says is either trivial or corrupt, therefore the movie is no good. Well, that doesn't follow. *BONNIE AND CLYDE* is about a couple of people — little more than feeble-minded — who go around killing people. Tony Mastroianni and Emerson Batdorff thought this was a bad movie. Well, it's not a bad movie, it's a good one. The people in it are not admirable, but that doesn't mean the movie isn't. If you use that kind of reasoning, you would say that *Macbeth* was a bad play, because Macbeth and the Mrs. aren't too nice. It all goes back to leaving your morality at home when you go to a movie. Let whatever it is happen, and then come out and say how well it was done. There have been great right-wing films. Certainly everything that

Frank Capra made was terribly right-wing. *THE TRIUMPH OF THE WILL*, Leni Riefenstahl's Nazi documentary, is a great film, and you don't have to be a Nazi to recognize and appreciate it. This is just not understood. Again, it gets back to subject-matter: I would not be so presumptuous as to give lessons in morality. I'm not the *Catholic Universe Bulletin*. I think Batdorff and Mastroianni are both very honest men. I just could not write that way.

BONNIE AND CLYDE, directed by Arthur Penn.

Q. Are there any national reviewers you particularly like?

A. I like to read Pauline Kael, although I don't always agree with her. She is certainly head and shoulders over Rex Reed or Judith Crist. With Kael, there is a line of progression: this no good because a, b, c, d, etc. That's what I like. Not like Crist or Reed who say this is not good because it hit me wrong. In other words, Kael will not put something down just because it does not relate to her experience the way Reed and Crist will. If something is totally foreign to them, or offensive to them, or upsets their own life style, they will say it's a bad movie. I also read a lot of Andrew Sarris. I don't read his reviews because I don't get the *Village Voice*, but I read all his books and find him very interesting.

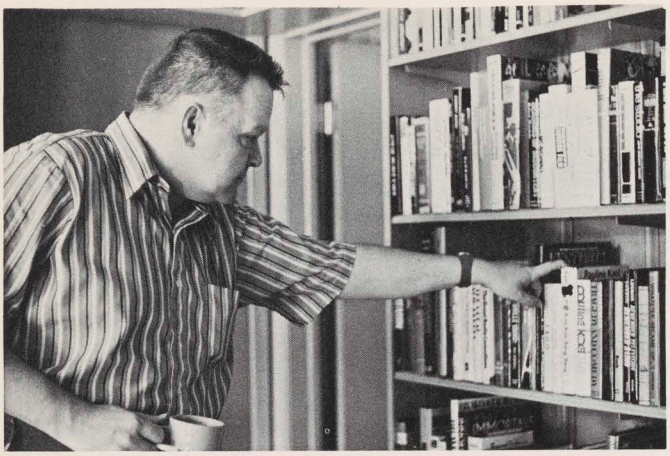
Q. What bothers you about the Cleveland film scene?

A. Did you know that there is not a straight feature movie house in a black neighborhood? Just that 105th Street skin flick joint. I also think that the Heights ought to go back to being an art house instead of showing skin flicks. They could charge a buck, show revivals and new flicks. In the Coventry neighborhood you could pack them in. You can't tell me that a double feature of *CITIZEN KANE* and *THE MAGNIFICENT AMBERSONS* for a buck wouldn't be swamped.

Q. Why do you suppose Cleveland is such a bad film town?

A. A lot of it is the exhibitors. They are miles behind the public in taste. I went to a screen of *LITTLE BIG MAN* with about twenty-five exhibitors. They came out shaking their heads — all that bloodshed. They didn't understand it. I said, look, play the movie, just play the movie. The people will be there. You've got a movie directed by Arthur Penn, with Dustin Hoffman and the people will show up. This will be a great commercial success. So they did. And it was. It opened six months ago and is still playing. They murdered *THE WILD BUNCH* by practically sneaking it in. They had a contract to open it, or they wouldn't even have done that. On my insistence, they brought it back and it did quite well. Even though they went and brought it back Christmas week. Great! Gee folks, what will we do, it's Christmas Eve? Let's go see *THE WILD BUNCH*! See Jamie Sanchez get his throat slit! And they wonder why people don't go to the movies here in Cleveland! But the exhibitors, so many of them, their tastes stopped around 1949. As a result, we have Mr. Fitzpatrick, the man who runs the Continental and Heights — a nice young guy — who will play *THE STEWARDESSES* for three months. He says no one will come to the other kind of movie. I told him, if you open a movie like *THE PROJECTIONIST* (a very special kind of film) on a Friday, with no advance screening, how the hell is anyone going to write anything about it? So they open on Friday and close on Tuesday, with the excuse that they did no weekend business. You can't do any business unless you get some publicity on the air and in the papers. Well, I'm only on three times a week, and I also do plays. I can't possibly review every movie. It's so frustrating. I don't get to see all the movies I want to. There is a space problem in the newspapers too. You can't write much more than five hundred words. It's brutal. That's why we need more journals, more monthly magazines, thing like what you people are trying to do.

Barbara Paskay reflects on the words of Don Robertson.



I'd have the staff review every damn thing that came out, have a section twenty pages long with nice substantial reviews.

Q. Are there any particular filmmakers you like?
A. I like anything that Bergman does, even though half the time I have't the vaguest idea what he's talking about. My favorite is *THE VIRGIN SPRING*. I like Fellini very much. Recently on Channel 61 they showed *THE SWINDLE (IL BIDONE)*, which is a terrible movie but it's a Fellini movie and it's worth seeing. *MR. ARKADIN*, a terrible film also, but it's an Orson Welles movie, and it's worth watching. It's really dreadful, really bad. But I'd rather watch a bad movie by someone like Orson Welles than the best thing that Stanley Kramer ever did. "Important" movies like *JUDGEMENT AT NUREMBURG*, *SHIP OF FOOLS*, or *ON THE BEACH* just bore the pants off me. I'd rather see a well-made western than some of those pictures that get all the awards and are so overrated. What I hate is the pretentious shit that is put out. I have to go back to Kramer because he's done more of this, like *SHIP OF FOOLS* — really, just unbelievably bad. When our directors try to Grapple With the Cosmos, it just doesn't come off. The Europeans are much better at that.

Q. Why do you think this is so?
A. The only thing I can think of is their civilization. We are still trying to create a culture. They already have one, a longer tradition. They can sit back and look at things. We are still creating form in this country — the western genre, and so forth. Sam Peckinpah says more in *THE WILD BUNCH* about the human condition than a generation of Stanley Kramers. It says more and with more honesty than any movie I have seen in my life. It's a masterpiece. I think that long after *BONNIE AND CLYDE* and some of the others are forgotten, people will remember *THE WILD BUNCH*. This is because even *BONNIE AND CLYDE* sort of cops out, implying this happened because of the Depression and they were so poor, etc. But *THE WILD BUNCH* says the hell with all that. This is the way people are and we have to face it.

Q. Then you don't think *THE WILD BUNCH* is "just a western"?
A. What Peckinpah states so simply and in such devastating visual terms is this: folks, we had better stop wringing our hands and saying whenever someone is assassinated that it's the work of a lunatic. We'd better begin to understand that violence is a part of the human condition and deal with it as a manifestation of sanity rather than as something insane. Examine our history, back to the beginning. If normal behavior is that which is engaged in constantly by people, then obviously violence is normal behavior. Our society creates these people. The Wild Bunch is not a bunch of lunatics, they are perfectly sane. Peckinpah is a most sentimental man. Only a sentimental man, a man who cares, would have made a movie like that. Of course, there are the obvious parallels to Viet Nam. When Borgnine says to Holden, "It ain't that you made the promise, it's who you made the promise to," it's that same business of revolutionaries and Americans going over to help a corrupt regime. God, can Peckinpah create character! His people are believable. I was in the army and these are regular army people. This *is* the army mentality.

Q. Who do you think are America's most promising directors, besides Peckinpah?
A. I guess in the younger group, Robert Mulligan. He's a little soft, but that's his style. He's sentimental and does things like *UP THE DOWN STAIRCASE* and *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD* quite well. I also like Robert Raphelson, who did *FIVE EASY PIECES*. I want to see another Dennis Hopper movie. I really enjoyed *EASY RIDER*. He did a splendid job, and it was the first time I had seen flash-forwards. Of course Arthur Penn, but he's been doing good things for twelve years now since *THE LEFT-HANDED GUN*.

Q. Who do you feel is our most underrated director?
A. Robert Aldrich. He's done some outstanding things, like *THE DIRTY DOZEN*, *THE KILLING OF SISTER GEORGE*, *WHATEVER HAPPENED TO BABY JANE?*, and *THE BIG KNIFE*. Of course, these are not subtle pictures at all. He's very brutal, he hits you on the head with a mallet with everything he does. He gets nothing but rough, strong scripts and he does a good job, with style, consistently.

Q. Who do you feel is an overrated director?
A. Oh, David Lean. Did you see *RYAN'S DAUGHTER*? She drops her umbrella over the cliff and the music swells up like the Ride of the Valkyries. You then get five minutes of her umbrella falling. It's a small story about a woman's infidelity in a small Irish town during World War I, and it goes on and on as if it were *LAWRENCE OF ARABIA*. You just don't do that. I thought the movie was just terrible because they were putting three pounds of material in a fifteen pound bag, and it just rattled around in there. You sit there and say, Oh God, will this ever end!

Q. Are there any other films you dislike by Lean?
A. He did an even worse job with *THE BRIDGE ON*

THE RIVER KWAI, where he missed the point entirely. The Pierre Boulle novel was such a delicious Frenchman's comment on how the English behave. At the end, this colonel (the Alec Guiness character) gives up his life to save the bridge. But in the movie, at the point where he is about to do this, he stops dramatically and utters, "Oh! What have I done!" and goes ahead and explodes the bridge. Lean blows the very thing that the author was trying to say because he wanted to have a happy ending. The movie is out-

rageous, it's an affront. During the entire film he develops the colonel's personality. Then at the end he has him do something totally out of character. The point is that Guiness gave his word as an officer and a gentleman — *a British officer* — to build that bridge and protect it for the Japanese. I was outraged when I saw the film. What a wonderful shaggy dog story. But the delicious humor of it was totally lost.

Q. Have there been any films recently that you particularly like?
A. *LITTLE BIG MAN* really turned me on. *SUMMER OF '42* is no great masterpiece, but it's a nice movie. I like it, it does what it sets out to do. The complaint is that it's so trivial. But if the intent is to be trivial and it does it with style — what more can you ask? I haven't seen any foreign films lately that stood me on my ear, nothing like *LITTLE BIG MAN. THE WILD CHILD* is a nice little movie. Francois Truffaut photographs nature better in black and white than most people do in color. It's a beautifully composed picture.

Q. You said a while back that you were not particularly impressed with "important" pictures. Is this why you are such a horror movie fan?
A. I guess maybe that's one of the reasons. I can suspend my critical judgment sometimes. Take Edgar G. Ulmer, who made mostly terrible grade X, Y, Z movies. But he made some great horror films, especially *THE BLACK CAT* (1934) with Bela Lugosi and Karloff. It is so exciting visually. He used a hand-held camera to film the chase scene. And the part when Bela skins Boris alive, it's too much. He knew how to make that kind of genre movie, knew when to end it — it's only sixty-seven minutes long. There are some really fine horror films. If you look closely, you'll see the hand of some great directors. For example, Sam Peckinpah wrote *THE INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS.* He was working very closely with Don Siegel, the director of the film. It's a great picture. When Kevin McCarthy kisses Dana Winter and realizes that she is changed — the look on his face — just a marvelous movie. I just love *THE THING.* It was credited to Christian Nyby, who was actually the assistant to Howard Hawks, but Orson Welles did most of the directing for Hawks. It was entirely improvisational — there was no script at all. The resultant hesitation made the talk seem so real, like scientists and Air Force people stationed at the North Pole.

Q. Do you have any single favorite horror film?
A. My all-time favorite is *THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN.* I just adore that fag, Ernest Theisiger, who plays Dr. Pretorious, hamming all over the place. At the end, when he proclaims in those fruity tones, *"The Bride of Frankenstein,"* and wedding bells sound, and Elsa Lanchester takes one look at Karloff and screams. Too much! There is more humanity in it than in most pictures about real people.

Q. I guess most reviewers get asked this question, but what do you think of the Hollywood rating system?
A. *FOOLS' PARADE,* with Jimmy Stewart and George Kennedy is a good-bad movie, but it's terribly violent and it gets a GP. *SUMMER OF '42* is a lovely sentimental movie about three fifteen year old boys on an island trying to get laid. And that's all it's about. Oh, once in a while they say "shit," but it is a most gentle, kind movie. It gets an R because they say "shit." George Kennedy just slaughters people in *FOOLS' PARADE,* and it gets a GP. I would just throw the whole thing out. What's worse, having a kid go see an X movie, or sit at home and watch the war on T.V.? The whole system is ridiculous. It's *in loco parentis.* Anything like that, I just resist.

Q. If writing novels is your big thing in life, why do you keep reviewing movies — especially in view of all the "pretentious shit" that's being produced?
A. The greatest thing about reviewing movies is going into the screening room to see something you know absolutely nothing about and just being electrified. It doesn't happen that often, but it's a great feeling and it makes it all worth while. Film is *the* art form. If I weren't a novelist, I would say that it's going to be more important than the novel. As it is, I will say it will be just as important.


loverbloom

THE SOUNDS OF SILENCE
COMEDY OF THE TWENTIES

By Carol Evans

The silent masterpieces of the twenties, particularly the films of Charles Chaplin, Buster Keaton, and Harold Lloyd, are generally regarded as the Golden Age of American Comedy. Carol Evans argues that these movies are masterpieces precisely because of their silence. The advent of sound necessarily involved a greater degree of realism, and a stricter regard for narrative probability and continuity. Once the talkies displaced silent comedy, an era of team comedians was ushered in. On the whole, the great comedies of the thirties were verbal, not visual.

Comedy in the silent movies had a wild emancipating humor that has seldom been achieved since the advent of sound. James Agee in his famous *Life* paean, "Comedy's Greatest Era" (September 3, 1949), has attempted to articulate the type of enjoyment that silent comedy could inspire. He describes four cinematic grades of laughter: "the titter, the yowl, the bellylaugh, and the boffo." Agee claims that since the death of silent comedy

THE CIRCUS, directed by Charles Chaplin. Perhaps no other silent comedian was such a master of pantomime as Chaplin, who has been said to have the most eloquent body in the history of film.

motion picture humor has seldom moved its audience beyond the second stage of merriment. Anyone, Agee says, "who has watched screen comedy over the past ten or fifteen years is bound to realize that it has quietly but steadily deteriorated." Agee's article is undoubtedly the finest homage to silent comedy that has yet been written, and it is a classic of film criticism.

The reason for silent comedy's great success, and for many of sound comedy's failures, tends to exist as an inherent property in the convention of silence. This is a confusing proposition, and to explain the point more fully, we might use a hypothetical example of a man who, after a hard day at work, has decided to go with his wife to the opening of a new comic film. The first thing that the man is going to require of the film, in order that he find it humorous, is that its situations not resemble any world he has been forced to inhabit. Modern cinema has provided this man with a choice of entrees: Jerry Lewis as a millionaire, Bob Hope on the road to Mandalay, and Phyllis Diller on the moon. Of course, some charity must be allowed for the fact that none of these three is a comic genius. Yet even with the characters on the moon, in Mandalay, or in a palace, there is one reality that the dialogue comedian cannot escape. A real sense of time tends to be an inescapable adjunct of speech.

In silent comedy, a character can say farewell to his sweetheart, his homeland, or his life with a simple movement of his lips and a gesture of the hand. Then, with the formality accomplished, he can spend five minutes attempting to free his necktie from a bear trap. Because the silent comedian did not require a "real" length of time to say his farewell, we are quite willing to grant him more than a "real" length of time to free his necktie. And, the thing to be remembered is that the farewell was not funny, while the tie in the bear trap was. Time in silent comedy is highly subjective, and bears little resemblance to realistic chronological time.

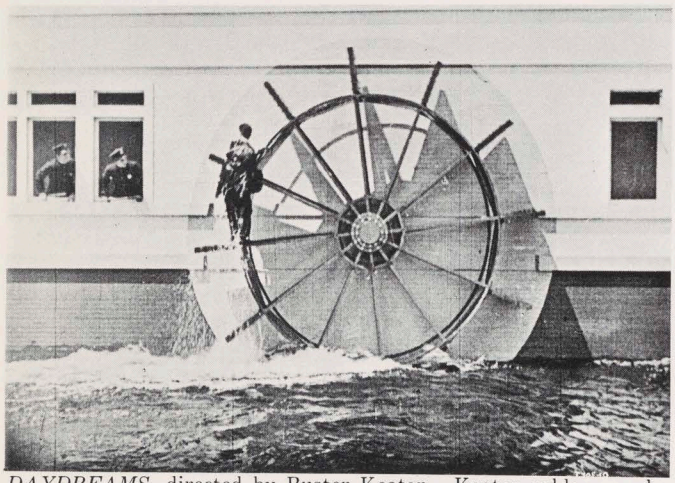
A perfect example of the silent film's license with time is found in *SAFETY LAST* (1923), one of Harold Lloyd's early features. The plot of the film has Harold as a store clerk who has been writing so boastfully to his girl about his success in the big city that when she comes to visit him, he has to do something sensational to redeem himself in her eyes. This exposition is sketched out in a few swift scenes with a minimum use of titles. Then, with the plot set up, Harold's chance for humor (and for a reconciliation with his girl) comes when he is forced by circumstances to substitute for a "human fly," who makes his living by crawling up and down the outsides of tall buildings.

More than half the film is spent with Harold pre-

Ben Turpin (center) was one of the dozens of slapstick comedians in the twenties who enjoyed enormous popularity.

cariously trying to edge his way up the side of the building. He misses toe holds and finger holds, often dangling perilously over the gawking crowds below. The comic denouement comes as Harold, trying to hold onto his hat and to keep from losing his glasses, hangs by his fingertips from the hands of a giant clock which stands many stories above the street. All in all, the formula for *SAFETY LAST* would read about six parts laughter to one part plot.

In sound comedy, a reasonable length of time must be allowed for a man to make his farewell: after all, he cannot make his words run any faster than he can speak them. Then, when the necktie becomes entangled in the trap, we tend to expect that its disengagement will take no more than a similar "real" length of time. In sound comedy, the comedian is forced to spend unfunny minutes talking himself (often unconvincingly) into improbable situations, for sound brought with it an increase in realism. In silent comedy, we tend to expect no such explanations, for these movies were not realistic by virtue of their silence. Silence permitted audiences to suspend their disbelief and accept the universe of the film as "real" in a different sense from the actual world outside the theatre. It would be simplistic, however, to base all of the delights of the silent comedy solely on this silence principle and its temporal implications.



DAYDREAMS, directed by Buster Keaton. Keaton seldom used a stuntman, and his daredevil feats (he is on the paddle wheel in this shot) provoked gasps of astonishment from his audiences.

Silence was in a sense a vacuum, and the measure of the silent comedian could be taken by how well he was able to fill this vacuum. Lacking the conventions of words, the silent comedian was forced to rely on his face, his body, and his props, in order to communicate meanings. His art was in creating physical and visual metaphors for ideas which would be communicated verbally in the real world. In "Comedy's Greatest Era," Agee describes a gag situation which finds the silent comedian suddenly struck upon the head:

> He seldom let it go flatly....The least he might do was to straighten up stiff as a plank and fall over backward with such skill that his whole length seemed to slap the floor at the same instant. Or he might make a cadenza of it — look vague, smile like an angel, roll up his eyes, lace his fingers, thrust his hands palms downward as far as they would go, hunch his shoulders, rise on tiptoe, prance ecstatically in narrowing circles until, with tallow knees, he sank down the vortex of his dizziness to the floor, and there signified nirvana by kicking his heels twice, like a swimming frog.

There is an unmistakable technical resemblance between these comic conventions and much of the humor which was produced on the old vaudeville stage. The work of some of the later silent comedians, while equally funny, tended to be more complex. These later performers exploited the cinematic resources of the film as a separate and distinct medium.

Buster Keaton, who is much acclaimed as the "most cinematic" of the early comedians, was especially brilliant in his handling of space. Keaton made the proscenium arch of the vaudeville stage seem a restrictive and binding limitation. Through the judicious use of the long shot, he opened up comedy to the world of nature and the world of the machine. Most silent comedians found themselves beset by biting dogs, spilled paint, and bananas on sidewalks. Keaton created a character who found himself plagued, not simply by the usual comic trivialities, but by an entire malevolent universe as well.

The real magnitude of Keaton's universe is demonstrated by the monstrous co-star with which he shared the screen in *THE GENERAL* (1926), one of his most popular films. The giant steam-driven locomotive which gave its name to the picture was on screen with Keaton for seven out of the eight reels of the movie. Together with its master, the great hulk of machinery went through its comic paces like some giant well-trained dog. One particularly memorable sequence at the beginning of the film occurs when the General is stolen, and Buster (as Johnny Gray) sets off doggedly in pursuit — on foot, in a hand-car, and on a bicycle. Most of *THE GENERAL* was shot on location, and the added dimension of the panoramic vistas enhanced greatly the visual scope of the chase.

The comic vision of Charles Chaplin, on the other hand, was quite different. While Keaton had expanded the limits of the "proscenium arch" in his movies,

Harold Lloyd with time on his hands, just hangs around in *SAFETY LAST*.

The most famous costume in the history of film. Chaplin claimed that the derby hat, the cane, and the moustache were symbols of Charlie's vanity and dandyism. The baggy trousers and tightly fitting morning coat were symbols of his absurdity and vulnerability.

Oliver Hardy. Though Laurel and Hardy enjoyed their greatest popularity in the thirties (after the advent of sound), a number of their silent classics employed pantomimed "dialogue."

THE GENERAL, directed by Buster Keaton. Like many silent comedies, Keaton's movie used the chase as an important structural element, but perhaps no other film of the twenties integrated character, theme, and the episodes of the chase with such organic cohesion.

The greatest acrobat of all the silent comedians, Keaton's comic effects were generally gags contrasting Buster's precarious body with the malevolent objects of a given space, as in this shot from *THE GENERAL*.

At the conclusion of *THE GENERAL*, Buster is elevated to officer status and he gets the girl as well. Always the manipulator of objects in space, he manages to kiss his girl and salute some enlisted men simultaneously.

Chaplin used film as a medium with which to diminish space by magnifying one specific point within the arch. Through the skillful and sparing use of the close-up, Chaplin was able to capture an intimacy which was never available on the stage. In so doing, he added a new quality to the dictionary of pantomimic comedy — the quality of pathos. Chaplin understood that from a distance of fifty feet, the sight of a man tripping over a dog can by hysterically funny. When the same man is only a few feet away, his plight is not funny at all. The close-up tends to reveal the humanity inherent in most seemingly comic situations. Knowing when to cut from the long shot to the close-up can enable an artist to manipulate his audience from laughter to tears.

One of the most funny and pathetic sequences from Chaplin's masterwork, *THE GOLD RUSH* (1925), is achieved with just this sort of intercutting. The scene opens with Charlie and Mack Swain stranded in a snow storm with no food in their cabin. We see Charlie boiling his old worn shoe for a holiday dinner. When they sit at the table, Chaplin moves his camera in for one of the most memorable and poignant pieces of pantomime recorded on film. Charlie carves the shoe as though it were a turkey, portioning it out between himself and Mack Swain. Then, with the finesse of a gourmet, he twirls the laces on his fork as though they were spaghetti, and nibbles the nails as though they were succulent bones. The scene is a complex blend of desperation, courage, and brilliant comedy.

The advent of sound did not hit Chaplin as it did most of the other great silent comics. Chaplin managed to survive and continue turning out films, though the characters he played in these films were never quite the same. After *MODERN TIMES* (1936), the Tramp disappeared, and was replaced by a gallery of more complex, more morally ambiguous figures. It was sound which put so many fine comedians out of work: quite simply, pantomimic comedy did not require words, and Hollywood felt that its box offices did.

Of the comedians who successfully made the move from silent comedy to dialogue comedy, probably the most interesting are Stan Laurel, Oliver Hardy, and W.C. Fields. These three comedians pioneered many dialogue comic conventions which have been used and reused ever since. Laurel and Hardy are probably better considered as one comedian than as two. They werethe most popular comedy pair to have made it in movies. The tremendous number of teams which followed Laurel and Hardy indicates that the team was a convention well suited to the talkie. Even before the coming of sound, the comic work of Laurel and Hardy tended to be in the nature of a dialogue comedy. Unlike the single comedians, who were often seen alone, or with props, Laurel and Hardy were forced to work together and to relate to one another. Their comedy tended to be in the nature of a pantomimed dialogue, and thus when sound became an added factor, the transition was easily made. Probably more than half of the comedians who have achieved fame since the advent of the talkie have been team comedians. The Marx Brothers, Hope and Crosby, Abbott and Costello, Martin and Lewis, the Three Stooges, and many others have been patterned on the Laurel and Hardy tradition.

W.C. Fields represents another type of early dialogue comedian. He was among the first of the "character"

comedians. His success in silent film was only moderate, but he was extremely popular once the talkies came in. Fields's humor was based on the predictability of his reaction to any given stimulus. He played the same role in film after film, and his audience grew to know and to expect from him the same comic reactions. He was always the same blustering indignant phony that he was in his last film, and when sound provided the addition of his raspy nasal voice the effect was only heightened. As with the "team" convention, many dialogue comedians have patterned themselves around the "character" pose.

The thirties of course was a great period for American comedy, largely because of the advantages of sound. In the opinion of many comedy fans, however, the Golden Age was the twenties — when the sounds of silence seemed far more eloquent.

THE GOLD RUSH, directed by Charles Chaplin. Three desperate characters, stranded in an arctic blizzard. •The camera in this three-shot is closer to the action than Chaplin generally favored.

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David Robinson. **Hollywood in the Twenties.** A.S. Barnes, 1968.

The Marx Brothers in *A DAY AT THE RACES*, directed by Sam Wood. Thirties comedy tended to be more verbal than visual, though the Marx Brothers assaulted both sight and sound in their films.

Nitrate stock in the process of decomposition.

THE SAD STATE OF FILM PRESERVATION

By W. Scott Eyman

Film is both an art and an industry, a cultural artifact and a commercial commodity. Occasionally, film directors have acted as their own producers, thus assuring control not only over the financing and distributing of their films, but over their preservation as well. Among those directors who produced most or many of their own works are Griffith, Chaplin, Keaton, Hitchcock, and Billy Wilder, though all of these men have also known the exploitation of philistine studio executives. One of the most unfortunate side effects of the American studio system has been the discarding of prints, and sometimes even master negatives, of a film after it has finished its run. American movies are seldom commercially revived, and hence, from a business point of view, old movie prints have been considered valueless by shortsighted studio executivs. If prints were not destroyed deliberately, many were permitted to rot in studio vaults. The cultural loss from this neglect has proved inestimable: many of the early works of Keaton, Chaplin, and von Stroheim—to mention only a few—are forever lost to posterity. Had it not been for a number of enterprising bootleggers, this loss would be even greater, as W. Scott Eyman points out.

Time was when the term "bootlegger" was mentioned, the image that sprang to mind was that of a hillbilly in the Carolinas brewing up some rot-gut whiskey. Not any more. Nowadays, when the term is used, it's often in connection with films.

Operating in open defiance of outdated and absurd copyright laws, the vast underground sells everything from rare Chaplin features to *2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY*, at prices ranging from $50.00 for an 8 mm feature to $500.00 for a 16mm sound print of *2001*.

While such obviously illegal activity may seem out-

wardly reprehensible, in many instances it is the film bootegger, busily operating a basement laboratory, who is responsible for saving for posterity many of the greatest American films.

When talkies came in (*circa* 1927), most of the film companies, thinking silent films were now outdated, silly antiques taking up valuable storage space, simply burned their silent negatives and prints. Of all the major companies, only MGM retained good prints of their silent classics. Some of the lost works of the MGM archives — for example, the Lon Chaney film *THE UNKNOWN*, directed by Tod Browning and dealing quite blatantly with sado-masochism — exist only in private (bootlegged) collections. When the American Film Institute was searching for many of these early lost materpieces, their frequent (and often only) sources were from private European collections.

If it hadn't been for numerous individuals secreting away 35mm and 16mm prints in their attics and basements and making prints in home laboratories, a large proportion of irreplaceable American culture would be lost forever.

Foremost among these individual was William Donnachie of Philadelphia. In business for almost twenty years, Donnachie offered for sale some of the enduring masterpieces of the screen, American and foreign, silent and sound, at most reasonable prices. Goodies like *THE BIG PARADE, THE MALTESE FALCON, THE GRAPES OF WRATH, WINGS, MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY* (1935 version), *KING KONG, HELL'S ANGELS, OPEN CITY, THE PAWNBROKER, TRIUMPH OF THE WILL, THE GREAT DICTATOR, TABU, M, THE GOOD EARTH*, and many others were offered.

I say "were" because early in May, Mr. Donnachie got busted. Royally busted. Four U.S. Marshalls waving guns busted him. All that muscle for a little old man on Social Security. The ways of the law are indeed mysterious.

LONDON AFTER DARK, Tod Browning's 1927 classic, starring Lon Chaney, was one of the many permanent casualties of nitrate stock disintegration.

A suit, brought against Donnachie by six movie companies, has effectively frozen all of Mr. Donnachie's negatives and assets. The whole legal charade becomes infuriating when one considers the facts.

As Mr. Donnachie stated in a letter to me,"The one pleasure I got from doing it was that I was setting a pattern of saving for posterity the art of the motion picture. The studios, or copyright owners, take out a copyright for one thing only — money.

"When all these films have run in cinemas throughout the world, and then have been televised, these copyright owners have all the royalties they can get, so whre can they go from here?"

Where indeed. Certainly Mr. Donnachie made peanuts on his bootlegged prints: when he was arrested, he didn't even live in his own home, but rented a modest apartment. If film preservation had been left to the companies that were making films, the surviving list of silent movies would be pitifully small.

Aside from the wholesale burning of negatives and prints, another villain is the early nitrate film stock. In use until about 1948, it is highly combustible and, chemically speaking, very unstable. When exposed to air after long periods of storage, it turns into dust. Even when stored under perfect conditions, it has a tendency to turn to dust anyway.

When an executive at Paramount was given a small amount of money to look at the remaining silent films in the Paramount vaults and see what, if anything, was salvageable, he found a grand total of five features out of over eighty-five that were stored which could still be printed up. Among those films that had deteriorated beyond repair were the negative of C. B. De Mille's first feature, *SQUAW MAN*, a host of movies starring Rudolph Valentino, and Gloria Swanson, and many others.

From a strictly aesthetic viewpoint, most of these films are probably not worth seeing. Yet masterpieces have a way of cropping up in the most unexpected places. And anyway, how can one judge that which one has not seen? A great many of Shakespeare's plays were also once thought to be not worth preserving until later generations proved Shakespeare's contemporaries wrong. (The reasons were much the same: many of Shakespeare's contemporaries considered his plays "commercial," and not worthy of serious artistic consideration.)

With the formation of the American Film Institute, the responsibility of film preservation was taken out of the hands of the beleagured private collector and put in the large arms of a government organization. The AFI has done a fine job, transferring to safety stock over five hundred films, silent and sound, which were in danger of deterioration.

Unfortunately, the AFI's appropriations have been steadily declining since its formation in 1967. If the present trend continues, the AFI will have to subsist solely on membership dues, and the film preservation program will suffer an almost irreparable setback. There is no time to waste.

But the witch-hunt continues. Films forgotten in attics for forty years continue to deteriorate, and the people who really love film and are dedicated to letting them be seen (as their makers intended) are forced further underground as the greedy film companies continue their righteous crusade.

JOHN FORD'S

By Richard W. Evans

John Ford is generally (and rightly) esteemed for his westerns. But Ford was interested in other variants of the epic as well. In the essay below, Richard W. Evans deals with Ford's adaptation of John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath. *The clash of artistic temperament between these two men is understood by the fact that Ford is one of America's most conservative directors, while* The Grapes of Wrath *is clearly a Marxist novel. Perhaps predictably, Ford refashioned Steinbeck's material, de-emphasizing its Marxist and religious elements, and stressing the themes of family and community, two typically Fordian concerns. In developing the differences between literary and cinematic communication, Mr. Evans suggests that Ford's film is weakest precisely when it adheres too closely to the original, particularly in some of the political speeches.*

Many times one emerges from the blackness of a movie house to overhear a comment such as, "I thoroughly enjoyed the film, but I wish it had stuck to the book." Such statements raise the ire of even the amateur film critic: the popular compulsion to see film adaptations as in some way a lowly reproduction of the novel. Such thinking has caused a number of critics to step forward to explain the proper relationship between the two forms. The classic explanation is that they are in fact two distinct forms, each having its own strengths and weaknesses, powers and limitations. Many such discussions move from here to obscurity. Unfortunately, our critical tools do not always serve us well in dealing with the problem. Furthermore, many critics are skilled in the analysis of literature, but not flexible and sophisticated enough to appreciate the *filmic* qualities of an adaptation. Too often, such critics cling insecurely to the word.

The so-called foreign "art film" actually poses less of a methodological problem for the critic. Antonioni, Bergman, or Fellini are quite conscious artists, and their movies are often overtly symbolic. They are not "entertainment" films in the same way that most American movies are. In *WILD STRAWBERRIES* or *8½*, the sensitive viewer cannot help but respond on a number of poetic and filmic levels at once. But "popular" cinema poses a problem, for deeper meaning is not always self-evident, perhaps because the complex elements are embedded in the narrative structure of the film.

Part of this problem is based on the nature of popular films. Fellini and Bergman draw from techniques and conventions that occur commonly in literature, symbolism being the most obvious. The use of literary conventions allows the viewer to make a literary type of analysis of a film. On the other hand, popular cinema tends to use literary conventions less. Part of the reason is that "entertainment films" are concerned much more with telling a story. The average American viewing public wants primarily to "enjoy a movie." The result is that popular cinema is much less open to "literary" analysis.

A few film critics are beginning to understand this, especially those who find a certain interest in directors who, because they are so popular, have not been considered seriously as artists. In an attempt to explain the work of Alfred Hitchcock, Robin Wood points out the direct emotional relationship film has to its audience, as contrasted to the cognitive and interpretive experience literature must generally depend on:

> It seems to me a fair representative specimen of that local realisation that one finds everywhere in recent Hitchcock films, realisation of theme in terms of "pure cinema" which makes the audience not only see but experience (experience rather than intellectually analyse) the manifestation of that theme at that particular point.(1)

The implication of what Wood contends is far reaching. He is saying in essence that film has managed to "short circuit" the long-standing relationship between exerience, intellect and art. All people are able to experience, and thus through film, all people are able, regardless of training or sophistication, to experience art directly. This is not to say that the critic is obsolete, for his job is not so much to point out meaning as to refine and embellish one's perception of meaning. But it does mean that the *essence* of a film should be accessible to all. Though the average man could probably make little sense of Joyce's *Ulysses*, the proper translation of Joycean themes into "purely cinematic" terms should render them accessible, on the experimental level, to all. And Joseph Strick's *ULYSSES* seems to come very close to realizing this accessibility. The truth of this statement can be seen in the powerfully libralizing effect cinema has had on American society, an effect which probably could not have been accomplished with popular literature.

The usefulness of this perspective might become clearer if we consider a single film, John Ford's *THE GRAPES OF WRATH*. This movie is unquestionably an example of "popular cinema," and is also an adaptation of an at least respectable piece of literature.

In his critical study, *Novels into Film*, George Bluestone asserts that the film and the novel are two distinct and somewhat incompatible media. Given the limitations and conventions of each medium, an attempt to reproduce literature in film (or vice-versa) is doomed to failure. This is especially true of what Bluestone calls "content," as distinguished from subject or story. Content is too organic, too tightly linked to the medium (words) to survive adaptation. It is from the other dimensions — the crude "subject matter" or "story" — that the film director must draw. "He looks not to the organic novel, but to characters and incidents which have somehow detached themselves from language, and, like the heroes of folk legends, have achieved life of their own."(2)

There is much in Steinbeck's novel that fits into

GRAPES OF WRATH

THE GRAPES OF WRATH was photographed by Gregg Toland, who also shot Orson Welles' *CITIZEN KANE*. Welles has called Toland the great est cinematographer in the history of film.

this category. In writing the novel, he alternated chapters throughout the work, one set carrying the story line quite literally, the other set developing a more complex matrix of imagery and theme. In the story chapters, Steinbeck de-emphasized those traits of literature which usually anchor theme and character to language. He vigorously avoided ever getting inside a character. We never perceive thought in the book: the point of view is always external, and (as in the film), we are required to infer emotions, thoughts, and motivations from what is done and said. Indeed, the narrative chapters of Steinbeck's work are presented as if they were meant to be filmed: he rarely relies on metaphor or analogy, and his realistic descriptions are clear and literal. Possibly Steinbeck's realism is derived in part from the influence of the American documentary film makers of the thirties, notably Pare Lorentz, whom Steinbeck knew well.

By using the literal descriptions of the narrative chapters for a basis, Ford could have adapted Steinbeck's novel by simply condensing what is already there. The art of such a film would be in the skill with which the photography was carried out. And certainly on that level, Gregg Toland's superb cinematography succeeds in translating Steinbeck's "directions" into cinematic reality. But both the novel and the movie contain much more than a simple story line.

Bluestone argues that the novel contains at least six motifs, including (1)a preoccupation with biology and organic metaphors, (2)the juxtaposition of natural morality and religious hypocrisy, (3)the socio-political implications inherent in the conflict between individual work and industrial oppression, (4)the love of the regenerative land, (5)the primacy of the family, and (6)the dignity of human beings.(3) Bluestone notes that the first two are absent from the film; the third is muted; and the last three are articulated strongly. This is unquestionably true: Tom's encounter with a turtle is dropped, as are dozens of references to pigs, cows, birds, and the images of seeds and fruit. No hint of Ma Joad's encounter with the "Jehovites" or Mrs. Sandry's damnation of Rose of Sharon can be found. And the purposeful exploitation by local government, police, and farmers is exchanged for a more nebulous injustice which seems to have no real source, or is the

action of a few evil and selfish individuals.

On the other hand, Ford encompasses the other themes of the novel with a great deal of subtlety and skill. One could hardly forget Grandpa kneeling near the old homestead, a handful of dirt in his hand, crying, "This here's my country. I belong here. (Looking at the dirt) It ain't no good — (after a pause) — but it's mine."(4) Nor Ma, sitting in the empty house, strong yet gentle, pushing memories of life in Oklahoma into the fire, as the family prepares to leave. Nor Tom, as he steps over the horizon near the close of the film, in the hope that "maybe I can jes' fin' out sump'n."(5)

But in his analysis of themes, Bluestone and a number of other critics have missed the major thematic movement of the novel. Family is important, and one of the major tensions of the novel is created by the gradual disintegration of the family: loss of the family homestead, the death of Grandpa, then Grandma, Noah's walk into oblivion, Connie's desertion, Al's proposed marriage and move to the city, and finally Tom's flight from the law. From a sociological perspective, Steinbeck's point must be that in the family, man's most human institution, cannot long survive within a hostile social environment. But comment is not totally pessimistic. Early in the novel, Ma Joad challenges Tom and Pa with a tire-iron when they suggest that the family split up: "All we got is the family unbroke. . . I ain't scared while we're all here, all that's alive, but I ain't gonna see us bust up. . . I'm a-goin' cat-wild with this here piece a bar-arn if my folks busts up."(6)

But by the closing chapters, Ma urges Tom to leave, with the realization that even with the disintegration of her family, a broader sort of community is possible. This awareness is foreshadowed earlier in the novel when Ma remarks to the company store clerk whe has bestowed a favor which might cost him his job. "I'm learnin' one thing good. . . learnin' it all a time, ever' day. If you're in trouble or hurt or need — go to poor people. They're the only ones that'll help — the only ones."(7) The disintegration of the family has been compensated for by the coming awareness of a greater class community. From this standpoint, the "pessimism" of the novel's conclusion becomes muted, for a partial compensation of the loss of family is a gain of community. Rose of Sharon, in offering her milk-laden breast to a starving old man, is extending an intimate family gesture to a large class family.

Ford emphasizes this theme in the film. Community has long been recognized as a central preoccupation with Ford: his films repeatedly illustrate the humanizing effects of community, particularly in times of threat. *STAGECOACH* is the classic example. Thrown into the context of a dangerous coach ride across Indian country, a group of derelicts, outcasts, and weaklings draw together in close communty, and through that experience derive new strength and dignity. In his later film, *MY DARLING CLEMENTINE*, Ford couples the theme of community with the idea of family lost. The Earp brothers, driving a herd of cattle to California are stopped in Tombstone, Arizona, where the youngest brother is murdered and the cattle rustled. In an attempt to gain vengeance, Wyatt accepts the job of marshal, only to find that though his own family is disintegrating (another brother is murdered, and Wyatt remarks that the news will destroy his father), there is strength and comfort to be found in the emerging frontier community of Tombstone. This new found sense of community is most strongly symbolized in the Sunday meeting square dance, a recurring motif in many Ford films.

In *THE GRAPES OF WRATH*, Ford uses the Federal government camp as the scene of emerging community. The well ordered camp, which is depicted as a model of cleanliness, health, and renewed dignity, is in stark contrast to the savage exploitation outside the camp. The audience senses relief at the camp's clean grounds and white buildings, as contrasted with the dirt and dinginess of the squatters' camp and the peach ranch. Its democratic committees, governing and protecting themselves, are contrasted with the humiliating and brutalizing oppression of the "tin star fellas they got for guards" in other camps. And its cooperative and humanizing interaction between residents, demonstrated most poetically in the Saturday night dance, is contrasted with the hyper-individuality of the other camps.

But if the redemptive qualities of the government camp and the community it encourages are deeply understood by the audience, it is through Ford's characterization that this is accomplished. When Tom says to the caretaker, "Ma's shore gonna like it here. She ain't been treated decent for a long time," the audience sympathizes totally. Through Ford's development of Ma Joad, the audience has come to perceive her with respect and compassion, for he uses her as the centerpost of the family unit. We know what the loss family has meant to her, and agree with her that "some things ya jes' gotta do." With Tom we wish that this gentle yet heroic woman could be allowed the peace she deserves. The importance of the government camp and the revitalizing effects of community are focused through the characters in the film. The camp allows Ma and Tom and the others peace, and eventually it allows them to achieve a almost heroic nobility.

From this perspective, even though Bluestone scoffs at script writer Nunnally Johnson's report that he chose Ma's speech for his final line because he considered it the real spirit of the novel (it appears in Chapter 20, about two thirds through the book), we must at least agree in part with Johnson. If the novel ends with a resolution between the themes of family lost and community gained, so does the film: Ma Joad's exchange of "we're the folks" for "we're the people" (that is, family, for community) is every bit the resolution that Steinbeck symbolizes in Rose of Sharon's act.

But regrettably, the actual utterance of that line lacks the power that Steinbeck put into the novel. It is singly the film's greatest flaw, ironically one of its most "literary" (and artificial) moments. Throughout the film, Ford has skillfully presented Ma's powerful attachment to the family and her gradual transfer of commitment to a larger community. Unfortunately, Ford and his writer Johnson yield to the temptation of verbalizing what is so obviously apparent in Ma's behaviour.

The roots of this problem lie in the Marxian myth of the proletariat-cum-intellectual. Such figures were popular with American writers, especially during the thirties: a working man becomes exceedingly disaffected with socio-economic system which is hostile

Tom Joad (Henry Fonda) learns of the thousands who are starving in California. He had thought, like 200,000 other dust bowl refugees, that California was the Land of Milk and Honey, the New Eden.

The death of Grandpa, along Route 66, the first of several deaths which will strike the Joad family on their way to California.

to his needs. Through his experiences, and sometimes with the help of a Marxist ideologue,the worker develops a class consciousness and comes to articulate a fairly sophisticated class analysis of his situation. Jack London's *Martin Eden*, and to a lesser extent, Frank Norris' *The Octupus* and Upton Sinclair's *Co-op* are classic examples.

Steinbeck's novel, though to a lesser degree, seems to fall into this general genre, and Ford's film follows suit. Both novel and movie use the road metaphor as a journey through several experiences which lead to socio-economic enlightment. Casey makes the journey first, followed by Tom, then Ma. Both Steinbeck and Ford fail to make the characterization fit in with this thematic development. The Joad family are people who experience directly. Rarely do they intellectualize their experience; they more often just feel it. Casey is the exception to this, and their response is that they don't quite understand him. But near the close of the film, Tom ceases to be a plain simple man of direct experience, and becomes a self-conscious, highly articulate Marxist activist.

Lifted almost verbatum from Steinbeck's novel, Ford shows Tom kneeling in the dark next to his mother's lighted face. With strains of "Red River Valley" in the background, he says:

> **TOM** (laughing uneasily). Well, maybe it's like Casey says, a fella ain't got a soul of his own, but on'y a piece of a big soul — the one big soul that belongs to ever'body — an' then...
> **MA**. Then what, Tom?
> **TOM**. Then it don't matter. Then I'll be all aroun' in the dark. I'll be ever'where — wherever you look. Whenever there's a cop beatin' up a guy, I'll be there. I'll be in the way guys yell when they're mad — an' I'll be in the way kids laugh when they're hungry an' they know supper's ready. An' when our people eat the stuff they raise, an' live in the houses they build, why, I'll be there too.(8)

Until this point in the film, Tom has never expressed ideas of such complexity and abstraction, and certainly he has never handled language with such facility. For the sensitive audience, the realism of Tom's character is immediately broken. To audiences thirty years later, the lines seem overwrought and ridiculous. Though Steinbeck does the same thing in the novel, it is less offensive, perhaps because of the rhetorical language of the non-narrative chapters.

Diverging from the chronology of the novel (the government camp and peach farm episodes are reversed), Ford commits the same error with Ma in the closing scene:

> **MA**. Rich fellas come up an' they die, an' their kids ain't no good, an' they die out. But we keep a-comin'. We're the people that live. Can't nobody wipe us out. Can't nobody lick us. We'll go on forever, Pa. We're the people.(9)

Once again, the unusual articulation of complex idea breaks the illusion of reality which is so carefully preserved in most of the rest of the film.

Lindsay Anderson has noted that "there is a sort of strain, apt to evidence itself in pretentiousness of style, about Ford's attempts with material outside of his personal experience or sympathy.(10) Ford is far from a Marxist, or for that matter even a political liberal. The "pretentions" of Ma's and Tom's speeches bare this out. But Ford is a humanist, and he does believe in the common man, in his courage, his tenacity, in his ability to endure. And these are the qualities that remain with us after seeing *THE GRAPES OF WRATH*, not the few lapses.

(1) Robin Wood, **Hitchcock's Films** New York: A. S. Barnes, 1969), pp.8-9.

(2) George Bluestone, **Novels into Films** (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1957), p.62.

(3) Bluestone devotes an entire chapter to **The Grapes of Wrath**.

(4) Nunnally Johnson, **The Grapes of Wrath**, in **20 Best Film Plays**, edited by John Gassner and Dudley Nichols (New York, 1943), p. 231.

(5)*Ibid.*, p. 376.

(6) John Steinbeck, **The Grapes of Wrath** (New York: Viking Press, 1939), p. 231.

(7) Johnson, p. 347.

(8) *Ibid.*, p. 376.

(9) *Ibid.*, p. 377.

(10) Lindsay Anderson, "The Method of John Ford," in **The Emergence of Film Art**, edited by Lewis Jacobs (New York, 1969), p. 239.

JOHN FORD

By Amy Kotkin

When John Ford started his career as a director of westerns in 1917, he was heir to a genre which had already become a highly stylized and romanticized cliche. Yet while he has made enormous contributions to the perpetuation of that idiom, Ford's unique and poetic personal view of the old west has added dimensions to his films which raise them far above the general level of this genre. In the essay below, Amy Kotkin traces the development of western conventions and stereotypes up until Ford came on to the scene. In a detailed analysis of STAGECOACH, MY DARLING CLEMENTINE, *and* THE MAN WHO SHOT LIBERTY VALANCE, *she suggests some of the reasons why Ford has been called the greatest living film director by Ingmar Bergman, Orson Welles, and Akira Kurosawa.*

The western film as we know it today has its roots in nineteenth century literature, most specifically in the sentimental novels of James Fenimore Cooper. Cooper's *Leatherstocking* series unearthed both an enthusiasm and a mass market for popular fiction. In 1860, an enterprising publisher named Erastus Beadle started to capitalize on this popularity by publishing cheap western stories designed for a mass audience. Produced weekly by a staff of writers, these first "novels" were a direct throwback to the *Leatherstocking* series, depicting an old benevolent and nomadic hunter who, though unglamorous, was an expert marksman and Indian fighter — skills that were essential for survival in the rugged West. Although the "dime novels" were an immediate success, Beadle (and his newly-spawned competitors) realized that their continued popularity would depend on increasingly exciting and dangerous characters and situations.

As a partial response, the tough, moralistic, yet unstriking image of the old hunter was gradually eclipsed by younger, more exciting heroes. Typical of this new breed was Deadwood Dick, who proved to be one of Beadle's most popular and enduring heroes. In this character, we begin to see the prototype of the cowboy hero: part white knight and part individual in the grand American tradition. Dick's knight-like qualities lay in the spheres of skill and morality. True to the chilvalric code (and in part, to his predecessor — the hunter), he was strong, brave and well-schooled in the skills he needed for survival, namely riding and markmanship. He was also unquestionably pure; he neither smoked nor drank, and was both respectful toward and protective of virtuous womanhood. Furthermore, Dick was never violent unless challenged by the personified forces of evil. If he killed, therefore, it was usually a matter of defending his own honor or that of a woman.

Most importantly, however, Deadwood Dick embodied the ideal of the self-made man of humble origins who maintained a dignified lifestyle based on a personal code of bravery and humanity in a land where no chivalric tradition or codified law dictated right or wrong. In short, he confirmed the American belief that obstacles could be overcome by the courageous, virile and determined stand of the individual as an individual. This romanticized and idealized image has persisted, and in doing so has given America its major folk hero.

The dime novel heroine was also highly idealized. Corresponding to the chivalry of the western hero, the heroine was most frequently portrayed as a delicate and virtuous creature whose gentility and femininity were further emphasized by the fact that she generally came west only after men had paved the way. She was usually thought of as a carrier of civilized and settled eastern traditions such as the church, school, and the institution of marriage.

The legacy of these novels survived and was adopted into the cinema in the early 1900's for basically two reasons. First among these was that the western story was still popular and thus offered both a successful formula and a potentially large market for the films. Secondly, the western was a perfect vehicle for early moviemakers who were just learning how to grapple with the principles of motion pictures. The western movie included a lot of motion (both of animals and people), and the majestic and melancholy natural scenery of the plains and mountains provided an inspiring backdrop. Needless to say, the early western films inherited the popularity of the dime novel and in doing so became heir to a venerable tradition of "reworking history to reflect ancient themes of liberty and nature." (1)

The early western remained in its purest sense a morality play. That is, the theme was usually dominated by a very obvious struggle between good and evil. The structure, too, became somewhat standardized, following largely the pattern of crime or conflict between the forces of good and evil, pursuit or chase (which had enormous cinematic and dramatic potential), and the ritualistic showdown.

The early western film hero was also patterned almost directly after his dime-novel counterpart. Tom Mix was the most obvious off-shoot of the Deadwood Dick character. Although he was jazzed up visually by fancy costumes and flashy trick riding, Mix embodied the chivalric code, was forever chaste, and never flinched from a challenge (as personified by the proverbial train robber, rustler, or corrupt banker) to his honor or his high sense of duty.

Because he was cast as a traditional folk hero, Tom Mix and other cowboy stars of his era personified the most primitive and nationalistic aspirations of a people. The plot of most westerns "though embedded in a kind of history, is really an accretion of fantastic and superhuman adventures." (2) Because the western's intention was moralistic, idealistic, and relatively simple, "the folk-hero cowboy's virtues tended to be those of physical strength, courage, singleness of pur-

STAGECOACH, directed by Ford in 1939, was the first film he shot in the magnificently beautiful Monument Valley, in Utah.

pose and blind endurance." (3) Inasmuch as he was seen more as a symbol than a person, the western hero became predictably flat and one-dimensional.

This rigid and dehumanized idealization had other consequences for the cowboy star. As a composite national image, he was not only totally good but by definition loomed above all others in his environment in terms of bravery, nobility of purpose and self-reliance. He was a complete man and thus had no real need for anyone or anything save his own sense of honor and integrity. Because he was self-sufficient, he was an individual in the highest sense, and therefore an outsider to the community by whose standards, then, he could not be judged. His individuality and freedom were heightened by the fact that in most cases he had no cultural roots and no family. He was a man without a past, a "new man," or as R.W.B. Lewis terms him, an "American Adam."

Because the Western hero evolved into such an idealized and one-dimensional character, the supporting players were consigned to no less stereotyped roles lest their individuality detract from our interest in the hero. Even the heroine, who matched the cowboy hero in goodness and purity, was curiously subordinated to him, a subordination that was insisted upon by the movie-going public which would tolerate no mush in their archetypal folk hero. In the first place, the hero does not really need her; she also represents a threat to his freedom and rootlessness. Marriage is thus left to those who were subject to societal pressures–and the cowboy hero, as I have noted, is essentially an outsider.

The formula which I have outlined led to a standardization of symbols, characters, themes, and structures which persisted for decades. Because of its predictability, the western has long been open to good-natured spoofing:

> The west was won by the quickdrawing heroes of an earlier, less complicated day when Good (clean-shaven, white hat) pursued Evil (mustache, black hat) across a silent screen to the accompaniment of the William Tell Overture. Greed, buttoned into the town banker's black frock coat, preyed on Innocence (an orphan in callico). Lust worked the saloon beat, hustling drinks in her spangled finery, and Death waited off-stage for justice to be served by the traditional shootout. (4)

Before I move on to a discussion of Ford, I think that it is important to note here that although the vast

majority of westerns followed this pattern or variations of it until quite recently, there was one significant and early break with this formula in the westerns of William S. Hart. Hart was originally a Shakespearean actor who came into film in 1914 because he was outraged at what he believed to be a misrepresentation of his native west in contemporary films. Although he held the limelight only briefly, Hart brought to the screen a measure of realism by introducing the concept of the strong, silent hero of great dignity who was nevertheless morally ambiguous. By humanizing the hero, Hart added a rugged, austere and poetic dimension to his films that was quite alien to the standard western of his time. By 1925, however, Hart's vogue had begun to ebb because the public demanded a return to the streamlined, flashy and knight-like hero of Tom Mix's ilk. Nevertheless, I believe that Hart's career had a great influence on Ford's later career in terms of characterization.

John Ford started directing westerns at a time when the director had very little choice as to his interpretation of the genre. Because most of his early works were studio assignments, which starred such stylized figures as Mix, Hoot Gibson or Ken Maynard, the films did not vary significantly from the framework outlined above. As his career and reputation grew, however, Ford was given more freedom as to his choice of materials, and his films started to break out of these strict molds.

The most important break Ford made with the pattern of the early westerns, and the characteristic which I think puts his work on a higher level, was reducing the importance of the theme of good and evil. Ford saw, perhaps partially through the influence of Hart, that his theme was almost singularly responsible for forcing characters into the flat, heavily symbolic roles that offered so little room for development or deviation. Ford's break from tradition had many important repercussions. His later heroes no longer embodied the wooden, moral absoluteness of a Deadwood Dick or a Tom Mix: they became mortals and therefore more capable of need for other humans. They could also make wrong decisions, or work outside of the law. Because the hero was now a man among men, the supporting characters did not necessarily have to be stereotyped as weaker or more vulnerable. Rather, by playing down the western as a lesson in morality, Ford was able to see each character as a product of his environment which had molded his beliefs. In this way, Ford was able to meet each character on his own level, and deal with him accordingly. Because of this approach,

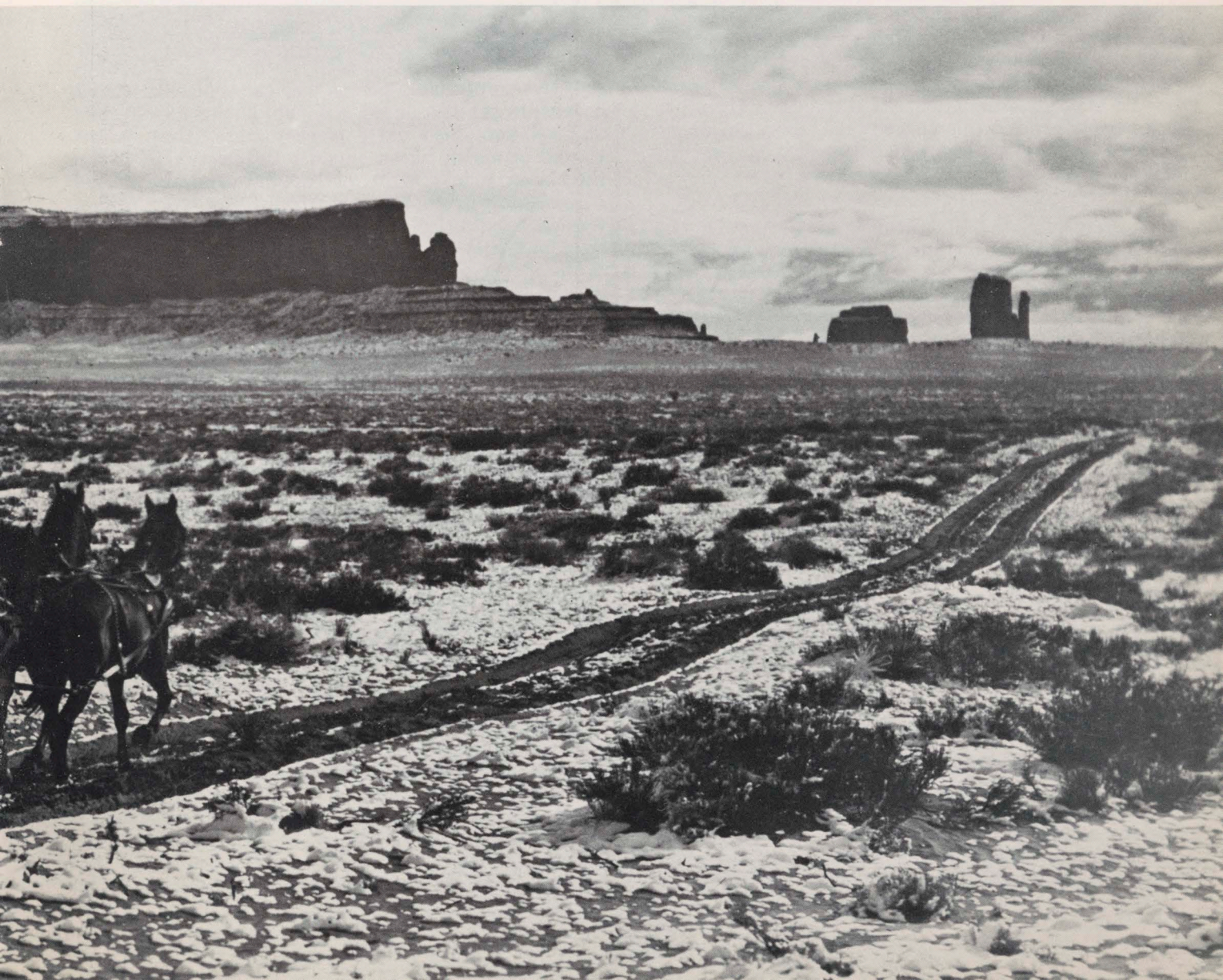
Ford was able to retain most of the popular stereotypes while giving them depths of characterization that were hitherto unknown, except in the films of William S. Hart.

Another important consequence of this change was that it left Ford free to explore other themes appropriate to the saga of westward expansion. These themes had been largely overlooked by earlier filmmakers because of their concentration on depicting the western as essentially an American morality play. Historically, the post-Civil War west, while still a loosely-knit and highly individualized society, stood on the verge of the inevitable march of civilization. Western society, then, was a society in transition, and Ford seized upon the dramatic potential of this change by exploring, as one of his basic themes, the consequences of the clash between the opposing forces of East and West. These forces are dealt with both symbolically and personally. Throughout Ford's best westerns, a number of polarities emerge: the settler vs. the nomad, the individual vs. the community, charismatic authority vs. legal authority, savagery vs. civilization, tradition vs. change, etc.

In particular, Ford often seeks to show how a sense of brotherhood and community functioned in the West. The idea of a journey in search of a better way of life also takes thematic precedence in many of his films. But although Ford made a thematic breakthrough that gave his westerns depth and poetry, his artistry lies in the fact that "his work is a double vision of an event in all its immediacy and also in its ultimate memory image on the horizon of history." (5) Thus, his themes and symbols never become heavy-handed or "messagey" because they are subtley woven into the plot and structure of his films.

It is difficult to pinpoint an exact time when this deeply personal interpretation of the West became apparent in Ford's films. Doubtless it was an evolution that did not take place overnight. In *Hollywood in the Thirties*, John Baxter states that after *THE INFORMER* (1935), Ford's "adventure stories were replaced by socially oriented dramas; many of them with historical themes. And when he returned to his old milieu, it was with a heightened sense of their true nature and a technique which allowed him to extract from traditional themes values nobody had sensed in them before." (6)

I have chosen three of Ford's films that were made after 1935 to discuss. The first of these is *STAGE-*



COACH (1939), which I think is important primarily in terms of how Ford added depth to the established stereotypes, and how his recurring themes appear in the narrative structure. The other two films are *MY DARLING CLEMENTINE* (1946) and *THE MAN WHO SHOT LIBERTY VALANCE* (1962), which illustrate Ford's personal vision of the West, and his evolving outlook over the years.

In discussing these films, I think it is important to bear in mind a statement made by Peter Bogdanovich in his book, *John Ford*. "What Ford can do better than any film-maker in the world is create an epic canvas and still people it with characters of equal size and importance — no matter how lowly they may be." (7) This is especially true of *STAGECOACH* where, although Ford is working basically with a band of stereotypes, he meets each on his own level and balances their virtues and foibles in such a way as to make no one person (except the "greedy banker") look totally good or bad. Dallas, the "tough but benign prostitute" in search of a new life is redeemed and indeed becomes the heroine by her selflessness and her love for Ringo. Ringo himself is a feared but respected outlaw who echoes the Hart prototype of a strong, silent, morally ambiguous yet dignified character. He, too, is redeemed by his heroic efforts in defending the stagecoach from a band of Apache maurauders, and is "humanized" by his need for Dallas. Mrs. Mallory, though straight-laced and condescending toward the rough-hewn westerners with whom she is traveling, is also respected for the stoic determination she displays in trying to find her husband in this rugged land. Even Dr. Boone is saved from sheer drunken buffoonery by the fact that in a pinch, he delivers Mrs. Mallory's baby.

Thematically, the film involves a journey on two levels. The first is the literal journey of the stagecoach, and the second is the individual quests of the main characters to find a better way of life (or in Ringo's case, to seek revenge) in Lordsburg. A second idea that Ford explores in this movie is the theme of an enforced community, how this collection of individuals are forced into a situation where survival may depend on cooperation. The process by which this sense of community finally does evolve is established primarily in visual terms.

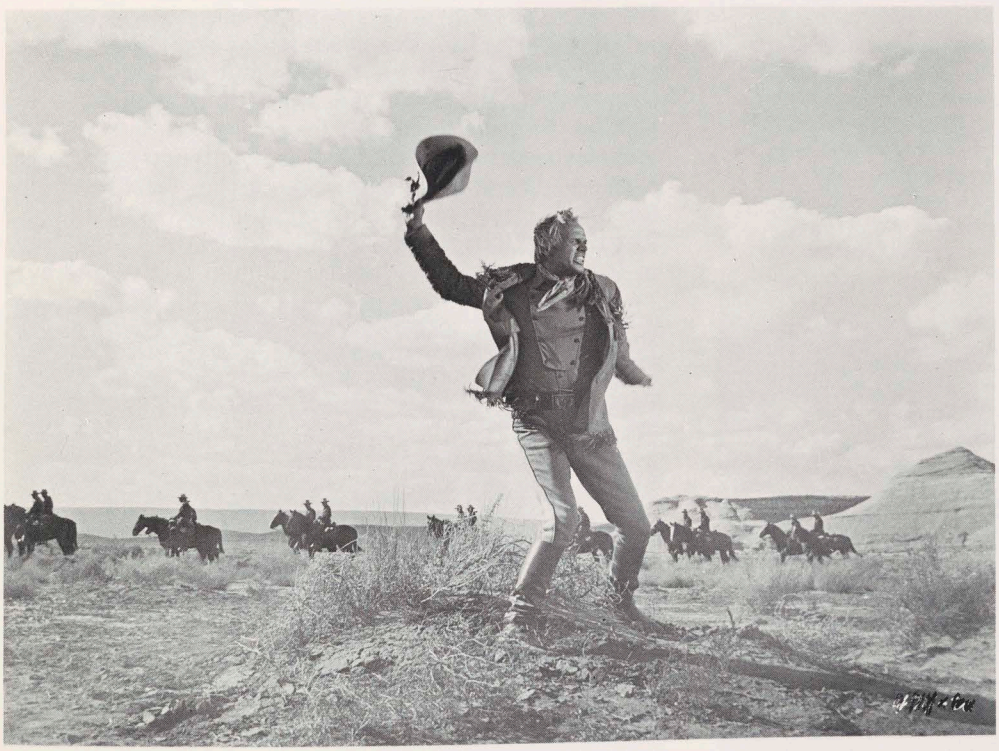
At the beginning of *STAGECOACH*, Ford uses many one-shots inside the coach to emphasize the fact that these people are a group which is defined only by proximity, rather than any real sense of interaction. These one-shots are then contrasted by long shots of the tiny stage wending its way vulnerably through the monumental and foreboding landscape. The implication of this juxtaposition is that external forces may force cooperation if they are to complete their journey safely. By the time they arrive at the way-station for dinner, the characters are more aware of the danger imposed by the Indians and of each other. Each person has found someone else on the stage whom he can trust; some because of similar social backgrounds, others because of shared interests. These coalitions are depicted by a series of two-shots of Dallas and Ringo (the social outcasts), the drunken doctor and the whiskey salesman, Mrs. Mallory and Hatfield (the fellow Virginians), and the banker and his money. This limited camaraderie is made to look deficient by the way Ford photographs the characters: they are sitting around a dining table which acts as a contrast because of its symbolic suggestion of unity. The disunity is reinforced by the dialogue, when each member of the party gives reasons why he should or should not continue the journey based on pure self-interest. The unity which enables them to withstand the Apache attack, however, is achieved only with the birth of the baby, which functions as a symbolic birth of unity as well. Predictably, this is the first point in the film where Ford uses a group shot. Because the story of *STAGECOACH* is that of an eventful journey, its structure is episodic. The episodes, however, are woven together by an increasing sense of tension and awareness, of internal and external threats to survival.

The characters in *MY DARLING CLEMENTINE* are also familiar types, but again, refracted through Ford's personal vision. As the hero, Wyatt Earp is essentially good and highly individualized. Although he is somewhat nomadic and footloose, he is not rootless. He is close to his brothers and has a sense of filial obligation which forces him to return home at the end of the film to tell his father of his brothers' deaths. Though Earp maintains honor and integrity in the best tradition of the western hero, Ford's sensitive interplay of symbol and reality does not permit Earp to be stereotyped and limited by his code. Rather, he is a flexible, sensitive and friendly person who can cope with change because he is self-assured. Also, unlike the more austere and self-contained early cowboy hero, Earp is not viewed primarily as an outsider to society. He eats in the saloon, drinks with Doc Holliday, and plays poker with the townsfolk. Most importantly, he has a respect for legal authority which is accentuated by the fact that he becomes marshal to "do what he must do" in terms of avenging his brother's death.

In the context of the story, these qualities make Earp a pivotal figure. Though a proud westerner, he accepts the coming of civilization as personified by Clementine. This process is best shown visually in the scene "after Wyatt Earp has gone to the barber (who civilizes the unkempt), where the scent of honeysuckle is twice remarked upon: an artificial perfume, cultural rather than natural. This moment marks the turning-point in Earp's transition from wandering cowboy, nomadic, bent on personal revenge, unmarried — to married man, settled, civilized, the sheriff who administers the law." (8) Thus Earp's progress is an "uncomplicated passage from nature to culture, from the wilderness left in the past to the garden anticipated in the future." (9)

Another way in which Ford adds depth to his characters in this film is by their subtle shifting relations with the other players. This is especially true of Clementine. In her clash with Chihuahua, Clementine appears as the paragon of virtue and gentility. But again, Ford counter-balances these qualities by stressing the fact that in all her goodness and idealism, Clementine can never understand, as the "town trollop" can, the man Doc has become. To Doc then, Clem-

WAGONMASTER (1950), like many of Ford's films, features a community dance as a symbol of the reconciliation of opposites: in this case, Mormon pilgrims, prostitutes, con-men, and ordinary cowboys.



In *CHEYENNE AUTUMN* (1964), Ford's vision of the New Eden turns sour. Gone are the images of the west as a Garden of Plenty, a Land of Milk and Honey. The film is told from the point of view of a tribe of Cheyenne Indians, who are forced by the white man to live on an arid reservation.

entine is a symbol of a past from which he has tried to escape. But to Earp and the larger frontier society, she represents the civilized future of the West.

In many ways, Holliday is more self-contained and independent than the hero, in that he has made a break with his roots and seems to have need for nothing except his self-image and sense of power. Ironically, though, his Eastern roots and his malady still confine him physically and psychologically. The futility of his escape, of course, is accentuated by Clementine's arrival. Doc's morality is also called into question by Earp's position as marshal. Despite their ideological differences, both men display a respect for one another which permeates the entire film and culminates in their union at the ritualistic and climactic showdown against the Clanton family.

In terms of structure, *MY DARLING CLEMENTINE* is very close to the classic pattern of crime, pursuit (or in this case, a prolonged wait), and showdown. The theme of good and evil, then, plays a large thematic role, but it neither distorts Ford's characters nor predominates over his other interests. In a sense, the idea of individual quests or journeys is suggested by Earp's search for revenge, Clementine' quest to find the lost love of her youth, and Holliday's desire to start anew in his last days. Again, as in *STAGECOACH*, their journeys are united first by proximity and then by interaction.

The most forceful thematic imagery, however, remains that of the antithesis of East and West. In this film, Ford emphasizes not their irreconcilable differences, but how they can be united to form both better individuals (Doc, Earp, and Clementine) and a more perfect society.

> In Ford's *MY DARLING CLEMENTINE* a half-built church appears in one brief scene; yet it embodies the spirit of pioneer America. Settlers dance vigorously on the rough planks in the open air, the flag fluttering above the frame of the church perched precariously on the edge of the desert. Marching ceremoniously up the incline towards them, the camera receding with an audacious stateliness, come Tombstone's knight and his 'lady fair', Wyatt Earp and Clementine. The community are ordered aside by the elder as the couple move onto the floor, their robust dance marking the marriage ceremony that unites the best qualities of the East and the West. It is one of Ford's great moments. (10)

THE MAN WHO SHOT LIBERTY VALENCE embodies a melancholy feeling that is missing from either of the two other films. Because it is structured essentially as a sentimental journey into the past, the viewer is immediately aware that Ford is telling a story which is antedated even within the context of the film. Thematically, the director is again concerned primarily with the dichotomy between the East and West. But, while *MY DARLING CLEMENTINE* brought us up only to the brief, optimistic instant where East and West seemed to combine to form a more perfect whole without serious compromise by either side, this later film deals with the ultimate historical consequences of the advance of civilization — namely the demise of the Old West and everything it stood for:

> As the years slip by the darker side of Ford's romanticism comes to the foreground, and twenty years after the war — in *THE MAN WHO SHOT LIBERTY VALANCE, TWO RODE TOGETHER, CHEYENNE AUTUMN* — we find a regret for the past, a bitterness at the larger role of Washington, and a desolution over the neglect of older values. . . . The ringing of changes is discernible in the choice of star as well, the movement from the quiet idealism of the early Fonda (Earp) through the rough pragmatism of the Wayne persona (Ringo and Doniphon) to the cynical self-interest of James Stewart (Stoddart). As Ford grows older the American dream sours, and we are left with nostalgia for the Desert. (11)

Like Earp, Tom Doniphon is a man with a code who seeks not to extend his domain but only to assert his personal values. Also, though both he and Earp kill, neither is seen as a murderer, but rather as virile and virtuous men. Nevertheless, Doniphon comes much closer to the stereotype of the cowboy hero than does Earp. He is a self-contained, limited man who can function only in a sphere which tolerates a high degree of freedom and individuality. Though settled and hope-

Along with *WAGONMASTER, MY DARLING CLEMENTINE* (1946) evokes the old west with rich nostalgia.

SHE WORE A YELLOW RIBBON (1949) is the last of Ford's monumental "Cavalry Trilogy" (which also includes *RIO GRANDE* and *FORT APACHE*), and one of his greatest achievements.

ful of marrying Callie, Doniphon is essentially lonely and alienated. Hardnosed, self-made and serious to the point of coldness, the hero of this later movie is seen as an outsider to society. However, Ford's depiction of Doniphon as the archetype westerner is not merely a reversion to stereotype, but rather a device he uses to show how this man and the era he represents became so tragically archaic in their own time.

Interestingly enough, civilization in this film is represented not by the usual Eastern woman, but by the arrival of Stoddart, the Eastern lawyer. Nevertheless, because of his background, he reflects many characteristics that we traditionally associate with the genteel heroine: he despises violence and cannot see why the law of the gun must take precendence over codified and democratized law. He even takes on "woman's work," such as cooking and schoolteaching to support himself until he can open his law office. His white apron is a constant reminder to us that he cannot function as a man is expected to in this world where charismatic authority supercedes rational-legal authority.

Callie, as the object of both men's affections is sensitive and flexible; she is also the pivotal character in the film. She learns to read and write as readily as Earp is barbered, and she is no more out of place in the schoolroom than he is at the church site. Therefore, her decision to marry Stoddart, though more emphatic than the intimation Earp maes about returning to Tombstone, signals in both cases the ushering in of the new West.

Stoddart is clearly the underdog at the beginning of the film, and Doniphon at the end; but they are balanced throughout by the same kind of respect that is engendered between Earp and Holliday. Significant also is the fact that, like Earp and Holliday, they too unite at the climax of the film to overcome the forces of evil. This results in Holliday's actual death in *CLEMENTINE* and Doniphon's symbolic death in *LIBERTY VALANCE*. But the differences here are equally clear. The showdown in the first case is the ritualistic one of going up against great odds to defend themselves and their sense of honor. In the case of Liberty Valance, the showdown is an illusion. Doniphon shoots Valance from secluded darkness and cedes the "credit" and thus his authority to Stoddart. In this sacrificial act, Doniphon acknowledges and seals his own doom. This image of Doniphon is further reinforced when Stoddart and Callie, now in the present, return for Doniphon's funeral and find his one mourner, the faithful ranch hand Pompey, sitting by the hero's casket:

> Doniphon, the epitome of the old west, dies without his boots on, without his gun, and receives a pauper's funeral, but the man of the New West, the man of books, has ridden to success on the achievements of the first, who was discarded, forgotten. It is perhaps the most mournful, tragic film Ford has made. There is nothing wrong with the New West — it was inevitable; yet as they ride back east, Stoddart and Callie look out their train window at the passing western landscape and Callie comments on how untamed it used to be, and how it has changed. But one feels that Ford's love, like Callie's, remains with the wilderness. (13)

(1) Jim Kitses, **Horizons West** (Univ. of Indiana Press, 1970), p. 15.
(2) Irving and Harriet Deer, **The Popular Arts: A Critical Reader** (Charles Scribners & Sons, 1967), p. 4.
(3) *Ibid.*
(4) *Holiday* (August, 1963), p. 78.
(5) Peter Bogdanovich, **John Ford** (Univ. of California Press, 1968), pp. 20-22.
(6) John Baxter, **Hollywood in the Thirties** (A.S. Barnes, 1968), p. 46.
(7) Bogdanovich, p. 23.
(9) Peter Wollen, **Signs and Meaning in the Cinema** (Univ. of Indiana Press, 1969), p. 96.
(10) *Ibid.*
(11) Kitses, pp. 21-22.
(12) *Ibid.*, p. 13.
(13) Bogdanovich, p. 34.

In his later period, which includes *TWO RODE TOGETHER*(1961), Ford's deepening pessimism was embodied in part by his new leading men (James Stewart and Richard Widmark), who are more complex, more morally ambiguous.

Orson Welles has called Ford "a great poet, and a great comedian." In *WAGONMASTER*, a superb comic scene involves the discovery of a stranded wagon in the middle of the desert, owned by a slick conman and two hustlers.

LOVING YOU (1959)

GIMME SHELTER (1970)

ROCK MUSIC AND FILM

By Anastasia J. Pantsios

During the past few years, the use of rock music in the score of a film or even throughout an entire soundtrack has become for many film makers the thing to do. Some directors have used music to express the idea of the film. The use of the cinema to express the ideas in rock music has occured less often, though it can be seen in such movies as WOODSTOCK *and* MONTEREY POP. *In the essay below, Anastasia Pantsios, explores this use of film. She traces the history of rock movies from the mid-fifties to such recent films as* WOODSTOCK. *She relates how techniques (and in fiction films, plots) have become more sophisticated, but argues that all too often, attempts at being interesting and "relevant" come off as obvious and unimaginative.*

Music has been used as background to films since film was invented, and for almost as long, there have been movies about music, including an infinite number of biography films. *THE JAZZ SINGER* was about Al Jolson, *WORDS AND MUSIC* about Rodgers and Hart, *THREE LITTLE WORDS* about Ruby and Kalmar, and dozens of others. Musicals are among the most enduring American genres, and are enormously popular both here and abroad. Since rock music came into being in the mid-fifties, film makers have exploited it just the way they did earlier musical forms. This discussion covers only films in which the music is the major element, films which center around the music and exist mainly to express it visually. I am not concerned with films which merely use rock music in their soundtracks, music chosen to express ideas already established in the film, such as *THE GRADUATE.*

Early rock films like *ROCK PRETTY BABY* (1957), *ROCK, ROCK, ROCK* (1958), and *LET'S ROCK* (1958) were basically excuses for playing "numbers." The story was usually built around a songwriter or singer trying to "make it" (*LET'S ROCK* and *ROCK PRETTY BABY*), or a school holding a prom or sock hop (*ROCK, ROCK, ROCK*), where the songs are brought in as performed stage numbers. These movies were actually a revamped version of the 1930's musical in which a group of people are trying to mount a Broadway review and incidentally get to do all their numbers on the screen. *FOOTLIGHT PARADE* (1933) is a good example of this kind of earlier film. Unfortunately, the 1950's rock and roll films did not have their Busby Berkeley, and while the numbers in *FOOTLIGHT PARADE* or *THE GOLDDIGGERS OF 1933* were visual treats, the ones in *ROCK, ROCK, ROCK* consisted of seeing Little Anthony and the Imperials up on the bandstand with an occasional close-up of Little Anthony. The effect was the same as being at a concert, and except for the use of the close-up, not expecially cinematic.

Similar to these were the Elvis Presley pictures which began in 1956 with *LOVE ME TENDER*, and have continued to this day, pretty much in the same vein. The excuses for stories got a bit more far fetched, but with Elvis appearing in two pictures a year, he could hardly have gone on making variations on the "singer makes good" theme. So he was a ranchhand or a hillbilly who frequently broke out into song. Actually, he was nothing but Elvis, and the stories were nothing but fillers between songs. Perhaps these are the only true rock musicals we have on the screen.

The next wave of rock pictures were the "Beach Party" movies, though in a sense, the music again became the background. The music was of inferior quality and written for the particular film, rather than the film being made to enhance the music. Still, there was little narrative interest, and the movies were pretty much excuses for "music" (and girls dancing in bikinis)

and "jokes" by comedians like Don Rickles. As film art, these aren't worth discussing. A typical shot had a stationary camera set up in front of Frankie and Annette "driving" a car in front of an obvious screen, while they sang "Beach Party Tonight."

In 1964, the British, specifically the Liverpudlians, gave rock music new life, and the old 1950's films was revived. (Actually, it never died, having been used in the form of such memorable epics as *TWIST ALL NIGHT* and *LET'S TWIST*, in 1962. Probably no musical fad escaped exploitation by a film maker somewhere.) *A HARD DAY'S NIGHT* (1964) was one of the first and one of the most interesting of these new British movies, but there were also vehicles for groups like the Dave Clark Five (*HAVING A WILD WEEKEND*), Herman's Hermits (*HOLD ON* and *WHEN THE BOYS MEET THE GIRLS*), and Gerry and the Pacemakers (*FERRY CROSS THE MERSEY*). Like the fifties films, these frequently centered around a talent competition or a big show being put on by the performers, who played themselves and did their big

Annette Funicello in *Disneyland After Dark*. Following her "Mouseketeer" days, Annette reached her apex of fame as the female lead in innumerable "Beach Party" films, whose only purpose in existing was to spotlight the rock stars of the pre-Beatle years.

hits just as they did on stage, which is what people went to see anyway. The early rock documentaries (such as *GO GO MANIA* and *THE T.A.M.I. SHOW*, both 1965) were even cruder and did nothing except offer a slightly better view than might have been had in the balcony.

Gradually, new techniques came into use and were put to the service of the music. *A HARD DAY'S NIGHT* was one of the first which featured sophisticated cinematic techniques. Superficially, this film adhered to the familiar story line. Somehow, the group (the Beatles) ends up at a television studio doing a show. A fairly good part of the movie is spent getting them there, though the scenes do not bend single-mindedly in that direction. The scenes are loose, often bearing only a tenuous relation to the plot. We are jumped back and forth from place to place without obvious connection, and the cutting is appropriately rapid. The musical numbers, at least in the earlier part of the movie, are tossed in, like the other scenes, without a grain of logic. Suddenly instruments are set up in a boxcar of the train in which the group has been travelling, and they do a number, without a producer standing up and saying, as in the fifties films, "O.K., kids, I think the garden flower number is ready. Let's see it." Finally, in scenes like the discotheque scene (which has since become obligatory for "mod" movies), no pretense is made that the group is playing while their music is on the soundtrack. Instead, they are doing something else entirely. The activity is usually in keeping with the rhythm and mood of the song, though generally not specifically related to it. Overall, the music had taken on a more nervous quality and the film managed to reflect this. Also, for the first time in this type of film, photographic techniques are used to emphasize moods, as in the slow-motion sequence of the four Beatles in a field, taken from a helicopter.

HELP!, the second Beatles film, followed in the tracks of *A HARD DAY'S NIGHT*. Although there was a plot here, it had nothing to do with the music or the

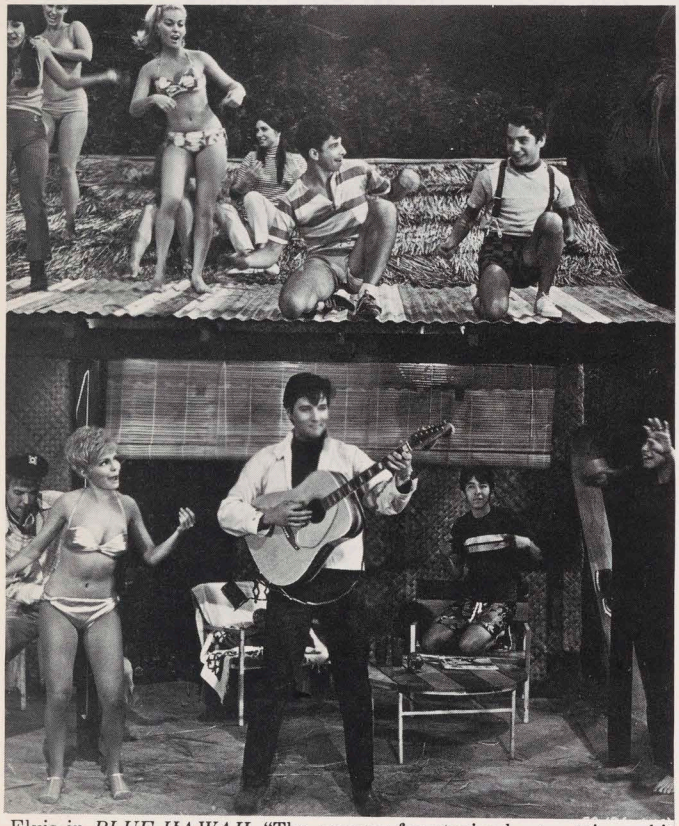
A scene from *THE COOL ONES*. Although this film was made in 1967, it has progressed little if at all in film terms from the "Beach Party" films. The featured players are not big rock stars, and the film still does not attempt anything more ambitious than to capitalize on musical fads of the day by greatly exaggerating them.

group themselves. The narrative was so limp that it could hardly have been said to exist for itself. The tempo of the film bends for the music and not for the story line. Strings of illogical episodes much like those in their first film, are cut in with musical numbers in which the Beatles may or may not be seen playing their instruments. Instruments may appear just as easily on a mountainside or a beach, as on a stage or in a high school gym. But musical numbers are also accompanied by bicycle riding, skiing, or walking down a street, the rhythm of the activity usually reflecting the rhythm of the song. In the rapid, edgy tempo of these films, the slow songs tend to get short shrift, and a tune like "You've Got to Hide Your Love Away" isn't particularly appropriate as filmed. As usual, nothing is done with the lyrics, which tends to be true in all these films about or centered around music. Films like *THE GRADUATE*, which used music to express what is already in the movie, tend to do better

in this respect.

Indeed, many contemporary non-musical movies — like *BUTCH CASSIDY AND THE SUNDANCE KID* — now feature lyrical interludes. In fact, these musical intrusions have become so fashionable of late that film critic Roger Ebert has dubbed them "S.O.L.I.," which stands for "semi-obligatory lyrical interlude." An example of the S.O.L.I. in *THE GRADUATE* has Benjamin driving dreamily through the rain while "Scarborough Fair" plays on the soundtrack. These S.O.L.I.'s were generally trying to express a character's mental state, which for some reason was usually "dreamy." They are, at their worst, a regrettable use of popular music. The nadir was reached in *JOANNA*, where the heroine drifted through a park in slow motion while the soundtrack intoned the deathless Rod McKeun lyrics, "When Joanna loved me, every day was Sunday, every town was Paris, every month was May."

In the late sixties, many films began to use rock music on their soundtracks, but only because of its relative popularity, which had exceeded that of Henry Mancini in some circles. The effect was usually just as surely background music as the score to *BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S*. Films from *BLOW-UP* to *EASY RIDER* used the music for their own purposes, and often were in a sense unfaithful to the music. Sometimes, however, as in *BLOW-UP*, the film accidentally seemed to be expressing the music. In this case, it was because the Yardbirds, who performed "Stroll On" in the nightclub sequence, were so much a part of what the film was about — the mechanization and fragmentation of contemporary life.

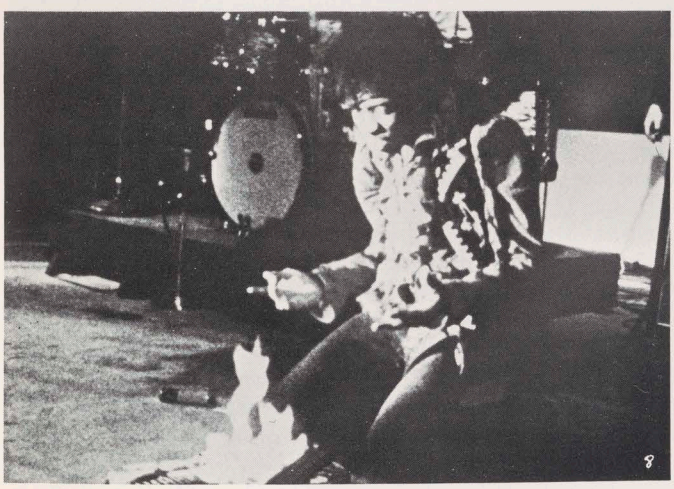


Elvis in *BLUE HAWAII*. "The excuses for stories kept getting a bit more far-fetched. . ." This time Hawaii was the setting, and usually the settings and the character Elvis portrayed were the only things that differentiated each of his films. "Actually, he was nothing but Elvis, and the stories were nothing but fillers between songs."

A HARD DAY'S NIGHT, directed by Richard Lester, changed rock films perhaps as much as the Beatles changed rock music. The comedy in the film is as valid a reason for the film's existance as the music. In the above shot, Lester parodies the Beatles' popularity as Paul McCartney's grandfather in the film hawks photos of the group.

Minor documentaries dealing with rock music had been made earlier. Several are mentioned above, and *DON'T LOOK BACK* could be considered as well, though in reality it deals with folk music. *MONTEREY POP* was the big breakthrough in documentary rock films and remains probably the best of its kind. A thin thread of a story is retained to flesh out the performances by the artists. We see scenes in which the producers are organizing the festival, people are setting up equipment, and the crowds are arriving. But the basic goal of the film is to capture the mood of the event, which centered around the music. In the nonperforming scenes, the music fits in because these scenes are blended in and out of those of the performers: the music and shots seem selected to mutually express each other. The mobile, free-wheeling song "San Francisco" accompanies the shots of people arriving at the festival. "People in Motion," says the song, as the camera roves restlessly through the gathering crowds.

The numbers are filmed far more strikingly than in the earlier rock and roll films, though it must be taken into account that the actual performances on



Above, three shots from *MONTEREY POP*. Top: Janis Joplin's raw blues performance is captured in a beautiful close-up. Center: Keith Moon of The Who literally destroys his drums in the group's violent finale. Bottom: shot in striking contrasts, Jimi Hendrix urges the flames on as he burns his guitar, an act which enhances the singer's sexual style. At right, from *WOODSTOCK*. Top: the locals stare as the huge crowd settles on the hillside. Center: the hand-held Eclair MPR 16mm in action, shooting Richie Havens with an extreme wide-angle lens, close-up from below his face. Bottom: Graham Nash and David Crosby harmonize during the Crosby, Stills & Nash segment.

Lead singer Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones, from *POPCORN*. The close-up of Jagger helps to emphasize the group's image: ugly, evil, and a bit perverted.

stage were now far more striking, for light shows had come into extensive use and the high school gym was no longer the chief setting for rock shows. Still, several years earlier we would not have had close-ups of Janis Joplin, lead singer of Big Brother and the Holding Company, stomping her feet during the gutty, raucous "Ball and Chain," nor the floating, detached back-lighted profile of Jefferson Airplane's Grace Slick playing the piano during the romantic "Today," or Country Joe McDonald shot from below, silhouetted against a light blue sky, strangely god-like during an eerie, electronic style number.

POPCORN, a pseudo rock festival film from England (in reality, the numbers were shot in many different concerts and many were specially shot for the film) goes the farthest of any of the documentaries in attempting to use film imaginatively to express music. Unfortunately, it also fails the most dismally, for a clumsy mixture of over-obvious techniques nearly destroys everything that the film maker sets out to do. The mixture of the scenes shot in and out of concert is particularly bad. In the concert scenes, the lighting and colors appear quite real and natural, while the out-of-concert scenes are photographed in dazzling, garish colors that can only remind one of a cigarette advertisement. Irrelevant zooms are distracting in the Rolling Stones sequence, and the Jimi Hendrix sequence is a bad copy of that in *MONTEREY POP*.

The gentle, whimsical British group, Traffic, is seen performing their song, "Hole in my Shoe," a sunny-day fantasy type of thing, with strange floating organ and twittery flute accompaniment. The entire scene is shot with multi-exposed revolving pink flowers superimposed on top of the musicians, an ingenious accompaniment to the fantastic lyrics ("I climbed on the back of a giant albatross that flew through a hole in a cloud to a place where happiness reigns all year around"). The effect was interesting and, in some ways, very much in keeping with the spirit of the music.

At other points in *POPCORN*, the "original" ideas

bomb. A rather bad English pop singer stands in front of a screen performing an innocuous little number entitled "Come and See the Real Thing," as newsreel footage is projected on the screen in back of him. He is photographed in solarized color and cut in with still other newsreel shots of such things as the atomic bomb exploding and soldiers in Viet Nam, all of which have been dyed a single color. The effect is over-inflated and idiotic. The "Indian music" scene was also shot in garish cigarette ad color, but other than that, seemed a direct copy from the famous Ravi Shankar sequence in *MONTEREY POP*.

One of the more interesting scenes in *POPCORN* was the Small Faces' parody of *A HARD DAY'S NIGHT*. The group, dressed in ridiculous brightly-colored costumes, prances through a park to the music of their own "Itchycoo Park." In shots similar to those of Jean-Luc Godard, the group plays impishly with the camera, completely aware of its presence. The scene was saved from becoming an S.O.L.I. by the personalities of the group members, and by the song itself, which is hardly "lyrical." Among other things, the director included multi-exposed close-ups of the Small Faces making idiotic expressions, all saturated in more garish color. In individual scenes, ideas were often full of potential, but just as often, they didn't come off. The entire film blended together badly, and included such things as a Twiggy fashion show, and surfing scenes, just to make it a film about the "youth culture," rather than just rock music. All in all, this movie couldn't be considered any kind of milestone.

Finally came *WOODSTOCK*, the most polished of these films and the best known, due to the publicity attending the event itself, and a huge promotional push on the film. The story line of this movie copies that of *MONTEREY POP*. It opens with shots of people arriving and setting up equipment, to the appropriately tempoed "Long Time Coming," though unlike the equivalent "San Francisco" in *MONTEREY POP*, the song has nothing much to do with the activity. *WOODSTOCK* seems less direct and less honest than *MONTEREY POP*, and I often felt that the film maker was using the music for his own propagandistic purposes. The multitude of film "devices" gives the movie an air of unreality and a frankly slick quality.

Certain performers are photographed well, such as Joan Baez in solitary shots, in which she is the only lighted object against an empty dark background, while she sings a capella. Also well done was the performance of The Who in a split screen sequence, though this particular device was badly overused and distracting. Other than these few, most of the musical sequences were unimaginative. More effort was spent on cramming things into two or three screens than on the composition of a single screen, and the film often seemed to be falling prey to the director's reluctance to discard any of his footage. (The movie was over three hours long, and originally had been longer.) Of course, expedience frequently dictates in documentaries, and at Woodstock, the problems involved in filming the performers were probably greater than in filming the non-musical sequences, like the interviews with the townspeople and the kids romping in the lake. These problems are also apparent in Pennbaker's *DON'T LOOK BACK*, a documentary on Bob Dylan,

POPCORN "goes the farthest of any of the rock documentaries in attempting to use film imaginatively to express music. Unfortunately, it also fails the most dismally. . ."

where the stage sequences become monotonous and repetitious, although this fitted surprisingly well into the meaning of the film, since the style of Bob Dylan's music is monotone and even tedious.

Some underground film makers have tried to make movies in which images other than those of the performer express the quality of the music, but most frequently the music is just background for some "interesting" images. Trendy films are made trendier by the addition of a pop tune. Playing Dylan's music makes shots of naked people wielding Nikons "relevant," or so thinks the film maker. Or, like the "Come and See the Real Thing" sequence in *POPCORN*, they get heavy-handed. (I can envision a film using Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young's "Ohio" and images of police beating up long-haired kids. I hope it won't be made, but someone in a college somewhere has probably already done it.)

Certain sequences from *POPCORN* come the closest to using images freely and imaginatively to express qualities inherent in the music. *A HARD DAY'S NIGHT* and *HELP!* took large steps in this direction. Unfortunately, the next wave is likely to be copies of *WOODSTOCK* and, like the attempts to repeat the event itself, they will probably be dismal disasters.

CENSORSHIP

The Evolution Of Self-Regulation

By Christine W. Unger

Jean Harlow.

Paul Muni, in *SCARFACE*, directed by Howard Hawks in 1932.

Because of the mass audiences that have flocked to the movies, the film industry has been traditionally plagued by the problem of censorship. The history of film censorship in the United States is a long and often funny one, though unlike most other countries, censorship in this country has not been political, but primarily sexual, as Christine W. Unger demonstrates in the essay below. Mrs. Unger traces the development of "self-regulation" in the movies from its beginnings, to illustrate the changing attitudes towards censorship on the part of the American public. The appended "Particular Applications of the 1930 Production code" is offered in the hope that it will provide the reader both edification and amusement.

The censorship in the United States is a more complex matter than it is in most other countries.(1) First of all, the United States is a federal country with legislative power divided between the central government and state governments and with additional responsibilities delegated to local governments at the county and city levels. Then, too, the United States has a system of judicial control over the legislative and administrative branches of government through the concept of checks and balances. Finally, the United States has been for many years the home of the world's most powerful film industry. Generally the Federal Government has avoided involvement in the controversial area of film censorship, and the result has been a "centralized" censorship by the film industry itself, through an avowed policy of "self-regulation."

Censorship on a local level was introduced in Chicago in 1907, and in 1909 the National Board of Censorship was appointed by the People's Institute, an organization dedicated to research and education, as an attempt to avoid the necessity for further local censorship and the resultant court action. The Motion Picture Patents Company agreed to abide by the decisions of this Board, with right of appeal to the Institute; however, the influence of the Board was short lived. Due to its opposition to censorship and its emphasis on encouraging better films, the Board concentrated more on film classification than on film censorship, and in 1916 the name of the Board was changed to the National Board of Review, with the slogan "Selection not Censorship," a change which more truly expressed the attitudes and activities of the organization. After 1916, the Board became merely a previewing body which issued lists of films in various categories for the guidance of the public.(2)

There was growing pressure for censorship. In 1919 the General Federation of Women's Clubs, for example, announced that the Board of Review was "a tool of the industry" and reported that in a survey of motion picture content they found objectionable 20% of the films passed by the Board.(3) Similar accusations and demands came from religious organizations and state boards of censorship. In April, 1919, the National Association of the Motion Picture Industry proposed a Constitutional Amendment providing for freedom of the screen, a bill which was defeated in committee. At the same time the president of the Association suggested that the Association should itself censor films and refuse to rent their pictures to any motion picture exhibitors who should accept and show unapproved films. This suggestion also died, but was resurrected

Theda Bara, as Cleopatra, shows a lot of flesh, and her clench-fisted suitor shows a lot of interest.

in 1921, when the Association responded to increased pressure by announcing the establishment of "Thirteen Points," a list of resolutions condemning the types of scene most frequently objected to by organizations and censorship boards.(4) However, the Association lacked financial resources and general support, and with no methods for enforcement and complete reliance on voluntary agreement, the Thirteen Points did little to appease public demands. Censorship laws were passed in six states and were under discussion in thirty-six other states.(5)

By December, 1921, the industry was sufficiently disturbed to set up a new organization, the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America Inc. (MPPDA))(6), to

> . . .establish. . .and maintain. . .the highest possible moral and artistic standards in motion picture production, by developing the educational as well as the entertainment value and the general usefulness of the motion picture, by diffusing accurate and reliable information with reference to the industry, by reforming abuses relative to the industry, by securing freedom from unjust or unlawful exactions, and by other lawful and proper means. (7)

Then Postmaster-General of the United States, Will H. Hays, resigned to become director of the new agency. His power was tremendous — through his own personal prestige, through the realization of the producers that change was necessary and their own lack of plans for effecting such change,(8) and through a new system of "interlocking contracts" which made it practically impossible for members to resign.(9)

The "new morality" of the Jazz Age and the not-so-perfect private lives of film personalities (10) were lending impetus to the work of the reformers, and Hays responded in February, 1924, by issuing the "Formula," the preamble to which stated:

> Whereas, the members of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Inc., in their continuing effort 'to establish and maintain the highest possible moral and artistic standards of motion picture production' are engaged in a special effort to prevent the prevalent type of book and play from becoming the prevalent type of picture; to exercise every possible care that only

as to leave the producer subject to a charge of deception; to avoid using titles which are indicative of a kind of picture which should not be produced, or by their suggestiveness seek to obtain attendance by deception, a thing equally reprehensible; and to prevent misleading, salacious, or dishonest advertising. (11)

The only attempt at enforcement was the requirement of the Formula that all plays, novels, and stories were to be approved by the NPPDA before they were filmed, and again the attempt at self-regulation was ineffective. The introduction of sound in 1926 did nothing to aid the situation. Producers increasingly announced films without the approval of the Hays Office, and plays and novels rejected by Hays were filmed by non-member companies and shown in non-member-controlled theaters.(12)

Hays saw a need for closer control of the California producers, and in 1926 he sent Colonel J. Joy to Hollywood to form a Studio Relations Committee, attached to the Association of Motion Picture Producers, Inc. (AMPP), an independent organization

Diana Wynyard is putty in the hands of Rasputin the Rat, when Lionel Barrymore makes an unwelcome pass at her.

set up in 1924 with no official relationship to MPPDA. Joy's work with the studios was successful in that in June, 1927, AMPP agreed to a Resolution listing thirty-seven points on which censorship of varying degrees should be used. This list, which came to be known as the "Don'ts and Be Carefuls," also suffered from lack of enforcement mechanism, and the list became more of an office joke than useful criteria for censorship. In 1929, Joy wrote Hay enumerating the failures of the Resolution:

1. Less than half of the member companies of the AMPP were co-operating.
2. Some companies did not carry out or enforce Joy's remarks.
3. There was no system of previewing films to make sure that modifications ordered by Joy's office had been carried out.
4. "Ad-libbing" could not be controlled by Joy.
5. The "don'ts and be carefuls" were negative. (13)

This memorandum had important results. Immediate work was begun on a new Code, based on the "Don'ts and Be Carefuls" Resolution. The formulators of the new Code were Martin Quigley, a Catholic publisher, and the Reverend Daniel Lord, S. J. According to Quigley, the basic tenet of the Code was the application of the Ten Commandments to motion picture production, and its "objective was to make available to the motion-picture writer, director, and producer a practical working guide to aid in keeping the moral character and influence of motion pictures within the requirements of the fundamental tenets of the Judeo-Christian moral order."(14)

The Code was completed and ratified by the Directors of the MPPDA on March 31, 1930.(15) Its listing of prohibitions was more elaborate and detailed than any previous regulation,(16) and enforcement procedures were undertaken. According to the resolution which

It is Billie Dove's idea that Donald Reed is taking love a little too seriously in *THE NIGHT WATCH.*

accompanied the Code, every film produced by a member of AMPP was to be approved by the Studio Relations Committee before printing, and the producer was not to release the film until the required changes had been made. Appeal procedures were outlined, as well. In October, 1931, the submission of scripts to the Studio Relations Committee prior to filming was made compulsary, and in December, 1931, the SRC was given powers of appeal (previously, power of appeal belonged only to producers).(17)

Still, public criticism of the industry's lack of self-censorship persisted. Fuel was added to the fire in the form of the Payne Fund Studies (1933), a series of twelve studies indicating the lasting effect of films on children, especially in determining their attitudes

MENACE OF

(The following is a synopsis of a Sunday evening sermon preached by the Rev. W. E. Edmonds, Pastor of the Glendale Presbyterian Church, Glendale, California.)

Eight years ago many Presbyterians, especially ministers and elders with Holy vows resting upon them, were surprised to say the least, when Elder Will Hays left political life and became the executive head of the movie industry. While our surprise and regret was manifest we had hoped that perhaps as a Christian official he might make a success in cleaning up some pictures which had already become a stench in the nostrils of decent people, both in the Church and out of it. When he became the alleged "Czar" of the movies this is what he said: "I do not have to say that this industry must have toward that sacred thing, the mind of a child, toward that clean virgin thing, that unmarked slate, the same responsibility, the same care about the impressions made upon it, that the best clergyman or the most inspired teacher of youth would have . . . and that the films that shall go from this country abroad shall present to the world in the proper manner, the purposes, and the ideals, . . . of American life."

Mr. Hays pleaded for a chance to reform the industry. Many churches together with schools and other institutions gave thanks that at last they had a friend in the "movie court." They called off their dogs of opposition and tried to co-operate with Mr. Hays. Committees were appointed, resolutions were presented in Presbyteries and Synods and the General Assembly seeking to suggest better ways in which movies could serve the public. Local churches were encouraged to install picture machines, for the better and cleaner pictures were surely coming. Pastors were urged to use these "coming pictures" in programs of religious education. All the great Bible stories were to be filmed.

Eight years have passed. Have the pictures been cleaned up? Has Will Hays made good his promise, or has the better element in American life been fooled? Such an ad. from a metropolitan newspaper may answer in part. "Party Girl—She is everybody's pal, a goodlooking, fast-stepping, warm-hearted jazz baby with a ravishing smile, a marvelous figure and a million dollars' worth of "IT" and She's Hot Stuff! She'll show you the road to DIN, GIN and SIN . . ." Perhaps we should remind ourselves that the movies are here to stay and in order to be fair we must admit that some pictures, in part at least, have been historically true. Travelogues, etc., missionary films have been profitable. Pictures of a scientific value have been seen with enthusiasm, but it is not these that are working wreck and ruin in the lowering of our moral standards. Consider if you will that 250 million people are reached every week. Probably at least half of that number are boys and girls in their teens. Only recently 800,000 people saw one picture in one theatre during its four-weeks run. Sixty thousand individuals own the business and 235,000 men and women earn their living by it. The American motion picture industry, which boasts two billions of capital, now supplies the motion picture markets of the world. It must be recognized that no one man, however clever or powerful can hope to stem the tide which flows in the opposite direction from the church of Jesus Christ.

BOY SCOUT MOVEMENT

Answering your questions therefore, I would say that the present movies are not less of a menace to the mental and moral life of the community than before Mr. Hays assumed office, and, second, they are not any less devoted to blood and thunder, crime, gun play, lasciviousness, sentimentality, etc.

"Almost every one of the present day movies show drinking scenes, indulged in by both men and women, and in many pictures women are shown smoking cigrettes and drinking highballs and cocktails, so that the average youth of today between the ages of eight and sixteen has the impression that he ought to drink and smoke when he becomes of legal age. We are still having entirely too many questionable sex plays that are over-emotional and over-sentimental. We are still showing moving pictures of our soldier boys in France drinking and carousing with native women. Therefore, in my judgment, Mr. Hays has failed in properly regulating the movie business, and he is permitting an institution to be operated to the detriment of the people of the land at large"

Frank S. Hoover, North Canton, O.

CRIME AND SEX STUFF

The Child Welfare Committee of the League of Nations analyzed 250 films in 1926 and found in them 97 murders, 51 cases of adultery, 19 seductions, 22 abductions and 45 suicides Among the principal characters in these 250 pictures were 176 thieves, 25 prostitutes, 35 drunkards, etc.

The Chicago censorship board in 1924 is said to have made the following eliminations from 788 pictures:

1811 scenes of assault with guns with intent to kill.
175 scenes of assault with knives with intent to kill.
129 scenes of assault with other weapons.
231 scenes of hanging.
173 scenes of horror (as clawing out eyes, biting off ears, etc.)
757 scenes of attacks on women for immoral purposes.
929 scenes of nudity and semi-nudity.
31 scenes of jail breaking.

In 1928 the Chicago censorship board made 6,470 cuts from films.

In the four years from 1924 to 1927, inclusive, the New York censors eliminated 4,825 scenes as "tending to incite to crime and 3,763 as indecent, or obscene, or immoral, or tending to corrupt morals."

When one considers what the Chicago and New York censors LEFT IN, no one can accuse the censors of oldmaidishness . But the important fact to note is that *the thousands of communities outside the jurisdiction of such censorship did have these scenes dished up to their children.*

Aside from the silly, slap-stick comedies that are not even decent caricatures of life in its most ridiculous aspects, the emphasis is being placed on sex relations; the most amorous scenes and positions are made prominent. It is an appeal to the sordid, vitiated public taste.

THE CHILDREN

It's a shame that children are exposed to such pictures, but the average school child attends the movies once or twice a week and the questionable pictures constitute the bulk of the movie out-put. A survey has been made in cities and reveals the fact that the cheapest house displaying the poorest pictures are most crowded with children. A further survey shows that on the average delinquent children of Chicago attend as many as seven shows a week. The average program lasts one hour and forty-five minutes. This represents almost twice the period of the average Sunday School.

TESTIMONY OF THE TEACHERS

Prof. E. W. Burgess, of the department of sociology of the University of Chicago, reports the results of a study made under his direction by Miss Sara

THE MOVIES

Lewis. She questioned teachers and principals of 125 public and private schools in the city of Chicago. The overwhelming majority of these teachers report that the pictures interfered with school work, retarded mental development, lowered vitality and rendered the children nervous and excitable.

THE CHILDREN'S TESTIMONY

Now let us hear from a few of the many children whose testimony is recorded in Mrs. Mitchell's book:

A boy of fourteen: "I like especially the fighting and torturing . . ."

A boy of fourteen: "I like it where guys get killed with dynamite. . . ."

A boy scout after seeing a mystery play: "I didn't sleep for a week . . . I dreamed of skeletons . . ."

Another lad: "It makes you nuts to see so many movies. . . . Just don't know what you are doing when you see movies so often. They make you want things you haven't got—and you take them."

A young delinquent: "Movies make most anything seem all right. Things that look bad on the outside don't seem to be bad at all in the movies."

A thirteen-year-old girl: "I liked the part best where the girl wanted another girl's husband and took two dimes and tossed them. Of course, she got heads, so she got him."

A sixteen-year-old girl: "Those pictures with hot love-making in them; they make girls and boys sitting together to get up and walk out, go off somewhere, you know. Once, I walked out with a boy before the picture was even over. We took a ride. But my friend, she all the time had to get up and go out with her boy friend."

A fifteen-year-old delinquent boy: "Movies sorter coax a feller. You know you see them in the movies doing things,—looks so easy. They get money easy in the movies, holdups, robberies, if they make a mistake they get caught. A feller thinks he won't make a mistake if he tries it. I thought I cauld get the money, put it in a bank for a long time and then use it later . . . ."

SHOULD CHILDREN ATTEND THE MOVIES

(Literary Digest, March 1, 1930)—"The average child under ten should not be allowed to attend the usual commercial motion picture show."

That epitomizes at any rate sixteen out of nineteen replies to a questionnaire sent out by The Parent's Magazine. The sixteen considered that the movies are not a fit place for children, either because of the character of the films themselves, the unwholesome excitement, the tendency of the child to copy what he sees there, and time lost from outdoor recreation, the fatigue and eye-strain. Only three could see no harm for children in moderate attendance at movies —John B. Watson, author of Psychological Care of Infant and Child; John E. Anderson, director of the Institute of Child welfare, University of Minnesota, and Lee F. Hanmer, director of the Recreation Department, Russell Sage Foundation.

Many motion-pictures and talking movies, says Dr. Watson, the behaviorist, "are as rotten today as they can possibly be."

Judge Hoyt of the Children's Court, New York City, says: "I would not want a young child of mine to witness scenes of violence, brutality, marital infidelities, or criminal actions of any kind. I entertain grave doubts as to the advisability of permitting young children to be subjected frequently to the constant eye-strain of the movies at a time in life when this delicate organ is in its plastic period of formation."

AMERICAN FILMS TOO FILTHY FOR TURKEY

"Get the low-down on Love Nests in the most daring talkie ever produced. Risque' (Risky)? Yes. Daring? Yes."

It isn't necessary to quote further from this advertisement of a motion-picture.

From all accounts, the picture lives up to its promise—or its threat. (Its risque'.)

It may be good enough for us.

But it isn't good enough for Turkey, or for China, for Australia, or for our near neighbor, Canada.

In fact, Turkey, the country we were wont to look upon as outside the pale of civilization, is taking steps, we read, to prevent its children from being corrupted by American made films.

And China, which has been pretty busy suppressing Communism and brigandage, has complained about some of the films imported from America.

Africa, too, doesn't like the American sauce—call it apple or not.

Which brings us to a blasting indictment of American motion-pictures by Dr. Clifford Gray Twombly, rector of St. Jame's church, Lancaster, Pennsylvania. It is framed in an address delivered in part to the young people of the Church Conference of New England at St. Paul's School, Concord, New Hampshire, and is published in "The Reformed Church Messenger."

"Repeated warnings against American films are being heard today from all quarters of the globe; from China and Japan and India and Italy and Germany and France and South America.

"Even Turkey is about to forbid, or has already forbidden, children under fifteen years of age to attend the movies, in order 'to protect Young Turks from the demoralizing effect of American-made films;

"Even Turkey! 'The "infidel" nation is aroused to protect its children against the Christian nation!' And now Sir Hesketh Bell, former Governor of Uganda and Northern Nigeria in Africa, warns his British countrymen against the 'devastation' being wrought in the Dark Continent by American moving-pictures!

"Mr. Will Hays, in a speech in Berlin, Germany, July, 1930, emphasized the interdependence of the nations, and said that 'worldwide distribution of films could fill an important role in making the people of the various lands acquainted with one another.'

"Sir Hesketh Bell says that 'Nothing has done more to destroy the prestige of the white man among the colored races than these deplorable pictures!'"

STEM THE TIDE

The call is to Parent-Teachers Associations, Women's Clubs, Y. W. C. A., Y. M. C. A., Rotary Clubs, etc., to arouse public sentiment, and to the Church, Sunday School, Christian Endeavor Societies, Pulpit and Pew, to send out a warning note in the interest of Christian character. I believe in pure and uplifting amusements, music, art, literature, etc. I believe in clean sport, mental and physical as well as spiritual. God has placed us in a beautiful world. Where does God come in? Is the soul to receive no attention? Is man only an animal?

Fathers and mothers have tremendous responsibility. The home must be reckoned with. Prayer, Bible reading and good citizenship must be emphasized these days, for apart from these a moral standard, based on the sermon on the mount cannot be maintained. "Avoid the very appearance of evil."

3c per copy; 30c per dozen; $2.00 per 100

The Biola Book Room
Bible Institute of Los Angeles
536-558 South Hope Street
Los Angeles, California

5M 2-31 1931 Printed in U. S. A.

toward "nationality, race, crime, war, capital punishment, and prohibition"(18)

At this time, too, the Catholic Church undertook an active role in the problem of censorship by the creation of the Legion of Decency, an organization whose objective was to fight for better films. Members of the Church were urged to pledge themselves and their families to boycott films which the Legion listed as offensive. The Legion launched an extensive propaganda campaign, complete with picketing, and support was received from Protestant and Jewish organizations. In Philadelphia. a boycott of all movies regardless of content succeeded in decreasing box-office receipts by 40%.(19)

At last the right chord had been struck. Quigley and Joseph Breen quickly met with the Bishops' Committee, and a compromise was agreed upon. Appeals became subject to the decision of the Association's Board of Directors in New York (thus taking control away from the Hollywood producers). A certificate of approval was agreed upon, without which no member company was to release or distribute any film under penalty of a $25,000 fine. In addition, this agreement was drawn in the form of a contract, with each member company individually as well as collectively responsible.(20)

It is extremely important to note at this point that *consumer boycott* proved to be the most effective threat leading to action, rather than any threats of censorship on the state or Federal level.

The new Code (21) and the agreement with the Legion of Decency functioned well for some twenty years, insofar as they operated to calm the waters of public discontent.(22) However, in the late 1940s and 1950s public criticism was again being heard — and criticism of a surprising nature. The public had begun to tire of the "unrealistic" fare they were being given in films. Demands were heard for new and more challenging subject matter and more exciting presentation. An interesting study might be made of the relationship of this new trend to the period in which it occured; Elia Kazan had predicted in 1945 that the return of thousands of soldiers from World War II would result in new demands on film and theater. The soldier, he wrote, who had experienced the violence and senseless brutality of war, and his family, who had experienced their own kind of warfare at home, would no longer be satisfied with the Pollyanna approach of contemporary movies and plays.(23)

Criticism began to be levied at the Code itself: it was dominated by Catholics; it was socially, politically, and artistically — as well as morally — conservative; it defeated the purposes of true morality by promoting a kind of "sophisticated immorality" in which the audience projected the sexual element from its own imagination, often where there was no actual sexual intent; it discriminated against independent producers and concentrated power in the hands of a few major companies. (24)

Hollywood responded once more to consumer demand — less reluctantly than previously, since in this

WILL HAYS TELLS YOU—
THE "DON'TS" OF THE MOVIES

RESOLVED: That those things which are included in the following list shall not appear in pictures produced by members of this association, irrespective of the manner in which they are treated: profanity in even its mildest form, licentious or suggestive nudity, the drug traffic, sex perversion, white slavery, ridicule of the clergy, or wilful offence to any nation, race or creed. A second list of subjects and situations which must be handled with care and with every regard for good taste: the use of the flag, arson, firearms, realistic representation of criminal technique, especially in murder, executions, third degree methods, sympathy for criminals, cruelty, attempted rape, seduction, the institution of marriage, surgical operations, the use of drugs, and excessive and lustful kissing.

Will Hays

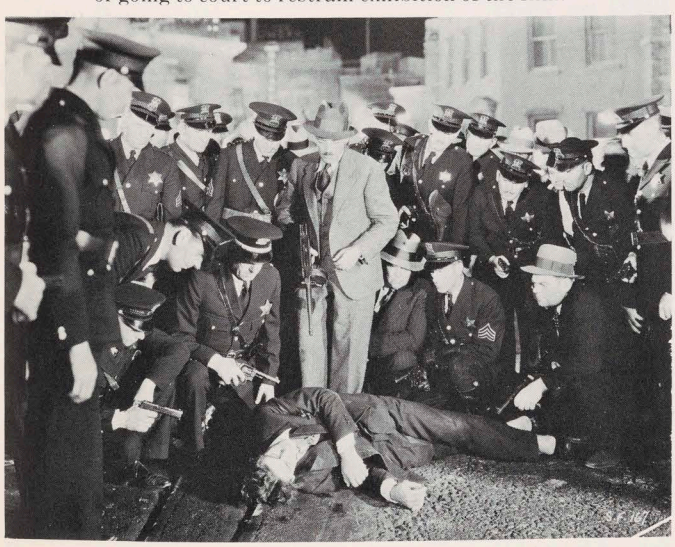
PUBLIC ENEMY (1931), directed by William Wellman, was among the first of the 30s gangster films. It contained numerous acts of violence, such as this famous scene, in which James Cagney indicates to Mae Clark that there is a problem in their relationship.

case the demands were in line with their own philosophies. As producers had evolved a curious system of fade-outs and symbolism to denote Code-prohibited actions and ideas, so they devised even more elaborate means of giving the public what it wanted without risking penalties under the Code. After David O. Selznick stated that the Code was "dated," and the Screen Writers Guild urged reconsideration of "some of the senseless aspects" of the Code, (25) any pretense of rigid compliance with the Code was forgotten. Indeed, certain items did remain anathema, but by 1958 *Time* reported that adherence to the Code was seen "about as often as the whooping crane." (26)

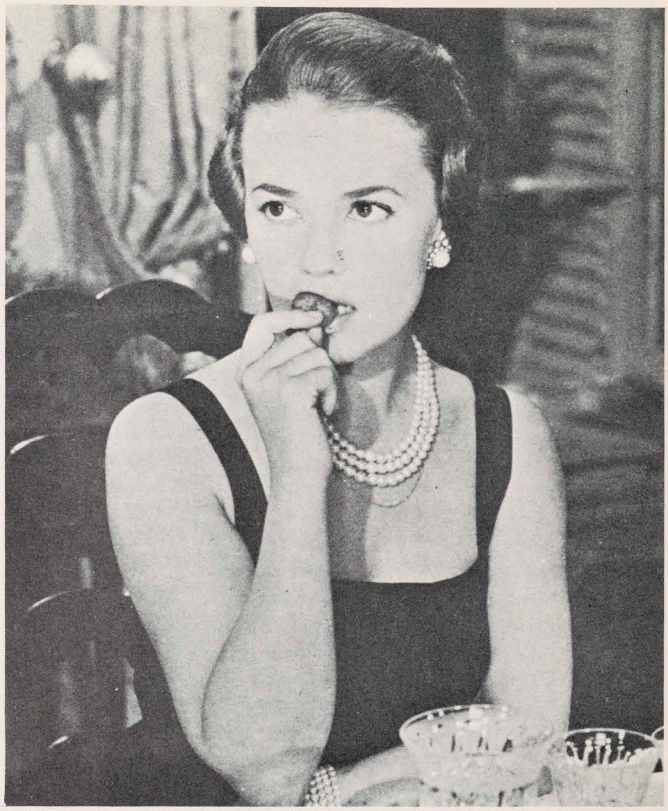
In order to bring theory into conformity with practice, a new Motion Picture Code was finally developed and adopted in 1966, replacing the specific prohibitions of the 1930 Code with eleven standards or guidelines for self-regulation. (27) New emphasis was placed on creative freedom within only general limitations, rather than on purity at the expense of aesthetic expression.

During this period of the 1950s and early 1960s, the fast-rising trend against censorship was reflected in many ways. Notably, several Supreme Court decisions were made severely limiting censorship powers of states and cities. For example, in 1957 (*Roth* v. *U. S.*), the Court ruled that alleged obscenities must be considered "as a whole," in context, with judgement being drawn on the basis of contemporary community standards.(28) Censorship laws in Pennsylvania, Kansas, Ohio, Maryland, Georgia, and Virginia were declared unconstitutional, and although the Supreme Court has not yet stated that *all* film censorship is unconstitutional, it has held that censorship is valid constitutionally only if it takes place under safeguards "designed to obviate the dangers of a censorship system." These safeguards include the following:

1. The burden of proving that the film is unprotected expression must rest on the censor.
2. While it is permissible to require advance submission of all films, in order to be able effectively to bar all showings of unprotected films, this must not be done in such a way as to give the censor's judgment an air of finality. . . . Consequently, the censor's function is restricted to either issuing a licence or going to court to restrain exhibition of the film.
3. The censor's action, whatever it is, must be taken within a specified brief period of time.
4. Any temporary restraint on the film pending final judicial determination of the merits must be as short as possible.
5. The procedure must ensure a prompt, final, judicial decision, to minimize the deterrent effect of an interim and possibly erroneous denial of a licence. (29)



The death of Scarface. After being shot, Scarface falls into a pile of horse manure, a scene which was later censored out of the final version of the film.



Louis Malle's *THE LOVERS* became a test case at the Supreme Court. At the time, the film was showing at the Heights Theatre in Cleveland Heights, under the courageous management of Nikos Jacobellis.

Also following the trend, the Legion of Decency has become much more sophisticated in its treatment of and attitude toward films. Special categories were introduced for adult films,(30) and in January, 1965, Legion awards were given to *DARLING, NOBODY WAVED GOOD-BYE,* and Fellini's *JULIET OF THE SPIRITS.* [31] In keeping with their new emphasis on the encouragement of good films rather than the banning of bad ones, the name of the organization has been changed to the National Catholic Office of Motion Pictures.(32)

Other religious organizations, as well, are exhibiting a new and more positive attitude toward films. Also in 1965, the Broadcast and Film Commission of the National Council of Churches gave awards to *PATCH OF BLUE, NOTHING BUT A MAN, and THE PAWNBROKER* (the latter had only barely passed the Production Code and has been condemned by the Legion for nudity). (33)

The new outlook of the public may be expressed in the words of Arthur Knight:

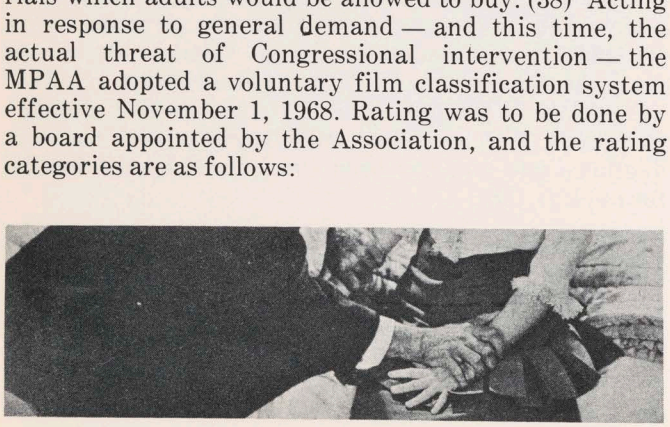
> For many years, films were made in America for the twelve-year-old mentality. . . .recently, movies from *A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE* to *SHIP OF FOOLS*, not to mention innumerable foreign imports, have been cut to make them conform to the censors' concept of

what is acceptable for twelve-year-olds. Now, I have nothing against children, but I have no desire to spend the rest of my life looking at kiddie shows. (34)

Our present-day moviegoing public is proportionately younger (35) and much better educated than at any other period in American history. Not only are they better educated, but they are much better informed and involved, and they are eager to see realistic treatments of social problems which are no longer being completely ignored by a euphemistic society. The influx of foreign films and widespread access to underground movies has created more and more demand for genuine artistic excellence in films, regardless of content and subject matter.

The public does not seem to be quite ready for a complete abolition of censorship, however. The recent maternal uprising against violence in films and on television has had noticeable results. Ten organizations continue to preview motion pictures regularly: the Daughters of the American Revolution, the American Library Association, the American Jewish Committee, the Federation of Motion Picture Councils, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the National Council of Women of the U.S.A., the National Federation of Music Clubs, the Protestant Motion Picture Council, and the Schools Motion Picture Committee. A Film Board, consisting of representatives of each of these organizations, provides reviews for *The Green Sheet*, an independent publication distributed by the Motion Picture Association. (36) Although their function is not actually censorial, their evaluations and the public response to these evaluations has brought about still another important milestone in the self-regulation of the film industry — film classification.

The new freedom of the 1966 Production Code has been expressed in the late 1960s by increases in screen profanity (as in *WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF?*), graphic treatments of lesbianism (*THE FOX*) and homosexuality (*MIDNIGHT COWBOY*), glorification of violence (*BONNIE AND CLYDE*), and general matter-of-factness about sexual freedom (*THE GRADUATE*). In 1966 and again in 1967, Senator Margaret Chase Smith submitted resolutions to create a five-man Senate Committee to study proposals for film classification in order to protect children from violent and erotic films. (37) Legal precedent had been set earlier when the Supreme Court had ruled, in a case dealing with girlie magazines, that a state had the right to prevent children from buying indecent materials which adults would be allowed to buy. (38) Acting in response to general demand — and this time, the actual threat of Congressional intervention — the MPAA adopted a voluntary film classification system effective November 1, 1968. Rating was to be done by a board appointed by the Association, and the rating categories are as follows:



G — for general audiences, without regard to age.
M — for mature audiences, with parents exercising their own discretion in taking their children (later changed to GP).
R — for restricted audiences, children under 16 not admitted unless accompanied by parent or guardian.
X — for adult audiences only, no one under 16 admitted.

(Local regulations may raise the age limit for classifications "R" and "X" to 18.) (39)
Any film denied the PCA Seal of Approval, or any film not submitted for rating, will be automatically rated "X." (40)

Criticism has been voiced that the rights of liberal parents who wish their children to see certain "X" films are being violated;(41) however, until recently general public response to the classification system has been favorable, with the possible exception that "X" previews are frequently shown in conjunction with "G" movies, thus causing some parental embarrassment and anxiety. Generally, consumers seem to value having some foreknowledge of a film's content, for themselves as well as for their children. It is interesting to note that the American system of film classification has four rating categories, whereas the older British system has but three, omitting the "GP" category and thereby placing less reliance on parental discretion.(42)

Thus, we can see that the evolution of the film industry's concept of "self-regulation" took place — however reluctantly at first — as a correlate of the moviegoing public's evolution of taste in film-viewing. More than that indefinable quality "taste" has been involved, however. Whether the society is reflected in its films, or the films in the society, it remains that the films of an era bear the stamp of the "personality" of that era, as the "new morality" of the 1960s is seen in the widened permissiveness of the 1960 films. It will be interesting to see how the trend toward conservatism currently developing in the United States may affect the film industry and censorship in general.

(1) For a thorough study of film censorship around the world in comparison to the United States, see Neville March Hunnings, **Film Censors and the Law** (London, 1967).

(2) Ruth A. Inglis, **Freedom of the Movies** (Chicago, 1947), pp. 74-77.

(3) *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79.

(4) *Ibid.*, p. 83.

(5) Hunnings, p. 153.

(6) This organization gradually superseded the National Association of the Motion Picture Industry.

(7) Hunnings, p. 154.

(8) Inglis, p. 89.

(9) Hunnings, p. 155.

(10) Inglis notes two instances of the backfire of Hollywood publicity: When Mary Pickford, "America's Sweetheart," divorced her husband and married Douglas Fairbanks amid charges of collusion, fraud, and perjury, the industry and Miss Pickford experienced a great outpouring of public horror and disapproval. When a girl guest died at a party given by Fatty Arbuckle, and Arbuckle was charged with manslaughter, the press implied that a sex crime had been involved, and in spite of his acquittal, Arbuckle was forced by public indignation to quit his movie career.

(11) Hunnings, p. 155.

(12) *Ibid.*

(13) *Ibid.*, p. 156.

(14) Martin J. Quigley, "The Motion-Picture Production Code," **America**, XCIV (March 10, 1956), 630.

(15) Hunnings, p. 156.

(16) See Olga J. Martin, **Hollywood's Movie Commandments: A Handbook for Motion Picture Writers and Reviewers** (New York, 1937) for a delightful but amazing detailed study of the specific applications of the 1930 Code.

(17) Hunnings, p. 157. Hunnings notes that the appeal jury (the "Hollywood jury") was used only ten times in three-and-a-half years.

(18) Inglis, p. 21.

(19) *Ibid.*, p. 124.

(20) *Ibid.*, p. 125.

(21) For the "Particular Applications" of the 1930 Production Code, see Appendix I.

(22) This essay does not purport to deal with the possible influence of the Code on the artistic development of films from 1930 to 1950.

(23) Elia Kazan, "Audience Tomorrow," **Theatre Arts**, XXIX (October, 1945), 568-577.

(24) Inglis, pp. 180-185.

(25) *Ibid.*, p. 185.

(26) "Decoded: Hollywood Production Code," **Time**, LXXII (November 3, 1958), 78.

(27) For the standards of the 1966 Motion Picture Production Code, see Appendix II.

(28) Hunnings, pp. 173, 219.

(29) *Ibid.*, pp. 220-221, quoted from **Speiser v. Randall** (1958). Hunnings includes specific studies of the Supreme Court decisions regarding film censorship from the earliest case to 1967.

(30) *Ibid.*, p. 159.

(31) Arthur Knight, "Who's to Classify?" **Saturday Review**, XLII (February 26, 1966), 42.

(32) Hunnings, p. 159.

(33) Knight, p. 42.

(34) *Ibid.*

(35) Jack Valenti, "The Motion Picture Code and the New American Culture," **The PTA Magazine**, LXI (December, 1966), 18.

(36) *Ibid.*

(37) James A. Michener, "GMRX:" An Alternative to Movie Censorship," **Reader's Digest**, XCIV (January, 1969), 90.

(38) *Ibid.*, p. 91.

(39) "Adults Only for Some Films Now," **U.S. News & World Report**, LXV (October 21, 1968), 22.

(40) "Film Classification," **America**, CXIX (October 12, 1968), 310-311.

(41) S. Kaufmann, "Sex Symbols," **New Republic**, CLIX (November 2, 1968), 30.

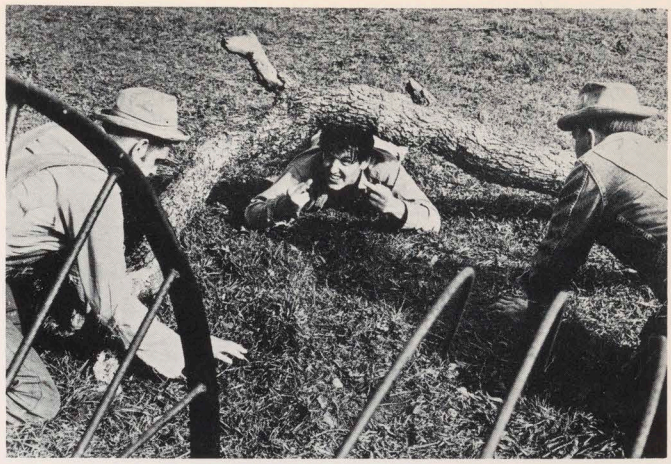
(42) *Ibid.*

"PARTICULAR APPLICATIONS" OF THE 1930 PRODUCTION CODE

I. **CRIMES AGAINST THE LAW**

These shall never be presented in such a way as to throw sympahy with the crime as against law and justiceor to inspire others with a desire for limitation.

1. **Murder**
   a) The technique of murder must be presented in a way that will not inspire imitation.
   b) Brutal killings are not to be presented in detail.
   c) Revenge in modern times shall not be justified.



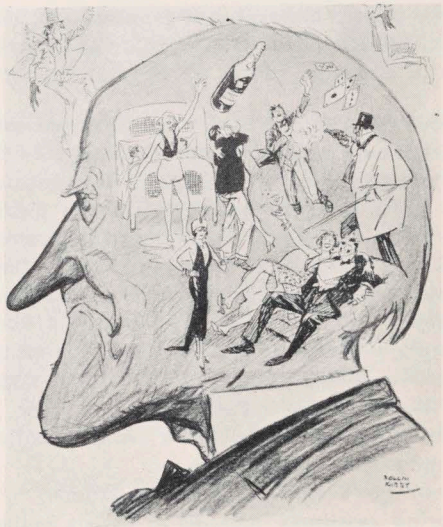
Agricultural hand signals, as seen in this shot from *FUTZ* (1970), were not included in the 1966 code.

2. **Methods of crime** should not be explicitly presented.
   a) Theft, robbery, safe-cracking, and dynamiting of trains, mines, buildings, etc., should not be detailed in method.
   b) Arson must be subject to the same safeguards.
   c) The use of firearms should be restricted to essentials.
   d) Methods of smuggling should not be presented.
3. **The illegal drug traffic** must not be portrayed in such a way as to stimulate curiosity concerning the use of, or traffic in, such drugs; nor shall scenes be approved which show the use of illegal drugs, or their effects, in detail (as amended September 11, 1946).
4. **The use of liquor** in American life, when not required by the plot or for proper characterization, will not be shown.

II. **SEX**

The sanctity of the institution of marriage and the home shall be upheld. Pictures shall not infer that low forms of sex relationship are the accepted or common thing.

1. **Adultery and illicit sex**, sometimes necessary plot material, must not be explicitly treated or justified, or presented attractively.
2. **Scenes of passion**
   a) These should not be introduced except where they are definitely essential to the plot.
   b) Excessive and lustful kissing, lustful embraces, suggestive postures and gestures are not to be shown.



Inside a Censor's Mind (From *Photoplay*, August 1928)

c) In general, passion should be treated in such manner as not to stimulate the lower and baser emotions.

3. **Seduction or rape**
   a) These should never be more than suggested, and then only when essential for the plot. They must never be shown by explicit method.
   b) They are never the proper subject for comedy.
4. **Sex perversion** or any inference to it is forbidden.
5. **White slavery** shall not be treated.
6. **Miscegenation** (sex relationship between the white and black races) is forbidden.
7. **Sex hygiene** and venereal diseases are not proper subjects for theatrical motion pictures.
8. **Scenes of actual childbirth**, in fact or in silhouette, are never to be presented.
9. **Children's sex organs** are never to be exposed.

III. **VULGARITY**

The treatment of low, disgusting, unpleasant, though not necessarily evil, subjects should be guided always by the dictates of good taste and a proper regard for the sensibilities of the audience.

IV. **OBSCENITY**

Obscenity in word, gesture, reference, song, joke, or by suggestion (even when likely to be understood only by part of the audience) is forbidden.

V. **PROFANITY** (as amended November 1, 1939)

Pointed profanity and every other profane or vulgar expression, however used, is forbidden.

No approval by the Production Code Administration shall be given to the use of words and phrases in motion pictures including, but not limited to, the following: alley cat (applied to a woman); bat (applied to a woman); broad (applied to a woman); Bronx cheer (the sound); chippie; cocotte; God, Lord, Jesus, Christ (unless used reverently); cripes; fanny; fairy (in a vulgar sense); finger (the); fire, cries of; Gawd; goose (in a vulgar sense); "hold your hat" or "hats"; hot (applied to a woman); "in your hat"; louse; lousy; Madam (relating to prostitution); nance; nerts; nuts (except when meaning crazy); pansy; razzberry (the sound); slut (applied to a woman); S.O.B.; son-of-a; tart; toilet gags; tom cat (applied to a man); traveling salesman and farmer's daughter jokes; whore, damn, hell (excepting when the use of said last two words shall be essential and required for portrayal, in proper historical context, of any scene or dialogue based upon historical fact or folk lore, or for the presentation of a Biblical, or other religious quotation, or a quotation from a literary work provided that no such use shall be permitted which is intrinsically objectionable or offends good taste).

In the administration of Section V of the Production Code, the Production Code Administration may take cognizance of the fact that the following words and phrases are obviously offensive to the patrons of motion pictures in the United States and more particularly to the patrons of motion pictures in foreign countries: Chink, Dago, Frog, Greaser, Hunkie, Kike, Nigger, Spig, Wop, Yid.

VI. **COSTUME**

1. **Complete nudity** is never permitted. This includes nudity in fact or in silhouette, or any licentious notice thereof by other characters in the pictures.
2. **Undressing scenes** should be avoided and never used except where essential to the plot.
3. **Indecent or undue exposure** is forbidden.
4. **Dancing costumes** intended to permit undue exposure or indecent movements in the dance are forbidden.

VII. **DANCES**

1. Dances suggesting or representing sexual actions or indecent passion are forbidden.
2. Dances which emphasize indecent movements are to be regarded as obscene.

VIII. **RELIGION**

1. No film or episode may throw **ridicule** on any religious faith.
2. **Ministers of religion** in their character as ministers of religion should not be used as comic characters or as villains.
3. Ceremonies of any definite religion should be carefully and respectfully handled.

IX. **LOCATIONS**

The treatment of bedrooms must be governed by good taste and delicacy.

X. **NATIONAL FEELINGS**

1. **The use of the flag** shall be consistently respectful.
2. The **history**, institutions, prominent people and citizenry of all nations shall be represented fairly.

XI. **TITLES**

Salacious, indecent, or obscene titles shall not be used.

XII. **REPELLENT SUBJECTS**

The following subjects must be treated within the careful limits of good taste:

1. **Actual hangings or electrocutions** as legal punishments for crime.
2. **Third-degree** methods.
3. **Brutality** and possible gruesomeness.
4. **Banding** of people or animals.
5. **Apparent cruelty** to children or animals.
6. **The sale of women**, or a woman selling her virtue.
7. **Surgical operations.**

The above is quoted from Ruth A. Inglis, **Freedom of the Movies** (Chicago, 1947).

STANDARDS OF THE 1966 MOTION PICTURE CODE

The basic dignity and value of human life shall be respected and upheld. Restraint shall be exercised in portraying the taking of life.

Evil, sin, crime and wrongdoing shall not be justified.

Special restraint shall be exercised in portraying criminal or antisocial activities in which minors participate or are involved.

Detailed and protracted acts of brutality, cruelty, physical violence, torture, and abuse shall not be presented.

Indecent or undue exposure of the human body shall not be presented.

Illicit sex relationships shall not be justified. Intimate sex scenes violating common standards of decency shall not be portrayed.

Restraint and care shall be exercised in presentations dealing with sex aberrations.

Obscene speech, gestures, or movements shall not be presented. Undue profanity shall not be permitted.

Religion shall not be demeaned.

Words or symbols contemptuous of racial, religious, or national groups shall not be used so as to incite bigotry or hatred.

Excessive cruelty to animals shall not be portrayed, and animals shall not be treated inhumanely.

(Quoted from Jack Valenti, "The Motion Picture Code and the New American Culture," *The PTA Magazine*, LXI (December, 1966), 19.

NATHANAEL WEST'S HOLLYWOOD

By Erik R. Hazel

When it became obvious that the "talkies" were not merely a fad, Hollywood producers scrambled for new writers — novelists, dramatists, even poets. Throughout the thirties, a steady flow of some of America's greatest writers streamed into Hollywood, including Scott Fitzgerald, William Faulkner, and Nathanael West. Many of these literary men misunderstood the nature of film, believing it to be a writer's medium rather than a director's. Neither Faulkner nor West were under this delusion, however. Both men avoided the twin pitfalls of cynicism and excessive idealism, and looked upon script writing with realistic objectivity. For them, writing scenarios was the most comfortable and efficient way of earning an often lavish income while still retaining sufficient leisure to write novels. In the following essay, Erik R. Hazel discusses Nathanael West's "Hollywood novel," The Day of the Locust.

In one respect or another, nearly every American felt the immense poverty of the Great Depression. Hollywood was something of an exception, however, for during this same period the movie industry's future seemed boundless. Only a few years before, sound had been added to the motion picture, and people were clamoring to view the new medium. With such a great demand at the box office, the industry's power structure began to undergo rapid change. Hollywood was becoming more of a big business enterprise, and large corporations such as Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Paramount, and Warner Brothers were on the rise. Businessmen with a greater interest in profit than art now headed the corporations, and movies were being produced as fast as possible, in order to placate the eighty-five million weekly viewers. (1) What interest there had been in artistic approaches was now being shunted aside by the quest for the dollar. Selections were based not on any literary or cultural value, but on their selling potential.

During the 1930's, people were obviously looking for an escape from the horrors of the Depression, and anything that reminded them of their troubles was to be avoided. Frederick Lewis Allen, contemporary social historian of the period, observed:

> As for the movies, so completely did they dodge the dissensions and controversies of the day — with a few exceptions, such as. . . "I am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang" or "They Won't Forget" — that if a dozen or two feature pictures, selected at random, were to be shown to an audience in 1960, that audience would probably derive from them not the faintest idea of the ordeal through which the United States went in the 1930's. (2)

The movies did more than just "dodge" the critical issues of the period; they went so far as to portray the complete opposite. America was *not* in the midst of a great crisis; according to Allen, "it was a country in which almost everybody was rich or about to be rich." Thus, the most popular productions were comedies, westerns, science fictions, and mysteries. Good and evil were forces seen completely in black and white terms, with the former always succeeding. A middle ground was rarely shown.

The period was not ripe for artistic endeavors, and thus men like Irving Thalberg were on the way out. Thalberg, whom Scott Fitzgerald portrayed in *The Last Tycoon*, was considered one of the key figures in trying to convert films into a prestigious medium. Although his movies were not always artistic, his attempts at art far exceeded those of his peers. In the 1930's, however, even these attempts "were seldom especially distinguished and did not always make money, mainly because of their strong literary bias and self-conscious striving for culture." (3)

As the job market became more stringent elsewhere, the eyes of the unemployed, including those of major writers began to turn westward. Men such as Scott Fitzgerald, Sinclair Lewis and William Faulkner were soon finding a new, albeit temporary, home in a new medium. Of these men, Fitzgerald may be considered the supreme idealist. His literary fame had been achieved in the early 1920's, but since then, a series of unfortunate incidents had ruined his health and spirit. (4) In Hollywood, he hoped to regain his lost prestige by becoming the literary spokesman of the motion pictures. He thought he could become the artist in films that he was in literature. Idealism was not needed in Hollywood, however, and he was continually being removed from even the worst of scripts. (5) He recovered from his lethargy long enough to begin what many critics consider to be his most mature work, *The Last Tycoon*.

If Scott Fitzgerald was the supreme idealist, Nathanael West was the supreme realist. When he decided to go to Hollywood for the second time, (6) he did not have any false illusions or aspirations about a new career in a new medium. He was going for two reasons, easy money and free time, and in a letter to a friend, he said:

> I once tried to work seriously at my craft but was absolutely unable to make even the beginning of a living. At the end of three years and two books, I had made the total of $780.00 gross. So it wasn't a matter of making a sacrifice, which I was willing enough to make and will still be willing, but just a clear cut impossibility. . . . While here (in Hollywood) the pay is large enough for me to have three or four months off a year. (7)

Thus, he was finally able to make a living and still have time to write novels. In thirty-six weeks of work at Universal, for example, he earned $12,600, well over ten times the amount he made in a decade of writing fiction.

Daniel Fuchs, a novelist turned screenwriter, said, "The first thing you have to learn out here is that you can't make anything good. . .but if you play it right, you can be. . .making big money."In 1938, each of 165 screenwriters earned approximately $25,000. Fuchs' philosophy was obviously a lesson that Fitzgerald never knew, but one that West learned very quickly. The other writers, however, had had higher aspirations than just money when they came to Hollywood; they just learned to compromise their ideals. In this respect, Jay Martin, West's biographer, sees West as one of the very few artists who remained true to his goal:

> West found that writing movies was easy for him, while his fiction was pain and torment. . . . His film outlines and treatments he dictated quickly and even gaily. . . . He regarded these as experiments in hack work, ways of making money; and he neither had illu-

> sions about the value of his screen plays nor felt that he had been exploited in doing them. (p. 287)

To say the least, West's screen credits were usually poor. His name is not even listed in John Baxter's *Hollywood in the Thirties*, a film history containing more than just the better works. Two examples of West's merit as a screenwriter are *THE SPIRIT OF CULVER* and *LET'S MAKE MUSIC*. In the former, some of his real talent is seen in an opening shot of America in the midst of the Depression, but the film quickly lapses into the normal trend of the period, with the use of slick sentimentality. Martin states that, "Much to West's gleeful and ironical astonishment, taste was so low among studio executives that they were delighted with the film." West thought the film was, "an over-sweet, over-foolish sob story with here and there a fairly decent moment." *LET'S MAKE MUSIC* exploits Bob Crosby and his musical group, The Bobcats. RKO Studio summarized:

> Malvina, an antiquated schoolmarm, writes a school song which the students turn down, but which Bob Crosby happens across and features in his night club act. He looks up Malvina and offers her a job plugging the song. She comes, with her niece, to New York City and sings her song, "Fight on for Newton High," which Crosby's arranger has made into a hot number. Bob Crosby falls for the niece. Malvina goes back to Newton High where her classes are filled to overflowing. She has tasted her lost youth. (Martin, p. 367)

Needless to say, this movie was a hit at the box office and placed West in the $400-per-week salary bracket. He became one of the more sought-after writers in Hollywood.

West's financial success, however, never deterred him from his real goal. While he was throwing off poor script after script, he was also laboring on a novel about Hollywood. As in past works, he again saw the facades and grotesqueness of his surroundings. Indeed, he actually hated his new life:

> I would be very much obliged to receive a list of worse places at this moment than Hollywood. I suppose you mean Hitler's Munich as one of them. However, if like me and St. Thomas Aquinas, you believe that man is duplex, body and soul being separate entities, then you would also know that there is very little to choose since in Munich they murder your flesh, but here it is the soul which is put under the executioner's axe. (8)

Thus, West worked with extreme difficulty, trying, against adverse conditions, to remain true to his art. He finally succeeded; *The Day of the Locust* was published in 1939.

The novel comes from what West himself actually encountered. He wrote what *he* saw and experienced in Hollywood, just as he would have Tod Hackett paint what *he* saw and experienced, for this is what West considered one of the main functions of the artist. Ironically, many artists see much in an object that the observer does not. What West saw and portrayed, however, was also seen by others in Hollywood. Budd Schulberg, who collaborated with Scott Fitzgerald on screen scripts, said *The Day of the Locust* was "extremely authentic," without "a single wrong detail." (9) Allan Seagar, a Hollywood radio announcer, said the book was "not fantasy imagined, but fantasy seen."

What West and others saw in Hollywood, however, was not what people back East saw. Jay Martin points out that,

> For millions of motion picture fans, Hollywood was a luminous center of blazing romance, of dazzling possibility, of beautiful people. If thousands of correspondents asked the Miss Lonelyhearts of America for help, thousands more found their dreams realized in the golden legends of Hollywood, chronicled in (screen) magazines. . .each of which, in the thirties, boasted a monthly circulation between 250,000 and 500,000. (p. 265)

These are the people who, not unlike John Steinbeck's Joad family, imagine Hollywood to be a Mecca, where all dreams are realized. West portrays this feeling in his novel:

> All their lives they had slaved at some kind of dull, heavy labor, behind desks and counters, in the fields and at tedious machines of all sorts, saving their pennies and dreaming of the leisure that would be theirs when they had enough. Finally that day came. They could draw a weekly income of ten or fifteen dollars. Where else should they go but California, the land of sunshine and oranges? (10)

Like the Joads and the other Okies, however, these people find that their dreams and passions will *not* be realized. They have been lured westward by false hopes and promises, as West suggested in the novel's original title, *The Cheated:*

> Once there, they discover that sunshine isn't enough. They get tired of oranges, even of avocado, pears and passion fruit. Nothing happens. They don't know what to do with their time. They haven't the mental equipment for leisure, the money nor the physical equipment for pleasure. Did they slave so long just to go on an occasional Iowa picnic? What else is there? . . . If only a plane would crash once in awhile so that they could watch the passengers being consumed in a 'holocaust of flame,' as the newspapers put it. But the planes never crash.
>
> Their boredom becomes more and more terrible. They realize they've been tricked and burn with resentment. Every day of their lives they read the newspapers and went to the movies. Both fed them on lynchings, murders, sex crimes. . .wars. This daily diet made sophisticates of them. The sun is a joke. Oranges can't titillate their jaded palates. Nothing can ever be violent enough to make taut their slack minds and bodies. They have been cheated and betrayed. They have slaved and saved for nothing. (p. 177)

Violece, then, is the only outlet for their boredom and frustration. Only by striking back can they appease their anger. Earlier in the novel, Tod notes of these people that, "When their stare was returned, their eyes filled with hatred." Everything they had once desired, loved or envied, now becomes the object of their hatred. When a friend once marvelled at a long-waiting crowd in front of a premiere, West remarked that "(The people) want to kill (the stars), they hate them, they'd like to tear them to pieces. If they could shred their flesh as much as their clothes, they would." He then discussed the rather angry, grotesque expressions on the faces of the people who went to the premieres. He called it "the apocalypse of the second hand." (11) And West portrays this apocalypse in the final scene, when these same people become a mob, and actually enjoy each sordid, violent occurrence. (12)

West describes another group who feel cheated, and who also experience much the same feelings of boredom, frustration and violence. These second-rate writers, extras and bit actors are the major characters in his novel. People like Faye, Harry and Earle act out in real life the parts they cannot portray on the screen. Earle is the cowboy who receives very few roles, except as an extra. Thus, he becomes a cowboy in real life, to such an extent that he himself believes in his role:

> Tod found (Earle's) Western accent amusing. The first time he had heard it, he had replied, "Lo, thar, stranger," and had been surprised to discover that Earle didn't know he was being kidded. Even when Tod talked about "cayuses," "mean hombres" and "rustlers," Earle took him seriously. (p. 110)

Harry, Faye's father, was once a minor hit on the stage. Now that is all in the past; he sells polish from door to door, but cannot forget his role of clown, acting out old routines over and over, at each house. Whenever he and Faye argue, they reenact the same scene. Even when the old man is dying, half of it is an act:

> Harry framed the word "no" with his lips, then groaned skillfully. It was a second-act curtain groan, so phony that Tod had to hide a smile. And yet, the old man's pallor hadn't come from a (make-up kit). (p. 119)

The focal point of all the role-makers is Faye, the blonde-goddess whose biggest claim to fame is a bit part in a chorus line. "She had only one line to speak, 'Oh, Mr. Smith!' and spoke it badly." Unable to succeed in films, she plays her role in real life, but with the vehemence of one who has been betrayed by false dreams and hopes:

> She was supposed to look drunk, and she did, but not with alcohol. She lay stretched out on the divan with her arms and legs spread, as though welcoming a lover, and her lips were parted in a heavy, sullen smile. She was supposed to look inviting, but the invitation wasn't to pleasure. (p. 68)

This was her portrayal on the screen, and now it is her portrayal in life; she is the same person in both settings. Tod sees this, and realizes the difference between wanting her and having her:

> Her invitation wasn't to pleasure, but to struggle, hard and sharp, closer to murder than to love. If you threw yourself on her, it would be like throwing yourself from the parapet of a skyscraper. You would do it with a scream. You couldn't expect to rise again. Your teeth would be driven into your skull like nails into a pine board and your back would be broken. You wouldn't even have time to sweat or close your eyes. (p. 68)

Tod sees what he wants, and also realizes he can never have it; for the only way to take Faye is by force, and he "didn't want Faye that way." In a turnabout of the dreams, Faye is an object of the dreamers, in addition to being one of them. Jonas Spatz likens her to Hollywood: "Faye, like Hollywood, promises paradise to the dreamers, but then cheapens and murders their ideals and drives to release their anger in violence." (13)

Both groups of the cheated, totally frustrated and bored, want to strike out at the cheater; thus, they find their only release in violence. One of the most memorable scenes of violence, aside from the final apocalypse, is the cock-fight. This is the ultimate in grotesqueness; people watch murder with ecstacy and later celebrate with more violence. Abe kicks Earle in the groin in a fight over Faye's body, and the Mexican finally rape-seduces her.

Only Tod remains somewhat aloof from the hatred and violence, and even he has a difficult time staying on the outside. This conflict within himself is not unlike West's own struggle. Both Tod and West, for art's sake, are trying not to be involved, in order to remain the artist, or the objective observer. Both men came to Hollywood with a certain work of art in mind as their real goal. Tod always has in mind his painting, "The Burning of Los Angeles," just as West never loses sight of his projected novel. In order to live, the two of them take on hack work at studios. (14)

Both men also become somewhat involved in their surroundings. Tod's involvement with Faye makes him a part of the rest of the characters, the same ones he hopes to portray in his painting. How can he objectively see them, when he is so strongly involved, even to the point of jealousy? He finally becomes part of the mob at the end, and he now envisions the painting with himself, and both cheated groups in it. At the same time, however, he is a more passive member, as the mob *carries* him along. West also became involved. Just as he had done as a hotel clerk years ago, when he was trying to know the people he would depict in *Miss Lonelyhearts*, once again he was trying to know everyone in the lower levels of Hollywood. Again he became deeply involved and began to feel their tragedy deeply, to the point of losing his objectivity. Thus, just as Tod becomes part of his painting, West became part of his novel. In effect, their works are as much about themselves as they are about Hollywood.

When Nathanael West was writing about Hollywood, he realized that once again he was writing about all of America. Hollywood was not a unique institution, but rather a microcosm of the country, symbolic of American culture as a whole. This was not the first time he had written about the grotesqueness, the synthetic qualities, the deception and the loneliness of life. It is just that in Hollywood, all of it was more readily accessible, all boxed up and fitted, as in a film container. There have been countless novels written about Hollywood. Jonas Spatz calls *The Day of the Locust*, "certainly the most brilliant novel about Hollywood," because West transcends that geographical area and tells a more universal story.

(1) Frederick Lewis Allen, **Since Yesterday** (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1965), p. 224.

(2) Allen, p. 222. Allen does mention that there were quite a few good movies — even some that dealt with social problems, but they were in a great minority.

(3) John Baxter, **Hollywood in the Thirties** (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1968), p. 124.

(4) At the time of Fitzgerald's arrival in Hollywood, he had many financial problems due to his daughter's college education, his wife's mental illness, and his own extravagant tastes. He had written only one novel in the last decade, and was an alcoholic.

(5) See Budd Schulberg, **The Disenchanted** (New York: Random House, Inc., 1950) and Aaron Latham, **Crazy Sundays: F. Scott Fitzgerald in Hollywood** (New York: The Viking Press, 1970) for accurate accounts of Fitzgerald's stay in Hollywood.

(6) West had gone to Hollywood the first time as an idealist, when he had hoped to make an accurate movie adaptation of his recent novel, **Miss Lonelyhearts**. It turned out to be a detective tale, and West returned East, quite bitter.

(7) Quoted by Jay Martin, **Nathanael West: The Art of His Life** (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1970), p. 341.

(8) *Ibid.*, p. 321. The statement takes on added weight when we note that West was a Jew.

(9) Martin, p. 305. Schulberg is known for his own Hollywood novel, **What Makes Sammy Run?**

(10) Nathanael West, **The Day of the Locust** (New York: New Directions, 1969), p. 177.

(11) Martin, p. 304.

(12) *Ibid.*, p. 327. "At one such premiere, Arturo Toscanini was nearly crushed to death, unrecognized, by a mob in pursuit of Spencer Tracy."

(13) Jonas Spatz, **Hollywood in Fiction** (The Netherlands: Mouton & Co., 1969), p. 139.

(14) It is of interest to examine Tod's last name in conjunction to the type of work both men were doing: "Hackett" ("hack work").

ARTHUR PENN

DIRECTING FILMS AND PLAYS

By Wendy Bell

The essence of Arthur Penn's art is an intense awareness of, and emphasis on, physical expression, particularly violence. But Penn's treatment of violence is complex and ambivalent, and this attitude has resulted in much critical controversy. Many critics dislike Penn's films because he does not condemn violence outright. His characters seek expression in a limiting and confining society. As we enter this society, we too are divided by ambivalent responses, for though we may not "approve" of the inevitable violence which is a by-product of these frustrations, yet we cannot totally condemn it either. In the followig essay, Wendy Bell shows how the cinema is ideally suited to Penn's themes and attitudes, and how his experience in the legitimate theatre seems curiously unrelated to his movie output.

There are some definite themes that run through all of Arthur Penn's films which seem to be absent from the plays he has directed on the stage. Penn's movie version of *THE MIRACLE WORKER* is very similar to the play, which he had previously directed on Broadway, and it is also the least typical of his films. When Penn made his first movie, *THE LEFT-HANDED GUN*, he was working very much by instinct. He seemed to know what made a scene cinematic even though he was not yet consciously aware of how he was doing it. Many of the elements that people admire in his later films can be seen in his first. While making *BONNIE AND CLYDE*, Penn stated that he was trying to unlearn a lot of the patterns that he had fallen into. He felt that his camera work had gotten less original in each picture, and he wanted to get back to the innocence he had when making *THE LEFT-HANDED GUN*.

One of the major themes that runs through Penn's films is the emphasis on physical expression. This is an important ingredient of film since it is primarily a visual medium. Theatre is essentially a verbal medium, so what the characters say is more important generally than how they move. Of course movement is a part of the theatre, but it must be obvious enough to be seen and understood by people in the last row. In a movie, the smallest movement or expression can be picked up by the camera. As Robin Wood points out in his study, *Arthur Penn* (Praeger, 1970), one of the elements of physical expression which is immediately associated with Penn is violence. *THE LEFT-HANDED GUN* has many shootings, including a man blasted out of his boots; *MICKEY ONE* contains several beatings; *THE CHASE* has very bloody beatings plus a killing; *BONNIE AND CLYDE* has its famous shoot-outs, including the bloody ending; *LITTLE BIG MAN* has several massacres. Even *ALICE'S RESTAURANT* conforms to this pattern, though the violence is often kept under the surface, and is more verbal than in Penn's other films. In *THE MIRACLE WORKER*, the nine minutes of fight scenes are the only part of the movie that Penn now considers cinematic.

Apparently Penn was not even aware of the extent of the violence in *THE LEFT-HANDED GUN* when he was making it. Several relatives commented on it and when he thought about what they said, he came to the conclusion that he liked violence in film. He says that violence makes good films, and that the western and "great men of action" are the "basic stuff" of which the best movies are made.(1)

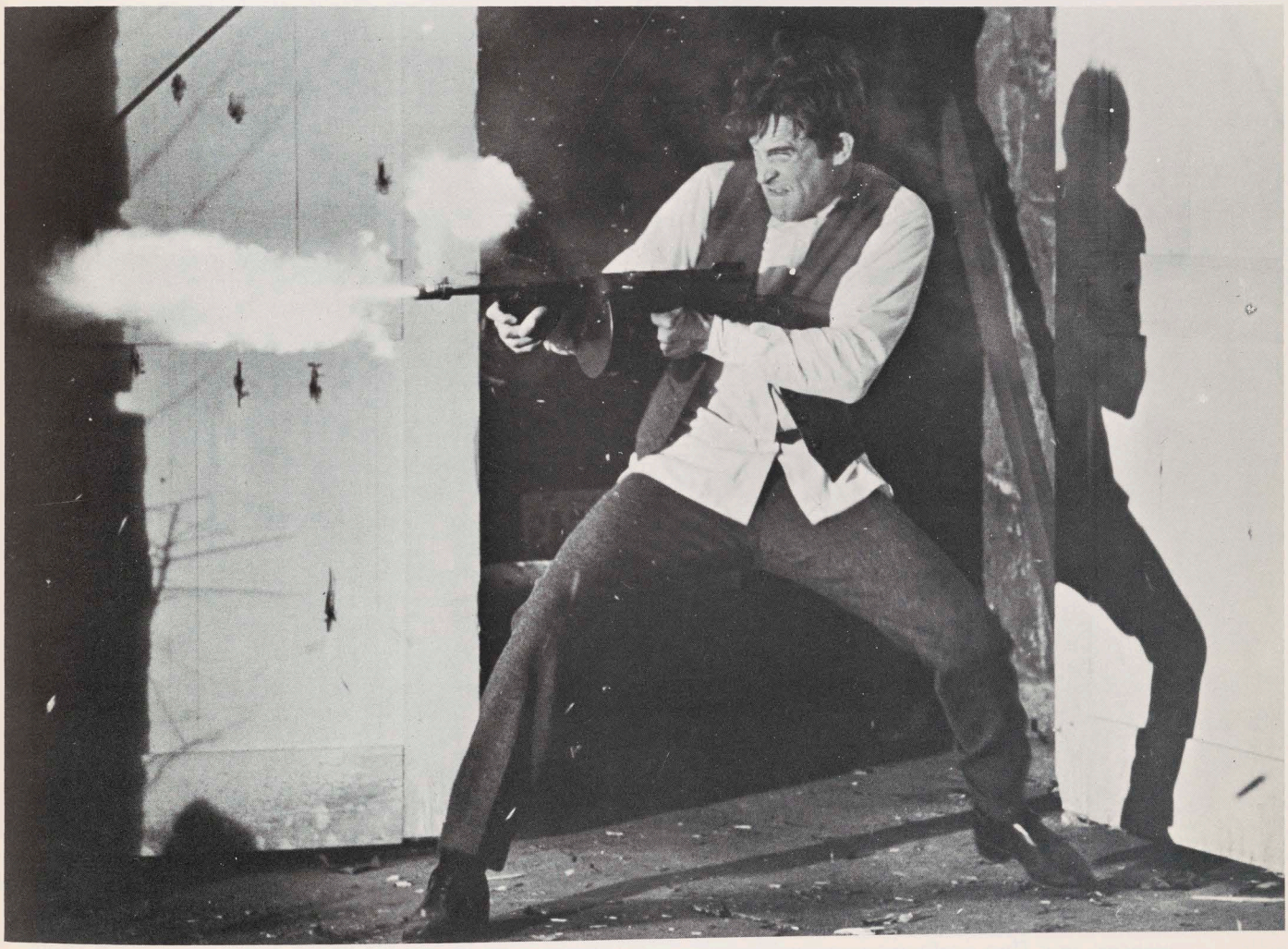
This is an important divergence from his plays, for he neither likes nor uses much violence in them. On the practical level, stage violence is not generally as effective, but Penn seems to think that besides practicalities, it simply does not belong on stage. One can see this by looking at the plays he has directed. Some

of them are contemplative, like *Two for the Seesaw* and *Toys in the Attic*. *Fiorello* and *Golden Boy* are both musicals, and *An Evening with Nichols and May* is a collection of comedy sketches.

Penn's films also show a concern for organized societies. He is interested in the individual against society, rather than in collective movements. He admires the person who shows what is wrong with society and fights against it. In *THE LEFT-HANDED GUN*, Billy has always been an outsider, and when he kills four men (including a sheriff), he becomes more alienated. While the audience cannot approve of killing four men, it does understand his desire for revenge. Billy is willing to go against the sheriff's all-pervasive power, because he doesn't believe that the sheriff should control an innocent man's right to life. In *THE MIRACLE WORKER*, Annie Sullivan was an outcast because she was raised in an almshouse, and Helen Keller is an outcast because she is blind, deaf, and dumb. This movie is really about Annie, for she is the one who stands up to society and says that Helen can be helped.

In Penn's next film, *MICKEY ONE*, the protagonist seems to be totally alienated from society. He is always on the run and is the only one of Penn's characters who doesn't face and fight society. This may be because Mickey is just as much a symbol as he is a real person, and it is not terribly clear as to what all the symbols mean. In *THE CHASE*, we see an interesting switch: the lawman is now the outsider. Sheriff Calder tries to fight the money-based society of the town, but in the end he is defeated and he leaves. *BONNIE AND CLYDE* are certainly not part of the mainstream of society, but the society of the time is so drab that they seem appealing in comparison.

When Penn went to Texas to shoot the film, he found the people there very anxious to reminisce about the real Bonnie and Clyde. Most of them held a sort of respect for the couple, because they had been willing to fight against the hopelessness brought on by the Depression. The image of Bonnie and Clyde as vicious, blood-thirsty killers was made up by the police, and built up by the media. Bonnie and Clyde were almost forced in spite of themselves to fit into this mold. In a tape made by Allen Lomax, Woody Guthrie talks about how the banks were failing because they closed up so many farms, and then they blamed their failures on robberies by criminals like Pretty Boy Floyd, Dillinger, and Bonnie and Clyde. He also talks about the F.B.I. as a new organization which was trying to



BONNIE AND CLYDE was perhaps Penn's most violent film, and an enormous critical and commercial success.

MICKEY ONE (top) is generally regarded as Penn's least successful film, largely because of its confusing (and often pretentious) symbolism. *THE CHASE* (center) was butchered by inept studio personnel, though its mangled released version still contained some excellent sequences, and fine performances by Marlon Brando and Angie Dickenson (shown here). *BONNIE AND CLYDE* (below) established Penn as the most brilliant of America's younger directors.

build itself into a national police force. They would build up the exploits of these petty criminals and make them sound like killers in order to build up the F.B.I.'s image.

Another important theme in Penn's films is the idea of image versus the real self. At the end of *THE LEFT-HANDED GUN*, Billy the Kid finally learns to look beyond his image to discover William Bonney, his real self. His image has been built up by Moultrie, the newspaper man, and it takes Billy a long time to realize that there is more to him than this. In *THE MIRACLE WORKER*, there is the conflict between most people's image of Helen (she was almost committed to an asylum for the mentally defective), and the Helen that Annie uncovers. Mickey One has a public image of a smooth nightclub comedian which conflicts sharply with his insecure real self. His uncertain identity is best demonstrated in the scene where he burns all his I.D. cards.

In *ALICE'S RESTAURANT*, we see Arlo as an outsider from two societies. The group that Ray and Alice try to keep together is outside of the dominant "straight" society. But Alice and Ray have a lot of the same problems, so Arlo finally leaves both societies to go off and try to find out more about himself. Little Big Man is also an outsider from two societies. He is neither an Indian nor a white man. The film also shows the Indians as outsiders from the powerful white society which they must fight in order to survive.

THE CHASE is a film about a town that is built on false images. Val Rogers rules the town because of his money, and his image prevents him from being a real person. He comes to believe that the respect people pay him is due to their genuine admiration, when actually it is due to a fear of his money and power. He is so concerned with images that he has his son keep up the appearance of a respectable marriage, even though everyone knows it is a hopeless travesty. Sheriff Calder is the only man in the film who knows himself. He not only knows who he is, but what he wants. In this film, at least, awareness of self is synonymous with the "good guys," while the rest of the townspeople are the villains. Bonnie and Clyde's image is the creation of the media and the F.B.I., and they both grow to realize its restricting falsity. At first, the image is exciting to Bonnie, and she wants to maintain it. But eventually her desire for security overcomes her attraction for glamor. In *ALICE'S RESTAURANT*, Ray tries to keep up the image that he has of himself as the liberated father of a community. His immaturity and selfishness eventually destroy the image, however. The film also demonstrates that most of the facile images of "hippie life" are not valid. Penn points out many contradictions and complexities in their community. Throughout most of *LITTLE BIG MAN*, Jack Crab has no clear self-image. He is an outsider from both the Indian and white societies. As a white man, he constantly changes his self-image as he changes situations.

A prominant characteristic of Penn's movies is ambivalence. One of the elements which makes his films so real is that we are both drawn to and repelled by many of his characters. He is also adept at alternating humor with seriousness. He says he learned this alter-

nation of moods as a result of the failure of *MICKEY ONE*. He found it boring, because it lacked humor and variety. To prevent *BONNIE AND CLYDE* from becoming tedious, he decided that alternation of moods and styles should be an important element of the film.

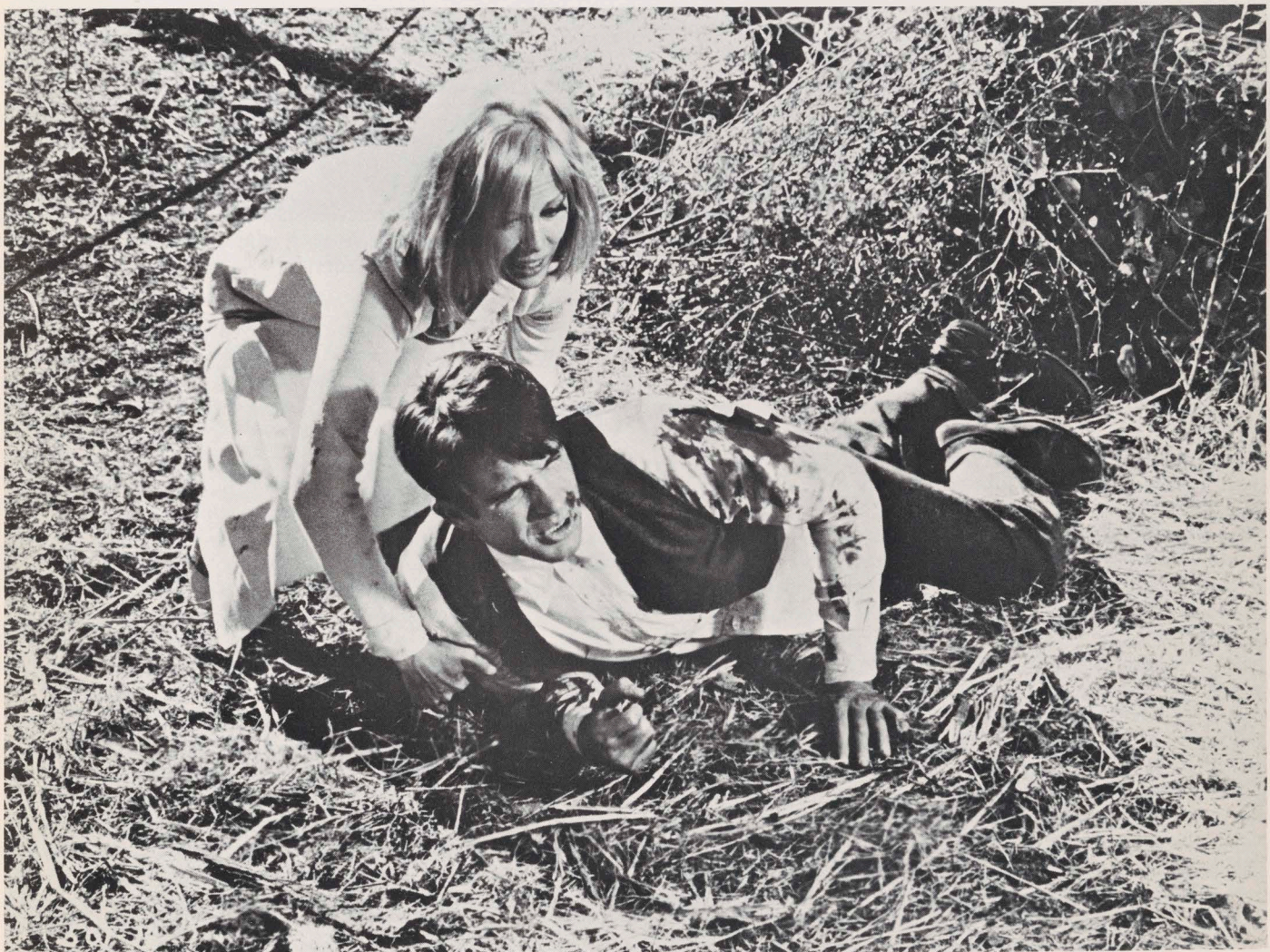
In *THE LEFT-HANDED GUN*, we understand Billy's desire for revenge and one part of us wants him to kill the killers. At the same time, we are appalled at his obsession. Even in this movie, Penn makes an attempt at alternating moods. In a basically serious film, he inserts several funny incidents, such as the flour fight and the horny toad incident when Billy is lying in bed. *BONNIE AND CLYDE* is the prime example of ambivalence in Penn's films. Bonnie and Clyde are attractive characters, yet intellectually we don't approve of what they are doing. Many of the other characters in the film evoke this same kind of ambivalent response. The main point of *ALICE'S RESTAURANT* is to show both the good and bad aspects of an alternative type of community. *LITTLE BIG MAN* is certainly a pro-Indian movie, yet Jack Crab keeps returning to the white society, which is not totally evil. The scene of the Indians attacking the stagecoach and of Old Lodge Skins with a scalp also keeps the film from being too one-sided. *THE CHASE* is Penn's least ambivalent film, and Pauline Kael sharply criticized it on these grounds. (3) The only diminishment of Calder's virtue is his beating up Archie at the end of the film.

Perhaps what has attracted Penn more to the cinema than the stage are the very possibilities for complexity and ambivalence which film provides. In the theatre, almost everything depends on the language. In the movies, the visuals and sound can act in contrast with each other — a technique Penn often employs. Film isn't just limited to words and pictures either. Thoughts, conversations, dreams, settings, music, symbols, camera angles, framing, and much more can all work together to create a more complex effect. Penn thinks this is what makes film so relevant to today, audiences. People want ambivalence and complexity, and films can give it to them much more effectively than plays.

(1) See Curtis Lee Hanson, "An Interview with Arthur Penn," **Cinema** (Summer, 1967), p. 11.

(2) See Joseph Gelmis's interview with Penn in **The Film Director As Superstar** (Doubleday, 1970), p. 210.

(3) Pauline Kael, "Southwestern: **The Chase**," in **Kiss Kiss Bang Bang** (Bantam Books, 1968), pp. 185-187.

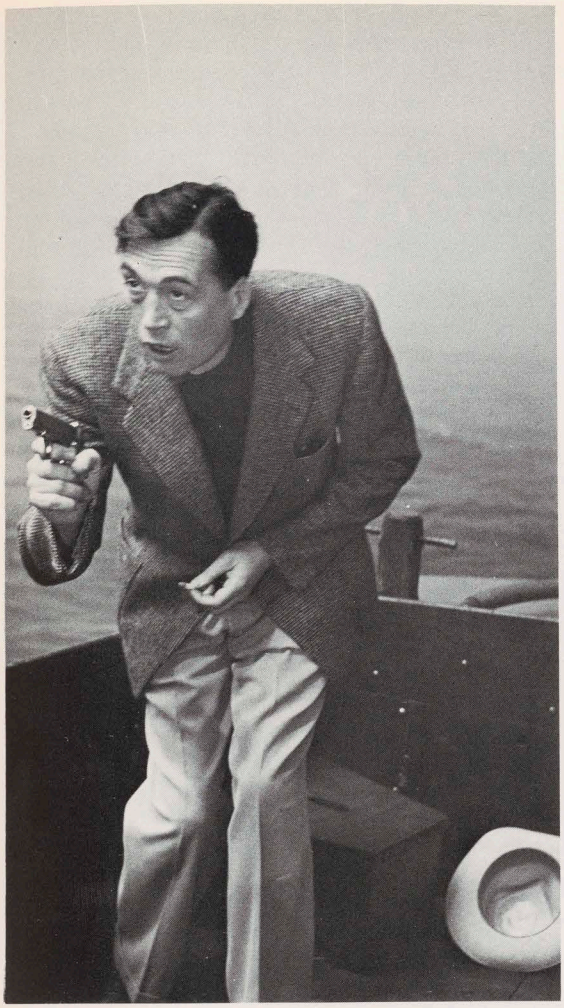


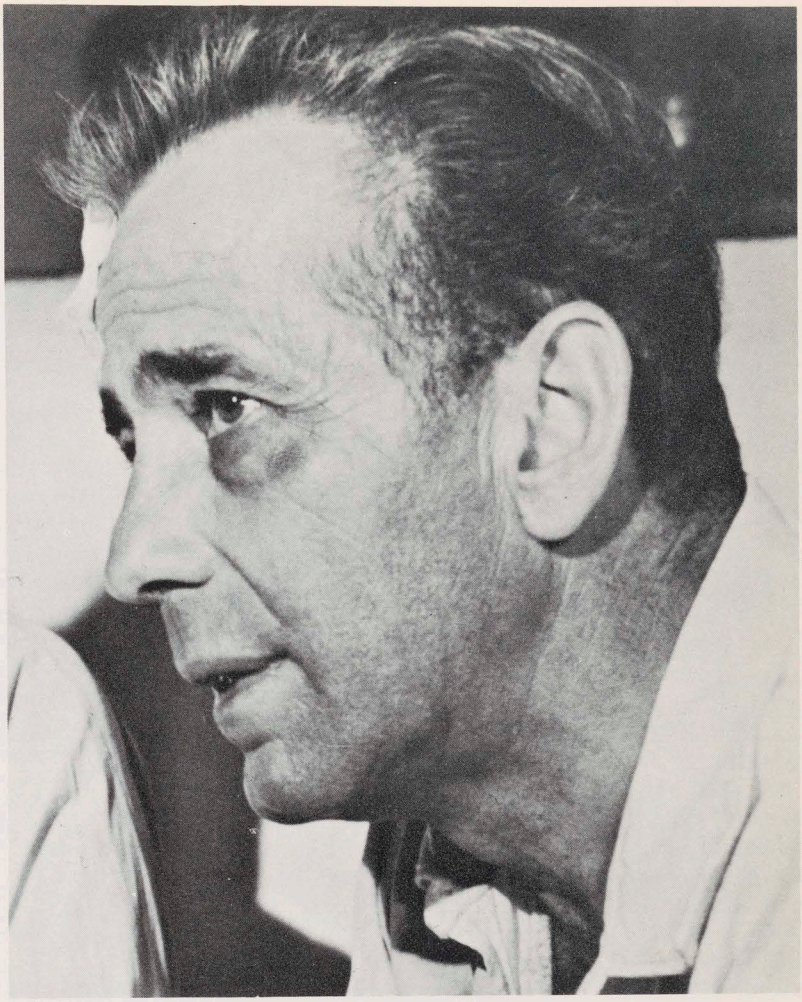
Along with Sam Peckinpah's *THE WILD BUNCH*, *BONNIE AND CLYDE* portrayed violence with such vivid brutality, it was harshly condemned by many as glorifying the violent life. Both films are now considered masterpieces.

THE MALTESE FALCON, the first and perhaps classic Huston-Bogart film, featuring a cast which Pauline Kael describes as "impeccably right": Bogart, Peter Lorre, Mary Astor, and Sidney Greenstreet.

HUSTON AND BOGART

By Joseph F. Bressi





The young John Huston, demonstrating a role in *KEY LARGO*, one of the less celebrated Huston-Bogart films.

The rise of the Bogart Cult in the sixties confirmed him as one of the great personalities of the American cinema. However, like Bette Davis, another cult figure, Bogart was also a great actor. The cultists have glorified Bogie as the romantic loner, the self-reliant, tight-lipped tough guy who loved and lost, but kept his self-respect — a role Bogart was to repeat with depressing predictability. But the cheap Warner Brothers imitations of the forties (such as Michael Curtiz's likeable but sentimental CASABLANCA*) tended to diminish Bogart's genuine accomplishments, for these imitations merely exploited the Bogart persona without exploring it further. The great Bogart films, in fact, were produced almost exclusively under the direction of two men: Howard Hawks* (TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT, THE BIG SLEEP) *and John Huston* (THE MALTESE FALCON, THE TREASURE OF SIERRA MADRE, THE AFRICAN QUEEN, *and* BEAT THE DEVIL).

John Huston and Humphrey Bogart are both somewhat legendary figures in the American cinema. Because their private lives were revealed to the public via Hollywood-style press coverage, the public images of each were solidified in a period beginning in the nineteen - forties and continuing throughout the nineteen - fifties

Bogart was born on Christmas Day, 1899, to a wealthy New York family. His father was a successful surgeon and his mother worked as a magazine illustrator. As befitted the social status of his family, he attended Trinity School in New York and later went to Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, but it was not long before he was suspended for his pranks.

He enlisted in the U.S. Navy when this country entered World War I, and at the age of seventeen saw transport duty in the Atlantic Ocean. It was during this period that he received the scar on the right side of his lip; a scar that would add to his face another look of toughness.

After the war he entered show business through a job as a clerk with a New York theater and later became a stage manager for one of the road companies operated by his father's friend, William Brady.(1) Eventually Bogart was to try his hand at acting, and had his first part in a juvenile role in a 1922 production called, *Swifty*. In those early days of his career he played young, sporty, athletic roles in many Broadway productions. He finally went to Hollywood in 1929 and had unsuccessful screen tests and tryouts. These years included several returns to the New York theater, for his attempts in Hollywood met with little success.

In January, 1935, however, after some very lean years, he was to make his debut on Broadway as the "tough guy" in Robert Sherwood's play *The Petrified Forest*. This was a turning point in his acting career. Through the efforts of his friend, Leslie Howard, he was picked to play the role of "Duke Mantee" in the Warner Bros. film version produced in 1936.

During the last few years of the thirties, Bogart

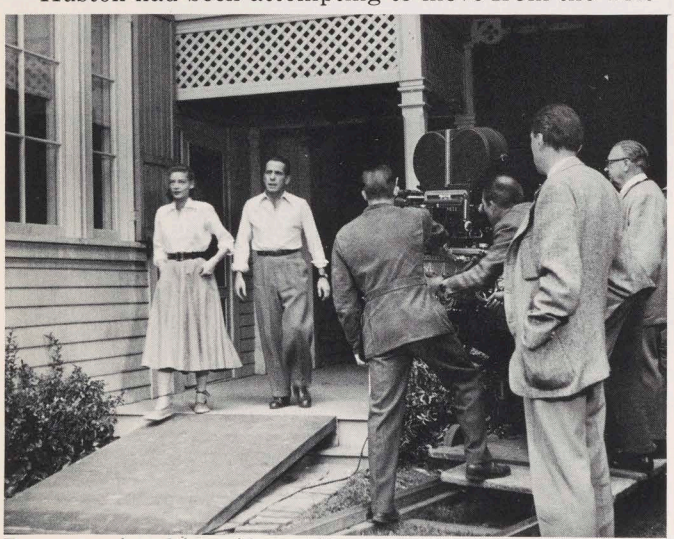
Like *THE MALTESE FALCON, THE TREASURE OF SIERRE MADRE* was an austere fable of the destructiveness of greed. In this film, Bogart played the heavy.

made seventeen films for Warner Brothers. In 1938 he came into contact with John Huston, who had co-authored the screenplay for *THE AMAZING DR. CLITTERHOUSE*, which starred Bogart and Edward G. Robinson.(2)

Huston had just returned to Hollywood after several years of odd jobs and traveling. His first endeavors there had been in 1931 and 1932 when he had written the dialogue for two films starring his father, Walter, entitled *A HOUSE DIVIDED* and *LAW AND ORDER*.

CLITTERHOUSE, the first film in which Huston and Bogart worked together, was not more than an average film for the period. It was directed by Anatol Litvak and was a psychological drama with Robinson playing the title role. The story centered about the scientific endeavors of Dr. Clitterhouse in his study of the reactions of criminals to fear and excitement.(3) The film had the positive effect of bringing Bogart and Huston together professionally and marked the beginning of a friendship that lasted until Bogart's death in 1957.

Huston had been attempting to move from the writing jobs which Warner Brothers gave him to a position as a director. He was well-established as a screen writer by this time and was even more successful when the screenplay for Howard Hawks' *SERGEANT YORK* was nominated for an Academy Award in 1941. This led him to his next affiliation with Bogart. After *SERGEANT YORK*, Huston collaborated with W.R. Burnett in converting Burnett's crime novel, *HIGH SIERRA*, into a movie script. This film was very important in the careers of both Huston and Bogart. For Bogart it was his first really important role and elevated him to star status at the Warner Bros.' studios. The successful screenplay led Huston's first assignment as a director. The film was directed by Raoul Walsh and released in 1941.



Bogart with his wife and co-star, Lauren Bacall, rehearsing a scene from *KEY LARGO*. Behind the camera is cinematographer Karl Freund, with Huston (hands in pockets) supervising.

In *HIGH SIERRA*, Bogart plays the leading role of Roy Earle, the last member of the Dillinger gang. The film tells the story of the organization of a "new mob" which is headed by Bogart, whose plan entails a daring robbery of a gambling casino. Bogart's characterization of Earle, who carries his machine gun in a violin case, confirmed his status as a leading gangster type. In the final shoot-out scene, located in the mountains, Bogart is finally trapped by the police and shot by a concealed rifleman. This role had been turned down by George Raft, James Cagney, and Edward G. Robinson, but was a true break for Bogart. Harold Barnes, a reviewer of movies for the *Herald Tribune*, wrote:

> Humphrey Bogart was a perfect choice to play the role Always a fine actor, he is particularly splendid as a farm boy turned outlaw, who is shocked and hurt when newspapers refer to him as a mad dog. His steady portrayal is what makes the melodrama something more than merely exciting.(4)

The next film in which the two worked was *THE MALTESE FALCON*. Huston was given his choice of several properties, but he was convinced that a re-make of this motion picture, if made with the right combination of talents, could be as successful as the novel in its characterizations. Warner Brothers' studio was difficult to convince, as Dashiell Hammett's novel had been the basis for two earlier, but undistinguished film versions released in 1931 and 1936.

George Raft, an established star, turned down the opportunity to play the leading role because he did not want to take a chance with his image as a star in the first attempt of Huston as a film director. The role then went to Bogart. He is quoted as praising Huston for the work which he did upon the transformation of Hammett's novel into a first-rate screenplay. The film is lauded by critic Pauline Kael:

> Humphrey Bogart's most exciting creation was Sam Spade — that ambiguous mixture of avarice and honor, sexuality and fear, who gave a new dimension to the detective genre. This first film by writer-director John Huston made him famous and a good many of us think it's still his best. It is an almost perfect visual equivalent of the Dashiell Hammett thriller. Huston used Hammett's plot design and economic dialogue in a hard, precise directorial style that brings out the full viciousness of characters so ruthless and greedy that they become comic. It is, and this is rare in American films, a work of entertainment that is yet so skillfully constructed that it hasn't even dated. After many years, and after many viewings, it has the same brittle explosiveness — and even some of the surprise — that it had in 1941. Bogart is backed by an impeccably "right" cast: Sydney Greenstreet, Mary Astor, Peter Lorre, Gladys George, Elisha Cook, Jr., Ward Bond, and Barton MacLane.(5)

THE AFRICAN QUEEN, perhaps Huston's greatest triumph. Bogart deservedly won an academy award for his comic portrayal of Charley Allnut. Katherine Hepburn portrayed Rose the missionary spinster with equal brilliance. The script was written by the great critic-poet-novelist, James Agee.

The plot of this film concerns a series of murders which occur while a group of strange characters seek possession of a fabulously valued statue. Bogart as Sam Spade virtually established a new type of detective story hero. He is cool and quiet, but capable of great violence and possessed of an ability to see through the tricks and lies which others seem to live by. It was a characterization that made Bogart seem tough and self-reliant.

Huston prepared for his first attempt at movie direction with thoroughness. He personally prepared hundreds of sketches which demonstrated the precise camera angles desired. He also played a major role in set construction and design. His screenplay re-created the terse and stark characterizations found in the novel. Under his direction, the film had a hardened, realistic outlook and a fast pace. The characters are seen to waken as their greed for the "falcon" increases. But Bogart, as Sam Spade, alone retains some sense of honesty as when, in the final scenes, he returns the treasure to the police after revealing to them that Mary Astor was the killer of his detective-partner.

Huston completed the filming of the *FALCON* in less than two months, at a cost of less than $300,000. Through his imaginative direction the film achieves a tremendous force and sense of realism. Huston took advantage of a cast that included unique figures such as Sydney Greenstreet. He filmed Greenstreet from low angles to emphasize his bulk, and the harsh lighting gives the sets a special atmosphere that matches perfectly the plot of the film.

The film met with great success and was chosen by Britain's *Films and Filming* for its "Great Films of the Century" series. The magazine praised Huston for his "exact manipulation of actors, cameramen, set designers and others, in capturing such a rich, near-flawlessly correct mood throughout the length of the film."(6) The critic James Agee called the film the "best private-eye melodrama ever made" and the film was nominated for an Academy Award as the best picture of 1941. The commercial success was so good that Warner's studio announced that a sequel to the film was in the offing, but this project never got beyond the publicity stage.

During this period, Bogart made many films which were to insure his position as one of the best actors in Hollywood. The combination of Huston and Bogart was to achieve its next dramatic success with the filming of *THE TREASURE OF SIERRA MADRE*. Bogart was starred as "Dobbs"; John Huston's father, Walter, starred as the old prospector "Howard"; and Tim Holt played the role of "Curtin." Huston adapted the screenplay from a novel by B. Travern. The film was shot in the rugged mountainous country of Jungapeo, Mexico, and the advantage of filming on location added authenticity to the film. The story of *TREASURE* concerns the fate of Dobbs and Curtin, who are down and out when they meet up with Howard,

a crusty old prospector. He persuades them to team up with him on a search for gold in the rugged Sierra mountains. After months of prospecting and mining they have not only managed to outwit the bandits who harass them, but also have amassed quite a fortune in gold dust.

The appearance of another American on the scene causes tension, but this dissipates when he is killed by the bandits. The fortune they have acquired begins to cause distrust, with Dobbs gradually slipping in to a state of paranoia over his distrust of the other two. Howard manages to save the life of a young boy and is then rendered a prisoner to a tribe of Indians who consider him their medicine man. This leaves Dobbs and Curtin with the fortune. Dobbs shoots him and is now totally controlled by his greed for money. He then is destroyed by the Mexican bandits who unwittingly scatter the gold dust in the wind, not knowing its worth. Walter Huston won an Academy Award for his performance and John Huston won the award twice for his screenplay and his directing. The film is a masterpiece on all levels and has the advantage of a unique performance by Bogart and Walter Huston.

The work of both Huston and Bogart in this film make it a classic of the American cinema. The viewer watches Dobbs change from a drifter to a hard worker and finally to a man maddened by a greed which finally causes his death.

Huston had a good many hurdles to cross with the Warner's studios in completing the film. The first was the cost of shooting the film on location in Mexico. Then came script changes from the studio heads which called for Dobbs to live and not meet his otherwise bloody demise. Huston managed to stick to his ideas, however,and resisted change. His direction of his father and his father's equally good acting ability produced the marvelous character of Howard. The old man is out once again to strike it rich and this time succeeds beyond his expectations. In attempting to keep the peace between Dobbs and Curtin, however, the audience sees more in him. Howard grows more philosophical in the end, and returns to live with the Indians as their "medicine man." Thus, two of the three persons survive the greed that destroyed Dobbs and almost destroyed them.

Following the production of *THE TREASURE OF SIERRA MADRE*, Huston next directed *KEY LARGO* which was also released in 1948. Here Bogart is starred with Edward G. Robinson and Lauren Bacall, with Bogart playing another "tough guy" role. The action is centered in a Florida hotel temporarily seized by a group of desperate men hiding out from the police. The mood is typified by the intervention of a hurricane, which parallels the tensions created by the group trapped in the hotel. This film is typical of the gangster films of the nineteen-forties and it is interesting primarily because of the casting of Bogart with Miss Bacall.

One of the best of the Bogart-Huston collaborations was *THE AFRICAN QUEEN*. Huston began groundwork for this film by engaging writer and critic James Agee to collaborate with him on the screenplay. He chose Bogart to play the role of Charles Allnut over such other stars as Gregory Peck. In surmounting the technical problems (Huston chose to shoot on location in Africa), he logged some 25,000 miles by air over the jungles of Kenya, Africa, to find the proper filming sites. He also had trouble convincing his financial backers of the feasibility of shooting the film in color. To do so without being hampered by big studio politics and middlemen, Huston formed an independent production company, Horizon Pictures, with producer Sam Spiegel. He convinced Katherine Hepburn to play Rose Sayer, and also persuaded her to put up with the chore of filming in Africa. Huston felt that filming the movie on location would not only give it authenticity but would also give to the actors who had to live on location a certain edge which would show in their portrayals. "The very hardships give character to the finished film," he explained.

In the movie, we see Bogart — out of his typical gangster or "tough-guy" character—portray Charles Allnut, a seedy river hand. As pilot of the small mail-boat he offers Miss Sayer a sanctuary after her brother dies. The setting is 1914 and the couple are sandwiched in by the German colonists. The way out of their predicament is not a simple one, and Miss Sayer convinces Charley that they should strike a blow for England and mount an attack on a German gunboat which guards the lake. After Allnut is convinced, the two make their way down the river and fall in love. This gives them both a new personality and a new strength. Due to a stroke of fate, they succeed in sinking the gunboat.

Bogart's portrayal shows his ability to play a sensitive role. Although he is comic on one level, he never loses the personality of Charles Allnut to comedy. Bogart was nominated and won the Academy Award for his performance. Huston was nominated twice, as director and co-author of the screenplay.

The two teamed up again in *BEAT THE DEVIL*, released in March of 1954, but the film was not regarded as much of a success for either, though in recent years it has acquired a king of off-beat reputation among film-buffs.

The combination of Huston and Bogart covered a period of some sixteen years and produced at least three classics in the American film. In working for Huston, Bogart was able to achieve any level he wanted. His ability as an actor goes beyond the mystique of the "Bogart cult" and as his portrayals in *SIERRA MADRE* and *AFRICAN QUEEN* bear out, he was able to play more than the one role for which he is most remembered. Their lives parallel in many ways and this gave their friendship a solid foundation. Both were individualists and were always carrying on a dispute with someone. Bogart had acted under many directors but it was John Huston, his greatest director who eulogized him after Bogart died of cancer in 1957. "His life, though not a long one measured in years, was a rich deep life. . . He is quite irreplaceable. There will never be another like him."

(1) Jonah Ruddy and Jonathan Hill, **Bogey, The Actor, The Legend** (New York, 1965), pp. 17-18.

(2) William F. Nolan, **John Huston: King Rebel** (Los Angeles, 1965), p. 234.

(3) Paul Michael, **Humphrey Bogart: The Man and His Films** (New York, 1965), pp. 80-87.

(4) Quoted in Joe Hyams, **Bogie, The Biography of Humphrey Bogart** (New York, 1966), p. 74.

(5) Quoted in Richard Gehman, **Bogart** (Greenwich, Conn., 1965), p. 126.

(6) Quoted in Nolan, p. 42.

BOOKS

Hitchcock's Films, BY ROBIN WOOD. (New York: A.S. Barnes, Second Enlarged Edition, 1969). Paper, Illustrations, 204 pp. $2.45.
Hitchcock, BY FRANCOIS TRUFFAUT, with the collaboration of Helen G. Scott. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967). Paper, oversized pages, Illustrations, 256 pp. $3.95.

The very first line in Robin Wood's book, *Hitchcock's Films*, poses a question: "Why should we take Hitchcock seriously?" It is a question that, as Wood points out, has been posed often by Hitchcock's detractors, who would call him less of an artist than such directors as Bergman or Antonioni because of the popular appeal of Hitchcock's films, and the "concessions to popular taste" that these critics find in those films.

The rest of Wood's volume is an attempt to answer his own question, and in doing so he succeeds brilliantly. The author's analyses of the themes and techniques of Hitchcock's works delve deeply into the subject matter, far beyond the surface layer where the popular appeal of Hitchcock's films lies. In short, Wood establishes that what Hitchcock has to say has implications just as serious and profound as the works of Bergman or Antonioni.

Wood, who is one of the finest film critics writing today (he has also written books on the films of Arthur Penn, Howard Hawks, and Ingmar Bergman), concentrates in this volume on eight Hitchcock films, including five consecutively released works which, says Wood, "constitute an astonishing, unbroken chain of masterpieces." These movies are *VERTIGO*, *NORTH BY NORTHWEST*, *PSYCHO*, *THE BIRDS*, and *MARNIE*.

The book begins with an analysis of *STRANGERS ON A TRAIN*, and it is an excellent example of Wood's style and critical brilliance. He meticulously goes through the plot, detailing the meaning and importance of most of the significant shots, examining how these shots relate to the underlying themes of the film.

Wood's analyses of each of the above-mentioned films (in addition to *REAR WINDOW* and *TORN CURTAIN*) proceed in a similar manner. His comments are unconvincing only in his analysis of *MARNIE*, which he seems more intent upon defending from its detractors than in explaining clearly. Wood was also disappointed by *TORN CURTAIN*, and his chapter on that film is likewise disappointing. Overall, however, Wood's volume is a very fine work, one of the best volumes of cinematic criticism in English.

If there is one other fault with Wood's book, it is that in explaining why Hitchcock should be taken seriously, he somewhat neglects the other levels which make Hitchcock's films so much fun to watch. For a study that dwells less on—though does not ignore—the complex meanings of Hitchcock's movies, *Hitchcock*, by Francois Truffaut is highly recommended, for it spans Hitchcock's entire career, complete with anecdotes and facinating comments on the making of films.

The book consists of the transcript of a long interview with Hitchcock conducted by the French director, who is a well-known admirer of his subject, and a brilliant film-maker himself. Hitchcock's entire life is covered, from his days as an art student at the University of London through the making of *TORN CURTAIN* in 1966.

Of course, Hitchcock's comments on everything from his early films to his technique and his anecdotes on the making of movies are the highlights of the book. Truffaut, a former critic, does a fine job of interviewing, and manages to get quite a bit from his subject on his philosophy of filmmaking, which is essential to students of Hitchcock. The obvious respect and affection which Truffaut and Hitchcock have for each other is also a great asset to this book.

An abundance of stills from Hitchcock's films greatly enhances the interview, and the selections are much better than those in Wood's book. Both Wood and Truffaut include complete filmographies in their volumes.

Ron Weiskind

THE FILM CRITICISM OF PAULINE KAEL

I Lost It at the Movies (New York: Bantam Books, 1966). Paper, 323 pp. $1.25.
Kiss Kiss Bang Bang (New York: Bantam Books, 1969). Paper, 498 pp. $1.25.

What is so outstanding about Pauline Kael is her ability to burst bubbles — rosy pink ones, fatuous, or pedantic ones. What is disturbing is the damnable frequency with which she bursts personal favorite bubbles. She does it so well that I almost find myself agreeing with her. In some sort of masochistic frenzy, I devour her books eagerly, searching for some film or director we can agree on.

I Lost It at the Movies and *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang* are as good a general introduction to *competent* film criticism as I have read. Not only is Miss Kael knowledgable about movies, but equally important, she writes with great wit. This last is her saving grace and greatest charm.

I prefer *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang* for purely personal reasons. Being the newer book, it deals with more recent films. Perhaps the most outstanding article is her lengthy piece on *BONNIE AND CLYDE*, which has since become a classic of criticism. One of Miss Kael's more attractive virtues is how she places a movie within a social and critical context. In the *BONNIE AND CLYDE* review, for example, she discusses the reaction to the film as well as the work itself.

> That it is generally only good movies that provoke attacks by many people suggests that the innocuousness of most of our movies is accepted with such complacence that when an American movie reaches people, when it makes them react, some of them think there must be something the matter with it — perhaps a law should be passed against it. . . . *BONNIE AND CLYDE*

> needs violence; violence is its meaning. . . . It is a kind of violence that says something to us; it is something that movies must be free to use. . . . Maybe it's because *BONNIE AND CLYDE*, by making us care about the robber lovers, has put the sting back into death.

Kiss Kiss Bang Bang also contains an A to Z film guide, featuring short capsule comments on 280 movies. This is a fascinating section, and would be an invaluable help in checking out the importance of any given film. As a late, late movie freak, she deals with all the oldies that no one else writes about anymore, particularly the American classics of the thirties and forties. Her article on Orson Welles, Hollywood's ostracized genius, draws tears of rage and frustration. America's greatest practicing film director is shown to be too individualistic, too much a giant for the petty minds ruling over Hollywood.

I Lost It at the Movies is divided into four parts. As in her other book, she devotes the longest section to reviews, mostly of films of the late fifties and early sixties. Her strongest section, in my opinion, is Part IV, "Polemics." Running a close second is Part I, "Broadsides." In the former, she neatly deals with Siegfried Kracauer's highly influential *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality*, which sets forth the thesis that movies and photography are realistic media, and do not take well to fantasies or historical recreations. To Miss Kael, Kracauer is a critic who is so pedantic he is "dry behind the ears." The chapter entitled "Circles and Squares" tackles the famous *auteur* theory, and she successfully demonstrates that this approach to film criticism — which emphasizes the director as sole creative artist — is a severely limited one, especially with American movies. Concentrating on Andrew Sarris, America's best-known (though not the best) *auteur* critic, Miss Kael deftly exposes the ridiculous, deflates the bombast, and strips the theory bare — perhaps too bare, for she is not generous in conceding some of the advantages of the theory. Unlike most of the *auteur* theorists, Miss Kael seldom discusses a movie in a vacuum. As she points out, good criticism is not a matter of a given body of rules, but of the taste, intelligence, and depth of feeling of the critic. Using these criteria, Pauline Kael must be judged one of the best, for she has these qualifications in abundance.

— Barbara Paskay

HOLLYWOOD BY THE DECADE

Hollywood in the Twenties BY DAVID ROBINSON.
Hollywood in the Thirties BY JOHN BAXTER.
Hollywood in the Forties BY CHARLES HIGHAM AND JOEL GREENBERG. (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1968). All illustrated, paper, approximately 175 pp. $2.95 each.

These three books represent diverse approaches to the study of film. The first, *Hollywood in the Twenties*, concentrates primarily on the individuals who were active in the industry. Unfortunately, it too quickly lapses into a mere listing of these people and devotes chapters to categories — "The Invaders," "The Survivors," "Recruitment," "The Idols." Native American directors (the "recruited") are mentioned according to the year in which they made their first film, an aspect that might be interesting, but not particularly useful or valuable.

Baxter's study of the films of the thirties emphasizes not so much the individuals as it does the studios. *Hollywood in the Thirties* is somewhat more readable as a result, because most of the directors are treated as part of the context in which they worked. The obvious problem with this emphasis is that there were great directors who managed to remain outside of the studio system. Baxter, then, like Robinson, falls prey to the Andrew Sarris syndrome (attributed to him not because he invented it, but because he is the worst offender) of having to place these exceptions — the "great directors" — on a plateau by themselves. Sarris calls them the "Pantheon directors," Robinson the "Six Masters" of the twenties (Chaplin, Keaton, Stroheim, Sternberg, Ford, Flaherty), and Baxter, "The Great Originals: 1," and "The Great Originals: 2." In the former he includes Sternberg, Hawks, Lewis Milestone, Frank Capra and *not* John Ford. So we come to the unavoidable conclusion that the studios do not provide us with an adequate means of coping with the film makers, much less the film makers' films. Another problem is that Baxter says in the beginning that readers will notice a heavy emphasis on technique. This reader, for one, did not notice that. Baxter will meaninglessly praise a film for being "imaginative" and having "fluid" cinematography, or condemn it for being "flawed," or "unremarkable" in one aspect or another.

The final study, Greenberg and Higham's *Hollywood in the Forties*, is in many ways the best. The authors choose to deal foremost with the films themselves, and secondarily with the individuals and studios. Films are comfortably and loosely organized according to the genre they most nearly resemble, and directors are seen as artists who are capable of creating different types of films. It is undoubtedly easier to refer back to the volumes on the twenties and thirties to locate sections on specific directors but the study of the forties avoids the lack of unity and continuity inherent in reference books. Robinson and Baxter, because of their isolation of the "great directors", are trapped into sacrificing objectivity for the sake of neat categories. Greenberg and Higham, on the other hand, while expressing obvious preferences (Ford, Capra, and Curtiz, and not particularly *CITIZEN KANE*) never lift their favorites out of the same context in which they have treated their lesser contempories. Their prose may not flow like Agee's, but it comes closer than Robinson's or Baxter's, and at least Higham and Greenberg do not use bold-face type for the name of every director. And if none of these books make for particularly exciting reading, at least the forties one is designed to be read.

— John S. Barbour

Orson Welles, as he appeared in his film, *THE IMMORTAL STORY*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Paramount Films, Maysles Films Inc., Walt Disney Productions, Warner Bros. Pictures Inc., United Artists, Leacock Pennebaker Productions, Universal-International, 20th Century Fox Productions, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Inc., Universal Pictures, Jay Ward Productions Inc., Columbia Pictures, The Walter Reade Organization, Carmie Amata, Larry Edmunds Inc., Museum of Modern Art, Cinemabilia, *Movie Classis, Pic, Photoplay.*

THE SCARLET EMPRESS, directed by Josef von Sternberg.