

*cabiers du*  
**CINEMA**  
*in english*

*Truffaut on 'Fabrenheit': III*

*Jean Seberg on 'Lilith'*

*Robert Rossen*

*Leo McCarey*





# LE CONSEIL DES DIX (Council of ten)

COTATIONS (Ratings) ● Inutile de se déranger (No use bothering) ★ à voir à la rigueur (see if necessary)  
 ★★ à voir (see) ★★★ à voir absolument (see absolutely) ★★★★ chef-d'oeuvre (masterpiece)

	Michel Aubriant (Candide)	Robert Benayoun (Positif)	Jean-Louis Bory (Arts)	Albert Cervoni (France Nouvelle)	Jean-Louis Comolli (Cahiers)	Michel Cournot (Le Nouvel Observateur)	Michel Delahaye (Cahiers)	Jean-André Fieschi (Cahiers)	Jean Narboni (Cahiers)	Georges Sadoul (Les Lettres Françaises)
<b>L</b> a Guerre est finie (Alain Resnais)	★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	●	★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★
<b>L</b> e Château de l'Araignée (Throne of Blood) (Akira Kurosawa)		★★★	★★	★★		●	★★	★★		★★★
<b>F</b> our in the Morning (Anthony Simmons)	●	★	★★★	★★★	★★	●	★★	★★	★	★
<b>T</b> he Man I Love (Raoul Walsh)	★★	★	★		★★	●	★★★	★	★	
<b>L</b> a Boutique dans la grand'rue (The Shop on Main Street) (J. Kadar, E. Klos)	●	★	★	★★★	★	●	★★	★	★★	★★
<b>M</b> ickey One (Arthur Penn)	★★	★	●		★★★	●	●	★★	★★	★★
<b>V</b> oi i Mir (War and Peace) (Serguei Bondartchouk)	★★	★★★	★★		●	●	●	●		★★
<b>H</b> arper (The Moving Target) (Jack Smight)					★★	●	★		★★	
<b>R</b> oger la Honte (Riccardo Freda)	★★	★★		★★	●	●	●		●	
<b>L</b> e Coup de grâce (J. Cayrol and C. Durand)	★	●	★★★	★★	●	●	●		●	★
<b>L</b> e Dix-septième Ciel (Serge Korber)	●	★	★★		●	●	●	●	●	★
<b>O</b> n a volé la Joconde (Michel Deville)	★	★			●	●	●	●		★
<b>B</b> oeing Boeing (John Rich)		★★	●		●	●	●	●		★
<b>B</b> attle of the Bulge (Ken Annakin)		★	●			●	★	●		
<b>T</b> he Reward (Serge Bourguignon)		★★			●	●	●	●	●	
<b>L</b> e Chevalier à la rose rouge (Steno)		★	●			●				★
<b>G</b> uerre au trafic d'opium (Cheng Chun Li)			●			●	●			
<b>L</b> a Mandragola (Alberto Lattuada)			●	★		●	●			
<b>M</b> es femmes américaines (Gian Luigi Polidoro)	●	★				●		●		●
<b>L</b> es Forfaits du Marquis de Sade (Freddie Francis)	●	●	★		●	●	●	●		
<b>T</b> en Little Indians (George Pollock)		●				●	●	●		●
<b>U</b> ne vierge pour le prince (P. F. Campanile)	●					●	●			
<b>L</b> es Sultans (Jean Delannoy)	●		●		●	●	●	●	●	●



cahiers du

# CINEMA

in english

Number 7

January 1967



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Jean Seberg.

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## The War Is Started

### An Editorial

So, Suzanne Simonin, *la Religieuse*, of Denis Diderot and Jacques Rivette is banned. And one will be able to discover or rediscover the why and the how of the operation by reading the extracts from the press that we are publishing, among them Godard's letter to Malraux, the only definitive reply to it. We who came too late in the battle to be useful as shock troops and yet too soon to have the serenity of those who draw up a balance sheet, what are we to say of it? Well, that this film, which some find Christian and others anti-Christian, is therefore a complex film, and that is to say intelligent: then is it not this intelligence that they have thought proper to censor? Let us wager

that, on the contrary, they would not even have dreamed of harassing the film if it had displayed that summary clericalism or anticlericalism that French cinema—in the past—made its custom. French cinema that had never the right (even if it had the desire) to do anything whatever that questioned anything whatever; to touch on everything without really touching on anything. At least this ban will have had the curious effect of uniting against it people whom everything separates; and, in the end, the action of the Censor is always an admission of powerlessness: so much to congratulate oneself on!

(The editors of *Cahiers du Cinema* in English heartily concur.)

## Readers on 'La Religieuse'

### The joys of the autodafe

The cowardice and the stupidity being exceptionally gratuitous, it seemed to us interesting to bring to our readers' knowledge the complete text of the petition carrying *La Religieuse* to the stake that has been circulating for several months in the *écoles libres*. This petition was addressed to us by M. Fauré, of Dijon:

"*Le Religieuse*," from the novel of Diderot.

Producer: M. Georges de Beauregard (cinéaste).

Director: M. Jacques Rivette.

1—For about a year, this film, in the course of shooting, has been arousing many warnings of responsible civil or religious authorities. A dossier has been made up, in the hands of M. Peyrefitte.

2—Last fall, the president of the *Union des Supérieures Majeures* of France was warned; urgent request for intervention with M. Peyrefitte, then minister of information, in the name of the 120,000 nuns of France. On October 4 she sent her letters; on November 15, the minister replied, assuring her that he would do everything that was in his power to prevent the release of the film. The new president renewed her request with the new minister of information, M. Bourges, reminding him of the promises of his predecessor.

3—a) Last year, some performances of *La Religieuse* at the Studio des Champs-Élysées aroused no emotion: a theatrical failure.

b) December 11, in the framework of a showing of *Rive et Poésie*, an extract appeared on television, a scene that, out of context, was barely 'equivocal.' No protest.

c) Through the press, M. de Beauregard argued in advance: 'Why would they ban my film, since at the theatre people did not take umbrage, and since the television sequence disturbed no one?' By saying that "Diderot" appears in the program of the lycées, he shifted the problem. (It is easy to reply to him.)

d) M. Christian-Jaque (*Aurore*, December 17), interviewed, states his plans explicitly. 'If Dame Censorship authorizes *La Religieuse*, I shall film *L'Abbesse de Castro*; all hopes are allowable.' (*La Religieuse* is the first film of an anti-religious and scandalous series.)

e) An article of *L'Aurore* (December 3) and an article of *Figaro* relate an intervention of M. Frédéric-Dupont at the municipal council, on the occasion of the pre-censorship. He protested vigorously against the film and demanded its banning. M. Papon, contacted, said that the minister of information, the person responsible, was resolved to do everything in his power to act in that direction.

4—It follows from all the preceding that the affair is semi-official, and that



interests very much beyond financial interests alone are concerned.

5—The expressions employed by those who have seen this film are almost all identical: 'Blasphemous, ignominious, dishonors nuns.' Moreover, alas, artistic success, and no scene really obscene. It is a matter, not so much of images, as of a deeply perverse spirit that falsifies and caricatures religious values."

#### Copy of the petition proposed by the A.P.E.L. (Association des parents des écoles libres)

"We undersigned, parents of pupils of . . . protest against the projection on our screens of the film *La Religieuse*, drawn from the novel of Diderot. If this production, as there is every ground to believe, were presented to the French public, it could only create confusion in people's minds.

"Situations presenting an analogy with that evoked by Diderot in his novel can have existed—exceptionally—in the past. It remains no less true that the work created by the novelist belongs for the major part to fiction and refers for a very small part to reality. The posters, by mere taste for scandal, will make an impression and will incite numerous spectators to be present at the showings.

"This film, which defames and travesties the life of religious orders, injures—  
—the dignity of woman;  
—the honor of nuns;  
—wounds the moral sense;  
—draws a distorted picture of nuns, former educators of our mothers and our wives; most often at present still educators of our children.

"On all these grounds, we firmly protest against this project—however advanced that it may be in its realization—and we urgently appeal for the total banning of its projection."

#### Straw and grain

This beautiful fit of moral abjection and of syphilitic clericalism had the result that one knows. Purists will note, in the fifth point, the "alas," which is not far from being sublime. Besides, we have received a certain number of indignant letters, whose expressions we thought that we ought not to attenuate. Here are some examples:

"Dear *Cabiers*—We are ashamed of living in a city that answers to the name of Bourges, name from now on a laughing stock. We have proposed to our mayor to un-baptize our city and to call it henceforth 'Diderot' or 'Rivette.' We ask you to believe that, to our ears, Bourges has become a synonym for intellectual desolation. We are ashamed!" (Letter signed by forty-one residents of Bourges.)

"Messieurs, I read in *Le Monde* that Monsieur Bourges, Secretary of State for Information, has just banned *La Religieuse*, and that in spite of the favorable vote given twice by the Control Commission. I am nauseated. I am not so accustomed to show myself violent, but

if you do not insult that man publicly, on the cover of your next issue, in the terms that his behavior calls for, you will be the last of cowards. With all my friendship." Jean LEPIC, Toulouse.

On the cover, how you do go at it! Our covers are saved for people whom we esteem. But what does the Abbé Lénfantin say?

"Dear *Cabiers*, I have tears in my eyes! What? They ban *La Religieuse*; they dishonor themselves in that way, in the name of the honor of nuns! I know nuns well. I believe that I can know that they value less a fallacious 'honor' than they do the search for truth. Are people naïve enough in high places (what baseness, dear God) to believe that nuns have not read, for lack of having lived, the book of Diderot? My friends, I have always espoused the cause of truth, for it is that of God. Happily, the State is not God, since it arrogates itself the right to ban the Truth, to gibe at it, to trample it underfoot. Oh, how I should like to have M. Bourges in the secrecy of the confessional! I will tell him, that ignoble servant of a totalitarian State, some home truths. That such men, such fools that one is flabbergasted, exist still and govern us! I say out loud to M. Bourges and to his masters that they will remain in the memory of history on the same grounds as the judges of Flaubert and of Baudelaire — as those powerless curs who cling with all their teeth to the skirts of Beauty! Good wishes to you." Abbé LENFANTIN.

"To my friends of *Cabiers*, in connection with the banning of *La Religieuse*: Messieurs, there are predestined names. That of Monsieur Bourges is one. Take your Larousse and read:

'*Bourg*, Borough: large village where a market is held.'

'*Bourg pourri*, Rotten borough: English borough, whose electors readily sold their votes to the candidates who wanted to have himself sent to parliament.'

Of course, the word 'parliament' no longer has much meaning in France, but the thing itself remains, and the market, and compromise, and dishonor.

Monsieur Bourges is truly a 'rotter.' I ask you to believe that I weigh my words." Philip CREUZE-VAULT, Rennes.

"Messieurs, I have subscribed to *Cabiers* since number 11, and, since then, I have never missed a single issue. With my friends, I have followed particularly your struggle on behalf of cinema and of the *politique des auteurs*. No need to tell you the shame that we have felt on learning the fate reserved for the film of Jacques Rivette, shame that could not fail to spurt back over the whole of French cinema. There it is, I was determined to assure you of my support and of that of my friends, and that I am prepared, if necessary, to collect all the signatures that I can for a protest. *Vive Cabiers, vive cinema, vive La Religieuse!* Down with Bourges, with

flunkies!" Louis ROYET, Verdun.

"... They say that it was after having received numerous letters from 'right minded' people that M. Bourges has believed himself authorized to set upon this film; so I suggest that your journal call upon its readers to write to the Secretary of State to manifest *en masse* their disapproval of the decision that has been made and of the censorship in force at present. We are letting ourselves be trampled on by narrow and sectarian minds. Democratically and cinematographically yours, Jacques-Yves DAMIAN, Chateauroux.

"P.S. Propose to the Ciné-clubs the organization of debates on censorship, and have them vote in their meetings resolutions against Censorship and against the decision of Yvon Bourges."

It remains for us to call on all our readers, and all the people whom they can affect, to struggle against a decision that, beyond the admirable film of Rivette, quite simply bullies freedom of expression, and, as such, constitutes a scandalous political action. Friends of *Cabiers*, this matter obviously extends beyond the framework of our letters from readers; therefore make known your indignation, rather than to us, to M. Yvon Bourges, Secrétaire d'Etat à l'Information, 69 rue de Varenne, Paris, and sign *en masse* the manifesto of 1789 (which should be that of 1,789,000) put in circulation by Georges de Beauregard.

"M. Rivette, the journalist (!) of Europe 1 who, the other day, confronted you with M. Frédéric-Dupont, was not so supercilious at the time of the remarks made by M. Noel-Noel (*à propos*, you know?), the latter praising the censorship, stigmatizing rotten *cinéastes*, and thanking the Most High who had just granted him an audience, and who, he said, should entrust to him the direction of a ministry of Cinema. Noel-Noel complaining about no longer making films, when his spirit is so subtle, so witty, not disdaining the good dirty joke—healthy and French—stigmatizing the eroticism of certain perverted directors. After that homily, I wrote to Europe 1 to express my indignation. Are we going to become a Spain, a Portugal?" Marcel LAMAZEROLLES, 29, rue des Tanneurs, La Rochefoucauld.

Moreover, Jacques Rivette, not being able to reply to each of the people who have written to him, here thanks all those who have expressed to him their solidarity.

—Jean-André FIESCHI

## Jottings From Other Publications

I should have liked to be able, as ordinarily, to devote this column to the best or worst extracts from the press encountered in the course of the month. The decision of an official decided other-





Jacques Rivette: Suzanne Simonin, *la Religieuse*, Anna Karina.

wise by turning our attention to the importance of a single event that has eclipsed all the others.

Everything, in fact, suddenly withdrew into the background the afternoon of April 1, 1966, before what we read in *Le Monde*:

"Although the control committee twice gave a favorable opinion by a large majority, M. Bourges, secretary of state for information, has just banned the film *Suzanne Simonin, la religieuse de Diderot*, for export as well as for distribution in France. The ban in these two respects is justified at the secretariat of state for information in these terms:

"This decision is motivated by the fact that this film, because of the behavior of some characters, as of certain situations, and similarly because of the audience and the range of a commercially distributed film, is of a nature to affront gravely the feelings and the consciences of a large part of the population.

"These considerations are equally valid abroad, particularly in certain foreign countries where this production is likely to impair the reputation or the authority of groups, many of which devote themselves to work that shares in the cultural or humanitarian dissemination of France."

Alas! That had nothing of an April fool joke about it, and we had not at all the impression of being free as we went down the rue Marbeuf that evening. Or rather, we had never had occasion to feel our freedom thus, if, as Sartre said, "We have never been so free as under the German occupation." As besides Rivette too says, precisely in *Suzanne Simonin, la religieuse de Diderot*, which we are some who have had the privilege—which ought not to be one—of admiring (the ban, indeed, curiously prolongs the film, since life causes us thus to feel, thanks to the film, the very thing that it says in artistic terms). As Godard said the next day in *Le Monde*:

"The U.N.R. candidate for the presi-

dency of the republic had declared some months ago to Michel Droit, under the eyes of twenty million Frenchmen: 'I have abolished censorship by M. Gazier, and I have not reestablished it.' By banning today the filmed adaptation of one of the most celebrated classics of freedom, his secretary of information, Yvon Bourges, therefore belies his illustrious employer.

"For my part, I am grateful to him.

"In fact, during Munich and Danzig, I was playing marbles. During Auschwitz, the Vecors and Hiroshima, I was wearing my first long trousers. During Sakiet and the Casbah, I had my first adventures with women. In short, as intellectual beginner, I was all the more behind as I was equally beginner—*cinéaste*. So I know fascism only in books.

"They have taken away Danielle.' 'They have arrested Pierre.' 'They are going to shoot Etienne.' All these pattern-phrases of the Resistance and of the Gestapo affected me, to be sure, more and more strongly, but never in my flesh and in my blood, since I had had the luck to have been born too late. Yesterday, abruptly, everything changed: 'They have arrested Suzanne.' 'Yes. The police came to George's place and to the laboratory. They have seized the prints.'

"Thank you, Yvon Bourges, for having made me see before me the true face of present-day intolerance. Sartre said that freedom of expression is found where police cars encircle it. Happily, there is more and more of it."

That was what struck us in this sordid adventure, and that Godard once more expressed in the most fitting word. But there was also the Ubuesque aspect of the matter that Chabrol stressed in *Paris-Press*:

"It is a very natural decision, but inadequate. One must send them all to prison!

"For a long time I have been repeating that it is necessary to go down into the street. Think of the look of the people of the censorship committee who

twice approved the release of the film . . . They risk seeming clowns. Moreover, one must put the censors in a convent. I thought there were limits to prudery; I was mistaken!"

In his fine article in *Le Monde*, Baroncelli asked that one write to the Secretariat of State for Information (69, rue de la Varenne), and then in *Le Nouvel Observateur* of April 6 Jean-Luc Godard wrote an open letter to his minister, to our minister of *Kultur*:

"Your employer was right. Everything is happening at a 'vulgar and subaltern' level. I believe that he was thinking of the princes who govern us when he made that assertion. Happily for us, since we are intellectuals, you, Diderot, and I, the dialogue can begin at a higher level. Besides I am not so certain, dear André Malraux, that you will understand anything of this letter. But since you are the only Gaullist that I know, it must needs be that my anger should fall on you.

"And after all, it falls rightly. Being a *cinéaste* as others are Jews or blacks, I was beginning to be bored with going every time to see you and with asking you to intercede with your friends Roger Frey and Georges Pompidou to obtain mercy for a film condemned to death by censorship, that gestapo of the spirit. But God in heaven, I did not really think I should have to do so for your brother, Diderot, a journalist and a writer like you, and his *Religieuse*, my sister, that is to say, a French citizen who prays simply to our Father to protect his independence.

"Blind man that I was! I should have remembered the letter for which Denis had been put in the Bastille. Happily, this time your refusal to receive me and your playing dead to the telephone have opened my eyes. What I had taken for courage or for intelligence in you when you saved my *Femme mariée* from the axe of Peyrefitte, I understand at last what that was, now that you accept with a light heart the banning of a work in which you had nonetheless learned the exact meaning of those two inseparable ideas—nobility of spirit and resistance. I understand at last that it was very simply cowardice. And especially do not speak to me of Spain, of Budapest or of Auschwitz. Everything is happening at a subaltern level, one has already said it to you. And I put it explicitly to you: that of fear.

"If it were not prodigiously sinister, it would be prodigiously beautiful and moving to see a U.N.R. minister of 1966 fear the spirit of an encyclopedist of 1789. And I am certain now, dear André Malraux, that you will understand definitively nothing of this letter in which, overwhelmed with detestation, I speak to you for the last time. No more will you understand why henceforth I will also fear to shake your hand, even in silence. Oh, it is not that your hands are like those on which the blood of Charonne and of Ben Barka

(Continued on page 64)





*Fahrenheit 451*, Julie Christie.



# Journal of 'Fabrenheit 451': Part Three

by François Truffaut

## Wednesday 6 April

At Black Park. The weather is a little better. Oskar Werner, still with flu, can work on condition that we don't send for him until we are absolutely ready. I begin by retaking the worst of Friday's shots, those in which Montag arrives among the book-men, with less background action. I thought it out of place to see a TV set in the book-men's railway coach, but we need it for the story.

At the end of the scene in the coach, Henri Brulard gives some civilian clothing to Montag and we pan towards the window, on to a man reciting into a walkie-talkie a Lewis Carroll poem which he is teaching to someone else, a girl on the far side of the lake. In the ordinary way the walkie-talkie might be for relaying television announcements to keep the book-men in touch with the outside contemporary world.

Rain stopped us several times and it's now doubtful if we shall finish before Easter, that is to say by tomorrow evening.

## Thursday 7 April

Shocking weather. No question of even going to Black Park. At the studio, we shoot more inserts of the flame-thrower in action, the television set exploding (we had kept the necessary piece of wall from Montag's apartment) and various shots of spraying and burning the books. All of this is just fiddling about, shots we wouldn't have taken had the weather been good. So they're just for consolation.

Tomorrow is Good Friday. Shooting won't start again until next Tuesday, for two days if the weather's good, otherwise for the rest of the week.

Whatever happens, Oskar Werner and Julie Christie go off on the 15th April to Hollywood where perhaps two Oscars await them, perhaps only one, perhaps none at all.

Already several members of the crew have left for other films, mainly *Funeral in Berlin*. Several others are looking for work and some of them have asked me to recommend them to Antonioni, which is not in my power. Our focus-puller, Kevin Kavanagh, the most intellectual member of the technical crew, has gone to write the dialogue for a film devoted to the exploits of the Daughter of Fu Manchu. This camera crew is

very creative: my cameraman, Nick Roeg, whose photography will be one of the most positive features of the film, has already written the script for a film on which he also did the lighting, and for which Kevin wrote the dialogue bit by bit in between following focus! Nick hopes to be directing next year.

## Friday 8, Saturday 9, Sunday 10 April

Easter in France.

## Monday 11 April

Back to London. In the aircraft, a superb book: "Entretiens avec Salvador Dali" and on page 160 this beautiful exchange:

ALAIN BOSQUET: What have you to say about science?

SALVADOR DALI: There is cybernetics. It is an obsession with people like Jean-Luc Godard, maker of the film *Alphaville*.

A. B.: He is a young man of talent but of total stupidity.

S. D.: Marcel Duchamp told me that it was the most remarkable film for decades.

A. B.: You know, Marcel Duchamp. . .

S. D.: Marcel Duchamp's opinion interests me more than yours.

A. B.: Quite so . . . Let us talk cybernetics.

## Tuesday 12 April

Everyone back on the job in Black Park at 8:30 a.m. The weather is dull but it's not raining. With Montag and Henri Brulard we shoot a tracking shot already set up and rehearsed twelve days ago; since then we've almost shot it on several occasions but rain has stopped us each time.

Several book-men introduce themselves to Montag, always in the same way, giving the name of their book and its author. Example: "I am 'The Pickwick Papers' by Charles Dickens." For Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice" I chose twins. When Montag asks: "Both of you the same book?", they reply: "My brother's Volume One — My brother's Volume Two." The choice of this book will give the knowing critics a bone to pick. They will take great pleasure in pointing out that "Pride and Prejudice" has never been published in two vol-



umes. In the film, Henri Brulard adds for Montag's benefit: "We call the first one *Pride* and the other one *Prejudice*." It's not all that subtle but I feel that if we don't have a few jokes among the book-men, we shall wind up with a truly frightful solemnity.

Oskar Werner and Julie are anxious to finish as they are leaving on Saturday for Hollywood, where the presentation of Oscars takes place on Monday. By four o'clock the sky was almost black and we had to stop shooting. I hope to finish by the end of the week—that has become imperative. This film won't have been 'shot'—it will have been grabbed, scene by scene.

### Wednesday 13 April

The weather was impossible until 11 o'clock, but then brightened up and allowed us to wrap up eleven set-ups of Montag and Henri Brulard's walk amongst the book-men. Henri Brulard asks Montag: "Are you interested in Plato's 'Republic'?" Montag should reply: "Er . . . certainly." The camera then reveals a young woman: "I am Plato's 'Republic.' I will recite myself for you whenever you like." Oskar, who has no sense of humour, played this with imperturbable gravity and didn't once say the "Er . . ." which gives the

lie to the "certainly." I explained to him the meaning of this "Er . . ." and even then he played the next take exactly the same. What do you do, fly at his throat? I contented myself with taking a close shot of the girl, which will enable me later to cut out Montag's ". . . certainly." The greatest proof of stupidity and amateurism an actor can give is a fierce determination to make his character appear more intelligent than the character playing opposite him. My favourite actors are the ones who enjoy playing dumb — Michel Simon, Belmondo, Albert Rémy, Jean-Pierre Léaud, Michel Piccoli, Jean Yanne, almost all the Italians, Mastroianni, Gassman, Sordi, Tognazzi . . .

To erase Oskar's naiveties and to take the curse off the "happy ending" I improvised a shot in which Clarisse meets Jeremy Spenser, the man of the first scene in the film, and takes a bite out of the apple he is eating. Also I have modified the order of events in the sequence, to defer the moment when Clarisse and Montag find each other again.

As in the novel, the book-men will move around them reciting. I have engaged a Chinese, a Spaniard, a German, a Greek, a Japanese, a Russian, a Norwegian, an Italian, and all of them

are going to recite a few lines. That is what I must shoot tomorrow come what may, so as to release Oskar and Julie. As yet I have no idea how I am going to shoot this final scene. If I were a Believer, I would pray this evening for fine weather tomorrow and that a good idea will come to me during the night.

### Thursday 14 April

This morning at six o'clock, from my window on the twenty-fifth floor of the Hilton, I watched the snow fall over all of London, thick, packed, unyielding. Black Park has become White Park!

I decided to shoot just the same and to make a virtue out of the snow. We laid a floor of rostrum-tops over the swamp ground at the head of the lake, put camp fires in one or two places down the shores and by midday we were ready to turn the camera on the long final shot. Clarisse comes from the distance through the bushes towards camera reciting the beginning of the "Memoirs" of Saint-Simon in French. She passes other book-men reciting in Russian, German and so on. She comes up with Montag who, book in hand, is learning a passage from "Tales of Mystery and Imagination" by Edgar Allan Poe: "I am going to relate a tale full of horror . . ." The book-men go



*Fahrenheit 451*, Julie Christie and Oskar Werner among the book-men.





Shooting in Black Park—cameraman Nicholas Roeg, Truffaut at right.

back and forth in front of the lake while the snow falls—and there we have the final shot that I'm waiting impatiently to see in rushes. My fears are that several of the foreigners I recruited will look too miserable in the snow; some of them were mugging, there were twenty-five of them going backwards and forwards and the camera panned through 300°, so it was difficult to keep an eye on all of them. However, we shall see . . .

After shooting, a little impromptu party in my office at Pinewood to celebrate Julie's birthday which coincides with her last day's work on the film. Everyone on the unit likes Julie—as opposed to her co-partner. She has many friends who often came to watch us shooting, and every time she first asked my permission. The last time, I told her that it was marvellous to have so many friends, and I added: "It's a funny thing—one never sees any of Oskar's friends on the set . . ." She replied with a sweet smile: "That's because we're not shooting in Austria!"

#### Friday 15 April

The snow is melting and this time Black Park is really impracticable. We have five or six shots left there, zooming in on the book-men, and we must have

sun. This series of shots is put off till later.

In the studio, we film against blue backing the evolutions of the four flying men in pursuit of Montag. They are attached to wires that hold them off the ground—very painful for them and pretty ridiculous for us to watch. The effectiveness of the result will depend on the quality of the special-effects work.

For the same scene during the pursuit, I need a close-up of Oskar Werner hidden under the tarpaulin in the boat. We set up the boat on the studio floor, the lighting is ready. They come to tell me that Oskar Werner, busy post-synchronising under the patient supervision of Helen Scott, will not come and shoot until our producer, Lewis Allen, whom he has sent for, has brought him the check for his week's work. I am not prepared to wait so I shoot with his stand-in, showing only his hands pulling down the tarpaulin to reveal the top of his head. And that's the end of my collaboration with Oskar Werner, whom I shall not see again before his departure for Hollywood tomorrow nor, I hope, thereafter.

#### Saturday 16 April

The film is not completely finished

but the crew is disbanded as from the end of this thirteenth week. The essential technicians will be engaged on a daily basis probably for Thursday, Friday and Saturday next. We have still to shoot:

- (1) a subjective tracking shot in front of Montag's house;
- (2) shots of TV aerials on rooftops to put in two different places in the film;
- (3) run-bys of the fire engine in the streets and in the countryside;
- (4) some zooms on the book-men in Black Park.

I'm also looking for an idea which will enable me to use different takes of the long final shot in the snow which I saw yesterday in rushes and which in the last analysis doesn't quite come off, but which is by no means a failure.

"I am going to relate a tale full of horror. I would gladly suppress it were it not a chronicle of sensations rather than facts." It finally appears that the phrase I had chosen from Edgar Allan Poe, that Montag recites in the last scene of the film is not to be found in any English edition. In the French-language editions, it is the second paragraph of the story entitled "Bérénice." Should it perhaps be attributed to Charles Baudelaire, his translator? Instead of reciting



Edgar Allan Poe, it turns out that Montag is reciting Baudelaire in the Helen Scott translation!

### Tuesday 19 April

Result of the Oscar awards. Julie wins one for "Darling," but Oskar Werner sees Lee Marvin preferred for the Best Actor award for his performance in "Cat Ballou."

### Wednesday 20 April

All day with Suzannah and Thom Noble, screening the first six reels of the film to make cutting adjustments. Since cutting has kept pace with shooting on this film, and we have viewed it sequence by sequence, we have avoided the shock of having to look at a "first assembly" when shooting is all over. It isn't that the film in its present state is anything to be excited about, far from it, but I already know its weaknesses so well that ways of overcoming them come to mind more quickly. What works best in the film is its construction: the scenes flow harmoniously and it would be almost impossible to change their order. I had cut out one scene before shooting it and that has created such a gap that I have had to make up a scene by using bits from various parts of the film, unused in the editing.

Ray Bradbury gave me a free hand in adapting his novel for he knew it would be difficult, having tried himself

to make a stage play from it. Jean-Louis Richard and I worked on the construction for ten or twelve weeks, and, having finished the job at the beginning of 1963, we have often taken it up again since, tightened it, re-shaped it, so as to get the story into 110 minutes and keep the budget down.

It will surely be an off-beat film, especially for an English-language production, but within its strangeness it seems to me to be coherent.

I should be especially worried over *Fahrenheit 451* for René Clément says in an interview: "One by one M. Truffaut's films diminish in quality." It's possible that I choose them badly and I ought to have accepted *Is Paris Burning?* which Paul Graetz offered me before entrusting it to René Clément. Truth to tell, I didn't much fancy filming the adventures of Captain Alain Delon telephoning to General Belmondo to ask him to contact Sergeant Orson Welles to get him to obtain from Admiral Mastroianni forged ration cards for Leslie Caron who is in the Resistance and the cousin of Gert Froebe, a colonel in the Free French Forces under the orders of Yves Montand, head of the Gestapo . . .

In the same three months, I refused to direct "Remembrance of Things Past." I wrote to the lady-producer that no real film-maker would allow himself to squeeze the madeleine as though it were a lemon and in my opinion only a film

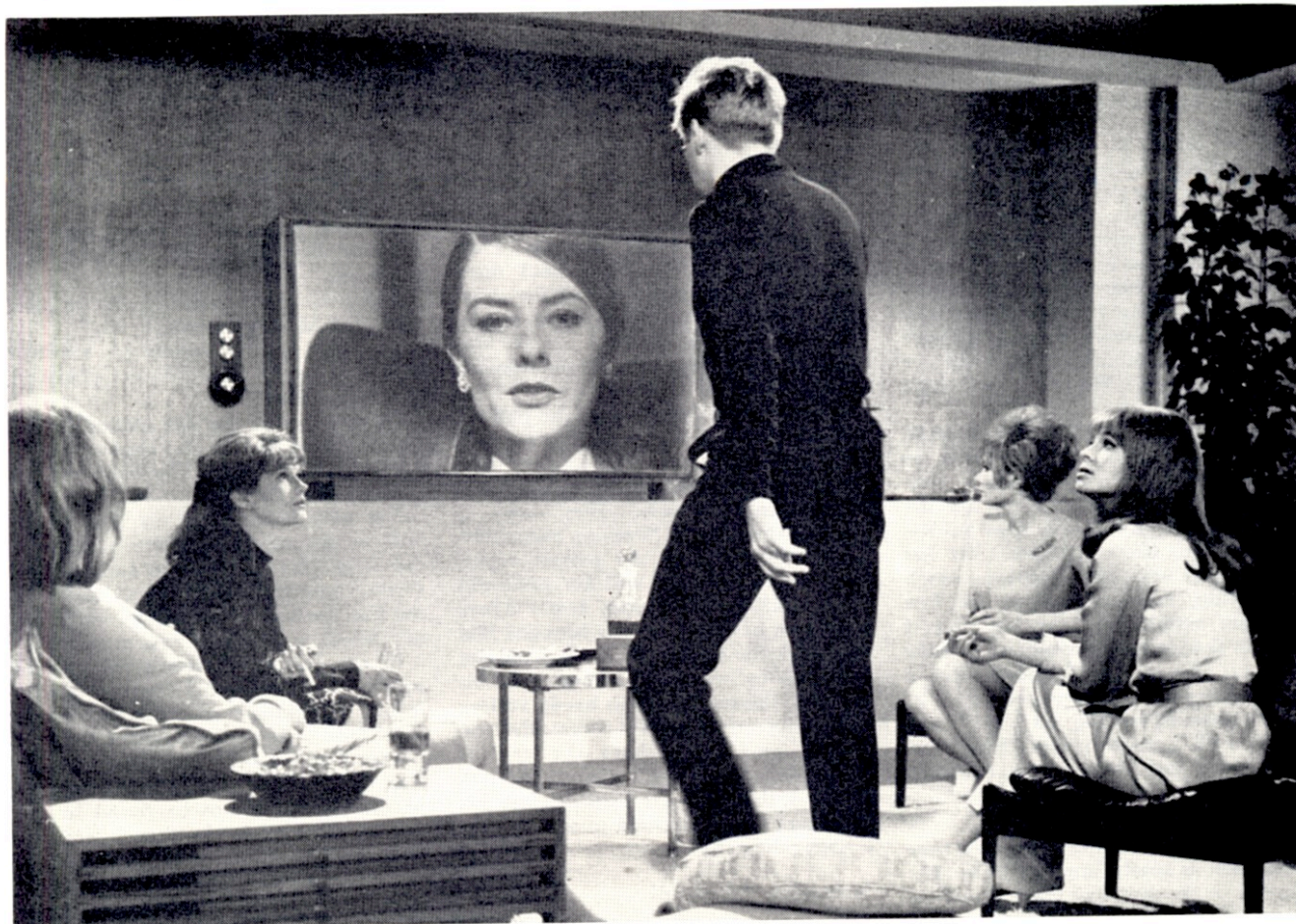
butcher would have the nerve to put Proust through the mincer.

A few weeks later she obtained the agreement of the Verdurin salon, that is to say René Clément. Come to think of it, is Proust burning in *Fahrenheit 451*? No, but this omission will soon be corrected.

### Thursday 21 April

Sun and splendid weather all day in Black Park, and we worked with various book-men, doing individual shots of them with the zoom lens: Jean-Paul Sartre's "The Jewish Question," Byron's "The Corsair," "Pilgrim's Progress" by John Bunyan, "Waiting for Godot," "Alice in Wonderland," and so on. On the other side of the lake, a brief improvised scene with Stevenson's "Master of Eallantrae" who before he dies is reciting himself to his nephew, who will take over from him and in turn become the same book. Nothing melodramatic here thanks to the realism of the boy who gets his words wrong from time to time and so has the real look of a pupil. We tinker with the text in such a way as to lead into the idea of snow which comes immediately afterwards in the film. As a matter of fact, here again we're dealing with a false quotation, for Helen found us a more appropriate passage in another of Stevenson's novels, "Weir of Hermiston."

We shot sixteen set-ups today, all



*Fahrenheit 451*, Oskar Werner, Julie Christie, and Gillian Lewis as the TV announcer.



good I think, and it was certainly one of our better days. Reduced crew, relaxed atmosphere, superb weather, actors great.

#### Friday 22 April

Not so lucky today. Three shots of TV aeriels on rooftops at Pinewood. Rain stopped us. Rather than have the titles over the fire engine, which I prefer not to see until after the first scene, I wanted to have them over TV aeriels. As one sees nothing written in the film other than books, the titles will be read aloud by the voice of a woman announcer.

Shooting this title background is postponed till later and we go off to the exterior of Montag's house to get three missing shots. There too we could only shoot one on account of the rain. Yet it still meant getting the fire engine out there and seven men whom I showed *only from the back, since we did not* have Oskar Werner, Cyril Cusack and Anton Diffring.

Parting. The unit this time is really dispersing and Suzanne Schiffman is going back to Paris to look after her children. She has been the best of assistants to me the whole way through the film, which has been more difficult for her and for me than the three previous ones. All that remain for me to shoot one of these days are the title-background shots of the aeriels, which are still fixed on the studio roof.

#### Thursday 28 April

Nearly a week later, with a replacement cameraman, we go to the front of the Montag house to do the remaining shots: arrival of the fire engine, the men getting down . . . Then, on the Pinewood rooftops a series of twenty-five zooms, slow and fast, designed as visuals to go with the spoken titles. This time it is really the last day of shooting.

#### Friday 29 April

For the first time, uninterrupted screening of the complete film. Suddenly the construction of the story seems weaker than I thought it would be. When Linda informs on Montag I look at my watch—it is ten minutes to eight, and I say to myself: "This is the finale, it must go fast." When the lights go up it is a quarter past eight. There are, in fact, two endings—the time where Montag burns up The Captain. Then a vague manhunt begins, vague because it isn't menacing enough, and tacked on after this phony chase is the sequence with the book-men. This has the merit of bringing the chase sequence to a neat ending, by the conclusive faked execution shown on the TV set in the book-men's railway coach.

Anyway, although the rhythm is faulty, the film is in its definitive state; I don't envisage cutting out or switching a single scene. It is running 118 minutes and I want to get it down to 110 simply by tightening up. That's



Francois Truffaut and Oskar Werner.

what we're going to tackle now. I keenly regret not being able to show the film to my friend Jean Aurel who helped me so much over the editing of *Jules et Jim* and *La Peau Douce*; ruthless and clear-thinking, he is the best critic I know of work which is unfinished and can therefore still be improved. Having confidence only in Aurel, I shall not show *Fahrenheit 451* to anyone else before the end, for I am hostile to the Braunberger-Reichenbach method which consists of asking thirty people for their opinions and then more or less adopting the suggestions thus collected.

#### Tuesday 3 May

What's new at Pinewood? Charlie Chaplin has finished shooting and is post-synchronising. John Huston is shooting *Casino Royale*, but only the scenes in which David Niven appears.

When a film reaches the editing stage, one feels a great sense of release. The actors can dope themselves, break a leg in the snow or commit suicide, you

couldn't care less. You have no more need of them, because you have several hundred little representations of them which are better than they themselves, and one cuts and joins these images, assembles and adjusts at one's ease, like a craftsman.

These actors are perhaps already on another film or on holiday; it's certain that in their minds the shooting is fading away, whereas for me, on the contrary, it is revived every day on the moviola—in slow time. "Look! The girl's a bit puffy in the face there—that was the day she slept after lunch . . . Ha! This is where Joe was fluffing—he must have had a drop too much . . . Well, well! The woman in the square has a gold tooth . . . My, my! You can see the telephonist's bra when she plugs in . . ." On the moviola one comes to know more about the actors than they themselves would ever admit to anyone. You can see whether they were happy or unhappy on such and such a day, whether they had been making love or whether they were not feeling well.

The nicest shot in all the three thou-



sand films I must have seen is in *Singin' in the Rain*. In the middle of the film, Gene Kelly, Donald O'Connor and Debbie Reynolds, after a moment of discouragement, recover their taste for life and start singing and dancing in the apartment. The dance finishes with them jumping over a divan on which all three of them end up sitting side by side. During the dance-fall on to the divan, Debbie Reynolds pulls her little pleated pink skirt down over her knees with a quick, firm movement of her free hand, so that you won't be able to see her panties as she sits.

This gesture, quick as lightning, is beautiful because in one and the same shot we have one of the most extravagant of movie conventions (people who sing and dance instead of walking and talking) and one of the truest to life, a little girl concerned with not showing her fanny. All this happened once fifteen years ago, it lasted less than a second but it has been immortalised on film as irrevocably as the Arrival of the Train in the Station at La Ciotat. Those sixteen frames of *Singin' in the Rain*, that delightful, almost invisible movement of Debbie Reynolds' hand are a good illustration of that double life, that double action that films have, which becomes legible on the moviola. In fact, it is on the cutting bench that one really starts to discover an actor, it's only here that one truly gets to know him and it's why one must make more than one film with the performers one likes. The role of Catherine which Jeanne Moreau played in *Jules et Jim* was so varied that Jeanne and I have had to wait a long time to unearth a subject which does not contain a single image common to both films. We shall be back together again at the end of the year on "The Bride Wore Black," William Irish's first novel.

### Wednesday 4 May

In my diary for 13th April, I told of my troubles over the humourless way Oskar Werner spoke the word "Certainly." Well, Thom Noble found in another scene a string of hesitations by Montag, several "Er . . . er's," and he gave me a pleasant surprise by putting these "Er . . . er's" into the mouth of our hero instead of the "Certainly." It works very well. Perhaps Hitchcock was right when he said that actors are just cattle, since one can just as well replace "I love you" with a bray, a whinny or a moo in the mouth of any one of them.

### Thursday 5 May

To guard against the natural tendency that makes us try to improve a piece of work by constantly working over the beginning of it at the risk of skimping the end under the pressure of delivery dates, I force myself to practice the opposite system, the system of the "third third." In present circumstances this consists, after having taken a good look

at the twelve-reel film as a whole, in not touching the first eight reels until we are satisfied with the last four. So—every morning, screening of each of the last four reels twice over, with eight interruptions for discussion with Thom Noble.

### Tuesday 10 May

I had thought to bring this diary to an end on the last day of shooting, but Jean-Louis Comolli has asked me to try and carry it on until the mixing. It won't be easy without falling back on generalities. I am in a period where a three-second cut which I didn't think of a week ago makes me happy for the rest of the day. Now in the first place, it's well-known that happiness can't be put into words. Moreover, I have many reservations about this picture taking it sequence by sequence and shot by shot, but to enumerate all the flaws I have allowed on to the screen would verge on masochism, particularly as I am devoting myself six hours a day to getting rid of them.

So I shall try, with the same relative candour of course, to tell how the editing progresses, to evaluate the contribution made by the sound tracks which are being laid by an excellent technician, Norman Wanstall, and above all to give an account of working with Bernard Herrmann, who composed the music for *Citizen Kane*, *The Magnificent Ambersons*, *Five Fingers*, *Vertigo*, *Psycho*, the musician who in my opinion can do most to help a film.

### Wednesday 18 May

Pinewood. We have finished editing the third and now Thom Noble and I are concentrating on finalising the first eight reels. The running time is down from 118 minutes to 113 but still not to the 110 that I want. Those three minutes are going to be the most difficult to cut. The dialogue scenes are tight and I make it a rule not to shorten the "privileged moments," that is to say, the purely visual scenes, the goings and comings of the firemen, departures on fire-calls, burnings and other eccentricities.

We are going to try to replace the usual fade-outs to black by fade-outs to white. This will have a more science-fiction effect, but the trouble will be that after a few screenings in the cinemas the inevitable scratches will show up much more on the white. But bad handling and mutilation of both picture and sound is a commonplace in movie houses the whole world over, even in Los Angeles, and I think it is better to work in terms of the first showing without worrying about what may happen afterwards.

In *La Religieuse*, in order not to downgrade picture quality Rivette has replaced fade-outs and dissolves with straight cuts to sections of black film. I am going to copy Rivette by interpos-

ing here and there sometimes fire-engine red, sometimes flame-yellow.

### Friday 20 May

In the mail a letter from Ray Bradbury. He is delighted that the film ends up in the snow. He has himself adapted his "Martian Chronicles" and is sending me a copy of the script.

### Thursday 26 May

First session with Bernard Herrmann. We look at the film reel by reel and talk in between each. This morning we looked at six reels, the first half of the film. Almost always we find ourselves in agreement on the places where we need music. As a matter of fact, I had the music very much in mind during shooting, and in future films I want to try and indicate in the script where music will be used. The trouble for a film-maker who is totally ignorant about music is to find a vocabulary which allows him to communicate with the composer. It was not difficult with Georges Delerue because he is a great film fan and can sense what the film is getting at.

The music is important and there will be a lot of it, but Bernard Herrmann and I have agreed that it should not be in itself significant. If *Fahrenheit 451* is a flop commercially it won't be the music that will make it any less of a flop. So all it has to do is to parallel the strangeness of the scenes. No sentimental music over the Montag-Clarisse relationship, nothing terrifying over The Captain, no comic or even light effects; just *intriguing* music. The burnings by the firemen will be barbaric and primitive, the scenes that have to do with books will be treated in a way at once ancient and modern. From the very start of our discussion we rejected electronic effects or "musique concrète" and, in general, all the commonplace and futuristic clichés into which television, be it in the USA or in Europe, falls head first.

Bernard Herrmann intends to use harps and there again I have asked him that it should not be in any sentimental manner. When Maurice Roux was directing the music for *Les Mistons*, he called in a woman harpist who was eight months pregnant, and her efforts to make her arms long enough to reach the strings, with the handicap of her belly pressing against the back of her instrument, have prejudiced me against the harp for all time.

### Friday 27 May

Second session with Bernard Herrmann who uses his afternoons to direct his opera based on "Wuthering Heights." We look at the second half of the film, then recapitulate. There will be 37 music sections totalling 55 minutes, the equivalent of half the length of the film. As we have to all intents and purposes chosen to put music only over scenes without dialogue, this means that half of the film is strictly visual, which





*Fahrenheit 451*, Julie Christie and Oskar Werner.



makes me really happy. In almost all films, the footage of acted dialogue-scenes tends to increase during shooting whereas the mute part (action scenes, scenes of violence, love scenes, mute reactions) diminishes because there's never enough time to shoot all the scenes intended. Spurred on by all the silent films of the 1920's I have seen and seen again in the last two years, I cling to my "privileged moments" so that they don't get whittled down. That

doesn't mean that this film will be any less boring than another, but if one is bored by it at least it will be boredom set to music, and when it's Bernard Herrmann's music no one will be tired by two or three-minute sections like those in *Vertigo* or *Psycho*, not to mention the sound track of *Citizen Kane* which makes it the best musical film ever produced in Hollywood.

**Thursday 2 June**



*Fahrenheit 451*, Oskar Werner and Julie Christie.

Jean Aurel has agreed to take time off from other commitments, to hop across to London and look at *Fahrenheit 451*. He is an expert on the construction of films and, like Jacques Becker with whom he collaborated, a fanatic about visual clarity. To show a film to Aurel is to call a plumber and ask him not only to repair a leak but to find one. He arrived, looked at the film, took some notes in the dark, and then we talked. He likes it and reminds me that he was always afraid that the story, or rather the theme of the film, had always scared him as being very indigestible. He considers that I have been out on a limb, certifies that the story works and is particularly complimentary about all the parts played by the books—books read, books stolen, hidden, burned, that is to say my whole reason for wanting to make the film. He has one big criticism, at once serious and yet unformed: for him the film gets under way rather late—only when Montag reads a book for the first time at the end of the fourth reel. Up to that point each scene taken by itself seems right to him, yet something doesn't run true in the first half-hour.

Next morning, I again ran the first four reels for him, and he found a solution in the cutting continuity which I adopted at once, so obvious did it seem. It's a matter of transposing two long scenes, thus introducing Clarisse before Linda. It so happens that by doing this we go back to the construction of the novel which I had thought it necessary to modify. Hurrah for Bradbury! Thom Noble took the film away to make this change and after lunch we looked once more at the first half hour. It is incomparably better and the two transposed scenes become twice as interesting, gesture for gesture and phrase for phrase. Aside from that, Aurel also suggested to me two cuts totalling fifty seconds, and caught his plane back to Paris with the nonchalance of those Hollywood stunt-men, with a pair of slippers and a toothbrush in their overnight bag, who arrive at Cinecittà to do a dangerous double-somersault in a battle scene and go back home the same night.

**Monday 6 June**

Pinewood. Peter Brook has just moved in to film Peter Weiss' play, "The Persecution and Assassination of Jean-Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade." On the studio doors it says simply, "Marat/Sade." Shooting with two cameras in one set will last three weeks, with the actors from the stage play. But the true-blue English cinema asserts its rights again with Ralph Thomas who is to direct some new adventures of *Bulldog Drummond*.

Professor Chiarini, Director of the Venice Film Festival, announces his ar-



rival and his intention to view *Fahrenheit 451*.

### Wednesday 8 June

Bernard Herrmann comes to see the film again and I look at it with him, taking notes for cutting corrections.

I like the film quite well when I see it in pieces or three reels at a time, but it seems boring to me when I see it from end to end. Naturally, I tell myself that this is because I know it all by heart and it is really impossible to look at a film one has shot with the eye of a spectator. In fact this becomes possible a year or two after its release, but even then only if one has not seen it in the meantime. At the moment, during screenings, I wait for the scenes I like and close my eyes when a shot comes up that I can't stand. In parenthesis, I am glad this time that I do not have a single shot of people kissing or pawing one another.

After the screening Bernard Herrmann tells me a story about the efforts of David O. Selznick one day to persuade Stravinsky to write the music for one of his films. "Willingly," says Stravinsky, "but I shall want \$250,000" — "But that's impossible, one can't pay that kind of money for film music even if it is magnificent" — "You are wrong," replies Stravinsky, "my music is very cheap, it's my name that's expensive."

### Thursday 9 June

Recording session with Gillian Lewis who plays the television announcer. She appears quite often in the film, at the beginning, in the middle and at the end, yet she knows neither the script nor the story. She has never met any of the other actors nor seen one frame of the film. This does not prevent her from doing her work very well and even putting forward ideas. Today she had to speak television commentaries which we shall hear offscreen, interspersed with the dialogue and action when the TV screen is out of picture.

Liking her voice very much, I gave her the credit titles of the film to read for, since books are forbidden, no printed text is to appear in the film before Montag reads a book in the night.

The credit titles must last less than a minute so as not to bore the audience, so they will include few names and not always those I would have chosen. For instance, we shall not hear the name of George Ball, the chief propman, whose ingenuity and inventiveness got us out of trouble more than once. On the other hand, for contractual reasons I am obliged to introduce Tony Walton with the ridiculously pompous title, "Production and Costume Design Consultant" although he didn't make a success of half his work as costumier, two-thirds of his work as designer and the whole of his work on the furniture, set dressings and props.



*Fahrenheit 451*, Oskar Werner.

### Friday 10 June

Arrival of Luigi Chiarini who came and viewed the film. The second "fresh look" after Jean Aurel. He has accepted the film for the Venice Festival and has himself set the date of the showing, the 7th September. So now we must make haste to 'spot' the dialogue of the film,

in order to work out the French and Italian sub-titles. I have never been so happy to have a film invited to a festival as this time, doubtless because of my feeling of isolation in the course of all this work away from Paris. For the film to have its première on the Lido Europeanises it and brings the wheel





*Fahrenheit 451*, Julie Christie and Francois Truffaut.



full circle, since it is logical that this work which was carried out on an island should make its first appearance on an island.

### Monday 13 June

I hope no one will read any deliberate meaning into the choice of books featured in *Fahrenheit 451*. There are:

- (a) the books seen on the screen;
- (b) the books that are read aloud;
- (c) the books quoted in the dialogue;
- (d) the books that are burned.

Naturally I needed several hundred books, and chance in handling them, or shooting them with several cameras happens to have brought one book or another into prominence. Quite deliberately, personal choice had little to do with it. The point was to film the books as *objects*. Besides, some books happened to burn better than others, some were more photogenic or even cleverer at 'peering through the battlements' as one says of actors who, in crowd scenes, contrive to make their faces seen over the shoulders of the leading players. Some books were chosen for their sentimental value, because their covers recalled a certain epoch: for example, a Gyp published by Fayard with woodcuts represents the pre-war period for the French just as the first Penguin paperbacks of 1935 do for the English.

### Wednesday 15 June

I cut here, I lengthen there. We have reached the point where, having improved everything that can be improved, we are tackling the things that have seemed hopeless, the badly shot bits that one can't go along with. Well, as usual, one finds that somehow there is always a way round—always. Generally it means breaking the scene up more, putting in five or six cuts in place of two, either by using second takes and so creating a shot-continuity *a posteriori*, or by cutting in the beginnings or ends of other scenes: "I remember we did a big close-up of Julie with an out-of-focus background in such and such a scene: we could put in a foot or so of that which would enable us to cut the shot of Oskar in half and go from Take 5 which was good for the beginning to Take 7 which was better for the end . . ." and so on. These are the little delights of cutting, not to mention the shots on which we have optical work done: reverses, flop-overs, stretching, step-printing and holding frames. In the Old Lady sequence, I have a shot of Montag backing away from the flames. I have had the laboratory reverse it so that Montag appears to come towards the fire after the other firemen have run out. Over this I put a sound track of The Captain calling: "Montag, come back . . ." and thus the original idea is achieved, it gets across.

### Friday 17 June

Something that seems important to me is to consider that each successive stage

is in opposition, as it were, to the previous one: this amounts to shooting against the script, cutting against the shooting and perhaps mixing against the cutting. I am, of course, talking about the material aspects of the job and not about the spirit of the film which should stubbornly provoke in us the same reactions throughout all the stages. The only good film is one which remains obstinately consistent in its coherence.

They often speak of Orson Welles as a poet; I see him rather as a musician. His Falstaff film *Chimes at Midnight* is the film which most resembles an opera. Orson Welles' work is the prose which becomes music on the cutting bench. His films are shot by an exhibitionist and edited by a censor.

### Monday 20 June

I didn't pay sufficient attention to the color and it has played tricks on me. In a color shot there are so many more things to attract the eye that one must get closer to a piece of action that isn't too well defined, for fear that the spectator may be distracted by a red or yellow blob moving about on the other side of the screen. For example, in the scene in the square one doesn't quickly grasp that Montag finds a man with a book under his coat, but lets him go. Now I have to find a way to get it across, to ill-treat the shot either by re-framing it optically or by the very discreet use of a moving mask.

Having done a lot of trimming in the last few weeks, I am now allowing myself to ease out some places where we have cut too tight. I am lengthening by five or six seconds the pages of the Dali album riffled by the wind, for it is really very beautiful and I was sorry that the pages all seemed to turn over at the same speed.

### Tuesday 21 June

I shall bring this diary to an end today and give up the idea of carrying on until the mixing, for I don't want to expatiate on problems of detail which are all I shall be taken up with until the end of July. Here is what my engagement book says:

- 6th and 7th July—music recording.
- 8th and 9th July—pre-mix to get all speech on to one track.
- 11th-22nd July—mixing.

Then will come the grading of the negative at Technicolor (with Nick Roeg, the cameraman) and in Paris the work of sub-titling and dubbing into French with the help of Suzanne Schiffman. We must, of course, have two good prints to send to Venice, and that will be the end of this adventure in which I have lost quite a lot of hair and gained quite a few white ones. Everyone who works in fits and starts knows this phenomenon of growing old in quick time, which adds two years to us in seven months and ages us by the job instead of by the year. The end of a job leaves us dazed, with the feel-

ing that something has given us a hefty crack on the head.

Although the adaptation of *Fahrenheit 451* was written a year before the screenplay of *La Peau Douce* there are, strangely enough, a number of things common to both films, and if Montag's wife is called Linda—and not Mildred as in Bradbury's book—it's probably because the Jacoud affair was already in my mind. For the rest, *Fahrenheit 451* will be more like *Tirez sur le Pianiste*, perhaps because in both cases we are dealing with an American novel, stocked with American material. I don't know what the film will look like; I know it will look only remotely like what I have written about it here since, quite obviously, I shall have spoken only of what was unexpected or impressed me, and not of what was accepted long ago either in my mind or in Bradbury's. Now, on the screen you will see only what was in our two heads, Bradbury's brand of lunacy and then mine, and whether they have blended together well.

My films, like those of a lot of film-makers, are conceived from the idea of a blend, from the desire to take "the mixture as before" and blend the ingredients together in fresh quantities: "Listen, wouldn't it be interesting to tell that kind of story but to treat it in a different way from the usual one?" Here, in the case of *Fahrenheit 451*, it was a case of treating a fantasy with familiarity, making out-of-the-ordinary scenes look ordinary and everyday scenes look abnormal. I still don't know whether the result will give the impression of a sane film made by a madman or a mad film made by a sane man, but I am convinced that when we write a book or make a film we are abnormal beings holding forth to normal people. Sometimes our madness is accepted, sometimes it is rejected. Ever since I came to understand this, the question of knowing whether one or another of my films would be a success or not worried me less and less, and I shall never again experience the fear I had when I was making *Les Quatre Cents Coups*—that no one would be in the least interested. I believe Sartre is right in labelling as "scum" all those who think their existence has been indispensable, and yet I agree with Renoir when he rejects the old cliché—that no one is irreplaceable. My slowness prevents me from carrying out more than a third of my projects and I put aside two films for every one that I undertake, but I think I still have quite a lot of blends to make, new quantities to try out. I am a French film-maker who has maybe thirty films to make over the years to come. Some of them will succeed, some will not, and I don't really mind—so long as I make them.

—François TRUFFAUT

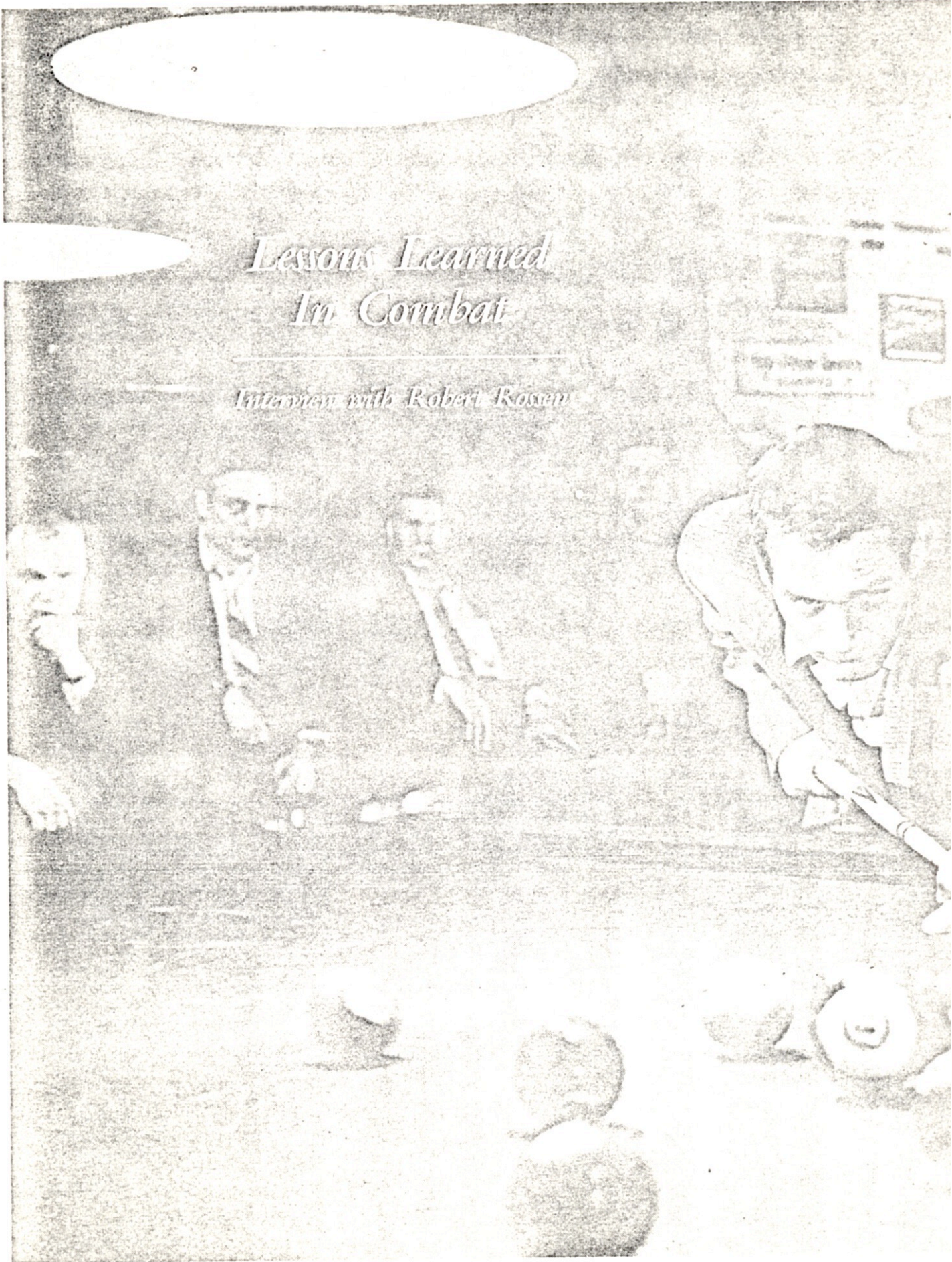
Translated by Kay Mander and

R. K. Neilson Baxter



## *Lessons Learned In Combat*

*Interview with Robert Rossen*







CAHIERS—You left Hollywood a good while ago . . .

ROSSEN—Yes, it *has* been a very long time since I was there . . . Let me see, it was in 1951, fourteen years ago . . .

CAHIERS—And you would like to return there?

ROSSEN—Oh no! But places mean nothing, you know. I have nothing against Hollywood; it's only that, as a human being, I don't like the place at all. I would find no inspiration there; I wouldn't feel at home there; I would lead there a life that I detest. Besides, the last years that I spent in Hollywood, I traveled a great deal. In fact, *All the King's Men* and *The Brave Bulls* were not shot in Hollywood, and it was after having been in Mexico for the latter film that I left California. Besides, I was almost sick in a studio. In that respect I have a kind of claustrophobia. I have a horror of studios!

For *Lilith*, I did only a week of studio shooting. The six weeks of shooting, we spent on Long Island, where I rented an old boardinghouse that no one was living in and that was marvelous, the Killingworth Taylor mansion; and also at Rockville, Maryland, where the clinic is.

CAHIERS—Your last two films have the reputation of being the best. Is that your opinion?

ROSSEN—I do not think they are my best films. I like *All the King's Men*, *Body and Soul*. I think that *The Brave Bulls* is a marvelous film. Then, maybe, those three and the two that you mentioned are my best films. But it is impossible for me to isolate a single one of them as the best. Maybe ultimately it is because I hope that none of them is the best and that I will make better . . .

CAHIERS—Then you do not like *They Came to Cordura* as much?

ROSSEN—No. I just redid it, about six months ago. I do not know whether that had much effect. I was an employee on that film; I did not have enough control over it. There were two enormous flaws: the first, it was too explanatory; the second, I wanted to give it the same ending as the book and they kept me from it. It was absolutely necessary that the hero die at the end, but one does not kill Gary Cooper! It was necessary, because in the book the hero was partly the symbol of Christ. Thus the story can end in only one way. Moreover I liked that story very much, and it was a film that I really wanted to make, but I did not expect to meet such difficulties. Of course one is always almost free during the shooting, but it's after that . . . ! So I tried to redo it so that it would turn out a little better, but it rarely does. It was technically impossible to save it because it was not filmed as it had to be. Nevertheless, it is better now. I had recourse to a device for the ending: when they climb the hill

Robert Rossen: *The Hustler*, Paul Newman.



and look at Cordura, on their faces reappear the moment when individually they became heroes, in short their first acts of courage. Each of them remembers in an instant that great, unique moment. I hope that will be effective, but I am not sure of it . . . That was a bad film.

CAHIERS—Is it not close in some ways to Huston, with whom you have worked?

ROSSEN—Yes, that's true enough. I hadn't thought about it, but the atmosphere is actually somewhat the same in *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*. And *The Maltese Falcon*, *The Asphalt Jungle*, are not, after all, so very far off.

CAHIERS—Did you like to work with Gary Cooper?

ROSSEN—Of course. He was an exceptional actor. He was not really suited to the role of *They Came to Cordura*, there was too much dialogue for him, and I did not know at the time that he was already a little ill. But he was extraordinary, as always. He was a unique person, one of the most likable fellows I've ever known. He was suffering from his spinal column and we had hired a double for some scenes, but

it happened that he would have fits of pride in that respect, and he mounted on horseback himself. Sometimes he took me hunting with him. He had all sorts of guns. He lived in perfect communion with nature; he was a poet, a mystic . . . But, too, a true professional to his fingertips. In everything that pertains to the actor's profession, I have never met his like. He had the quality that Burton has in equal measure—to-day more than ever—of controlling his acting completely, of interiorizing it, in a way. That's one of the essential differences between acting in the theatre and in cinema. It is something learned. One must know to what point one should surrender oneself to produce the desired effect. Bogart too, of course, knew it perfectly, but really Cooper was tremendous. It made you act with him; seeing him, you entered into the acting, and it's succeeding in that that makes the great cinema actor. The word "actor" assumes its full meaning then; he is a being capable of an action. One must act on an audience, make it participate, draw it along.

CAHIERS—*They Came to Cordura* has this in common with your best films,

among them *The Hustler*, that you go to the end in the way that you choose . . .

ROSSEN—Maybe, but more consciously in *The Hustler* than in any other film. Filming *The Hustler*, I was extremely conscious of what I was doing from beginning to end. In every region, on every level, from that of billiards (this film stirred up violent arguments here, in the billiard rooms, and I sought that), to the fact that Newman associates with a cripple. In fact, why is she lame? It is hard to say, and yet it could not be otherwise. He too is a cripple, but on the level of the feelings, while she is one even physically.

CAHIERS—Why this tendency to speak of disability in your last films?

ROSSEN—It is because if I look at the world in which we live, if I think about this world of today, I cannot keep from seeing in it a great number of cripples, and I cannot speak of them as if it were a matter of contemptibly depraved beings, I want to speak of them with sympathy, to try to understand them. It was by associating with many people, at once very different and very close to one another, in life, that I came to that. When I was young, I did not pay much attention to it, but today I realize that in the "abnormality" of some of these people there was good. It's like the girl of *The Hustler*: in a sense she draws an advantage from her disability. The drama, in this story of two cripples, is that she needs a cane and that he can give her only a billiard cue. I exaggerate, but that is it, you see. He needs to win before everything else; that is his tragedy. And I don't agree with the *Cahiers* lad, a fine fellow — Marcorelles, I think—who said to me that Newman ought not to have appeared to escape his tragedy. He said to me, too, as we were having lunch, that there were no more "hustlers" in Europe. Then I looked at him: at a nearby table were a group of people who were there for the launching of *Jules et Jim*, starlets, businessmen, photographers, and so on. I pointed them out, saying to him: "And they? They are not 'hustlers'?" You don't believe that they try to rob one another, to exploit one another, all day long?" In our profession everything is only a matter of experience. Good or bad, experiences always leave traces; it is they that inspire us. As for people, I don't believe that they are ever of one piece. Nothing is all black or all rose-colored. Things are more complicated, and the best we can do is still to try to render them in their complexity to attempt to understand them better. That's what guided the young Marx—although the Communist parties have sometimes forgotten it. I believe that in one way or another, the great *cinéastes*, too, share in this humanist tradition. Take Bergman, for example, the man in search of God; take Fellini; it is always a point of view, a way of relating one's experience, of preserving what one has received, with



Robert Rossen: at work on *Body and Soul* and *Lilith*.







Robert Rossen: *Lilith*, Jean Seberg.

which one has lived, and a way of transmitting it in terms of relations among human beings. That's Renoir. He attains that more than anyone else. But it is an end that we all pursue, no matter where we start from.

CAHIERS—And where did you start from for *Lilith*, for example?

ROSSEN—I read the book two or three years ago and I liked it very much. It has in it an idea that interested me enormously; that of comparing the person whom people call "adjusted" to the one called "maladjusted" in our society. Society considers the person who is outside its norms as sick. Now, my own feeling is that society, itself sick, is only refusing a certain form of unreason. This feeling I found very strongly present in the book. Since it was well written besides, I decided to bring it to the screen.

CAHIERS—Did you not find it precisely too "written?"

ROSSEN—Like most novels, it has not at all the qualities required for a film: the perception of space and of time rendered by images, the purely visual presence of a great number of

ideas, and so on. So I understand you. That is indeed why, moreover, I made efforts to transpose many descriptions and dialogues in visual terms. I reshaped the book along those lines. But not enough. I don't think I did it well enough. The relationships that unite the characters to what surrounds them, that may be what counts most in a film; now, these relationships are completely different from what one should establish in a book. So I imagined some scenes that extended the universe of my protagonists to the outside world. For example, some people bursting with health come to visit one of the girls in the clinic. One then had the impression that the outside world was really responsible for the confinement of this girl and of her companions, and thus an unreal world was created—as if the very existence of what was shown became doubtful. I cut that scene without knowing too well why, and now I have the impression that I was wrong to do so.

The book was actually hard to read. It was one of those works in which a great number of things are imprecise, left to the imagination. So it is a

creation entirely visual, but in its manner, in terms of prose. This prose was precious, *recherché*, it was hard to uncover what was image, what was not, and so on. So I tried as I do always when I adapt a book that I like, to render the spirit of it rather than the letter. Nor was *The Hustler*, either, at all a literal adaptation of the book. Only, there my task was easier, to the extent that I had spent many years of my life in billiard rooms. I even wrote a play on that theme when I was twenty-five or twenty-six. I never staged it because I was not satisfied with it; it seemed to me that it didn't succeed in saying what I wanted to express. Then thirty years later I read *The Hustler*, and it seemed to me that I found there precisely what I had tried to say in my play without really realizing it, because I was too young at the time. Of course in the novel there was a much more realistic social background.

CAHIERS—In this connection, have you been influenced by neo-realism?

ROSSEN—Oh, very much, very much! But when I was still only a scenarist, it seems to me that I was writing films already very close in spirit to the neo-realism that I did not yet know, and for good reason! My film on lynching, in 1937, *They Won't Forget*, was very "neo-realist," the first Bogart, *Marked Woman*, equally, and *The Roaring Twenties*. . . . So I did a great many things in that spirit at that time. But of course that does not mean that, later, I was not influenced by that great Italian movement. On the contrary, *Open City*, *The Bicycle Thief*, and so on, marked me deeply, and I even thought, when I became a director, that that was the true way of making films. It seemed to me then that the whole Hollywood system was condemned if people did not finally decide to look at life with a clear gaze, with a cold eye. Which does not exclude emotion, sensibility. It means only that life represented must be as we see it and not as we would wish it to be. We have to say what is out of joint in our time. I am of this century, that is a characteristic that I share with many others who nonetheless continue to think too often in terms already in use before the First World War. There exists still an almost Victorian outlook, and many of the tragic situations in which we find ourselves today are accountable to that. We use concepts that ought no longer to be in circulation. So those who give them a forced circulation are yet more mad than those who refuse to use them. Unhappily the former are the more numerous, and they consider their way of living as exemplary.

CAHIERS—To represent things as they are and not as one would wish them—is that a definition of your realism?

ROSSEN—Yes, except that nevertheless it is not a matter of a servile reproduction of reality. Rather it will be necessary to capture things as they are





Robert Rossen: *Lilith* (Jean Seberg) and her things.



and modify them so as to give them a poetic significance. Furthermore, it matters little whether you call it poetic or not; what matters is that in this way something situated beyond and above life be delivered, and that thus one should feel what one deeply thinks. To reach, if you will, through the objective become universal. But those terms are problematic. What is objective? What is subjective? The subjective becomes objective in many cases . . .

CAHIERS—With *Lilith*, one of the most important recent American films in our eyes is *Splendor in the Grass*. Do you see points common to the two films, as to temporal construction in particular?

ROSSEN—Let us say that time is more compressed in *Lilith* than in *Splendor* — more concentrated. Time weighs, one has the impression that it is going to crush us, to pass irremediably. She could leave the institution. He as well could go away. They don't do so. Vincent feels the passage of time in a terrible, morbid way. He's obsessed with losing Lilith. She has moments of lucidity, in short finds herself perpetually between two universes. He fears that for that reason she will escape him. He fears that in one way or another she will cross the line before he has really possessed her. I don't mean only in the sexual sense. It's that he becomes more and more concerned by Lilith's universe, so that he progressively abandons his own in favor of hers. He is nonetheless sensitive—on the contrary—to time. That's one of the things about which I concerned myself most. From that to making it the subject of the film, there is a gap, but that is surely one of its essential aspects.

CAHIERS—Perhaps one might call your style *réalisme fantastique*, fantastic realism, meaning by that a great objectivity enriched by a poetic dimension . . .

ROSSEN—Perhaps, but I don't much care to philosophize about my own case. It happens that I'm in theory to teach cinema at a university starting September. I don't know at all what is going to happen in the course of those lectures, for what is certain is that I am not going to prepare them. I will speak of my own experience, I will tell stories that I have lived in the course of my career, I will tell the lessons that I have drawn from them, and so on. But to make categories, to establish theories, and so on—that is not for me. That does not interest me. My style is in me; let it remain there. I do not seek to intellectualize, at least not before a script is finished. After that, one must indeed ask oneself what one wants to do, where one wants to arrive. But, in any case, to impose a style or a technique on students would amount to stifling the personality of future *cinéastes*. Technique and style will come of themselves; everyone carries them within him. I could of course talk about technique in the specific sense of the word in those lectures, but then that is not my affair,

it is that of a cameraman or of a sound engineer.

Technique is nothing compared to content, and to talk about it is not the task of one whom you call in *Cahiers auteur de films*. His work is to speak of films in a much deeper way, to create a style in the way of making films, a style in the service of a content. That is what has happened in every country. De Sica has his point of view, Rossellini as well, and Fellini has one completely different. Today we have come to something more abstract, with Antonioni. It is a matter of personality. So one must not try to impose a style, like women who put on clothes that do not become them, saying to themselves: "Of course this does not become me at all, but it is the fashion!"

As for me, I try to make films that mean something for me and for that reason perhaps will affect others as well. I don't make many of them. I don't especially care to make films for the sole pleasure of making them, you know, really I don't . . .

CAHIERS—You mentioned a number of *cinéastes*; what do you think of Welles?

ROSSEN—I think that if he had not been an actor, he would have been the greatest director that had ever existed. He is a complete genius. A fascinating being. Everything he does is new. He is gifted with a wonderful perspicacity, an amazing cinematographic sense—that way that he has of telling an entire story in one shot. It is a gift that few *cinéastes* have. I do not think, really I do not, that Antonioni is as great.

CAHIERS—And Fellini?

ROSSEN—To my mind he too is a very great *cinéaste*, but one of those extraordinary kinds of characters who do a gigantic, magnificent work and all at once slip on a banana peel. He always tries new things which are very interesting — still without being of a continual originality. His work was on 8½ cannot but recall what Resnais had done in *Marienbad*; I am thinking of the way of playing with the film, with the whites, and so on. But in art, whatever you do, there is always someone who did it before you. We make only variations. If one wanted to innovate completely, it would be necessary to deny the existence of the plays of Shakespeare!

CAHIERS—What do you think of the *Nouvelle Vague*?

ROSSEN — I love Truffaut and Godard. *Les quatre cents coups* is a fantastic film and *A bout de souffle* seemed to me amazing on the level of style. As for Resnais, I think that *Hiroshima* is infinitely superior to *Marienbad*, which is nevertheless an interesting film from an experimental point of view, as to spatio-temporal researches. But I am much more moved by *Hiroshima*. How not be? One can not live that film!

CAHIERS—Experiment, is that not what Renoir does all the time?

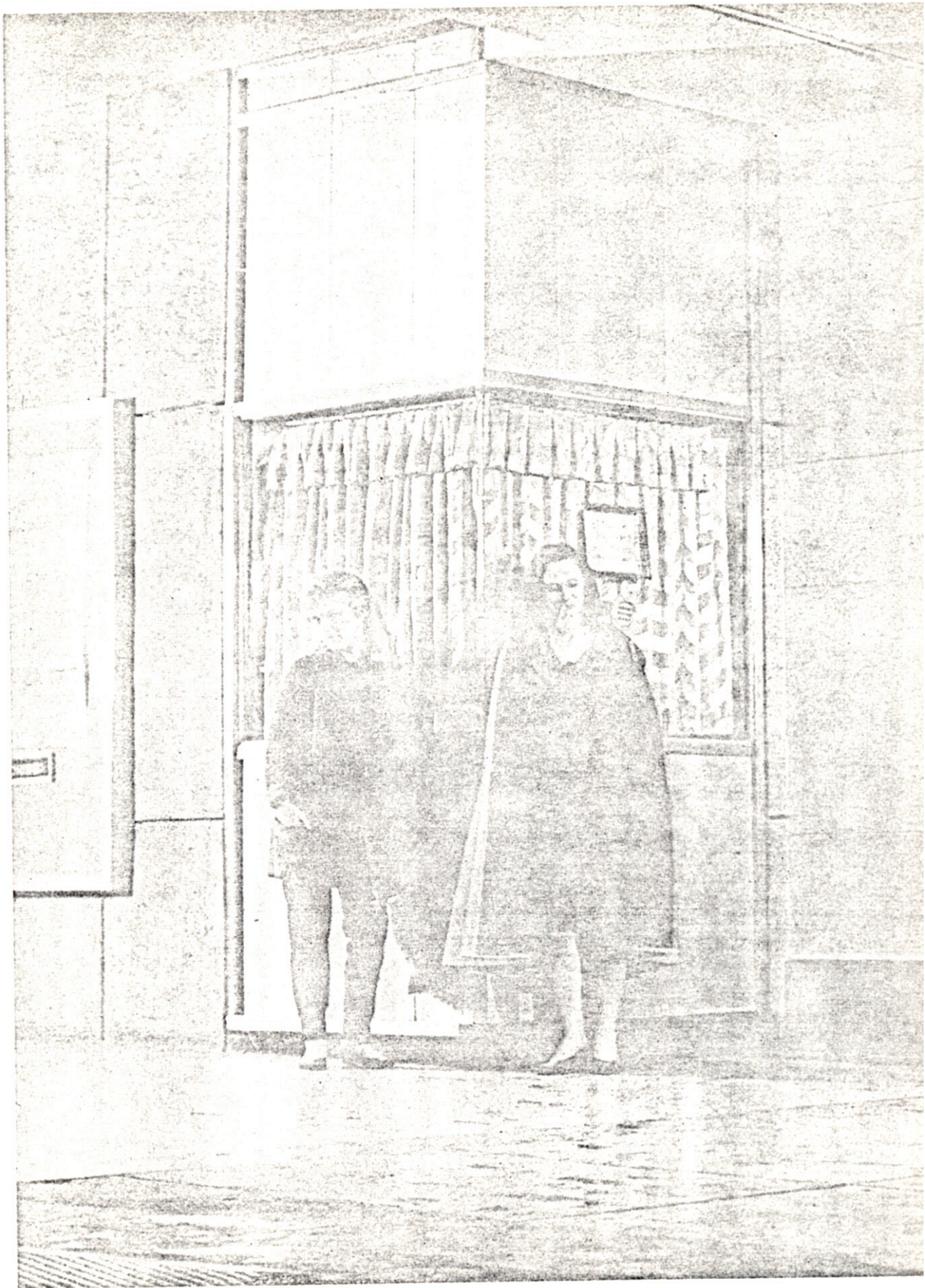
ROSSEN—Yes, but he is a great storyteller. He has a point of view. One cannot deny that. There is content. He is always marvelous, because starting from a content as strong as that which he offers, he can allow himself to experiment constantly. He never leaves stylistic problems. Maybe in *Le Carrosse d'or*, but not in *La Grande Illusion*. His style, consciously or not, comes from about life. Thus, for that reason, he has the special point of view that he has no relation to the Hollywood director who comes to see a producer saying to him that he is able to film the dizziest automobile chase ever seen — which would have nothing offensive about it if he were not forgetting the essential question: who is in the car?

CAHIERS—Between the theories of the Actor's Studio and the freedom that a Godard leaves to his interpreters, where do you place yourself in the matter of direction of actors?

ROSSEN—I do not believe that one can successfully bring it about that the actor truly becomes the character that he plays. So I leave him very free, but I know what I want to achieve. There are many aspects of the playing of the actor that, in any case, he will never understand. He will never understand why I want him to keep to a certain place rather than to another, why I say to develop a take that clearly does not please me in its totality, and so on. How could he understand all that? In the cinema, contrary to the theatre, the actor is excluded from what one creates in that he cannot have a total vision of that creation. In the theatre everything is there, on the stage, the actor sees it only from his point of view, but he sees it. He knows all of what is happening. Not in the cinema. That is why the intelligent cinema actor is the one who is aware of the fact that a great many things are happening of which he knows nothing.

What is the essence of a film? The essence of a film is first the fact that the camera must be the eye, the invisible eye. It must capture the moment of truth, the moment when things reveal themselves as they are. They open out in virtue of a situation that creates a moment of emotion. To arrive at that, one must leave the actors a certain margin of freedom. In large part the success of a film will depend upon what they will have given you and, of course, on what you have wished in yourself. But to impose your ideal from the start would be to deny the importance of the actor and to forbid oneself to benefit by what he can bring to the film. The actor can bring a great many completely mad things, a great many errors it seems, but which become true, marvelous, things that it seems to him could be better if he worked at them more, when that is not the case. It's the first time through that one succeeds best at that





Robert Rossen: *Lilith*, Jean Seberg, Anne Meacham, Warren Beatty.





sort of thing. Such is the innocence that I try to recover in the film.

In the rare films whose scenarios I did not write, I worked with the scenarist to arrive as I intended at creating the characters I wanted. But after that, I had to depend on the personality of the actor. Actors—however good they are—can never incarnate exactly the character that one has imagined. So for us it is a matter of having recourse to a great number of devices that are at our disposal—which is not the case in the theatre. They are two completely different means of expression.

I have generally worked with actors whose own personality, joined to that of my character, could give a good result. But I chose those actors, often in a purely instinctive way, because of what one can read in their eyes—which the audience will read as I do, even if it is not really there. I think John Garfield was excellent in *Body and Soul*. He is of course an experienced actor, but he was better there than anywhere else. That is because the setting in which he was to play was not unknown to him. It was a part of New York, a life, that he knew and that he understood without even thinking about it. During the filming, I scarcely advised him. It was no trouble, he found from within himself without seeking. When a take had to be redone, he knew why quite as well as I. It is a question of understanding. With Broderick Crawford, in *All the King's Men*, it was the same thing. And yet, he knew nothing of the role and the atmosphere, but there was in him a psychological reaction before the world that was perfect for this role: to be able to dominate the other, to have a great power over him, to use it. He knew how to render it, and I was persuaded of that before filming. With Paul Newman as well very interesting things happened. Starting from his character, whose least details he studies, he finds himself sent questioning the entire universe. And so the first time that you rehearse with him, he has so many things to do, so many problems to resolve, that you think there will be no coming out of them ever. He is the actor most concerned about the least details that I know. One must not interfere. It takes a mad length of time, but the next morning one can talk to him and begin to work, to discipline all the emotion aroused the day before. With Piper Laurie, I had to work with a girl who in real life has terrible problems of communication. She could be sitting here beside us for an hour without uttering a single word. I tried to understand why that was her problem, and I used that knowledge. To take into account the personality of the actor, that is what is important to me, rather than to impose this or that method. What we do in this realm is generally not perfect, but one must try to make a success of as many things as possible. Thus in the acting of Scott there are





Robert Rossen with John Garfield.

extraordinary things, but there are horrible ones as well. You can work at those with him for entire hours; nothing can be done about it; he will not correct them. He is a character, Scott. Working with him is like mining gold. There is gold somewhere, but how many stones, how much soil before reaching it! Kubrick succeeded at it in *Strange Love*, but he has great sensitivity; he is a clever *cinéaste*.

CAHIERS—And Preminger in *Anatomy of a Murder*?

ROSSEN—Preminger is another matter. He scarcely leaves room for possible miracles. What he wants is already contained in the script and he films it with an iron hand, but I do not think that he himself considers that he is one of the best directors that there are. He is much more realistic than that; he is a producer. Scott has had problems with Huston too, for Huston is even more strict than Preminger.

Jackie Gleason is completely the contrary of Scott. He loved his role, for he was the only one in the film who had really lived it. He could play seventy-five balls in succession without missing one. He never had a double; there were no devices. He is mad about billiards. He understood perfectly the spirit of his role, and moreover he had that grace that I desired, the grace that obesity sometimes gives. His identification with the character was so total that I had only to film him in the most propitious way to capture the essential part

of what he was offering me.

CAHIERS—We admired very much the photography and the editing of *Lilith*; how do you work with the technicians?

ROSSEN—I have always, since I began, attached much importance to editing. I have spent more time in the cutting rooms than anywhere else. I always think about the editing when I shoot, for it is the second part of the writing of the film. Cinema is in fact a way of writing on the same ground as the other, except that it is with the film that one must write. So I work in close collaboration with the editor.

I realized something during the shooting of *Lilith*, as during that of *The Hustler*. It happens that one writes a scene that, in the scenario, seems right and that, when one sees the film, does not become an integral part of the whole. It is the same scene, and yet it has no longer the significance that you wanted; it has not enough impact. Then you take that scene, you set it at different places, and it comes alive. Never could you have foreseen that while writing, nor even while shooting. The scene takes its meaning at a precise point that one could not have assigned to it before. Vincent was to meet Lilith first in her room. Moreover that is what happened in the book. I had to change that, and now they meet at the picnic. It is so much better that way for the development of their relationship, but

to know why, no doubt it was necessary that this relationship should begin really to exist, to take shape. Since I have been working as an independent, I have been very strict as to editing. For *All the King's Men* I had a contract specifying that once the editing was finished, it could not be redone. If it is not my editing, it is no longer my film. I have always avoided the very Hollywoodian dramas in that realm. It's the eternal story at Hollywood, that of the incompetent who, once the artist has finished his work, takes a malign pleasure in destroying it deviously by means of montage or in distributing it with an idiocy of Elvis Presley, for example. It's the combat there has always been between the creators and producers or all those people who work in the studios. They are frustrated people, who dare address themselves to a writer telling him what he is to write. They act the same way towards the director, who has the right to a first editing; the "director's cut" — which means nothing, because they can reedit the film after that to show how it should have been done. But they know nothing, these people. If the film has success, they profit by it; if not they attribute the failure to the director. There's no rhyme or reason to it. They are idiots. They can be the best producers, the best distributors, and all that you will—except *cinéastes*.

I remember that one distributor, when he saw *The Hustler*, said "But, my God, who will go to see that?" But what did he really know about it? He knew his ten dollar restaurant, his night club, but not the mind of the public.

That said, I have been very free at Columbia, as at Fox. But one must have great power for that. One must be able to impose one's will, one's conditions. One must struggle. But you know, it's somewhat the same thing for all artists . . . Of course one knows moments of discouragement in the course of which one asks oneself whether it wouldn't be better to drop everything and satisfy oneself with work at fixed hours. But if you believe in what you are doing, you must struggle, struggle, and be alone. Who isn't?

Maybe it will be possible to stop now, for I'm a little tired. I have been very sick, you know. I have a skin disease that I caught, I don't exactly know where, no doubt while filming. The only treatment is cortisone. It's a magical medicine, but it has noxious effects, on the stomach especially. I've been in the hospital four times in one year. I no longer have the necessary concentration to work much. At the end of a half-hour, I must rest. I live in slow motion, I swim . . . I had never known that before. No doubt that's why I need it. I didn't know what I was to be stretched out on a beach doing nothing. I'm learning that: the *tête-à-tête* with the sun. It's not so bad . . . (Interview recorded on tape by Jean-Louis Noames, August 1965.)






Robert Rossen: *The Hustler*, Paul Newman and Piper Laurie.





Robert Rossen: *The Hustler*, Paul Newman.





## Reminiscences

At the time of a picnic bathed in Shuftanian light, Eddie of the plastered hands spoke to Sarah about the passivity of the universe: the beauty of things is the measure of the quality of our habitat.

The beautiful action, whatever it be, is the one in which the actor allows the epiphany of the essence (as if life were art, essentially, in that to carry out an action is always to be *en représentation*, giving a performance, even if, like Eddie Newman, one must be one's own audience).

Brilliance of this manifestation; brilliance and danger: it intoxicates.

It is in virtue of such an intoxication that one saw the gift show through. It made scandal, and, condemned by a universe dull with levelling, called for punishment. Thence the one who wins is not the one who concerns himself with the beauty of the gesture, but he for whom everything poses itself in terms of efficacy, of return. Creator: forbidden a stay. Compromise or resignation are required. There is place only for Bert or for Minnesota Fats.

Bert cast a die calling "loser." But was Eddie not winning on another level?

Near, where confrontation—love or billiards — had led them, Eddie, Bert, Sarah recognize one another as from the same shore, alike embarked, like those who came to Cordura on an old handcar or like others confined in Maryland. It separated them no more than that which would never be fulfilled.

This was a story of wounded ones, of isolated ones, of unknowns. Constrained to limp alone.

As the threshold of the insurmountable strangeness of the other was revealed an irremediable strangeness to oneself.

There had been meeting in the conditional. Union in the mood of "That would leave us scarcely any time." Plan became, by hints, imposture there for the man without future.

So the itinerary of the lover cuts across that of the gambler: To become the person that he is by lifting up his body, in the glow of the high moment, that is to say happy, as monstrosity of our condition.

The film, its story full of digressions and lacunae, said that, essentially "hustled," each person was perhaps most deeply his own "hustler" forever, so that every screen could only be demoniac.—Jacques BONTEMPS.



# The Unique Film

At fifty-eight, three years before being carried away by sickness, Robert Rossen delivers in extremis, with *Lilith*, his incontestable masterpiece — which serves as well to wipe out past errors (*An Island in the Sun*, *Mambo*) as to relegate successes (*All the King's Men*, *The Hustler*) to the second rank. This man, said to be rough, grumpy, gauche, and preoccupied with pounding first truths without much nuance, came, against all expectation and thanks to a single film, to confuse the more or less vague ideas that critics maintained about him. In retrospect, certain precautions assert themselves. Lately a new viewing of *They Came to Cordura* (film *manqué*, certainly, out of balance and confused, but attaching) and of *The Hustler* has reestablished the mapping points that were missing, corrected false perspectives, and inevitably caused new attention to be paid to some formal or thematic indications that a casual approach could in the past cause to be neglected. Thus we must agree that the manifestly ultra-classical skill of *The Hustler* has too often masked the very real originality of the thesis that the film supported, that developed as if underground a fragile network of hauntings and obsessions that the efficacy of spectacle and of suspense seemed to indicate as secondary, when they were probably the first cause of the work and its stay. People have commonly seen in *The Hustler* a slightly late prototype, a too long delayed culmination, of the film noir of the 1950's, that is to say of a cinema, as one knows, eminently dependent on a period, on an industry, on a genre. They thought that Rossen, with elephantine slowness and regularity of step, was arriving fifteen years late at making a successful work of a kind of super-Wise or super-Robson. Yet in the N.R.F., of March 1962, Claude Ollier had put the accent on the deep inquietude and trouble revealed by the ambiguous relations of the characters of this film endowed with a quality of irreducible witchery in the sole details of its plot: "One has the constant impression that something else is happening that is escaping, being only briefly suggested by acting and dialogues with two meanings (. . .). A sense of indecision hovers permanently over this strange film; and the final explanations are not enough to dispel it."

If one wanted a tangible proof that this falsely simple film hides a secret, it would be enough to refer to the scene of the reception at the millionaire's house, in which Bert whispers in Sarah's ear something that one does not hear; Sarah, at once, slaps him violently, and sinks into a crisis of nerves. In the following sequence, after having written on a mirror the three words "Twisted," "Crippled," "Perverted," she kills her-

self. It is impossible here not to establish a parallel with another scene, in *Lilith* this time: when after the Kingstone tournament Lilith "seduces" the boy dazzled by her beauty, in like manner, before the Medusized Vincent, she whispers something in his ear. There too is one of the essential points of the rocking of the film, the final indication that denounces the forces, until then ambivalent, as definitively maleficent; one knows from then on that the giddiness of possession will destroy Vincent as well as the object of his desire. The secret does not have to be explicitly named to bring about a disturbing precipitation of the drama; it is the symbol of misfortune, the inaccessible emblem of a near and inevitable death. Its muteness strikes with suspicion the things said, infects every word, forbids all certainty. The mode of narration tends imperceptibly towards the improbable, towards contestation, struck by an oscillation as of a pendulum that illuminates or conceals, in a sole passage from light to shadow, the world dreamed or the world lived, equalized by the same piercing doubt in which desire and anguish are confounded. The film becomes that insidious totality in which all partition is abolished, in the alchemy of a fusion of forms, of instincts, of fears, and of impulses that indicates surely the frenzied will of the *auteur* to substitute, the space of an instant, his own universe for that of the others. The relation of enslavement and of fascination that is thus established with the spectator does not fail to recall the hypnotic periods at which Lang and Hitchcock are past masters, and which suspend dangerously the critical sense; between absolute rejection and absolute agreement, there is no longer any choice possible; a diabolically constructed series of transfers aims in incorporating the spectator into the work, establishing between him and the film a relation identical to that which binds Vincent to Lilith. The emotion crystallizes at several symbolic levels—love story, dream, portrait of the artist (Lilith is painter and musician), temptation to murder, levels that all cut across one another in the declared myth of possession (as in *The Hustler*). And so *Lilith* is, with *Vertigo*, the most complete realization in cinematographic form of the indefinable, the inaccessible, which the coupled plays of beauty and of illusion shape into a sumptuous and fatal mirage. It is the fairy tale in reverse, the statement of failure of the imagination; thus an additional turn of the screw is given at its several symbolic levels, that makes cinema rejoin its criticism. (And like *Vertigo*, *Lilith* develops in its first part the elements of a crystallization of the passions close to hallucination, or out and out hallucinatory, and in its second

part destroys or reverses these elements, which it desublimizes up to the final, unbearable rupture: Scottie at the top of the bell tower from which Madeline has just fallen, Vincent wandering in the deserted grounds of the asylum, are lost, it seems, forever. In both cases the curtain falls on an impassable gulf.) It would remain to link the flashing Lilith-meteor with the Rossen-universe from which it came forth. But this intellectual operation will never have appeared so vain. There is always a share of the arbitrary in drawing *a posteriori* the scheme of a trajectory, the itinerary of a work; the critic has a pretty game in asserting, without great risk of error, that his film could come only after that other, or only before that other. The cinema obeys laws too obscure for there not to be some presumption in attempting to codify the uncodifiable; we must confess that, in spite of the beauties of *The Hustler*, nothing could let us suppose that Rossen carried in him a diamond as brilliant and as cutting as *Lilith*. Yet one masterpiece is enough to change the face of a man: just as *Night of the Hunter* abruptly revealed to us that we ignored everything of the monstrous genius who hid his torments behind the picturesque grimaces of a good humored ogre, in the same way *Lilith* imposes on us the manifestness of a universe until then hidden, and which, suddenly, offers to broad daylight its true nature and its true depth. *Night of the Hunter*, *Lilith*, are unique films, the first because no doubt it sums up in its duration the obsessions of an entire life; the second because it drives off roughly to a distance from it the marking points that preceded it, those nine other films whose qualities or defects interest us henceforth in so far as they prepare or foretell the achievement of the ultimate work that an admirable struggle tore away from death and madness. The purity of the meeting point of themes and forms excludes the possibility of a happy chance; everything leads one to believe that, after *Lilith*, Rossen, withdrawn from the world, waited for the same terrible gentleness that he had tamed to carry him off silently. He worked no longer, and practised, he said, the tête-à-tête with the sun; this nonchalance finally won, after what detours, heightens the pathos of the last shot of *Lilith*, of the last shot of Rossen's work. Vincent Bruce advances toward the camera, ravaged, destroyed, broken, to murmur facing the audience the two syllables of despair: "Help me . . ." This cry of distress definitively closes the work on the bankruptcy of illusion; the threshold is reached where the cinema confesses and goes beyond its original sin. Beyond this confession reigns silence.—Jean-André FIESCHI.





Robert Rossen: *Lilith*, Jean Seberg and Warren Beatty.





Robert Rossen: *Lilith*, Jean Seberg.



# Lilith and I

by Jean Seberg

*Lilith* was for me at first the chance to try, in America, something in which I believed deeply with someone whom I esteemed very much; this film allowed me at last to leave my usual character, to do something other than what people usually proposed to me. That is to say in what degree the financial failure of the film afflicted us, Robert Rossen, who was already very ill, as well as me. We had truly given the best of ourselves, and that, for an empty theater. So *Lilith* was for me at once the most exciting of my experiences as an actress, and something rather sad. The recent death of Rossen, in which I do not succeed in really believing, only adds to this sadness. It will not have been given him to know success for the most venturesome work, and the most personal, that he ever undertook. I console myself by thinking that some people, like you at *Cabiers*, have loved the film, and by hoping that others will love it when they see it in the *ciné-clubs*, or at the *Cinéma-thèque*.

When I say that *Lilith* was the most exciting of my experiences as an actress, of course I am not forgetting *A bout de souffle*. But I want to confess that at the time when I made *A bout de souffle*, I was too young, too introspective, and even, on the personal level, too unhappy, to profit fully from an adventure which, honestly, ought to have been much more rich for me. I have already said several times, and everyone knows now, that from the first day of filming I had a misunderstanding with Jean-Luc. He wished that the character of Patricia be a thief, that she steal Michel's money. I had a strange reaction; I do not know whether one should impute it to the inevitable nervousness of the first days of filming, or more simply to a deeply Puritan mentality, but I refused to be a thief, and Jean-Luc was grieved. Later our relations became very good, and I keep a wonderful memory of the film, but I think there was always between us the misunderstanding of this refusal, a misunderstanding that was, I confess, entirely my fault.

When I made *Lilith*, I was more conscious of my responsibilities, and of the difficulties that the role presented; for me it was the greatest challenge of my career, the greatest effort that I had to make, and one that I wanted to make to escape the stereotyped character that all my films since *A bout de souffle* had drawn, a little in spite of me. It was a matter of escaping from this crude cinematographic presence that Godard, for example, asks of his actresses, to create entirely from the start a fictitious

character, who, in appearance at least, was rather remote from me.

Before even knowing that Rossen was thinking of me for the part, I had read Salamanca's book, when I was resting at a friend's home after a trip to Africa. Reading the book, I had not at any time projected myself into *Lilith* and I did not think myself suitable, even physically; I felt myself too healthy, too much a daughter of the earth in a sense, too close to the "little peasant girl" that Preminger had exploited in *Bonjour Tristesse*, and especially in *Saint Joan*. If someone had asked me then whom I saw for the role, I would have immediately answered Audrey Hepburn, for example, whom I imagined very well running among the branches, or rolling in the grass of the meadow.

The first actress envisaged was Yvette Mimieux, who is very beautiful, and who, physically, corresponded perfectly to the role. Moreover she struck up a passion for *Lilith*, and she dreamed of interpreting her. When, after much dispute, many tests, decisions and counter-decisions, Rossen chose me, Yvette Mimieux arranged for a large bouquet of lilies to reach him, without any other comment. It was Rossen himself who told me that, at the start of our collaboration. Rossen took a very long time to make up his mind; he did not really know whom he wanted. He had liked very much my work in *A bout de souffle*; and the rest, scarcely at all, as often happens in America. It was Warren Beatty who advised him to see me. At the start, Rossen and he had a relationship which was strangely fraternal, very intimate, very like accomplices even. Oddly, this relationship of intimacy stopped at the first day of filming, and from then on, it did nothing but deteriorate more and more. However that may be, they had both come to Europe to see different people. At one time it was a question of Natalie Wood, who in that period had an affectionate friendship with Warren, but she is very intelligent, and she did not want in any case to risk recommending a second *Splendor in the Grass*, which the theme of *Lilith*, with the same actors as in the film of Kazan, would necessarily have favored. Then Rossen made a test in London with Samantha Eggar, with whom he was pleased, and a test with Sarah Miles.

When he came to see me in Paris, he was already seriously ill. He had a strange disease, a kind of infection of the skin that made dark spots on his body and on his face. I said to him then that I very much liked the character of *Lilith*. Naturally I had, as

always, short hair, and his secretary, who had been the secretary of Otto Preminger as well, said then that *Lilith* ought at least have long hair, which did not become me at all. I answered a little sharply that I found myself very attractive with long hair, and that amused Rossen. One of his constant concerns was to try to avoid falling into a too easily fairy-like aspect of the character; it was too easy to do the mad Ophelia, and I entirely shared his reticence in this respect. Moreover the proof of that was given at the time of the filming, when a photographer came to make an entire series of photographs of me, dressed in a white gown, pleated, Greek style, in which I gamboled through fields, my hair loose in the wind. When he saw those photographs, Rossen immediately put them under lock and key, saying, "That is exactly what I do not want!" He wanted the part of *Lilith* to be strongly characterized as feminine and virile at the same time, that is to say the contrary of what I had envisaged as typically Hollywood "casting": Audrey Hepburn or even Yvette Mimieux.

I had at once the impression that Rossen wanted to demonstrate that beyond the "tough" and virile themes for which people knew him, he could also treat a difficult theme, "psychological" as they say. In my opinion, he had already made this demonstration in *The Hustler*, which is much more a psychological film than an action film, but in America one is card-indexed at once by criticism, one is put into niches from which it is then very difficult to emerge. So people considered Rossen as some sort of Humphrey Bogart among directors, a tough man, specializing in fisticuffs and in nothing else. Now, Rossen singularly escaped labels. He was a very complicated man, agonized even, who continually asked himself questions about himself. Perhaps one must seek out the cause of this anguish in the great McCarthy trauma, in which his world at the time had literally toppled. It is practically impossible to judge serenely all that happened in America at that time, even if many people judge it with light spirits. Everyone is still too close to those horrible stories of investigations and denunciations to be able to make a clear cut decision. In twenty years, maybe, someone will write the definitive book on the subject; today it is still too soon. Rossen had been on the Blacklist for a long time. He was even turned back from the New York airport, when he tried to leave for England, in order to avoid, like Carl



Foreman and some others, the testimonies, the counter-testimonies, and so on. And I think the moral shock of this affair had changed him deeply. He was led to withdraw into himself, to live a little apart with his family, to take things into consideration more, to examine the secret motivations of people; thus he became more introspective than if he had had a normal career as a Hollywood *cinéaste*, stretched out indolently in the shade of the California palm trees. He had certain obsessions, already visible in *The Hustler*, and revealed to broad daylight in *Lilith*. His art became more and more personal; it is there perhaps that one must see the reason for commercial failure. He was more attached to symbols, to deep ideas, than to appearances. The indications he gave the actors were never literal, but aimed at helping them psychologically and intellectually, at steeping them more in their roles. In the picnic scene of *Lilith*, he did not indicate to me by gestures what I should execute, but he explained to me how I should be fascinated by the water, by reflections . . . His patience was exemplary, and did away with every external worry for the actors. On this subject I know one amusing anecdote, which concerns *The Hustler*: He had said to Piper Laurie, who is a hypersensitive girl, that her character limped psychologically. At the start, lameness was precisely that—an indication, a crutch for obtaining a certain effect. And Piper Laurie really began to limp. In the course of the film, she limps less and less, and the New York critics reproached him for this—what happened? was she cured? Rossen made light of a certain external realism if it was to obtain a deeper truth; he replied to the critics that the lameness was solely symbolic. That is a mentality strictly non-Hollywoodian, and even anti-Hollywoodian.

Another day, Piper Laurie was to act a scene in which she prepared dinner for Paul Newman. For that she was to open a can of soup. She declared herself unable to act if it were not a certain brand of soup. And all the assistants began to rove the supermarkets to satisfy her. Other directors would have considered that as a caprice; Rossen accepted this caprice with good humor, from the moment that it could better Piper's acting. But not everyone reasons like that. To tell the truth, the unhappiness of Rossen was to be caught between two fires, between the European cinema that he knew and that he admired, and the American cinema of his beginning. Later I had the opportunity to see the difference between someone like him and a strict Hollywoodian like Mervyn LeRoy; it is strictly night and day. I could judge the difference between a crew of functionaries who do their work and nothing more, and a crew almost of artisans, like that of *Lilith*, where trust ruled, and a kind

of silent understanding in which each one, from the marvelous old Shuftan to the young cameraman Joe Coffey, from the editor Avakian to the make-up man, was conscious of working on something interesting and unusual, and put into it all his strength and his talent!

Rossen was very open to suggestions, to the personal contributions of each of us, if they were likely to serve the film. For example, he did not hesitate to cut out a sentence of dialogue, or to modify it, if it constricted an actor. Thus, when in the next to the last scene of the film, I was to say to Vincent (Warren Beatty): "You know what is wrong with Lilith. I want to possess all the men in the world," we realized, Warren and I, that something rang false in that reply. We rehearsed several times, and still it did not go well. Then Warren had the idea of having me say "You know what is wrong with Lilith? She wants to possess all the men in the world," and this way of speaking of myself in the third person, which moreover went in the direction of the characterization, made the scene much better. A thing to which Rossen paid great attention was respect for the mentally ill. He was literally dumbfounded by the falsity and the deception of the pseudo-psychiatric or pseudo-psychoanalytic films that people made in America. So before the film, Rossen, Warren, and I went several times to a luxurious institution for rich patients in the environs of Washington, one of those institutions in which one finds, what is atrocious to say, "the elite of madness." We watched psychodramas, and Rossen asked me to visit certain special patients whom he had had the opportunity to observe. At the start, the patients distrusted us a little, for they had seen *David and Lisa*, which they found a great lie, and they were afraid that we would do the same thing.

There was a woman of about forty, totally schizophrenic, who had herself called Rita-Sylvia; if one said to her "Good morning, Rita," she replied, "I am Sylvia," and the opposite. Besides this doubling, she took herself for God as well, and she complained endlessly of the work that that caused her. But she knew how to do nothing but knit, and as she was God, she knitted hearts, lungs, ovaries, human organs. This marvelous thing, I believe, no novelist or *cinéaste* could invent.

Rossen had asked me also to see a young woman, who had been beauty queen at her school, and who walked, it appeared, like a wild animal. She received me in her room, entirely hidden under her sheets—you could see that she was nude—her face included. You could see nothing of her. Visibly, she was masturbating. She said good morning to me. I returned her good morning, and added that I was going to leave. She asked me why. I replied to her that it was impossible for me to speak with someone whose eyes I could

not see. She asked me to stay, then to come back to see her. At the moment of leaving, she informed me of her intention to get up to say goodbye to me; and she got up, rolled in her sheets, her head hidden like a child who plays ghost; then she turned her back and stretched out her hand to me in back of her. Then she went back to bed. So I was never able to see the way she walked. When at the end of the film Vincent comes to confess to me that he is responsible for the death of Stephen (Peter Fonda) and I say to him that I understand nothing of what he is saying, the scene stems directly from the attitude of this young woman. I even wanted to film it entirely buried under sheets, but Rossen told me that that would seem exaggerated; we found a compromise, and kept the idea of masturbation (clearly indicated, although it was impossible to do in the United States what Bergman did in *The Silence*!).

Rossen truly approached this film with a pure viewpoint, which under American conditions is an immense thing. At the end of the filming, he was in a complete state of exhaustion, in the state of someone who has given all he could. And the permanent confrontation that opposed him to Warren did not help matters; he even wanted to bring a lawsuit against him, and other childish things . . .

People had often reproached him with being heavy, with being the elephant in the china shop; *Lilith*, on the contrary, is a magnificent crystal, so clear and so pure that it can only break itself. Madness is often sordid; he knew, in this last film, how to go beyond appearances, towards something very beautiful, in which all his personal unhappinesses were buried. *Lilith* was a defiance, and the failure that sanctioned our efforts was an immense disappointment for us all. For me, it remains as something that was necessary for me to do, and that I am happy to have done. I have just read an American critique in which I am reproached for always being the same, from film to film; I accept that reproach only on condition that the one who formulates it has not seen *Lilith*. Even if that appears pretentious, I know that there is a spring from which henceforth I will be able to draw. I remember the unbelievable camaraderie that bound us all towards the same end, in spite of the dissensions with Warren; I remember meals taken in common under the tent, that life in a trailer, that marvelous circus life . . . I remember the Jewish Passover spent among Rossen's family, the Jewish dinner, the thousand candles that burned in the room, while Rossen chanted the ritual songs with his sons, and I had the impression that there was in Rossen, and in his film, something very precious and very secret that I would never find again. (Interviewed by Jean-André Fieschi)





Robert Rossen: *Lilith*, Jean Seberg and Warren Beatty.





*Island in the Sun*, James Mason and Patricia Owens.

## Biofilmography of Robert Rossen

Born May 16, 1908 in New York of a Jewish family (his uncle was a Hebraist poet and his grandfather a rabbi), he studied at New York University, then rapidly turned to the theatre. In 1929, he staged *The Tree* by Richard Maibaum, then *Birthright*, anti-Nazi play, again by Maibaum, and last *The Body Beautiful*, of which he was himself the author and which he defines as a farce. He wrote, too, a work that he never staged, *Corner Pocket*, whose action, several years before *The Hustler*, even then was located in a billiard room. The critical success of *The Body Beautiful* drew the attention of Hollywood producers, and from 1937 to 1943 Rossen became one of the scenarists under contract at Warner Brothers, which, at that time, having George Raft, James Cagney and Humphrey Bogart under contract, had made the crime film the basis of its production. Then Rossen was to follow the movement, and so he wrote the scenarios of *The Roaring Twenties* of Raoul Walsh, the classic of prohibition, *Racket Busters* of Lloyd Bacon, in which Bogart is the Public Enemy, and *Marked Woman*, again of Bacon, in which a group of prostitutes, headed by Bette Davis, carry on a struggle without mercy against Eduardo Ciannelli, *cad* of vice, which he yields to Bogart, this time on the side of the law. But the activity of Rossen at Warner's was marked by two major events, and above all, by his meeting with John Garfield.

The influence that this excellent actor had on a part of the American cinema of the time is particularly striking in the case of Rossen. A notorious Communist, Garfield introduced into his films not only a social coloring, but also one of the themes dear to the Hollywood of the years 1945-53, that of the idealistic and unsettled individual, victim of a pressure group (gang or the like). The collaboration of Rossen and Garfield began with *Dust Be My Destiny* of Lewis Seiler, in which Garfield was a

rebel struggling against a society that oppressed him; it continued with *The Sea Wolf* of Michael Curtiz, from Jack London, which brought together a very strange group of characters: a Nietzschean captain (Edward G. Robinson), a girl escaped from prison (Ida Lupino), and two idealists, one poet (Alexander Knox) and the other sailor (Garfield). In *Out of the Fog* of Anatole Litvak, from *Gentle People* of Irwin Shaw, Garfield was again a fallen being (a gangster), whom Ida Lupino abandoned for Eddie Albert.

The second striking element of this period was *They Won't Forget* of Mervyn Le Roy, which Rossen considers as his best scenario of this time. A film on Southern racism, *They Won't Forget*, perhaps the best work of Le Roy as a director, is one of the most violent and most cynical films produced by Hollywood. The story shows this rather well: A small town in the South, on Confederate Memorial Day. A young woman is killed (it was Lana Turner in her first appearance), and after a Negro (Edmund Norris) has been suspected, a respectable teacher is accused of the crime, of which he is totally innocent. The inhabitants of the small town are happy to be able at last to avenge Southern honor by condemning a Northerner, and, from then on, the unhappy teacher is a virtual dead man. The press unleashes itself against him, and the District Attorney (Claude Rains) thinks that the condemnation of this hated person will be of use to him in the coming elections. The police refuse to seek a new culprit, and a detective arrived from the North is badly received by the population. A northern lawyer (Otto Kruger) comes to defend the accused and demonstrates in the course of a stormy trial that all the witnesses have lied, but, in spite of that, the accused is condemned to death. The governor commutes the punishment to life imprisonment, but the furious inhabitants take by assault the train that

was transporting the condemned man and kill him savagely.

The antagonism between the North and South of the United States is described with no concession, and thus one sees the inhabitants prefer to condemn a Northerner rather than a black; Rossen proves there with more strength than ever his hatred of violence and of intolerance. In 1945, Rossen wrote for Lewis Milestone the scenario of *A Walk in the Sun* on the debarkation of the Texans at Salerno, intentionally reduced to a bare military event; the conquest of a little position that costs the lives of the combatants, one after another. Some years before, he had written, also for Milestone, another war film, *Edge of Darkness*, on the resistance and collaboration in Norway. Drawn from a story by John Patrick, *The Strange Love of Martha Ivers* was one of those psychological films on crime (a child kills her aunt; when an adult, she seeks to know whether there were one or two witnesses of this murder), made to order for Barbara Stanwyck. *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* was a project of Rossen, who regretted not having been able to direct it and declared on this subject: "I had worked on the scenario with Huston, but he became director before me."

*Johnny O'Clock* (1947) marked Rossen's start as a director. It was a matter of a detective film without great ambition in which Dick Powell was wrongly accused of being a criminal. Much more interesting is *Body and Soul*, in which Rossen, director, meets Garfield again, in the role of a boxer who sacrifices everything (family, love) to his supreme ambition, the title, and who, discovering that the noble art is in the hands of veritable gangsters, finally revolts, and, when he is to go down for the count, knocks out his adversary—which will remove him from the rings forever, managers scarcely liking fits of honesty in their trainees. Garfield was co-producer of the film (Enterprise) which





Johnny O'Clock, Dick Powell and Evelyn Keyes.



They Came to Cordura, Van Heflin, Gary Cooper, Tab Hunter.

moreover grouped an astonishing number of future directors, or directors already in service (Aldrich, Pevney, Polonsky, Lyon, Juran, Wong Howe), and that in various employments. After the enormous critical success of *Body and Soul*, Rossen passed to production for *The Undercover Man* of Joseph H. Lewis. The film was totally botched, but again demonstrates the will of Rossen, who at that time was rather Red (which brought him troubles with the famous Committee on Un-American Activities), to attack various forms of oppression. The master of the gang described here was, though the authors took care not to point it out, none other than Al Capone, quite identifiable by his suit and by his hat. Perhaps disappointed (and one would understand it) by the work of J. H. Lewis, Rossen returned to direction for one of his best known if not best films, *All the King's Men*, from the novel by Robert Penn Warren. The theme (the man of integrity corrupted by power) was exciting, but the result is not always that, and, at present still, it is the scenario much more than the direction, sometimes very unskillful, that is interesting. The milieu of politics, and especially the personality of Willie Stark (Broderick Crawford), who, on one hand, constructed hospitals and public buildings, and, on the other, built on violence a gang without scruples, are described with a strength and a lucidity that, sometimes, make one think of the best moments of *They Won't Forget*.

The Academy Award was given to the film and from then on, Rossen occupied an enviable position in relation to criticism, a position that his following film, *The Brave Bulls*, does not entirely justify. There again the story is interesting (a matador victim of fear), but the work of Rossen, aggravated by very mediocre acting, spoils it little by little. Only one or two scenes (among them notably that in which, facing the bull in the arena, the matador—Mel Ferrer—

said to him: "They—the spectators—do not know what it is, they who are there yelling, to be thus one facing the other; only you and I know") recalled the *savoir-faire*, then very intermittent, of Rossen.

*Mambo* was one of the worst of the type of transalpine melodrama produced by Dino de Laurentiis for Silvana Mangano: this story of a young woman (S. M.) who takes refuge in dance after her disappointment in love is scarcely convincing. Besides, the cosmopolitan fauna that haunts this genre of film (dancers, playboys, and so on) is especially hard to describe, and if Mankiewicz achieved it with the happiness one knows (*The Barefoot Contessa*), as did, in less measure but with a certain intelligence, Henry Hathaway (*The Racers*), the least one can do is to remark that Rossen went sadly astray there.

*Alexander the Great* is a traitor production as well, but more successful. The talent of Burton (Alexander) and the strength of history aiding, this description of the life of Alexander until his death in Babylon did not lack a certain grandeur. Unfolding in an atmosphere dear to Maugham, *Island in the Sun* was at once a film on racism (in it Joan Fontaine loved the Negro Harry Belafonte and John Justin, Dorothy Dandridge) and on crime (James Mason having killed Michael Rennie, lover of his wife Patricia Owens). The end of the story was more conventional, for interracial love was doomed to failure, at least for the Fontaine-Belafonte couple, and Mason, obsessed by *Crime and Punishment*, gave himself up, but the warm and bewitching atmosphere had allowed Rossen to describe with real sensitivity two very noble feminine characters (Patricia Owens and Joan Collins) who already herald that of Piper Laurie in *The Hustler* and perhaps let one foresee the more remarkable one of Jean Seberg in *Liliuokalani*. All the intelligence, too often latent, of Rossen was exercised at last in *They Came to*

*Cordura*, astonishing parable on courage and cowardice that led to a stupefying conclusion, to knowing that the five combatants chosen for their courage by Gary Cooper to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor, appeared, at the end of a long odyssey, as vile beings, if not contemptible. The problem of the war hero was posed with frankness, and the antihero of the film (Gary Cooper) revealed himself finally as the only human being of this somber adventure. The introduction of a remarkable feminine character, incarnated by Rita Hayworth, who, at the end, gave herself to Van Heflin to let Cooper sleep for a few hours was the sign of a real achievement in Rossen's career. Rossen's only error (whence the scant interest that greeted the film) was, no doubt, that of having constructed his scenario rather badly, for all the start of the film, explanatory but not indispensable, if it allowed James Havens to direct one of those second crews with which he is one of the specialists, established a complete break in tone in relation to the second part (the long march). As for *The Hustler*, it is a skillful film, in the good sense of the word, and one whose true interest was not an incisive and intelligent description of the world of billiards but rested in the character of Sarah (Piper Laurie), uprooted and too passionate being, who will find deliverance only in suicide. So, in the light of *Liliuokalani*, *The Hustler*, a film referring to former works (Sarah and the roles of Garfield, the end of *Body and Soul*), sees its center of interest displaced from Paul Newman to Piper Laurie, and, indeed thereby, acquires a very attaching truth and tenderness. After that came *Liliuokalani*, about which *Cabiers* speaks again in this issue; let us limit ourselves to indicating its origin. Yvette Mimieux, fascinated by the novel of J. R. Salamanca, desired very much to interpret the principal character and sent the work to several directors, among them Rossen. But, irony of fate, it was to



Jean Seberg and not to her that the role fell (cf. text by Jean Seberg).

For what was his last project, let us let Rossen himself speak: "I am working at present on a film, which is an original story, on Cocoa Beach, a beach near Cape Canaveral, from which rockets are launched. But the film will not concern rockets or sidereal voyages. It will unfold outside this setting and will describe the life of the inhabitants of this very particular place. They are people who have no awareness at all of what is happening very near them."

A lover, like Kramer or Preminger, of great themes, Rossen declared, in 1962, in *Films and Filming*: "The point common to many of my films is the will to power and the desire to succeed, which are important elements in American life. They are important elements, more and more important, in what one calls Western civilization. I do not think that you could say it is true only for the United States, it is probably more true in North America, but, in my opinion, it is true for most of the civilized nations of the West. Modern industrial society creates certain competitive objectives, often sentimental, and it tends, I believe, to reduce more and more the grandeur and dignity of the human being."

"It compels him, if he tries to preserve this dignity, to rise against this society and to control it. It is one of the most dramatic situations of such characters: to be separated from all society and from all men. When I myself controlled my productions, I made my best films; when I no longer controlled them, I was far from making my best films. For me, to produce means, in the American sense, to control everything from the beginning to the end. If you have a success, you have more and more control over your films. But, at the start, a *cinéaste* cannot have control over his films; that is one of the errors of our industry. If you occupy a strong position, you can fight, but if you have no power, people pass over you. It is as simple as that."

#### SCENARIOS

1937 MARKED WOMAN (*Femmes Marquées*) of Lloyd Bacon, with Bette Davis and Humphrey Bogart. *THEY WON'T FORGET* (*La Ville gronde*) of Mervyn LeRoy, with Claude Rains and Gloria Dickson.

1938 RACKET BUSTERS of Lloyd Bacon, with George Brent and Humphrey Bogart.

1939 DUST BE MY DESTINY of Lewis Seiler, with John Garfield and Priscilla Lane. *THE ROARING TWENTIES* of Raoul Walsh, with James Cagney and Humphrey Bogart. *A CHILD IS BORN* of Lloyd Bacon, with Geraldine Fitzgerald and Jeffrey Lynn.

1941 THE SEA WOLF (*Le Vaisseau Fantôme*) of Michael Curtiz, with Edward G. Robinson and Ida Lupino. *OUT*

OF THE FOG of Anatole Litvak, with John Garfield and Ida Lupino. *BLUES IN THE NIGHT* of Anatole Litvak, with Priscilla Lane and Richard Whorf.

1943 EDGE OF DARKNESS (*L'Ange des Ténébres*) of Lewis Milestone, with Errol Flynn and Ann Sheridan.

1946 A WALK IN THE SUN ex. *SALERNO BEACHHEAD* (*Commando de la Mort*) of Lewis Milestone, with Dana Andrews and Richard Conte. *THE STRANGE LOVE OF MARTHA IVERS* (*L'Emprise du Crime*) of Lewis Milestone, with Barbara Stanwyck and Van Heflin.

1947 DESERT FURY (*La Furie du Désert*) of Lewis Allen, with Elizabeth Scott and Burt Lancaster. *THE TREASURE OF THE SIERRA MADRE* (*Le Trésor de la Sierra Madre*) of John Huston, with Walter Huston and Humphrey Bogart.

#### PRODUCTIONS

1949 THE UNDERCOVER MAN (*Le Maître du Gang*) of Joseph H. Lewis, with Glenn Ford and Nina Foch.

1950 NO SAD SONGS FOR ME (*La Flamme que s'éteint*) of Rudolph Mate, with Margaret Sullivan and Wendell Corey.

#### FILMS DIRECTED

1947 JOHNNY O'CLOCK (*L'Heure du Crime*). 85 min. *Director*: Robert Rossen. *Producers*: Edward G. Nealis, Milton Holmes (asst.) (Columbia). *Scenario*: Robert Rossen from the story by Milton Holmes. *Photography*: Burnett Guffey. *Decors*: Stephen Goosson, Cary Odell, James Crowe. *Music*: George Duning, M. W. Stoloff. *Editors*: Warren Low, Al Clark. *Assistant*: Carl Hiecke. *Cast*: Dick Powell (Johnny O'Clock), Evelyn Keyes (Nancy Hobson), Ellen Drew (Nelle Marchettis), Lee J. Cobb (Detective Koch), Nina Foch (Harriett Hobson), Thomas Gomez (Guido Marchettis), John Kellogg (Charlie), Jim Bannon, Mabel Paige, Phil Brown, Jeff Chandler, Kit Guard.

1947 BODY AND SOUL (*Sung et Or*). 104 min. *Director*: Robert Rossen. *Producers*: Enterprise/R. B. Roberts/United Artists. *Scenario*: Abraham Polonsky. *Photography*: James Wong Howe. *Decors*: Nathan Juran, Edward Boyle. *Music*: Rodolph Polk, Hugo Friedhofer. *Editor*: Francis Lyon. *Lyrics*: Johnny Green, Edward Heyman, Robert Sour, Frank Eyton. *Assistant*: Robert Aldrich. *Cast*: John Garfield (Charles Davis), Lilli Palmer (Peg Born), Hazel Brooks (Alice), Anne Revere (Anna Davis), William Conrad (Quinn), Joseph Pevney (Shorty Polasky), Canada Lee (Ben Chaplin), Lloyd Goff (Roberts), Art Smith (David Davis), James Burke (Arnold), Virginia Gregg (Irma), Peter Virgo (Drummer), Joe Devlin (Prince), Shimin Rushkin (Grocer), Mary Currier (Miss Tedder), Milton Kibbee (Dan), Tim Ryan (Shelton), Artie Dorrell (Jack Marlowe), Cy Ring (Victor), Glen Lee (Marino), John

Indrisano (Referee), Dan Tobey (Announcer), Frank Richards (Judge).

1949 ALL THE KING'S MEN (*Les Fous du Roi*). 109 min. *Director*: Robert Rossen. *Producer*: Robert Rossen (Columbia). *Scenario*: Robert Rossen, from the novel of Robert Penn Warren. *Photography*: Burnett Guffey. *Decors*: Sturges Carne, Louis Diage. *Music*: Louis Gruenberg, Morris Stoloff. *Editors*: Al Clark, Robert Parrish (Consultant). *Assistant*: Sam Nelson. *Costumes*: Jean Louis. *Script supervisor*: Donna Norridge. *Cameraman*: Gert Anderson. *Cast*: Broderick Crawford (Willie Stark), Joanne Dru (Ann Stanton), John Ireland (Jack Burden), John Derek (Tom Stark), Mercedes McCambridge (Sadie Burke), Shepperd Strudwick (Adam Stanton), Ann Seymour (Lucy Stark), Raymond Greenleaf (Judge Stanton), Ralph Dumke (Tiny Duffy), Katherine Warren (Mrs. Burden), Walter Burke (Sugar Boy), Will Wright (Dolph Pillsbury), Grandon Rhodes (Floyd McEvoy), H. C. Miller (Pa Stark), Richard Hale (Hale), William Bruce (Commissioner), A. C. Tillman (Sheriff), Housley Stevenson (Madison), Truett Myers (Minister), Phil Tully (Football Coach), Helene Stanley (Helene Hale).

1951 THE BRAVE BULLS (*La Corrida de la Peur*). 108 min. *Director*: Robert Rossen. *Producer*: Robert Rossen (Columbia). *Scenario*: John Bright from the novel of Tom Lea. *Photography*: Floyd Crosby, James Wong Howe. *Decors*: Cary Odell, Frank Tuttle. *Editor*: Henry Batisto. *Assistants*: Sam Nelson, Jaime Contreras. *Costumes*: Jean Louis. *Unit managers*: Antonio Guerrero Tello, Luis Sanchez Tello. *Technical consultant*: Dr. Alfredo Goana. *Supervisor of the bull-fighting scenes*: Donald Starling. *Cast*: Mel Ferrer (Luis Bello), Miroslava (Linda de Calderon), Anthony Quinn (Raul Fuentes), Eugene Iglesias (Pepé Bello), Jose Torvay (Eladio Gomez), Charlita (Raquelita), Jose Luis Vasquez (Yank Delgado), Alfonso Alvarez (Loco Ruiz), Alfredo Aguilar (Pancho Perez), Francisco Balderas (Monkey Garcia), Felipe Mota (Jackdaw), Pepe Lopez (Enrique), Jose Meza (Little White), Vicente Gardenas (Goyo Salinas), Manuel Orozco (Abundio de Iao), Esteve Dominguez (Tacho), Silviano Sanchez (Policarpe Cana), Francisco Reigura (Lara), E. Arozamena (Don Alberto Iriarte), Luis Corona (Rufino Vega), Esther Laquin (Señora Bello), M. del P. Castillo (Chona), Juan Assaei (Alfredo Bello), Delfino Morales (Indio), Rita Conde (Lala), Roman Diaz Meza (Don Tiburcio Balbuena), Fanny Schiller (Mamacita), Fernando del Valle (Don Felix Aldemas).

1954 MAMBO (*Mambo*). 94 min. *Director*: Robert Rossen. *Producer*: Ponti-De Laurentiis (Paramount). *Scenario*: Robert Rossen, Guido Piovene, Ivo Perilli, Ennio de Concini from the story of Ennio de Concini. *Photography*: Harold Rosson. *Decors*: Andre Andrejew, Gino Brosio. *Music*: Nino Rota,



Francesco Lavagnino. *Lyrics:* Bernardo Noriega. *Editor:* Adriana Novelli. *Choreographer:* Katherine Dunham. *Cast:* Silvana Magnano (Giovanna Masetti), Michael Rennie (Comte Enrico Marisoni), Vittorio Gassman (Mario Rossi), Shelley Winters (Toni Salerno), Katherine Dunham (herself), Eduardo Cianelli (Masetti), Martita Palmer (Lena Masetti), Mary Clare (Comtesse Marisoni), Cecilia Maris (the young comtesse Marisoni).

1956 ALEXANDER THE GREAT (*Alexandre le Grand*). 141 min. *Director:* Robert Rossen. *Second crew:* Michael Forlong. *Producer:* Robert Rossen (United Artists). *Scenario:* Robert Rossen. *Photography:* Robert Krasker (Technicolor-Cinemascope). *Decors:* Andre Andrejew. *Music:* Mario Nascimbene. *Editor:* Ralph Kemplen. *Production director:* Gordon S. Griffith. *Costumes:* David Ffolkes. *Special effects:* Cliff Richardson. *Technical director:* Prince Pierre de Grèce. *Cast:* Richard Burton (Alexander), Frederic March (Philip of Macedon), Claire Bloom (Barsine), Danielle Darrieux (Queen Olympias), Marise de Leza (Eurydice), Stanley Baker (Attalus), Harry Andrews (Darius), Peter Cushing (Memnon), Michael Hordern (Demosthenes), Barry Jones (Aristotle), Niall MacGinnis (Parmenion), Peter Wyngarde (Pausanias), Friederich Lederbur (Antipater), Helmut Dantine (Nectanebus), Gustavo Rojo (Clitus), Ruben Rojo (Philotas), Virgilio Teixeira (Ptolemy), Carlos Baena (Nearque), Ricardo Valle (Hephestion), Jose Marco (Harpales), William Squire (Aechines), Larry Taylor (Perdiccas), Teresa del Rio (Roxane).

1957 ISLAND IN THE SUN (*Une Ile au Soleil*). 119 min. *Director:* Robert Rossen. *Producer:* Darryl F. Zanuck (20th Century-Fox). *Scenario:* Alfred Hayes from the novel of Alec Waugh. *Photography:* F. A. Young, John Wilcox (De Luxe Color-Cinemascope). *Decors:* William C. Andrews. *Music:* Malcolm Arnold. *Editor:* Reginald Beck. *Assistant:* Gerry O'Hara. *Costumes:* David Ffolkes. *Production directors:* John Palmer, Ernest Holding. *Cameraman:* Robert Walker. *Script girl:* Margaret Shipway. *Lyrics:* *Island in the Sun*, Lead Man Hollar of Harry Belafonte and Irving (Lord) Burgess. *Cast:* James Mason (Maxwell Fleury), Joan Fontaine (Mavis Norman), Dorothy Dandridge (Margot Seaton), Joan Collins (Jocelyn Fleury), Harry Belafonte (David Boyeur), Michael Rennie (Hilary Carson), Patricia Owens (Sylvia Fleury), Stephen Boyd (Evan Templeton), John Justin (Dennis Archer), Diana Wynyard (Betty Fleury), Basil Sydney (Julian Fleury), John Williams (Colonel Wittingham), Ronald Squire (Lord Templeton), Hartley Power (Carl Bradshaw).

1959 THEY CAME TO CORDURA (*Ceux de Cordura*). *Director:* Robert Roasen. *Second crew:* James C. Havens (who directed the entire cavalry charge). *Producer:* William Goetz (Columbia).

*Scenario:* Ivan Moffat, Robert Rossen from a novel of Glendon Swarthout. *Photography:* Burnett Guffey, Frank G. Carson (Eastmancolor-Cinemascope). *Decors:* Cary Odell, Frank A. Tuttle. *Music:* Elie Siegmeister. *Editor:* William A. Lyon. *Color consultant:* Henri Jaffa. *Assistants:* Milton Feldman, Carter de Haven, Jr. *Technical consultant:* Colonel Paul Davison USA (Ret.). *Cast:* Gary Cooper (Major Thomas Thorn), Rita Hayworth (Adelaide Geary), Van Heflin (Sergeant John Hawk), Tab Hunter (Lieut. William Fowler), Richard Conte (Corporal Milo Trubee), Michael Callan (Andrew Hetherington), Dick York (Wilbur Renzichausen), Robert Keith (Colonel Rogers), Carlos Romero



The Brave Bulls.

(Arreaga), James Bannion (Captain Paltz), Edward Platt (Colonel de Rose), Maurice Jara (Mexican), Sam Buffington (First correspondent), Arthur Hanson (Second correspondent).

1961 THE HUSTLER (*L'Arnaqueur*). 135 min. *Director:* Robert Rossen. *Producer:* Robert Rossen (20th Century-Fox). *Scenario:* Robert Rossen, Sidney Carroll from the novel of Walter Tevis. *Photography:* Eugene Shuftan (Cinemascope). *Decors:* Harry Horner, Gene Callahan. *Music:* Kenyon Hopkins. *Editor:* Dede Allen. *Assistants:* Charles Maguire, Don Krnaz. *Cameraman:* Saul Midwall. *Technical Consultant:* Willie Mosconi. *Assistant Cameraman:* William Cronjager. *Cast:* Paul Newman (Eddie Felson), Jackie Gleason (Minnesota Fats), Piper Laurie (Sarah Packard), George C. Scott (Bert Gordon), Myron McCormick (Charlie Burns), Murray Hamilton (Findlay), Michael Constantine (Big John), Stefan Gierasch (Preacher), Jake LaMotta (Bartender), Gordon B. Clarke (Cashier), Alexander Rose (Score

keeper), Carolyn Coates (Waitress), Carl York (Young Hustler), Vincent Gardenia (Bartender), Charles Diercep, Donald Crabtree, Branden Fay, Cliff Pellow.

1964 LILITH (*Lilith*). 96 min. *Director:* Robert Rossen. *Producer:* Robert Rossen (Centaur Prod./Columbia). *Scenario:* Robert Rossen, Robert Alan Aurthur from the novel of J. R. Salamanca. *Photography:* Eugen Shuftan. *Decors:* Richard Sylbert, Gene Callahan. *Music:* Kenyon Hopkins. *Editor:* Aram Avakian. *Assistants:* Larry Sturhan, Bob Vietro, Allan Dennis. *Production manager:* Jim DiGangi. *Costumes:* Ruth Morley. *Cameraman:* Joe Coffey. *Assistant Cameramen:* Bert Siegel, Tibor Sands. *Script clerk:* Dorothy Weshner Kanzer. *Horse trainer:* Carly Baker. *Cast:* Warren Beatty (Vincent Bruce), Jean Seberg ("Lilith" Arthur), Peter Fonda (Stephen Evshevsky), Kim Hunter (Bea Brice), Anne Meacham (Mrs. Yvonne Meaghan), James Patterson (Dr. Lavrier), Jessica Walter (Laura), Gene Hackman (Norman), Robert Reilly (Bob Clayfield), Rene Auberjonois (Howie), Lucy Smith (Vincent's grandmother), Maurice Brenner (Mr. Gordon), Jeanne Barr (Miss Glassman), Richard Higgs (Mr. Palakis), Elizabeth Bader (Girl in the bar), Alice Spivak (Girl alone), Walter Arnold (Father of the girl alone), Kathleen Phelan (Mother of the girl alone), Cecilia Ray (Lilith's mother, in the dream), Gunnar Peters (Lilith's mother's chauffeur in the dream), L. Jerome Offutt (judge of the tournament), Robert Jolivet (the elder Watermelon brother), Jason Jolivet (the younger Watermelon brother), Jeno Mate (Dr. Lavrier's assistant), Ben Caruthers (Benito the dancer), Dina Paisner (Psychodrama moderator), Pawanee Sills (Receptionist), Luther Foulk, Kenneth Fuchs, Steve Dawson, Michael Paras (four doctors), Morton Taylor (ambulance doctor) Joavan Curran, Rick Branda, Wade Taylor, Tony Lombardi David Berry, Frank Nanoia (Six ambulance orderlies), Joanna Bayes, Barbara Lowe, Patsy Klein, Gwen van Dam Eadie Renaud (Five nurses), Rosalie Posner, Thom Brann, Louis Jenkins, Tracee Towers, Virginia Schneider, Robert Miller, Bruce Powers, Don Donnellan, Ken Naarden, Ron Cunningham (Ten occupational therapists), Katherine Gregg, Edith Fellows, Page Jones, Olympia Dukakis, Mildred Smith, Cynthia MacAdams, Wendell Phillips, Jr., Tony Grey, Elizabeth Lawrence, Harvey Jason, Gordon Phillips, Robert Dahdah. B. I. de Simone, Marie-Antoinette, Cornelius Frizell, Janet Banzett, Tina Rome, Thelma Ray, Katha Cale, Harry Northup, G. K. Osborne, Charles Tyner, Sonya Zomina, Ann van der Heide, Jocella Jackson, Amelia Barlston, Bess Carlton, Sylvia Gassel, David Craig, Bud Truland, Ruth Baker, Ceil Ray, Jeanne de Florio, Joe Rankin, Paul Varro, Stuart Goodman, Billie Erlich, Peter Bosche (Thirty-eight patients).—P. B.





Leo McCarey: *Duck Soup* (1933), Groucho Marx.



# Taking Chances

Interview with Leo McCarey

by Serge Daney and

Jean-Louis Noames

CAHIERS—Recently the Cinematheque Francaise programmed a series of Laurel and Hardy shorts that you "supervised": exactly what was your role.

McCAREY—You know, the film industry has undergone many changes since that time—I would like very much to give it the name of art, but so many people call it an industry . . . and, in any case, I believe that our success comes from the fact that, from time to time, we do something artistic. In the genre of popular comedy about which we are speaking, people like Marcel Marceau and Charles Chaplin have mastered a certain form of art. Once more, I want to say that, for myself, I would like very much to call this métier an art, for I do not like to call it "business," and I wouldn't do it if everyone else didn't. . . . This "supervision" you were asking about was, in those days, the function of being responsible for practically everything in the film: writing the story, cutting it, stringing the gags together, coordinating everything, screening the rushes, working on the editing, sending out the prints, working on the second editing when the preview reactions weren't good enough and even, from time to time, shooting sequences over again. . . . The function of the supervisor comprised almost all the responsibilities. But there was, in those days, a custom that called for one's name not to be mentioned in the credits: the members of the industry knew who had done what. Thus, many of our great artists didn't even have their names on the screen. For example, Irving Thalberg never put his name on anything. In my modest fashion I tried to follow the same path. While I "made" at least a hundred Laurel and Hardy films, I only very rarely took the credit. Following in this way the example of several predecessors I thought, as they did, that the people who were pleased would ask, "Who is the *auteur*?" . . . someone would tell them, and eventually the whole world would know. Today, it's completely different: thousands of dollars are spent on publicity so that people may know that such and such a person has made such and such a film, even if, in reality, he hasn't done a thing. . . .

CAHIERS—We all particularly like one of those shorts: *Putting Pants on Philip* . . .

McCAREY—That one I did entirely, it's my baby. I made it from beginning to end with no outside help at all. For no one wanted to make it, that one! As well as begin the producer, the boss (and I had three other films on my hands), I had to direct it, telling myself that at least I would be popular with the tailors! And all the tailors in the world have laughed at this film. Briefly, the idea of the film pleased no one, from the beginning, and I was so furious about it that I closed my office in order to go on the set myself with Laurel and Hardy (I hadn't directed anything for some time and hadn't even had occasion to go on the set); in this way I wrote and made this film in just about six days. I'm happy you liked it; it's one of my favorites and Laurel considered it one of his best.

CAHIERS—What was Laurel's role on the crew? It is said that he was very inventive . . .

McCAREY—He was one of the rare comics intelligent enough to invent his own gags. Laurel was remarkably talented, while Hardy wasn't. This is the key to the Laurel-Hardy association. Throughout their lives (I was one of their intimates), Laurel insisted on earning twice as much as Hardy. He said that he was twice as good and twice as important, that he wrote the film and participated in its creation, while Hardy was really incapable of creating anything at all—it was astonishing that he could even find his way to the studio. . . . This work represented a great deal to me; nothing could have replaced such an experience. And this experience — where all the ideas on which we were working were original and completely new — is comparable to no other. By virtue of the success of these films, it was possible for me to make a reputation and to receive offers to direct feature films. This allowed me, in a sense, to climb the ladder. And when I say "climb the ladder", sometimes I ask myself . . . Briefly, it caused me a lot of pain to leave Laurel and Hardy. It is to them, somewhat, that I owe some of my successes and the rewards that crowned them, when I continued on my path in this industry — but here I am



starting again. I mean to speak of our art, of course.

CAHIERS — Haven't you retained, from that period, a manner of cutting and editing your films, a sort of rhythm that recurs up to your most recent productions?

McCAREY—I believe in effect that first influences install themselves for life. But there is one thing above all that we, so to speak, discovered. At that time comics had, for the most part, a tendency to "do too much." With Laurel and Hardy we introduced a nearly opposite comic conception. I tried — we tried — to direct them in such a way that they showed nothing, expressed nothing, which had the consequence of making the public, which was waiting for the opposite, laugh. We restrained ourselves so much in showing the actors' feelings that the public couldn't hold back its laughter, and laughed because we remained serious.

But allow me rather to tell you an anecdote: "Babe" Hardy ("Hardy the baby" was the nickname I gave Oliver), one day, was playing the part of a *maitre d'* who was coming in with a cake to be served. As he steps through a doorway, he falls and finds himself on the floor, his head buried in the cake. I shouted to him, "Don't move! Above all, don't move! Stay like that, the cake should burn your face!" And, for a minute and a half, the public couldn't stop laughing. Hardy remained immobile, his head in the cake! He remained stretched out, furious, and you could see only his back.

CAHIERS—That, in fact, was one of the shorts we saw (*From Soup to Nuts*), and there is another scene we liked very much. The one in which a woman tries desperately . . .

McCAREY—. . . to grab a cherry! I remember it very well, it was a gag that never ended. It lasted throughout the film and we came back to it over and over, the woman trying, each time, new methods of getting hold of the cherry! Those were really marvelous times. Every two or three weeks we had to have one of these shorts finished and, in proportion as the quality was improved, we were given more time, more money too!

CAHIERS—Did you get along with other comics of the period?

McCAREY—I knew them very well, I should say. We were all good friends, although rivals, and every evening we all met. It was in this way that I very quickly allied myself with Chaplin, who particularly loves the Laurel and Hardy films. One of the most precious souvenirs is a fan letter that Chaplin sent me in which he congratulates me on my work with Laurel and Hardy and predicts a beautiful future for me. Keaton too was working. I believe, in a manner analogous to ours. Two or three gagmen were at his disposal and proposed gag ideas, which he had the

privilege of accepting or rejecting. Besides, we often tried to steal each other's gagmen. But we had no luck with Keaton: it was most often he himself who found his best gags, and we could not steal him! Another man that everyone tried to "steal" was Chaplin's gagman . . . There is, in America, a sort of dictum: "If we could only find the ghost who writes for Irving Berlin . . ." It was the same principle with us.

I am very happy to learn that Laurel and Hardy are still liked in France, for here they are still popular with the children of the new generation: their comedy cannot grow old, it is not faded by time.

CAHIERS — Do you know Harry Langdon?

McCAREY—Very well. But he worked far from our studio, in the valley, and I no longer recall his collaborators very well. I only know that Frank Capra was his director and he had a lot of talent. Arthur Ripley also worked with Langdon, and, in addition, he wrote very intellectual things: he was erudite. In my opinion, Langdon was too intellectual to be appreciated by the general public. And because he pleased only certain people he was not as successful as he might have been.

CAHIERS — Have you seen Jerry Lewis' films?

McCAREY — I haven't seen a one. And I must admit that it was only recently that I found out that he is a director: and I live in Hollywood!

Coming back to Laurel and Hardy, I must tell you that it was I who had the idea of putting them together: Laurel worked for me as a gagman and "Babe" Hardy was only a ordinary extra. In those days, the extras reported at the studio every morning to find out if there was work. I shall never forget the day the idea came to me to have them act together in a film. I had Hardy called and told him I had a project for him that would bring in ten dollars a day, six days a week, and he shouted, "Oh! Sir, that's marvelous news . . . sixty dollars a week! I can't believe it!" And I continued, "What's more, if the films are good, you will earn that amount every week." As for Laurel, he was earning a hundred dollars. Figure it out: for a hundred and sixty dollars a week, I had one of the greatest comic teams, in my opinion the best. But I don't want to start an argument. Of course they got a raise shortly afterwards!

CAHIERS—But isn't this one of the constants in your work, the bringing together of people who, physically, do not go together at all?

McCAREY—It is possible that this is an interior theme in my films . . . but I am too close to them to account for it.

CAHIERS—We were thinking in particular of that scene from *An Affair to Remember* between Deborah Kerr and the child hanging from the balustrade.

McCAREY—Yes, of course; she says

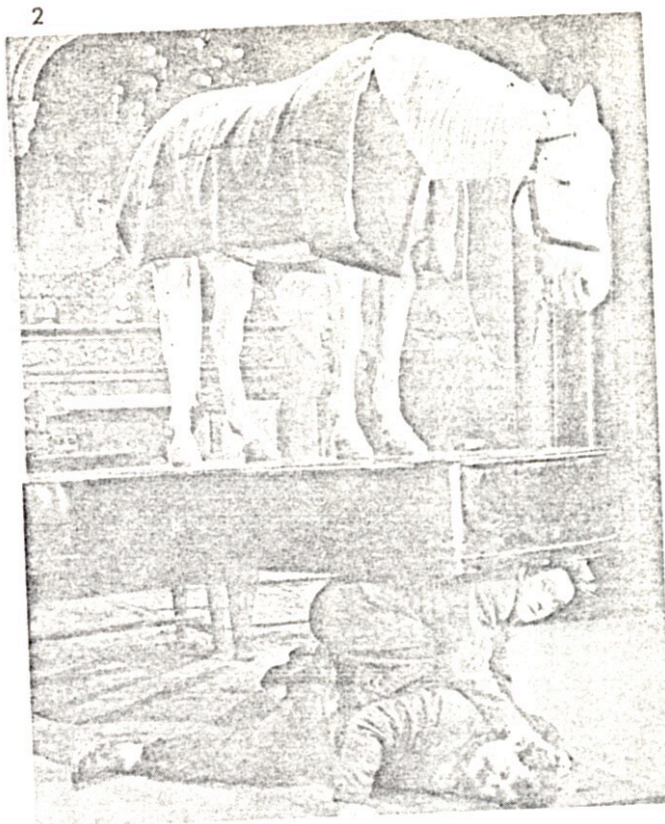
that when she was little she broke a leg that way and he answers her, after having asked her if her leg was alright now, "What are you complaining about, then?" Above all, what I wanted to show in the scene was — a rare enough thing on our screens — a sort of turned around humor . . . also, that scene provided a link for me: this child that the public already liked because he had made it laugh said, as soon as he saw Cary Grant, "You know, I've heard so much about you." And when Cary Grant asks what he has heard about him, he replies, "I don't know, because whenever they start to talk about you they make me leave the room." I could, in this way show the public the opinion people had about a character without having to underline it.

CAHIERS—Let's go back to your beginning. Can you tell us how you entered the cinema?

McCAREY—I started by being script girl! At that time I didn't know that it was almost always girls who did this work. I was dying to work in cinema, I wanted absolutely to get past the studio gates, to be one of them, I adored this métier. And that is why I accepted this job which consisted of following the script and taking notes on each scene. During the shooting I sat next to the director and, after that, I went to the editing room. From film to film, I had the opportunity to propose ideas because the scenarios we were shooting were all original. It was a unique apprenticeship working with a man who wrote, directed and edited his films himself. So much so that I didn't care what position I occupied. This man was named Tod Browning and he was famous, a little like Hitchcock, because he made horror films. At that time he was already terrorizing his public. All of the spectators screamed with fear at each of his films. Lon Chaney was his number one star. Strangely enough, and in spite of this apprenticeship, I have never made any but the genre of films I wanted to, and never horror films . . . however, I had the idea of one day making a film with Hitchcock. Quite simply, I wanted to direct Alfred in a horror film. But in spite of all the time we have spent together discussing it, we have never found a moment when we were both free. I wanted him to act in this film and to commit the perfect crime in it. He was fascinated by this idea, his wife too. (Moreover, our families are very close and our daughters excellent friends.) We have often discussed this project . . .

You know, he has a very great talent for acting. He proved this in the presentation of his films on TV, but at that time he had never been on TV and he only improvised droll things at certain parties where he did imitations, the people who listened to him laughed until they became hysterical. That's how I got the idea of having one of our greatest directors act. Besides, I like his





Leo McCarey: 1. *Big Business*, Oliver Hardy, James Finlayson, Stan Laurel. 2. *Wrong Again*, Laurel and Hardy.  
3. *Bacon Grabbers*, Laurel and Hardy.





Charlie Chase.





films very much, I always go to see them with enthusiasm. At certain moments, he fascinates me by what I consider a supreme disdain for logic. His principal aim was to frighten people and, in order to make them even more afraid, he often threw logic out of the window. I marveled at his films in spite of certain "ruptures" that hurt their continuity. In one of them, whose title I have forgotten, there are two people isolated on a desert, near a ghost town. A telephone starts to ring. One of them picks up the receiver, then holds it out to the other, saying, "Take it; it's for you!" Then he adds, "They want us to come back to town." The following sequence shows them back in town. Thus with no transition at all, they passed from the desert to the town. I remember being convulsed with laughter, so recognizable was Hitchcock's stamp.

CAHIERS — Let's talk some more about your work as assistant director.

McCAREY — There is a film I like, called *Outside the Law*. We were behind in our shooting schedule. The studio sent me to San Francisco to direct Lon Chaney. This was my first chance to become "somebody". That gave me importance. At night, nearly ten thousand people gathered in the streets to see me direct Lon Chaney and I walked back and forth, a little like DeMille. I was finally somebody. I headed towards Chaney, who was a great actor, and said to him, "Lon, at least give the appearance of listening to me." We had a little conference and I proposed that he do this or that, for example, to light a cigarette, which amounted to nothing because he knew exactly what he had to do. But me, I was giving the appearance of directing him, for three nights in a row. Besides, I made a big impression on the crowds. It was one of my first real joys in the cinema.

CAHIERS — Then, you made several films with Charlie Chase.

McCAREY — Oh well, I can't really explain to you what genre of comedy these films were, if you haven't already seen them. It is a little like the Dick Van Dyke genre of comedy, but I don't believe his films were ever shown in France. It was a matter of, if you will, these domestic comedies that, later, transposed to TV, were an enormous success. Moreover, I must say that the TV people didn't use our ideas badly. Some of these films were really very funny, but they were completely different from what we did with Laurel and Hardy. Most of them dealt with the misadventure of husband and wife. For example, the husband had a very big nose and the wife buck teeth: each of them saved his money in order to have plastic surgery. And each made excuses to the other, saying he was going to see a friend, and went away for a month. A little later, they meet on the street, their faces naturally com-

pletely different: they don't recognize each other. He approaches his wife, a romance is born between them. And the public couldn't find this immoral, since they were still husband and wife! And, in the following scene, he invites her to their apartment. Realizing his mistake, he is enraged that his wife could have wanted to deceive him with another man, without, of course, considering that he too was all but unfaithful. All that was really very funny.

CAHIERS — And your first film: *The Sophomore*?

McCAREY — This name designates second year college students. Many actors who are forgotten today played in that film. The only one who is still remembered is Lew Ayres. He is also the only one among them to have had a long career. For this film, I wrote a large part of the scenario. A curious detail: our producer was Joseph B. Kennedy, whose experience in the cinema was very short. (And I am responsible for the only financial success he ever had). This is the same Kennedy who later was our Ambassador to England and the father of our unfortunate John F. Moreover, I was invited to the wedding dinner of one of the Kennedy daughters, and I gave a little speech in which I declared that, since I had directed this film that has brought in money to their father, I had had a sort of a hand in the children's education—which was "*un peu drole*." It was a film about football and, unfortunately, I don't believe you could understand any of it: here, and here alone, is where this film could bring in so much money.

My following film: *Red Hot Rhythm*, was also a comedy, but very bad. It's one of the worst films I ever made. I don't want to look for alibis, but the filming coincided with a strike by the actors' guild, and we couldn't use people who weren't under contract to the studio. It was a small studio: therefore, we didn't have anyone. The actor who took the principal part was supposed to be a singer and composer and he had no voice. In those days we were not yet utilizing dubbing. When he spoke, it sounded as if the poor man had a frog in his throat: and this was our singer! That's only one of the inconveniences I was faced with during the shooting of this film.

For *Let's Go Native*, my following film, I had a lot more luck. Paramount's most important stars appeared in it: Jeanette MacDonald, Kay Francis, Jack Oakie, etc. My producer was Ernst Lubitsch and we were very good friends. And I am going to tell you something I think of all the time: it is I who designed the flowerbed on his tomb, and the only inscription we put on it was "Ernst", which impressed everyone. He helped me a great deal; and I love his films.

*Wild Company* was a rather mediocre film, and I'm not very attached to it. *Part Time Wife* was, in return,



a great success. It was a very funny film. And it's the one that allowed me to double my salary, first of all, and then made me known. It is somewhat in the same genre as *The Awful Truth* which was the first of my films to get an Oscar . . . Although they weren't filmed in the same way, there are two or three scenes in *Awful Truth* that are paraphrases of identical scenes in *Part Time Wife*. But I didn't have so much experience and these scenes, I believe, are better in their remakes. Then, I did *Indiscreet*, with Gloria Swanson, which didn't have much success here. Even so, it is amusing enough that the title was used again for a story that had no relation at all to mine: it was, I believe, a film with Cary Grant and Ingrid Bergman. I didn't have much fun making *Indiscreet*. But in this métier, we all have our share of good luck and bad luck. There are many moments of intense happiness and much turmoil as well. Here, ten days before the shooting was to start, we were informed that we couldn't do a musical comedy: and we

already had fifteen songs ready for the film, and the action turned entirely on the music. And Gloria had a beautiful voice! Joseph Schenck, who was then the head of the studio, asked us to find a new story quickly, because they had already started to pay Gloria. I locked myself in an office with the scenarist and, ten days later, we came out again with a new story—without music this time. It should be taken into account that this film was written in ten days! It wasn't really bad, but I believe that I've done much better. Why don't we talk about that instead?

CAHIERS—But first let's talk about other films you directed during that period.

McCAREY — Understand me: I am impatient to talk about something I like! For example, in *The Kid From Spain*, there is the most extraordinary *corrida* that was ever filmed. And this is not only my opinion but that of critics. That sequence lasted between eight and ten minutes and there was much humor and much emotion. To

double for the comedian who was to be pursued by the bull, I employed a young Mexican, twenty years old, who resembled Eddie Cantor; and that cannot, in any case, show Cantor in a bad light if I reveal that he had a double, because everyone knows very well that he has nothing of the torreador in him! In several shots you saw the bull throw the matador in the air with his horns and it was, of course, necessary that the young man wear heavily padded clothes in order to avoid an accident that could have been fatal. For five days we tried to shoot that sequence: and we had multiple annoyances. When we wanted the bull to charge he didn't want to budge. And when the cameras weren't running, he tried to kill us all. After many fruitless attempts of this nature, I finally gave up, and I was in my office when the cameraman came to see me. The sun had not yet completely set. During my absence, the matador had stayed alone with the cameraman and the bull, and they had filmed the scene together, without me. I expressed



Leo McCarey (right) and mystery man.





Leo McCarey: *The Awful Truth* (1937) Cary Grant and Irene Dunne.

the desire to thank the brave little young man. I was told that I would have to go to the hospital. I went there, to be sure. He had several broken ribs and the only thing he said, repeatedly, was, "Senor, I had taken off my protective clothing! But I knew how much you needed that scene so I did it anyhow . . ." He was an extraordinary young man.

CAHIERS—A short time later, you made *Duck Soup*, which is perhaps the best of the Marx Brothers films.

MCCAREY—I don't like it so much, you know. But even so I had become a better director. In fact I never chose to shoot this film. The Marx Brothers absolutely wanted me to direct them in a film. I refused. Then they got angry with the studio, broke their contract and left. Believing myself secure, I accepted the renewal of my own contract with the studio. Soon, the Marx brothers were reconciled with the company in question and I found myself in the process of directing the Marx Brothers. The most surprising thing about this film was that I succeeded in not going crazy, for I really did not want to work with them: they were completely mad. It was nearly impossible to get all four of them together at the same time. One was always missing! Yes, they were the four battiest people I ever met, which didn't stop me from taking great pleasure in the shooting of several scenes in the film. As my experience in silent films had very much influenced me, it was Harpo that I preferred. But this film wasn't the ideal film for me: it is in fact the only time in my career, to my knowledge at least, that I made the humor rest with



Leo McCarey: *Love Affair* (1939), Irene Dunne, Maria Ouspenskaya, Charles Boyer.



the dialogue: with Groucho, it was the only humor you could get. Four or five writers furnished him with gags and pleasantries. As for me, I didn't do any of them.

I like *Belle of the Nineties* better. The film was much as the title suggests: the story takes place around the 1890's. There were a few very good moments. Since I am (me too) at heart a musician, the thing that moved me the most was my collaboration with Duke Ellington. I kept him two weeks longer than the allotted time, and, one day, the big boss of the studio came to see what was happening on the set: I was in the act of playing the piano and the whole orchestra was accompanying me, conducted by Ellington . . . The guy, who was paying all of us, started to shout: "This evening, Ellington is finished!" But Ellington is one of our greatest musicians: I saw him create with astonishing speed. When the boss imposed this new setback on us, it was around noon. One number still remained to be orchestrated. Ellington got up, stood in front of his "gang", his orchestra, and started to hum the parts they had to play, to each section of the orchestra. With a few interruptions at the piano in order to correct certain passages, he wrote the entire arrangement in several hours. At six o'clock, Mae West was already singing it, and our delays were over. All of his musicians had such an immense talent and that's why he succeeded in this prodigious feat — without even writing a single note on a sheet of paper. I am very happy to finally be talking about some one other than myself.

CAHIERS—You wrote songs . . .

McCAREY—Yes, but only the words, of course . . . Following that I filmed *Ruggles of Red Gap*, the story of a British butler who comes to the U. S. A. explaining that his "jesting" in England would have forced him to remain a butler for the rest of his life, while here he himself could, with his own two hands, fashion and change his position. With a small amount of money he succeeds in opening a restaurant and, as he knows cuisine, of course, this allows him to make a fortune. Right in the middle of the film he declaims a passage from the Gettysburg address, in which Lincoln affirms the liberty of the Americans . . .

*The Milky Way* is a film I don't like very much. In this, Harold Lloyd plays the part of a milkman who, by accident, wins the middleweight championship: it was, to be sure, a comedy . . . for certain people, it seemed to be good fortune that, throughout the film, everyone drank nothing but milk . . . For me, the luck was less favorable, for I drank the milk of a contaminated cow and had so much fever that I had to be taken out of the studio in an ambulance. Which, very happily, permitted me to not finish this film. I almost died that

time, but I believe that the game was worth the candle . . . Moreover, what I am saying will please Harold Lloyd very much! If there were, even so, a few good funny scenes in this film, it was rather in the ensemble—like those pies made of leftovers that one doesn't know what else to do with.

*The Awful Truth*, which brought me an Oscar, was a film whose shooting gave me real pleasure. Irene Dunne, Cary Grant and Ralph Bellamy never posed a problem for me. It was one of the films I shot most rapidly. And what also pleases me is that it told, somewhat, the story of my life (don't repeat it: my wife will want to kill me . . .). But the few scenes turning on the question of unfaithfulness, I should hasten to say, were not at all autobiographical: my imagination alone is responsible.

*Make Way For Tomorrow*, in spite of all the humor in it, was the saddest story I ever filmed. There was much "pathos"; it is the adventure of a couple who have five children, raise them and, following money troubles, find themselves reduced to living off their children who, themselves, have problems and endlessly quarrel amongst themselves on the subject of their parents . . . It was at the same time very funny and very dramatic. It is difficult for me to talk any more about it, but I believe that it was very beautiful to look at. After this film, I received many telegrams saying that I had won the Academy Award for the lesser of my two films and I, too, prefer *Make Way For Tomorrow* to *The Awful Truth*. If I really have talent, this is where it appears.

CAHIERS—After that you directed *The Cowboy and The Lady* . . .

McCAREY — No! I didn't do that film! I am going to tell you about that misadventure, for it was one for Sam Goldwyn as well. I was resting — in the desert — convalescing from a very serious illness; bills were weighing more and more heavily on me: it was absolutely necessary that I earn some money. I very quickly wrote a story called "The Cowboy and the Lady" and I went to tell Willy Wyler about it. Wyler found it very good: but never had I put so much into a thing — doing all the parts in pantomime, interpreting each situation, etc. He advised me to go and tell Sam Goldwyn about it. Therefore, I went to see Goldwyn, trembling with fear and praying for luck. Mr. Goldwyn declared himself very satisfied and gave me twenty-five thousand dollars, which allowed me to pay all my doctors and nurses. Then, Willy changed his mind: he didn't want to direct the film. Moreover, I believe he had accepted the scenario in order to do me a favor and get me out of trouble. Goldwyn had me called and said he had a surprise for me: he wanted me to direct my story. I answered that I didn't like it enough for that. Don't let it out, to tell







Leo McCarey: *Duck Soup* (1933), Chico and Harpo Marx, Louis Calhern.



1



2



3



Leo McCarey: 1. *Satan Never Sleeps* (1961), William Holden and France Nuyen. 2. *An Affair to Remember* (1957), Cary Grant and Deborah Kerr. 3. *Rally 'Round the Flag, Boys!* (1958), Paul Newman and Joan Collins.



the truth, I answered him, "What? Direct that crap! . . . That's the whole thing."

CAHIERS—And the first version of (*Elle et Lui*): *Love Affair*?

McCAREY — Between the first and second versions, to tell the truth there aren't many differences. Moreover, it is the only time I did a veritable remake of one of my films, and I did it because it is my favorite love story. And all the celebrated actresses who have played this role on the radio and on television have told me that, of all the love stories they know, it is also their favorite. Since at least two generations of young people couldn't have seen that first version, I had the feeling that I should tell the story again, for them. As for the difference between *Love Affair* and *An Affair to Remember*, it is none other than the difference between Charles Boyer and Cary Grant. Cary Grant can never succeed in masking that really extraordinary sense of humor he has; in spite of all his efforts, he can't get rid of that humor. That is why the second version, even in the most touching love scenes, is so funny. If Grant had been as sincere as Boyer . . . I am not saying this against him: I like him very much, but he always brings out the humor latent in any situation . . . As for me, I prefer the first version for its beauty and the second because, financially, it was a much bigger success.

CAHIERS—We just saw *Once Upon a Honeymoon* . . .

McCAREY—I don't like this film. I should even say that I detest it. I had a lot of trouble with it, which I would prefer not to discuss. For this film, as sometimes happens, the gods abandoned me.

CAHIERS—There is something that seemed very strange to us: at the end of the film, that shot of the ship making a half turn . . .

McCAREY—In order to go looking for Walter Slezak who is drowning? But I never filmed that shot! Someone did me a dirty turn. In my version, I let him drown. But the people at the studio must have extracted this shot from film: they must have found the ending too inhuman! I find, on the contrary, that it was very good: since this character was so ignoble, I thought it very sympathetic to have him drown. It isn't very funny, the way studio people deal with a film as soon as it's out of your hands. Anything can happen! In fact, I didn't like the scenario of the film at all: but a scenarist came to see me and, as I like to write stories very much, I helped him and, without being aware of it, found myself up to the neck in that affair . . .

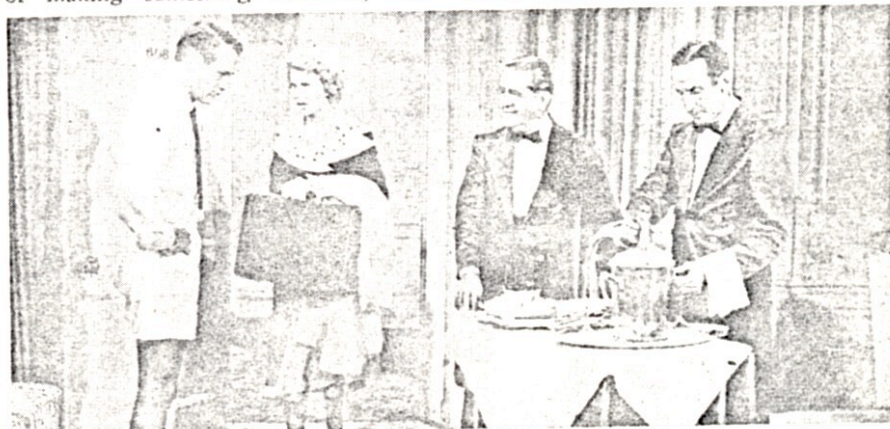
CAHIERS — It is very difficult, in France, to see your two "religious" films again: *Going My Way* and *The Bells of St. Mary's* . . .

McCAREY—But that's tragic! These are my two most successful films and, in a certain sense, one might say that

they alone constitute almost my whole career. But they weren't really religious films: there was a lot of humor. And, in any case, there was nothing at all pious in either of them. A Cardinal said of them that they were "gently disrespectful", which gives you an approximate idea of the tone of these films. It is difficult for me to tell you about them, because each little incident in them had great importance. Moreover, I have a theory about that, with a very exact name: "the ineluctability of incidents", which is applied to the construction of all of my films. To formulate it another way: if something happens, some other thing inevitably flows from it. Like night and day follow each other, events are linked together, and I always develop my story in this way, in a series of incidents, of events which succeed each other and provoke each other. I never really have intrigue . . . To come back to these two films, I really made them for the sole pleasure of making something beautiful, and

this film, fewer by far than the first . . . I still can't understand why *Going My Way* wasn't more successful in France: the songs were very rhythmic, you could even dance to them! (and, with this, McCarey throws himself into an interpretation of the title song . . .) Moreover, it also had "Ave Maria", the "Magnificat", the "Habanera"; in brief, these weren't typically American songs: it was easy to appreciate them abroad!

There was also a secondary intrigue: that amorous liaison the priest had had before taking the cloth. I really want to try to tell you about one of these scenes, but you'd have to see it, it's so beautiful: the priest and the young woman haven't seen each other for several years; she was studying singing in Switzerland. They met in the rain and she tells him that when he was still writing to her she always read his letters by moonlight. As it was raining, Crosby was wearing a raincoat, with the collar turned up, so that his cassock couldn't be seen. At the same



Leo McCarey: *Rally 'Round the Flag, Boys!* (1958), Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward.

filming them gave me great pleasure. I was surprised when the first one brought in so much money. I believed that it was a very small film and everyone was as surprised as I was by its success. In *Going My Way*, Bing Crosby took the part of a priest who wrote songs and sang them. Under a false name, he sold his songs to a publisher, in this way amassing money for his church. A girl with whom he had had a liaison had become a very celebrated singer and, in order to help him, she succeeded in getting the cooperation of the Philharmonic without paying anything at all. People wanted to see this film as a "musical comedy", because of the importance of the songs, but it was rather, to my way of thinking, a "dramatic comedy".

I made *The Bells of St. Mary's* because, from all over the country, letters came to me explaining that since I had rendered the priests so human and so popular I could do as much for the good Sisters and the nuns . . . I was told that I owed it to them, for they were human, too: living, breathing, laughing, etc. Therefore, I worked somewhat on demand. But I put very few songs in

time as she gives him to understand that she has become the star of the Metropolitan Opera, she invites him into her dressing-room, as shelter from the rain. She asks him to talk to her while she puts on her make-up. It is then that he sheds his raincoat and she sees that he is in priest's clothing: she understands why her letters went unanswered.

CAHIERS—In your opinion, do children play an important role in your work?

McCAREY—I must say, I like children very much. They can be extraordinary actors (moreover, they got an Oscar for their acting in *The Bells* . . .), I like to show certain naive sides of their characters, the divergence of their points of view and their incessant desire to know the *why* of things, which embarrasses many adults. For my following film, *Good Sam*, I believed that my point of departure was excellent but I was visibly mistaken. The film had a certain success but when, after two immense successes, you have a small one it is considered a failure. I believe I know why the film didn't go as well as I imagined it would: Sinclair Lewis refused to work on the script, telling



me that, these days, a man who tried to live the life of a saint would be a fool and would be considered as such. But I had my heart set on my character and I did the film even so, with Gary Cooper in the role. But Sinclair Lewis was right: the public thinks it isn't right for a man to help his neighbor. Each day, one learns of accidents happening without anyone's intervening or seeking to bring help to the injured. Not so very long ago, in New York, two or three guys raped a woman while spectators impassively watched. They didn't even try to alert the police. It's an unbelievable world. You see that the moment was ill-chosen for making a film about apostleship.

During the shooting of *My Son John*, a tragedy befell us and I was never able to tell the world about it. Right in the middle of the filming, Robert Walker died. If he had lived, it would perhaps have been my greatest film. . . . But one night my daughter, who had gone out, called me on the telephone and announced Robert's death. It was the end. The whole crew was as floored as myself. All salaries were stopped and everyone went to work on other films. We interrupted the film for three months. The studio wanted to recoup its money and, for that reason, we couldn't reveal Walker's death: I had to have recourse to all the tricks I had learned in this métier in order to transform the few scenes we had shot into a real film. And we succeeded in making this film, in finishing it, and it is all the same extraordinary that this film competed for an Oscar for best scenario. After three months of stubborn work I succeeded in establishing three or four new versions of the film, then I utilized the sequences in which Walker appeared with his mother and replaced her with Van Heflin, who played an F.B.I. man. But, in any case, it was necessary for Walker to die at the end and I hadn't shot the scene in question. That's when I remembered that Hitchcock, in *Strangers on a Train*, had filmed a scene in which Walker dies under a carousel. It was three o'clock in the morning and I paced back and forth in my room, telling myself that it was necessary to wait until Hitchcock woke up.

Seven o'clock it is still too early to drag Hitchcock out of bed! Eight o'clock — still too early for him — but if I wait till nine perhaps he will go out. I look in the newspaper to verify that he is not shooting any film. At eight-thirty, I had Hitchcock on the line and I asked him, "Do you have a close-up of Walker's death?" He answered, "I know nothing about it, but I can meet you at the studio and have the sequence screened, we'll see; I know what problem you are having; is that sufficient to help you?" — Help me? But it will save my life! I have the intention of having him shot to death, and having him pronounce the words, "I have made my confession," which I

have on a record by him. In the scene from Hitchcock's film, young Farley Granger talks with Walker under the merry-go-round. I was in a state of excitement and shouted at Granger's image, "But get out, get out of there!" Happily, for a second, Granger moved away and Walker remained, alone, saying several words. I took this shot and changed the text. . . . But since I couldn't confide in any of the actors, who could have revealed Walker's death to the journalists, which the studio had forbidden, I myself dubbed those few words in a barely audible voice.

*Satan Never Sleeps* was also a nightmare; I had a very fine story but, in the middle of the filming, people more powerful than I took pride in modifying it. I finally let the film drop and my assistant took care of the last five days of shooting. For *An Affair to Remember*, I wanted to find out whether I was as good a scenarist and as good a director as I had been twenty years earlier. Every night, I stayed awake trying to improve the film: I wrote nearly a third with new dialogue. And I shall always remember the time I met Deborah Kerr in Madrid and she said to me, "Do you remember the dialogue in the scene on the bridge: 'Winter must be very cold for those who have no memories to keep them warm, and we have already missed Spring' . . . do you remember that, Leo?" I answered her, "Of course; I stayed up a whole night writing that . . ." I wanted, incessantly, to surpass the McCarey of twenty years before. A propos Cary Grant, let me tell you an amusing anecdote. We had made two or three successful films together, but his Box Office hadn't risen and Paramount had not renewed his contract. I met him at the corner of Vine and Melrose, walking down the street. He said to me, "Paramount let me go: I'm on the streets." I answered him, "and just what do you think I'm doing? Paramount kicked me out, too!" We were two bums. But everything worked out well: the next year, we got an Oscar together.

For *Rally 'Round the Flag, Boys!*, there was, unfortunately, no publicity campaign at all in America. . . . Frankly, don't you prefer the first half to the second? No? You like the whole thing? I don't understand why. . . . In fact, I wrote the story completely: the author of the book was furious with me because all I had retained from his text were the names of the characters; all the rest was mine. I find the ending, which I also wrote, very funny. . . . But let me rather tell you an anecdote: I was shooting the end of the film, when Joanne Woodward and Paul Newman are in bed, selecting from a menu. . . . At that moment, a very important guy who was infatuated with Joan Collins arrived on the set. He asked me to do him a favor and shoot a scene with Joan for him. Since I had had a very easy day and it was the last day of the shooting, I

agreed. I reflected for several instants and asked the assistant to bring Joan over and to find a bath-tub. This guy was really mad for Joan. I said to her, "Take off your clothes." She asked me why: but you understand that I only shot that scene so that the guy could see Joan half nude, taking a bubble bath. . . .

I believe that Joan was going to become a great star. And I could have helped her. At the beginning, she had no confidence in herself and, little by little she confided in me. I told her I would do this film with her only if she sent her psychoanalyst away and allowed me to become him. I added, "If you want to stretch out on a couch, come to mine." She laughed, but she sent her psychoanalyst away and I let her do whatever she wanted: her bizarre dances, for example. We shot an enormous amount of footage for that film. But everything was simple. For example, for the scene in the hotel room with Newman, I said to Collins, "You are alone with a man in this room and you want him to make love to you." Well, she started to tickle his ears with her toes. . . . No matter! We were really amused. . . . But the problem, now, is that everyone tries to make super productions. I can't say they're wrong. But it's unfortunate!

CAHIERS—What are your favorite films?

MCCAREY—Without a doubt, but not necessarily in this order, *Going My Way*, *The Bells of St. Mary's*, *Make Way For Tomorrow*, *Love Affair*, *An Affair to Remember*. . . . There are moments in all of my films which I prefer, for example, the scene with the old woman in *An Affair to Remember*, the scene in which Deborah Kerr is found to be crippled, certain scenes from *The Bells of St. Mary's*. I have always said that if I could only make a film out of all my favorite moments . . . but one is always obliged to show other things that are less beautiful. . . .

I am not going to tell you the story of the film I am writing. It is so simple that someone would steal it immediately. I remember having told that I wanted to make a "Marco Polo": that made me lose a hundred and twenty-six thousand dollars, because someone printed the news and soon four versions of *Marco Polo* were under way. As for me, I could never do mine! In the Marco Polo project, which was a musical, I had Mario Lanza who, at that time, was thin. When I came back from the mountains where I had gone to write the scenario and the songs with the musicians, Mario had become fat. My heart sank.

In the films I am hoping to make, I don't want to change my genre: I like people to laugh, I like them to cry, I like a story to be about something and I want the public to leave the theatre feeling happier than it had been before.

(Material for interview taped)

Trans. Rose Kaplan



# Situation of the New Cinema



## 1. The Twenty-first: Interview with Jerzy Skolimowski

CAHIERS—How did you come to work as a scenarist for Wajda, then for Polanski? At the time, was that activity as a scenarist a logical continuation of your literary work for you, or did you already intend to make films as a director?

JERZY SKOLIMOWSKI — Chance alone guided my first steps, and I began to work for Wajda entirely fortuitously. One day he said to me, as he would have said anything else: "Jerzy, the entrance examinations for the *Ecole de cinématographie* of Lodz are going on just now. They began several days ago, but you could perhaps go there to take them all the same." I went there, and I passed. There it is.

CAHIERS—That was in what year?

SKOLIMOWSKI—In 1960. And I finished my studies at the school only last year.

CAHIERS—It was there that you met Polanski?

SKOLIMOWSKI—Yes, he was finishing his studies. When I arrived, he was making his diploma film, and he asked me to collaborate on an idea that he had written.

CAHIERS—It was *Le Couteau dans l'eau* (Knife in the water) . . .

SKOLIMOWSKI—*Le Couteau dans l'eau*, yes. A story in its way: three characters on a boat, the whole summed up in three sentences. We stuck to it, and three days later the script was finished.

CAHIERS—At what period?

SKOLIMOWSKI—Three days and three nights, in 1961.

CAHIERS—Was your work as a scenarist rewarding, or did you consider it as a mere stage to cross?

SKOLIMOWSKI—At that period, I was a writer, I was publishing books, and my work as a scenarist appeared to me as a certain form of literature; I liked the novelty of the problems it set for me, but I absolutely did not think

that it was a matter of a stage in my future career as a director. I took things as they presented themselves.

CAHIERS—What is the difference between a literary *nouvelle* and a cinematographic *nouvelle*?

SKOLIMOWSKI—For me now, there is none. Before, there was a great deal!

CAHIERS—What was the origin of your first film, *Rysopis*?

SKOLIMOWSKI—When I abruptly found myself in the *Ecole*, with the prospect of spending four years of my life there, I was seized with a great uncertainty. I was afraid of botching everything, of being a zero, or of spending long obscure years at being an assistant, which was scarcely better. Before those sad possibilities for the future, I began to ask myself how the devil I could get out of the situation. At the *Ecole*, each year one had the right to a certain length of film. I had the idea of using each meter at my disposal, not to satisfy my fancy of the moment or nonchalantly to make any foolishness whatever, but in such a way that I would find myself at the end of my studies with a full length film entirely finished. From the second year to the final diploma, one had the right to more and more films; in the final accounting, at the end of those strings tied to one another, there was *Rysopis*. I had to overcome an additional difficulty: each lot of film that they gave us was to be used as a very definite practical exercise, corresponding to this essay, to that examination, to such-and-such a stage to cross. So I had to think at once of a final aim, my film, and an immediate aim, the examinations that, through scraps of that film, I must somehow or other be taking.

CAHIERS—What counted more for you, passing the examinations, or the film?

SKOLIMOWSKI—The film, naturally. So it happened that I received very low

grades in the matter of my studies.

CAHIERS—Do you consider the film as a hodgepodge, or as a completed work?

SKOLIMOWSKI—It is certainly a hodgepodge, but a completed hodgepodge!

CAHIERS—How was the film received in Poland?

SKOLIMOWSKI—People were a little afraid of it. It was obviously legitimate to consider it in a way as a provocation, but finally people took it for what it was, and on the whole it was interpreted correctly. At present, it is even a film that is rather well thought of. So that is the proof that not only can I make films, but moreover that they can be well received.

CAHIERS—As to the origin of the second film?

SKOLIMOWSKI—I should like to go back a little to the question before, because it took me by surprise. If you will, people did not know very well what to do with it, that film . . . In a cinematographic system that produces twenty films a year abruptly falls from heaven the twenty-first, how to say . . .

CAHIERS—Without a label?

SKOLIMOWSKI—Without a label, yes, I think that that is the most precise definition.

CAHIERS—Now reply to the question about *Walk Over*.

SKOLIMOWSKI—It is hard for me to separate it from the first, for the two films are linked, on the same principal character, and although the second does not tell strictly the continuation of the first, yet it carries on the presentation of the same character. The basis of these two films, which has served me in a way as a theme, in the sense in which one speaks of a musical theme, is a little poem that I had written rather a long time before filming *Rysopis* and *Walk Over*, and it seems to me that in the few lines of this poem, there are not only the ideas of my two films, but moreover the ideas for all the films that I will be able to make in the future, for all my life even, if I so chose. So, since *Rysopis* had not said everything about the man that I wanted to show, I was compelled to make a second film on the same character. And maybe I will make yet another, to say everything that I know of him . . . The poem about which I am speaking to you is in a collection published in 1960. I have published three books, and I have also written an experimental play.

CAHIERS—What is its title?

SKOLIMOWSKI—*Quelqu'un se noie, Someone is drowning*.

CAHIERS—*Walk Over* is one of the most rapid films that can be seen, crammed with things that one must seize in flight, or by deduction. Where does your style of narration come from? Is it very studied, or does it correspond more simply to your own temperament?

SKOLIMOWSKI—First, I have a panic fear of boring people. Second,



I have a panic fear of being suspected of having something in common with Antonioni. Third, my own life is very rapid. It happens that I jump from a moving train to box in a ring. So I could not bear to tell something slowly.

CAHIERS—The dialogues of *Walk Over* are always a little displaced in relation to the action; for example, they never concern the solitude of the hero...

SKOLIMOWSKI—Since that is so obvious, it proves that there I was applying a certain method, and the result is the one that I wanted. Your last two questions have a common denominator. I will reply to them by saying that my film does not tell an anecdote or a series of particular facts, but that it aims at giving an account of the mental landscape of the hero. So, I arrange that the reality that I present should attack the spectator in as chaotic, rough and undisciplined a way as it does with my hero. If my hero does not answer all the questions that people put to him, because he cannot, because people speak to him here, there, on the right, on the left, at the same time, the same thing should occur for the spectator, who cannot control everything that happens around him. This fact of not being able to understand everything or to seize everything should lead to a certain edginess in the spectator. Life sets our nerves on edge; that for me is realism.

CAHIERS—In certain dialogues at the beginning of *Walk Over*, because of their rhythm, their delivery, their tonality, one thinks of the beginning of Pylon of Faulkner...

SKOLIMOWSKI—I know many of Faulkner's books, but not that one.

CAHIERS—Has Faulkner influenced you?

SKOLIMOWSKI—No, not at all. That comparison never crossed my mind. Nevertheless, it is a very satisfying comparison for me.

CAHIERS—We should like to have some details on the shooting of your films.

SKOLIMOWSKI—I used three hours and twenty minutes of film to obtain the hour and twenty minutes of *Rysopis*. For *Walk Over*, I had ten hours of film. *Rysopis* had been undertaken under the artistic patronage of Andrej Munk, who was a great friend to me. Moreover, in 1961 I wrote for him a scenario for an intellectual western.

I made *Rysopis* with my own hands, with a cameraman who was doing the photography of a film for the first time. I was obliged to look through cameramen's technical manuals to make sure that everything was going well. With that film, we truly learned to do cinema. So I owe a great deal to the *Ecole de Cinéma* of Lodz, which taught me my *métier*.

*Walk Over* is a professional production, a completely different production, with a standard crew, equipped with all the necessary apparatus. But I should

like to stress this enormous difference. The shooting of *Walk Over* was complicated nevertheless, because the film is made up of twenty-eight very long sequences. The ideal, obviously, would have been to shoot one sequence a day. But there is a regulation that prescribes that one not go beyond a certain length of film per day. And besides, one cannot make a film in twenty-eight days. Since, with us, there are about sixty days of shooting, that would have been contrary to the working plan. In addition, the greatest danger is the weather. If it is ideal weather for shooting a certain sequence, I cannot allow myself to prepare that scene for two days—to which I would have the right while remaining within the delays provided for—but I must hasten to shoot it at once, because tomorrow, day after tomorrow, or in a week, it may rain, and I will be paralyzed. And if I go past the limits, it is catastrophic. So that is an incessant risk. If one makes a film with very short sequences, one can always get out of the difficulty. But these are only questions of a technical order. What I am going to say to you is perhaps a little pretentious, but I have an almost mystical faith in the poem about which I was speaking to you a little while ago, for I have the impression that it contains the story ideas of my entire life. It is also a talisman and a handrail.

CAHIERS—How would you define

CAHIERS—Defined this way, your work is essentially poetic.

SKOLIMOWSKI—I hope so.

CAHIERS—How did you find your interpreters?

SKOLIMOWSKI—My principal interpreter, I found in my mirror. At the start, besides, that was a practical necessity more than anything else: I did not have enough money to be able to hire an actor who for three years could be at my disposal day and night, with the same clothes, who would watch his eating so as not to gain weight, who would keep the same short haircut, and so on.

CAHIERS—In the second film, you no longer had that kind of constraint. Why did you play the character yourself?

SKOLIMOWSKI—Because it was a matter of the same character as in the first; so I had to continue to interpret him. One could find in this fictitious biography elements of my own biography. As I said to you, it happens that I jump from a moving train to go to fight in a ring. That is what happens in *Walk Over*. But besides boxing, one loves, one eats, one sleeps, one walks, these are rather universal biographical *données*. It is no longer a matter of me exclusively. In *Rysopis*, apart from me, there was only my wife, to play for nothing. So she played three roles! When I made the second film, I was in



*Rysopis* (Identification Marks: None), Jerzy Skolimowski and Elzbieta Czyzewska.

your method?

SKOLIMOWSKI—I must own to you that I have a certain aversion for theories, but if I absolutely must explain myself, I could do it in the following way: it is a question of imagination and of way of looking, it depends upon the eyes with which one looks at what is happening in the brain. From the time that I begin to think about a film, I see that film there before me. I do not invent a story idea, but only images; those images move, there is someone walking, and such and such a thing happens to him. As I think that in the brain cutting does not exist, I see these things in a blur, quite connected, in a stream in which everything is continuous. At the end of this stream, there is the finished film.

the midst of being divorced, and my wife did not want to earn money playing in the film. She barely agreed to appear symbolically at the beginning, which has the significance that you know. It has seemed to me that this film is partly, among other things, a film about the woman vanished.

CAHIERS—What is the political significance of your film?

SKOLIMOWSKI—In Poland, the State always willingly stretches out a hand to the outsider. But it happens that the State and the outsider both stretch out the same hand, the right or the left; that is why they do not always succeed in clasp hands.

The political allusions of *Walk Over* are very subtle. The girl is a balanced and completely normal character, ap-



parently the contrary of the hero. But at one moment, there is a complete reversal of values. That is explained by details scattered in the first part: she remembers that he was expelled from the university ten years ago, that is to say in the time of Stalinism. She was not expelled. She is a former Stalinist who has learned by heart what she should think, and she recites it. And finally, it is he who shows himself stronger than she. They take the train, that is to say they run away. And the motorcyclist who follows the train calls not only the hero, he calls also to the girl, who does not answer him. The boy answers by jumping from the train. It is an attitude that has an ethical, an artistic and a political significance.

CAHIERS—Have you a preference for one of the other of your films?

SKOLIMOWSKI — For me, *Walk Over* is incomparably superior to *Ryopsis*, in which there are very juvenile things, like that descent of the stairway in one single shot. But in many first films, there are only descents of stairways.

CAHIERS—What to you is the best Polish film?

SKOLIMOWSKI—*Cendres et diamant* (*Ashes and Diamonds*).

CAHIERS—*Walk Over* is the first good film from Poland that comes from neither the Kadr group nor the Kamera group . . .

SKOLIMOWSKI—Today, the specialization of groups in ambitious or commercial films is in the process of disappearing. They class me among the four writers of Polish cinema, with Konwicki, Stawinski and Scibor-Rylski. But there are very great differences among us.

CAHIERS—You are a "jack-of-all-trades." Which of your activities do you prefer?

SKOLIMOWSKI—I have practiced all the arts a little, from boxing to literature. For me, cinema is the first of all, and the most serious.

CAHIERS—What audience do you wish for?

SKOLIMOWSKI—To make a success of a film, artistic speculation is inadequate. To see *Walk Over*, one must open one's eyes very wide. I want an audience that opens its eyes very wide.

CAHIERS—What good films have you seen at Cannes?

## 2. Closer to Things

I am very skeptical as to the diverse confessions and theoretical considerations that can be formulated by a director. I have established — after several years of study — that, with rare exceptions, and every time that it is a question of true art, the work, for an unknown reason, is always more intelligent than its *auteur*. There is obviously some mystery in this disparity between the magnitude of the creator and the magnitude of his work. And I think—even if it is impossible for me to give the least proof of it—that it is indeed in virtue of this mystery that art becomes art. That is why I maintain some reservations with respect to all theoretical discussions; they seem to me to belong to palmistry, and only the future will tell us who has been able to guess correctly.

Yet I am spectator too, and as such I observe this: What people have called *cinéma-vérité* has clearly proved that, at the most felicitous moments of its most felicitous films, it was not necessary to stylize the surface of things to penetrate very deeply below this surface. That is terribly important. What the film is, is perceived only through the image and the sound — through photography and recording. And photography has the characteristic of reproducing with absolute fidelity only the surface of things. Thanks to that, for example, the *cinéaste* of 8½, played by Marcello Mastroianni, represents, not a cinema director, but indeed Marcello Mastroianni made up so as to have the appearance of a cinema director. And that in spite of the fact that in the film a table is a table, the sky, sky, and the earth, earth. Marcello

SKOLIMOWSKI—*Walk Over*. As this is the first time that I have come to the West, I have better things to do than to go to the cinema. (Words taped by Jean-André Fieschi, Luc Moullet and Claude Ollier, at the time of the 1965 Cannes festival.)

Mastroianni is a cinema director: in sum, the essence of photography rests in the malicious disclosure of these little contradictions. That irritates me; for when I see a table, the sky, or the earth, I want also to believe that I am seeing a cinema director. I want to believe it, even if I cannot verify it. As I believe in Einstein even if I do not understand him, as I believe in Alain Resnais even if I do not understand him. But I do not believe in Hitler, although I do not understand him either. It is precisely the grasp of this surface of things (in its ambiguity) that arouses in me distrust as well as trust. And it seems to me then, for example, that the poorer the depth, the greater will be the effort to stylize and adorn the surface . . .

My strongest emotions, I had seeing the first films of Truffaut, Godard, Cassavetes, Olmi, who, precisely, left to things the aspect that is truly theirs. (I have seen no films of Rouch, Rozier, Marker, etc., and therefore excuse me for the incompleteness of my references.) That cinema for me represents the "new cinema." It deliberately leaves to the surfaces of things all their naturalness, their antiquity. Of course then the imperfection or the poverty of the content risks appearing much more quickly. It is precisely this risk that these films courageously take. And because of this courageous sincerity, I am disposed to pardon them many flaws. I say that from my point of view as spectator. The sincerity of a bad film moves me in fact more than the "suspense" of a mediocre detective film.

There is another thing that preoccupies me: people often reproach the new cinema for avoiding the great themes, the great problems of our period. I do not know. I am not so certain of that. Science itself, these last years, has turned attention more to the microcosm. In that way, it is proceeding to correct an imbalance that goes back to the Middle Ages. Then all the telescopes were turned towards the immensity of the universe. Very far. Nobody was interested in a minute grain of dust: the atom. There was in all that a madness—magnificent and naive—for greatness.

These great subjects, sublimely naive, on the meaning of life, the future of man, and so on—there have been many of them in cinema, no doubt there will be many still. Then why not turn, calmly, in the other direction, and seek at least to discover the meaning of human gestures, of words, of smiles, of tears . . . I should like to succeed



Milos Forman: *Loves of a Blonde*, Vladimir Mensik.



in devising an art which, through these very small manifestations of the human spirit, could discover and set free the greatest quantities of energy. Then only,

this energy can be used for excursions into distant spheres, like the meaning of life or its future, and that will be neither utopia nor lie. (Text of the com-

munication of Milos Forman to the first International Festival of New Cinema, at Pesaro, in 1965.)

Milos FORMAN

### 3. The Sterility of Provocation

The taste of the general public disregards us. We might not exist; that absence would pass unnoticed. The illusion consists in thinking that to interest the public it is enough to provoke it, to offend it, to scandalize it. That is precisely the illusion into which one can fall before starting out, the illusion that any product whatever can finally give satisfaction provided that one finds the way to pass it as contraband. Anything would be capable of attracting attention, of pleasing, provided that one finds the way to display it well, to make it pass for the realization of a secret wish of the general public. That is true only in theory.

It is actually true that a good launching—publicity, advertising—is essential to the success of the career of a film, but that cannot sustain it indefinitely if the film has no real reason to please the public. In that case, the film fails inexorably; it becomes useless. In order that the audience respond, it is necessary to anticipate it. It is necessary that people leave the theatre with the impression of having seen a good spectacle (impression that they will certainly spread around them, which constitutes the most efficacious publicity for a film). That spectacle must not only take into account the problems of the public, its aspirations, its frustrations, and so on. It must also set them forth in the way that pleases the public the most, tranquilizes it the most, clears it or even accuses it, but then of sins leaving personal vanity intact. Even provocation is generally received with indifference.

The Italians are not satisfied puritans proud of their condition; being on the contrary, at the deepest part of themselves, unsatisfied provincials, they tend not to be scandalized and instead to set off in search of scandal. They aspire to it. Thus, a film like *La Dolce Vita* that tries to go beyond its Roman frontiers to carry on a discourse that is addressed to everyone (as if it were possible to recognize universal constants in the occurrences and the characters that it proposes) has not been able to persuade the average Italian to recognize himself in it, to meet himself there. Quite the contrary, that Italian submits to its fascination, and *la dolce vita* remains instead an objective for him: the illusory realization of all his impossible thwarted aspirations.

Consequently: impossibility of causing a scandal at the level of ideas, and search for scandal as sexual compensation. So the range of provocation is extremely reduced — indeed nonexistent. Besides,

a certain form of didactic narrative is not only punctiliously accompanied by a disheartening ideological retardation, but is still more slovenly than provocation. And yet the young—fairly numerous—who are preparing to start out, like me when it was a question of my doing so, expect that their stories will turn upside down the State and all the conventions in effect on which it rests. Which is not true. For ultimately, with the general public, even the most directly offensive actions — mockery, blasphemy — set forth in a moderately realistic style, pass unnoticed and leave the spectator surprised at most. The latter does not succeed in establishing a relation between his own condition and the events that take place on the screen, or, if he does so, he keeps to a juxtaposition of an elementary type from which he escapes immediately without compromising himself.

Besides it is rather disheartening that the general public is not alone in giving itself up to this kind of comfortable operation, and that sometimes—rarely, to be sure—the critic imitates it. "Well, they say that this film (*I Pugni in tasca*) is an illustration of the middle class. What middle class? No doubt a middle class thought of by Bellocchio. As for me, for example, I who am the son of country middle class, as is the case of the maddest—though only epileptic—of the three brothers, Alessandro; well, I do not feel myself as decadent as Alessandro seems to feel himself . . ." (*Corriere Lombardo*, December 11, 1965: *Une famille d'aliénés*). So a critic, that is to say an advisor of the public, refuses to apply the most elementary rules of esthetics. One goes to the point of ignoring that, in using the debatable criterion of identification, it is a question of comparing one's own experience, not to that of a character—here Alessandro—envisaged as a whole, to its criminal conclusions, but only to a certain type of behavior in common (constants of behaviors: it is not so im-



Marco Bellocchio: *I Pugni in tasca*, Lou Castel and Paola Pitagora.

portant to establish the degree of decadence of Alessandro, who kills his mother because she is a burden to him and because he finds her taste in the decoration of her home bad, by comparing it with ours, we who happily at his age had done nothing but write funereal, very bad, verse. No; what is important is especially to recognize in both cases the existence of a decadent behavior—this without forgetting the specific conditions and environment that hindered Alessandro, on leaving adolescence, from taking up again the way of reason (as was the case for most of us), and that on the contrary incited him to obey his "petty demons," violating what, by tradition, it is conventional to call natural law. That does not prevent there being no scandal in recognizing oneself in Alessandro, as, to cite some well-known examples, we have recognized ourselves, at the whim of our reading, in Raskolnikov, Macbeth or Caligula.

Marco BELLOCCHIO

### 4. Frustration of Violence

*Machorka-Muff*, my first film (a short), was the story of a rape (rape of a country on which an army has been re-imposed, when it was happy to be rid of one). *Nicht Versohnt (Unreconciled; Billiards at Half-Past Nine)* is the story of a frustration (frustration—of violence; that which *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* invokes when she cries out: "Violence alone aids, where violence reigns"—of

a people that failed its revolution of 1849 and that has not freed itself from fascism).

I have deliberately set aside all that the novel included of the picturesque and of the satirical. And instead of putting my mind, like Boll, like the *auteur* of *Citizen Kane*, or like Resnais, to a puzzle, I have risked a lacunary film ("Lacunary body, body composed of ag-



glomerated crystals that leave intervals among them." Emile Littre).

It is to the incarnation of the characters that I put my mind. They are epic characters, in the Brechtian sense. Bourgeois becoming politically aware (to an extent limited by their condition) of Nazism and of its continuity with what preceded it, well before 1933 (anti-communism and bourgeois moral values,



Jean-Marie Straub: *Machorka-Muff*, Renate Lang and Erich Kuby.

such as "*Ernst, Ebre, Treue, Ordnung*"), and with what has followed it since 1945 (anti-communism and political opportunism).

They express themselves with the words of Boll but in the manner of the characters of Jean Rouch. We took the sound always at the same time as the photograph. Like Jean-Luc Godard, "I have always loved the sound of the first talking films; it had a very great truth, for it was the first time that one heard people talk"; and it is indeed the first time in Germany, since the war!

Jean-Marie STRAUB

## 5. The Gates of Meaning

*Nicht Versohnt* (Non réconciliés — Unreconciled; Billiards at Half Past Eight) tells a far-reaching short history (the fate of a German family from 1860 to the present) by exploring the superposed strata of humor left by the succession of generations.

The story is told with a rare concentration and simplicity, in fifty minutes heavy with all the meanings of history and diabolically interconnected.

Straub has chosen to illustrate only the principal times of the story. On the one hand, the strongest; on the other, the least strong: those that should render the imponderable part of the period, its air, precisely, moreover the breath of the film. Add that its organic unity includes also, among other levels laid

solidly overlapping, the words—commentary, recitative or dialogue — that solder among themselves the images, or the resonances woven among the images, derived from what they represent or from what they diffuse—their affective tonality. But all these elements find their bond and their materialization in that supreme unity, style — what does that mean? It means, like all style, in every art—whether it be made of touches, of words, or of images—the materialization of a driven search in the precision of the telling. Selection, condensation (which can imply restriction as well as expansion), it is always; what must I stress, erase, displace, replace, add (and take away, especially take away, always take away), to tell only, but to tell all, the essential? And what is the essential? . . . Here, facing the material to be controlled, instinct operates as much as thought. And gesture. Which sometimes precedes thought, but reflex or reflection, what does the order matter? If thought means vision of the world, then nothing will be done that does not, deeply, respond to it.

And that is to say also that style is never that which one can set as a principle at the point of departure, but that from which one obtains the form on arrival, at the end of modelling gropings (therefore through a proceeding deeply opposed to that of "experimenters" of every sort), and as materialization of an insatiable inner necessity, in the course of which everything happens as if the artist were seeking to obtain the always more perfect equivalence of his matter with a preexistent mould, when that mould is to be discovered and to be forged in the very course of the operation. To take up again the absolute word on the question: style is not sought, it is found.

Similarly, then, style is established. It is that thing simple, obvious and inimitable—egg of Columbus in the middle of the face—and which one designates, as with the said egg, by the name of the one who has found it. For if one can describe the proceeding, one cannot define the result. One designates it. One names the employer. One says Dreyer, Lang, Bresson, Faulkner, Céline, Matisse. That is enough.

Now, then, the Straub film has that. And everything comes (on that I am going to repeat myself) from the will to tell.

To tell? Straub, confronting the good, massive book of Boll, had to impose its matter in a clear, obvious, unstoppable way.

Friend, what have you seen? . . .

I have seen a war, says the billiard player . . .

For it is necessary that everything be overlapped precisely.

Flashbacks (and the first takes us to 1934). Links and crossings among the generations, their times and their fates. And among the details of every order: abbeys, cars, cafés . . .

. . . And the child hears the prelude to the war. Then, climbing to the floor above street level in the hotel, at that very moment he encounters the sect of the lamb, he who has just been hearing of that of the buffalo, and meets also an old lady slightly in her dotage, as old as the billiard player's mother, whom one will see later, almost mad, harping on the sum of the signs and meanings of the history. Meanwhile, the player has not finished; he sees some old friends appear, friends who lived the same history, the same way or differently, not to mention his father, who was an architect, and that is to say a builder, when he had to become a destroyer. He has also a son. Builder?

And the way of telling, that becomes, itself alone, an entire history.

Friend, what have you seen? . . .

It is necessary to tell, and the way of telling comes first from this will to tell, tell everything, precisely and strongly. It is necessary to choose, to interweave the threads, to stretch them taut, it is necessary that the tapestry be closely woven. All that to await and to bring into being the design.

All that so that the spectator will understand the image well. But he will not have to know the threads, I mean their why and how, he will need precisely to follow them, as they are put there, by Ariadne. Only to follow them. They are put there, woven there, for that.

Let the spectator satisfy himself, then, with entering, let him grasp the thread,



Jean-Marie Straub: *Nicht Versohnt*.

and all the rest will come in addition. For by wanting too much to forge the gates of meaning, he would condemn himself to remain outside, without ever being able to find what one has already found for him.

That said, there remains the case of the one who loses the thread; and that, obviously, poses another story. But Heraclitus said: "It is necessary also to remember the one who forgets where the road leads."

Michel DELAHAYE



## 6. Notes on the New Spectator

One of the objects of filmography as a science is to arrive at a scientific knowledge of the qualities (acuity, penetration, subtlety) of the seeing of the film. To do this, there is no other way than to subordinate the very existence of these qualities (abstract things) to the conditions (which one imagines more tangible) of this seeing.

But if, for the most part, these material factors themselves are susceptible to every variation and every adaptation (nothing more fragile, at the bottom, than technical norms), there is one at least that is found always and constantly, to the point of appearing a necessity, an indispensable condition of all seeing, and even, further, to the point of seeming a natural thing, the normal, ontological order: it is the *obscurité*, the darkness, of the room. I will grant that there may be a number of technical reasons to justify and impose the seeing of films in *salles obscures*<sup>1</sup>; perhaps, in fact, the light of the screen would suffer from the light of day. But although until now the dark has reigned supreme, I do not believe that optical reasons alone would have been enough to make darkness the natural milieu of cinema. In fact, all the other spectacles, theatre, circus, opera, concerts, adapt themselves to various degrees of half-light (when it is not, as for the ancient theatre, the full light of the sun). Cinema alone, though born in the relative semi-light of cafés, has developed and constituted itself rigorously apart from day, suffering no other light than that which it itself emanates. Now, as sociologists, psychologists, have remarked often enough, the darkness of the theatres has other functions and other effects than those of favoring a better seeing of the film . . . If it is the effect of technical imperatives, it is the ground of phenomena complex in other ways, which bring into play, through and beyond the film and its seeing, with the spectator and through him, man and society, that is to say, in some way the psychological and social function of cinema.

Here, a parenthesis: let it be well understood that cinema, if it is art, is language too, system of signs that, indeed thereby, metaphors more or less ample, signify, have meaning. And precisely what is remarkable in it—as in literature, linked to words, language of languages, expression therefore; but perhaps in cinema more absolutely than in literature, to the degree that the image reflects more directly to the world as mind than do words, instruments of the mind as world—the remarkable thing is that art finds itself there so linked, mixed, with life—images with the world, beauty with meaning. So it is not pointless to envisage cinema

more from the point of view of its meanings and functions (it goes without saying that both meanings and functions elaborate and distinguish themselves only by and through the "writing" of each *cinéma*—we say direction), that is to say from the point of view of its forms and of the formal questions that the latter pose, rather than from the point of view of its themes (of the themes, at least, that the works propose).

The *salle obscure* is then the theatre of myths, at once aroused by and arousing those that the screen leads along. One knows well enough the phenomena



Luc Moullet: *Brigitte et Brigitte*, Françoise Vatel and Colette Descombes.

of fascination, of transference, of rapture, in short the "projections" of the spectators that enter in phase with the projection of the film. And commercial cinema, the cinema that one calls *cinéma de consommation*, cinema for consumption (that is to say until the present the clearest cinema, whatever its esthetic value), does nothing but respond to these needs, nothing but maintain them. Thus doing, it maintains also, and continues to make even more indispensable, the surrounding darkness. So there is between the *salle obscure* and the *film de consommation* a very old contract, always renewed, each being to the other reciprocally the means of survival. And one would be at a loss to decide which of the two has contributed the more to maintain the conventions

on which both are based. For, in what one calls "current production," if it is true that one finds constants, stereotypes, conventions of story, of characteristic temperaments, of characters, if these conventions seem even to the eyes of numerous spectators immutable laws, the darkness of the theatre carries almost the entire heavy responsibility. There is a darkness conditioning that sets fully acting, like a reflex, in the spectator who enters a theatre, the expectation of — indeed the desire for — forms that he already knows; proved schemes; all a completely confirmed paraphernalia.

In the first place, perhaps the most important, the feeling of leaving the world of the living, of approaching, in a darkness close to that of the confessional or of the bedroom, the shores of dreams. The shadow of the theatre incites the spectator to consider cinema only as an ingenious machinery for dreams (but these, alas, almost always the crudest and most futile), that is to say, as a negation of living, a putting of the world in parentheses (even if it is a matter of a world as futile and as crude). Whatever may be the curative benefits for the spectator (ridding of complexes, fulfillment of frustrations, and so on) that derive from this repudiating or sublimating use of cinema, it leads unfailingly to an equilibrium, to the stabilization of needs and supplies, of demands and responses—the same remedies (since they have proved themselves) brought to the same ills, arising again in the same way from as many factitious cures — equilibrium or other cancellation of causes and effects, total stagnation. Such is the schema of functioning of the cinematographic industry when it operates at full production. And if cinema were only this industry subject to simple laws, that is to say if there were no great *cinéastes*, artists to confuse the game and cheat at the cards, to disturb all the tranquilizing effect that the producer-consumer osmosis has for both of them (disturbing it by brushing the nap of the conventions the wrong way, by disappointing primary illusions through the intervention of secondary illusions), there would be strong odds that the cinema would have wound and unwound itself in a closed circuit, repeating forever the same forms (since they produce the same effects), recommencing invariably the same series, like an old actor whose mannerisms have brought him success.

In any case, the Hollywood cinema (B series as well as "ambitious" films, but always excepting the works of Hawks, Hitchcock, Lang, Ford, Fuller, DeMille, Sternberg, Preminger, Ray, Mankiewicz, and so on, in short, setting aside the *auteurs*, since moreover their efforts have been precisely to extricate themselves from Hollywood or to betray it), the Hollywood cinema has presented for more than thirty years the prototype of this closed circuit (in which supply

<sup>1</sup> *salle obscure*, a motion picture theatre specifically; *salle*, any theatre in general.



and demand seem created each for the other); that is to say, a golden age, not of cinema, but of industry, true golden age, since in it needs are immediately satisfied; which is a parenthesis in Time, which has excluded itself from History, which remains a zone of shadow in even the history of cinema, the reserve of inertia of its evolution. And one understands better, then, that those people who are "nostalgic" for the American cinema are nostalgic, ultimately, not for the golden age of an art—every moment of art being tragedy, and inscribing itself for that reason in the history, not only of the arts, but of man—but keep the nostalgia, as for a lost paradise, for this condition in a way prenatal, for these relations of a foetal order between the spectator—son and the industry—mother; what the absolute supporters of American cinema love in that cinema is not, never has been, the beauties, the audacities, or the new forms that the Hollywood freelances of genius dealt out; on the contrary, it was, and, sadly, it always is, an automatic satisfaction, without problems, of their desires (if one can call these impulses desires). Let them not din into our ears the grandeur of the American cinema if what they call its grandeur is the perpetuation of this condition and of these larval relations, from which all danger is banished, in which all accident is impossible, in short, if it is this setting of the cinema and of the spectator outside the world and outside time. There is no grandeur in this perfect mechanism. I see the strength of the American cinema rather in the *cinéastes* who are irreducible to it, and who, far from satisfying themselves without complexes in this marvelous Bourse without fluctuations, have tried (the Lang of *Fury* and of *Beyond a Reasonable Doubt*, the Ford of *The Grapes of Wrath*, of *Long Voyage Home*, and of *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*) to break its clockwork mechanism. And it is a fact that, however considerable the success of their films may have been, the spectator at them was always (but often in spite of himself) treated as an adult and as a man, not as a daydreaming fool. The only progress known by this cinema in closed circuit that has excluded itself from the change of cinematographic forms is a progress still of the industrial sort, brought about by higher and higher bids aimed at the augmentation of demand and the increase of consumption, through advertising exaggerating of needs, and through inflation of its enticements (that is the case with super-productions, last effort to extend a supersaturated market yawning with rapture). As for esthetic innovations, stylistic audacities and inventions, they are, of course, the work of those rebels against the system who were more or less consciously *auteurs*, and they were brought about, not for the *salles obscures*, but, each time, against them.

Therefore the existence and even the new breadth of what one calls "the

misunderstanding" has nothing surprising about it. Entering the cinema, the spectator is at first prisoner of the dark theatre; conditioned by it to receive certain impressions, to expect certain thoroughly standardized series of emotions, he must carry through a real effort of resistance, he must undertake to detach himself, in order to appreciate the slightest *film d'auteur*, film that, by definition, does not conform to the norms vaguely fixed by the tradition of the *salles obscures*. Once in the darkness, the spectator must remain awake in order to understand something of the films that refuse to consider him as a spectator asleep. (Conditioning, habit, play a major role here; curiously, the ordinary spectator, if he has moderately frequented the *salles obscures*, will have kept from his experiences in a state of half-sleep only what was repetition, identity, conformism in them; his cinematographic "culture" obliterates the extraordinary, and retains only clichés, conventions, that then seem in his eyes natural tendencies of the cinema, all that thwarts them, by the opposite reaction, seeming monstrous or a failure. And one knows, too, that children grasp immediately the most complex and the least common narrative structures, are not afraid of the maddest of ellipses, in short, show an openness of mind that a long experience of the cinema as "diversion" has as its effect precisely to close forever.)

No doubt that is why the *cinéma d'auteur* is only tolerated, and still with bad grace, by the spectator. It is because there is a hiatus between the condition of the spectator in the *salle obscure* and the condition of receptivity or of lucid participation that every film that is not "for consumption" asks of him. Why? Either the film constitutes the natural extension of the dark theatre, antechamber of dreams, and then the spectator, having left the world, denies other people, and denies himself as another person; he is alone; he follows the easy sweet thread of a dream that surrounds him like a cocoon; the world that he has before his eyes unreels its figures with the ease of a dream; there is a hypnosis, sympathy, that any infraction of anticipated forms, as of promised themes, would break painfully. Or else the film wills itself, in spite of and beyond the *salle obscure*, extension of and commentary on the world outside. Then the spectator is lost; on the one hand he remains subject to the conditioning of the theatre, and finds himself borne by the theatre towards the customary satisfaction of his expectations—satisfaction that the film does not give; on the other hand he sees himself confronted by the film with himself and with others, unwearingly brought by the images back to the world, process of maintenance of awareness that the *salle obscure*, in its turn, opposes.

Then one can allege that there is an antimony between the responsible cinema (what from Griffith to Renoir, and

from Lang to Godard, we believe to be the modern cinema) and the place of its practice. The "misunderstanding" arises from the fact that the modern cinema (which is a confrontation of the world as it is of art: see Godard) must always pass through the darkness (omission of the world and obliteration of art) of the theatre. The modern cinema needs *salles claires*, light theatres, that neither absorb nor annihilate, as *obscurité* does, the *clarté* that comes from the screen; that, on the contrary, make it radiate, that set facing each other, on a level of equality, the character and the spectator, both of them emerged from the darkness.

What characterizes the modern cinema is precisely that the hero of the film is the spectator; that the film constitutes for the spectator the apprenticeship for this ungrateful and central role. How to understand a cinema that puts us on stage if we cannot know where we are, and who? *Cinéma-vérité*, the filmed inquiry, the eye-witness account, the interview, of which the great *cinéastes* of the past were almost all precursors, and which have so much influenced, directly or not, those of today, is the best illustration of the need for *clarté*, of this act of awareness, necessary today for the new cinema as for the new spectator. The extensive use made by television of the methods of *cinéma-vérité* is not accidental; the "little screen" is also the only screen that often opens on — literally — a "light room"; moreover — seeing the masterpieces of cinema again on television confirms it—if one is not a maniac for the *salle obscure*, and if one does not rack one's brains to recreate more or less happily the conditions of seeing-in-darkness of the motion picture theatres, if then one sees these films again in a half-light propitious to attention, I believe that one sees them differently and better than in a theatre, on a level of trust and quality, such that recipes no longer create illusion, and beauties are charged with more meaning.

Of course, this *salle claire* is also a dream: but no longer the dream of a cinema of escape, the dream of a cinema that would derive from life and, in the end, would be truly our reflection on life (it is in this sense that today one can "live the film").

As the precursor Moullet said speaking of his *Brigitte et Brigitte*: "It is a film into which one enters to meet reality again, from which one emerges to lose that perspective and return into the fiction of the street." No doubt that in the long run the new cinema (and as such one must understand the cinema that is significant for us) will give rise to this new spectator, who will come to judge the world and to know himself as the screen will show them both, in their truth. This new spectator, taking up again the words of Sternberg, will not tire of calling for "more light."

Jean-Louis COMOLLI



# Editor's Eyrie

by Andrew Sarris

We apologize to Randall Conrad for not crediting him with the excellent English translation of Pasolini's essay on "The Cinema of Poetry" in *Cahiers du Cinema* in English, Number 6, December 1966. We do so credit and thank Mr. Conrad now. . . Readers of *Cahiers du Cinema* in English are invited to submit their ten-best lists for 1966 before January 31, 1967. This year the poll will combine the opinions of readers of *Cahiers* and the *Village Voice* and listeners of the editor's Film in Focus program on WBAI. Every vote will be counted. Every film will be mentioned. . . This summer I covered the Berlin Film Festival for *Cahiers du Cinema* (The Paris or Parent Publication). My column was duly translated into French, and now I can reprint the original. I do so now without much fuss or fanfare or pointed pictorialism simply because I feel so remote from the events of last summer in Berlin, and because the Festival atmosphere applies a peculiar pressure on one's prose. The column was headed: "Godard Ist Da!" It reads as follows in the untranslated original: "'Godard Ist Da' was the headline on the Festival Newspaper the morning after *Masculin Feminin* was shown to an appreciative Berlin audience. Berlin has always been Godard's city from the days of Hans Lukas to the present, and the Berliners seem particularly attuned to Godard's moral sensibility. Godardian influences were to be found elsewhere. Nikolai van der Heyde's *Een Ochtend van zes weken* was virtually a homage to Godard, and Peter Schamoni's highly touted *Schönzeit für Fuchse* begins in a film publicity office where the journalist hero asks the clerk heroine to supply him with stills of *La Femme Mariée*. If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, it can also be a source of irritation to the director imitated. Certainly the past six years have seen so many bad imitations of Resnais, Godard and Antonioni that Resnais, Godard and Antonioni themselves have suffered grave damage as they frantically change direction to evade their imitators. Alfred Hitchcock has even had his genre taken away from him by James Bond. In this respect, Film Festivals take away with one hand what they bestow with another. In the beginning, the idea of the Film Festival was to reveal the diversity of themes and styles around the world, but now Festivals are beginning to impose a certain uniformity on directors around the world. Consequently, we have a Godardian film from Holland, an Antonioniesque film from Brazil (Walter Hugo Khouri's *O Corpo Ardente*), not to mention Florestano Vancini's Man-

tua Mon Amour from Italy (*La Stagione del Nostro Amore*).

"Otherwise, Berlin resounded with the gunfire of highly symbolic hunts derived from the classical allegory of *La Règle du jeu*. Carlos Saura's *La Caza* was the best film in this genre, and in some ways the revelation of the Festival. Not since Bunuel have we seen such clean, trenchant and controlled direction from Spain. Yngve Gamlin's *Jakten* from Sweden was less successful in its ellipses and longuers against the austere Swedish snowscape. *Jakten* seemed morally abstract whereas *La Caza* was painfully precise in its political implications. An important consideration for this genre with its tendency toward facile symbolism. Schamoni's *Schönzeit für Fuchse* was afflicted with the kind of romantic ennui that demonstrates the fallacy of expressive form. An indecisive protagonist is no justification for an indecisive mise-en-scene.

"Otherwise the big debates on the Kufursterdam raged between the supporters of Godard's *Masculin Feminin* and Polanski's *Cul de Sac*, both of which films, as well as their auteurs, represent relatively known quantities to the readers of *Cahiers*. The Festival Jury compromised by giving the Golden Bear to the Polanski film and the best actor award to Jean-Pierre L aud. Lola Albright was named best actress in George Axelrod's maiden directorial effort, *Lord Love a Duck*, a dark comedy on lunacy in Southern California that I enjoyed more than did most of my colleagues. Satyajit Ray was given a consolation award for *Nayak*, a film that his admirers found disconcertingly superficial and naive. The only other major discovery at Berlin was Costas Manousakis whose first film, *O Fivos*, treated lurid story material with admirable force and dignity. Sylvio Narizzano showed some talent with tasteless material in *Georgy Girl*, and the rest mercifully merits silence.

"The Max Ophuls retrospective was the highlight of the Festival and John Gillett of Sight and Sound skillfully engineered a commendation of Ophuls and *Die verkaufte Braut* past a Fipresci Jury of Critics. The whirling elegance of the Ophulsian universe made most of the modern movies look tawdry by comparison, and yet Ophuls followed most of the conventions of his time and place, finding true liberty of expression in a tradition of discipline. Does a moral lurk here? Perhaps a moral lurks also in the chaos of the New Brazilian Cinema. There were also several of Mack Sennett's comedies from 1913 to 1925 on display. These were surprisingly uneven, but by far the best was a 1920

opus called *Don't Weaken*. The organization of the Festival was superbly integrated into the New Europa Center, and Berlin remains the most fascinating Festival site in the world."

Looking back over this July report in December, I find it too smug and schematic for comfort. However cynical the reporter may be, he almost inevitably succumbs to the delusion that the future of the cinema is being resolved at that Festival which has chosen him as a professional pontificator. The Cinema is much larger than the sum of all its Festivals. Any Festival can only nibble on a tiny slice of the Cinema, and any critic or correspondent is limited to the most tentative notes on the subject. Curiously, *Masculin Feminin* and *Cul de Sac* have since come and gone in New York for critical lambasting. Satyajit Ray's *Nayak* may never open in New York, and *Georgy Girl* is one of the big hits of the season. There is no sign of the Dutch, Brazilian, Italian and German films to which I refer, and their absence is not felt too deeply. The Cinema goes on. Bresson and *Balthazar* one day, Resnais and *La Guerre Est Finie* another, Blake Edwards and *What Did You Do in the War, Daddy?* still another. Truffaut and Antonioni, Ford and Hitchcock, Bunuel and Godard, Losey and Lester, Anger and Warhol. The areas of analysis and association multiply beyond measure, and I become more skeptical than ever about detailed blueprints about the future of the Cinema. I would like to jot down some tentative notes on my skepticism at this time, partly to remind myself of some new trends, and partly to begin a trans-Atlantic debate on overall *Cahiers* policy.

1. I sense that *Cahiers* policy may be swinging too far away from the American cinema. Preminger, Minnelli and Anthony Mann seem to have been abandoned entirely. Minnelli and Mann are in serious career difficulties, and could use assistance from any quarter to regain some of the assignments now being doled out to impersonal television technicians. As for Preminger, his *Bunny Lake is Missing* should have been singled out as a return to top form. The arguments against *Bunny Lake* seem ludicrous in the context of the strenuous rationalizations for Hawks' *Red Line 7000*. I respect *Cahiers*' defense of Hawks, but I question their resistance to *Bunny Lake*. There also seems to be a persistent effort afoot to denigrate Phil Karlson, a director I happen to enjoy in a marginal way. This denigration takes an extreme form when, in a pan of *The Silencers*, the *Cahiers* critic suggests that Stella Stevens is trying to be another Sandra Dee. In this corner's



opinion, Stella Stevens is everything Cahiers mistakes Shirley MacLaine and Debbie Reynolds to be. A minor point, but symptomatic of a divergence of taste. Stella Stevens has come up in films by Minnelli, Quine and Karlson, and thus is merely a pawn in some larger game of critical reorientation by which every American director below Hawks, Hitchcock and possibly Ford will be consigned to the dustbin of history. Again, a matter of taste. However, I feel that negative rigidity is more harmful than positive rigidity. If you like a director to excess, he may embarrass you from time to time with unpopular films, but if you dislike a director to excess, you are liable to overlook his best work. It is my opinion that the great achievements of the *Politique des Auteurs*, particularly on the American Cinema, have been positive rather than negative. The discoveries of Hitchcock and Hawks, the rediscoveries of Ford and Griffith, have been infinitely more satisfying than the downgrading of Zinnemann, Huston, Wyler and Stevens. Recent kindness extended in the pages of Cahiers to such relatively undirected Kramerishnesses as *The Americanization of Emily* and *The Bedford Incident* threatens to thrust Cahiers into a sector of extreme social consciousness that *Sight and Sound* has abandoned to some degree. The belated discovery of writers and producers in the Hollywood apparatus can provide useful information, but it is absurd to credit glib producer types like John Houseman with the stylistic sweat of Vincente Minnelli.

2. Cahiers still resists the implications of the scene in Britain. Losey, Donner and Lester seem to be treated as deadly rivals of the original Cahiers directors. (I am curious to find out what Cahiers will think of Antonioni's mod masterpiece, *Blow-Up*.) The fact remains that Americans, by and large, are more interested in what is going on in London now than what may be going on in the future in Warsaw, Prague, Rio and Lisbon. As a long-time champion of Chabrol in America, I am entitled to claim equal seriousness for Losey, even in a stylistic experiment like *Modesty Blaise*. Donner's direction of a Pinter script was underrated by Delahaye. Lester has been treated strictly as a sociological phenomenon etc.

3. Jean-Luc Godard sounds in some interviews a disconcertingly Faustian note with middle-range French directors like Molinaro or Sautet, who he feels, should follow Resnais rather than Verneuil. I would think that Molinaro should follow Molinaro and Sautet Sautet just as Resnais follows Resnais and Verneuil Verneuil. There are those in America who believe firmly that Godard should follow David Lean. He shouldn't. He can't. He won't. Every director does the best he can with the material at his disposal, and every artist yearns for immortality. I simply can't believe in the myth of

the artist who passes up immortality for money. Verneuil, for all his limitations, is better off being the best Verneuil he can be than trying to be a fifth-rate Resnais. Molinaro and Sautet believe sincerely that they are confronting challenges ducked by the French cinema. On a higher level, Melville tries to bridge the cerebral French tradition with the muscular mystique of America. The tendency in Cahiers seems to be to penalize directors who break out of their compartments. There is no law that says all European directors are obliged to be intellectual while all Hollywood directors are obliged to be intuitive. It may work out that way, but critics must be always alert to the emergence of "outsiders" in national traditions.

4. Nonetheless I agree with Jean-Louis Comolli that there is too much worship of Hollywood for itself rather than for its exceptions. In America, the pernicious doctrines of pop and camp tend to obliterate the distinctions between what is good and bad in Hollywood movies by an all-encompassing condescension that is beyond criticism and against interpretation. Yet as a perceptive reader has observed, Comolli's defense of *Pierrot le Fou* rests essentially on a repudiation of all critical interpretations. I believe that Godard himself must be subjected to the same precise evaluation as are all his American colleagues.

5. If I question some Cahiers tendencies in Paris, it is not because I have any pat answers here in New York. As I write at the end of 1966, I have no clear vision of the future. I merely hope and pray for more illumination in 1967, and I hope that Cahiers du Cinema in French and in English will continue to contribute to that illumination.

We are grateful for the severe scrutiny of Dr. Gurudas Bhattacharya, Federation of Film Societies of India, 54, Ganesh Chunder Avenue, Calcutta 13, India. Dr. Bhattacharya writes as follows: "While the English version of Cahiers du Cinema is a delightful dish to the cinephile—to whom French is Greek—all over the world, the printing errors and technical mistakes strewn—should I say like post-autumn flowers or mines laid by the retreating battalions—through the polished lines of the journal make reading a painful and disturbing affair, and congratulations strictly conditioned, though not originally intended. The precious interview of Satyajit Ray by none other than Georges Sadoul ('From Film to Film') is a case in instance.

"The other evening I learnt from Ray himself that the article bore some factual errata, perhaps due to the hurried conversations in the midst of hectic festive days and that he himself was writing back on that account. My corrigendum is that of a reader's view, and here it is.

"Page 14, Col 1, para 2, line 1: 'My father Sekumar' should be 'My father

Sukumar.' Line 3: 'He' in place of 'Me.' Para 3, line 3-4: 'Tagore University' is an adnoun postpositioned; the correct nomenclature is 'Wishwabharati University.' Col 2, para 5, line 6: 'Bengalee' and not 'Bengal.' Para 6, line 3-4: 'Das Gupta,' that is, 'Hari Sadhan Das Gupta.' Col 3, line 7: 'Barrack-pore,' not 'Berhapore.' Para 3, line 12 (and elsewhere): 'Banerji' in place of 'Bannerji.' Page 15, Col 1, lines 12-13: 'Bengalee' in place of 'Bengal.' Col 2, para 2, line 6: read 'Chief Minister of Bengal' and not 'Prime Minister . . . who sits in Delhi!' Col 3, para 1, line 9: 'Bibhuti Banerji,' not 'Bisbhuti Bannerji.' Page 16, Col 2, para 3, lines 6, 8, 15: 'Brahmu'—the correct term is 'Brahma.' Line 10: 'Roy,' not 'Rai.' Para 4, line 6: 'India' in place of 'Bengal.' Page 17: the still printed above belongs to 'Mahanagar' and not to 'Charulata,' and the husband is Anil Chatterji and not Soumitra Chatterji. Col 1, para 1, line 12: 'actor' should be replaced by 'actress.' Lines 13, 16, 18: delete 'He' and 'he,' put 'She' and 'she.' Col 2, line 2: Replace 'Ivarenda' by 'Narendra.' Col 3, para 1, line 8: 'bungalow'—and unnecessary anptyxic vowel. Line 12: 'imposter'—yet another printing mistake! Para 2, line 2: replace 'Bacha' by 'Bagha.' Page 19, col 1, para 1, line 3: 'Nitin Rose,' not 'Kumar . . .' Col 2, line 3: 'Dilip,' not 'Delip.' Page 62, col 3, para 2, line 2: the same 'Bibhuti Banerji' who is not 'a new Bengali writer.'

"Under the heading 'Fimography of Satyajit Ray' (page 63): All 'Bannerji's' should be spelt as 'Banerji's.' Col 1, para 3, line 5 and also elsewhere: 'Chabi,' and not 'Chobi.' Para 5, line 2: 'The World of Apu'—don't understand why repeated? Col 2, para 2, line 3-4: delete 'novel' and put 'three short stories.' Col 3, para 2, line 4: 'Narendra' and not 'Ivarenda.' Line 7: who is this mysterious 'Kapurush o' Mahapurush' cast in Ray's 'Mahanagar?' In fact, 'Kapurush o' Mahapurush' is the original title of Ray's later film 'The Coward and the Saint.' Line 8: 'Jaya' printed as 'Java.' Para 5, line 6: 'Soumintra'—why this consonant please?

"There are some other errors too, and also in other articles. In 'From Film to Film' Georges Sadoul (we met him here. What a sweet personality this 'young' man radiates!) is, of course, aware of 'copyist's errors,' yet they are too many to be overlooked, and I don't know who really—the copyist or the printer's devil himself—is responsible for the painful production of a valuable interview 'that can serve to make the personality of Satyajit Ray better known in France'—and for that all over the world."

Hope better production henceforth worthy of the tradition of New York.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,  
Dr. Gurudas Bhattacharya  
Convener Film Study Group  
Federation of Film Societies of India."



## Jottings From Other Publications

(Continued from page 7)

will never be washed away. Absolutely not. You have hands pure as Kantism. But he no longer has hands, Peguy said. Blind then, and without hands, only with feet to run away from reality, a coward in a word, or perhaps simply weak, old and tired, which comes down to the same thing. Nothing surprising in your not recognizing my voice when I speak to you, *à propos* of the banning of Suzanne Simonin, la religieuse de Diderot, of murder. No. Nothing surprising in this profound cowardice. You play the ostrich with your interior memories. How then could you hear me, André Malraux, I who telephone you from the exterior, from a distant country, free France."

This letter was read and countersigned by François Truffaut who, by chance no doubt, but a very curious chance all the same, was in London, "far from Paris," Godard said, where he was filming *Fahrenheit 451* "temperature at which books burn."

Thus all the writers of *Cahiers* would well conclude their demonstration, for this *Affaire*, of their nearness in alienation on the one hand and in freedom on the other—that too of a sentence of Charles Péguy, written in *Notre Jeunesse*, noble book on another *Affaire*:

"Our *cahiers*<sup>1</sup> became, not by chance, but they constituted themselves by a slow elaboration, by powerful, by secret affinities, by a kind of long evaporation of *politique*, as a completely free company of men who all believe in something, beginning with typography, which is art and *métier* among the most beautiful." Another *Affaire*, other *Cahiers*. But is there not in all that something, alas, deeply analogous? And was not Péguy speaking of it when he wrote also:

"Political parties, parliamentary parties, all political parties, can hold conversation only in political, parliamentary language, they can engage in, sustain, action only on political, parliamentary ground, on the political, parliamentary level . . .

"Of all that we do, of all that makes the life and the strength of a people, of our actions and of our works, of our proceedings and of our conduct, of our souls and of our lives, they make ceaselessly, automatically, almost innocently, a translation into political, parliamentary language. Thus they hear nothing of it,

they understand nothing of it, and they prevent others from understanding any of it. They deform us, they distort us ceaselessly, both within themselves in their own imaginations, and among those who follow them, those who are of them, in the imaginations of those who follow them. All that we say, all that we do, they translate, they betray. *Traducunt. Tradunt.*"

That is what has happened to a film of Jacques Rivette that translates without betraying anything—even warning its spectator by a phrase of Bourdaloue, put as inscription to the film. Bourdaloue, Jesuit, preacher, and free man, born at Bourges (!) in 1632.

—Jacques BONTEMPS

## Gianni Di Venanzo

He was, with Portalupi, Rotunno and Tonti, the most famous of the Italian chief cameramen. Born in Termoli December 18, 1920, he started in cinema as cameraman for *Un Colpo di Pistola* and *Ossessione*, *Roma Città Aperta* (*Open City*), *Paisà* (*Paisan*), *Caccia Tragica*, *La Terra Trema*, *Miracolo a Milano* (*Miracle in Milan*), then after having been chief cameraman of films often uneven, between 1952 and 1956, he became one of the favorite technicians of Fellini, Rosi and Antonioni, the photographer of the most renowned Italian films of these last years. Filming *Anyone for Venice?* in Italy, Joseph L. Mankiewicz engaged him, but he died in the midst of the filming. The list below sufficiently reveals his importance.

Principal films: 1952 *Achtung banditi* (Lizzani). *Il capitano de Venezia* (Puccini). 1953 *Terra straniera* (Corbucci). 1954 *Cronache di poveri amanti* (*Tale of Poor Lovers*) (Lizzani). *Le ragazze di San Frediano* (Zurlini). 1955 *Le amiche* (Antonioni). *Gli sbandati* (Maselli). *Lo scapolo* (Pietrangeli). 1956 *Suor Ietizia* (Camerini). *Difendo il mio amore* (V. Sherman). *Terrone sulla città* (Majano). 1957 *Un ettaro di cielo* (Casadio). *Rascel-Fifi* (Leoni). *La sfida* (Rosi). *Il grido* (*The cry*) (Antonioni). *Kean* (Gassman). *La legge e legge* (Christian-Jaque). 1958 *I soliti ignoti* (Monicelli). *La prima notte* (Cavalcanti). *Rascel-Marine* (Leoni). 1959 *I magliari* (Rosi). *Volare* (Tellini). *Il nemico di mia moglie* (Puccini). *Vento de Sud* (Provenzae). 1960 *I defuni* (Maselli). *La notte* (Antonioni). *Crimen* (Camerini). 1961 *Savatore Giuliano* (Rosi). *Il carabinieri a cavallo* (Lizzani). 1962 *Otto e mezzo* (8½) (Fellini). *L'eclisse* (Antonioni). 1963 *La ragazza di bube* (Comenini). *I basilischi* (Wertmüller). *Le mani sulla città* (*Hands over the city*) (Rosi).



Shooting *Anyone for Venice?*: Di Venanzo several days before his death, with Susan Hayward.

*Gli indifferenti* (Maselli). 1964 *Alta infedeltà* (*High Infidelity*). *La donna e una cosa meravigliosa* (Bolognini). *Il momento della verità* (*The Moment of Truth*) (Rosi). *Giulietta degli spiriti* (*Juliet of the Spirits*) (Fellini). 1965 *Anyone for Venice?* (Mankiewicz).

## Herbert Marshall

Born May 23, 1890 at Marlow (London), his real name H. Brough Falcon Marshall, to Americans he was the incarnation of British seduction (as Adolphe Menjou and Maurice Chevalier were for French). Son of an actor, he made his own first appearance on the boards in 1911, but had a leg amputated during the First World War, a war in which he served in the same regiment as Ronald Colman. Noted actor of the theatre, he began to appear in cinema from 1927 and played with most of the major American actresses: Jeanne Eagels, Bette Davis, Garbo, Marlene Dietrich, Norma Shearer, Katherine Hepburn, Jean Simmons, Barbara Stanwyck, Ida Lupino, Gail Russell, Gene Tierney, Anne Baxter, Jean Peters, Arlene Dahl, Joan Crawford, Janet Leigh. From young leading man, he passed rather quickly to roles as husband (of Bette Davis in two films of Wyler, *The Letter* and *Little Foxes*, of Garbo in *The Painted Veil*), then of father (of Jean Simmons in *Angel Face*, of Janet Leigh in *The Black Shield of Falworth*, of Laraine Day in *Foreign Correspondent* of Hitchcock, in which he personified the dangerous president of the pacifist society). His performances in character roles of

<sup>1</sup> *Cahiers de la quinzaine* (1900-1914), review devoted to new writers and to liberal political ideas—Tr.



police inspectors, of politicians or of doctors (notably in the excellent *The Caretakers* of Hal Bartlett) were also noted, but strangely it was in adaptations of Somerset Maugham that he found his chosen terrain: *The Letter*, *The Razor's Edge*, *The Painted Veil* and especially *The Moon and Sixpence* of Albert Lewin, on the life of Gauguin.

**Principal films:** 1927 *Mumsie* (Wilcox). 1928 *The Letter* (De Limur). 1930 *Murder* (Hitchcock). 1932 *Blonde Venus* (von Sternberg). *Trouble in Paradise* (Lubitsch). 1934 *Four Frightened People* (De Mille). *The Painted Veil* (Boleslavsky). *Riptide* (Goulding). 1935 *The Good Fairy* (Wyler). *The Dark Angel* (Franklin). *If You Could Only Cook* (Seiter). 1936 *The Lady Consents* (Roberts). *A Woman Rebels* (Sandrich). *Till We Meet Again* (Florey). *Forgotten Faces* (Dupont). *Girls Dormitory* (Cumings). 1937 *Breakfast for Two* (Santell). *Angel* (Lubitsch). 1938 *Mad about Music* (Taurag). *Always Good-bye* (Lanfield). *Woman Against Woman* (Sinclair). 1940 *The Letter* (Wyler). *Foreign Correspondent* (Hitchcock). 1941 *Adventure in Washington* (Green). *The Little Foxes* (Wyler). *When Ladies Meet* (Leonard). 1942 *The Moon and Sixpence* (Lewin). *Kathleen* (Bucquet). 1943 *Flight for Freedom* (Mendes). *Forever and a Day*. *Young Ideas* (Dassin). 1944 *Andy Hardy's Blonde Trouble* (Seitz). 1945 *The Enchanted Cottage* (Cromwell). *The Unseen* (Allen). 1946 *The Razor's Edge* (Goulding). *Crack Up* (Reis). 1947 *Duel in the Sun* (Vidor). *The High Wall* (Bernhardt). 1949 *The Secret Garden* (Ardrey). 1950 *The Whipped* (Enfield). 1951 *Anne of the Indies* (J. Tourneur). 1953 *Angel Face* (Preminger). 1954 *The Black Shield of Falworth* (Mate). *Riders of the Stars* (Carlson). *Gog* (Strock). 1956 *The Virgin Queen* (Koster). *Wick-*

*ed As They Come* (Hughes). *The Weapon* (Guest). 1958 *Stage Struck* (Lumet). *The Fly* (Neumann). 1960 *College Confidential* (Zugsmith). *Midnight Lace* (Miller). 1962 *Five Weeks in a Balloon* (Allen). 1963 *The Caretakers* (H. Bartlett) *The List of Adrian Messenger* (Huston).

## Frank S. Nugent

Born May 27, 1908, in New York, and dead January 5, 1966 in Los Angeles, he was in particular the favorite scenarist of John Ford from 1948, and that for eleven films (*Fort Apache*, *Three Godfathers*, *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*, *Wagonmaster*, *The Quiet Man*, *Mr. Roberts*, *The Searchers*, *The Rising of the Moon*, *Last Hurrah*, *Two Rode Together*, *Donovan's Reef*), as at home in the political parable and in the Irish comedy as in the Western. Away from Ford—whose deepest ideas, it seems, he espoused, even in the description of a country of which he was not himself a native—he seemed less inspired; better to pass over *The Paratrooper* (1954 Terence Young) and *Flame Over India* (1961 Thompson). On the other hand, *Angel Face* (1953 Preminger) and *Tulsa* (1949 Stuart Heisler) showed two rather unusual feminine characters. This former crime reporter (he followed at first hand the kidnapping of the Lindbergh baby), ex-film critic of the *New York Times*, (whom, they say, Zanuck attached to Fox in 1940 to avoid having his films systematically torn to pieces), gave to the western, aside from his scripts for Ford, two fine scenarios, *Tall Men* (1955) of Walsh and especially *Gumman's Walk* (1958), the strength of whose story (the increasing ecstasy killing in a young man and the final killing

of the father by his own son) clearly went beyond the competence of the director (Phil Karlson).

## Hedda Hopper

Before becoming, together with Louella Parsons, Elsa Maxwell and Sheilah Graham, one of the most formidable columnists of Hollywood, she acted in an impressive number of films, particularly silent, most of which have disappeared even from the memories of the most confirmed amateurs. Only a few still return to mind: the excellent *Don Juan* of Alan Crosland (1926), in which she was the Marquise Rinaldo, *Adam and Evil* of Robert Leonard, *Alice Adams* (1935) of George Stevens, *Pilgrimage* (1933) of John Ford, *As You Desire Me* (1932) of George Fitzmaurice, remarkable adaptation of *Come tu mi vuoi* of Pirandello, which cast Garbo opposite von Stroheim, *I Wanted Wings* (1941) of Leisen, *Reap the Wild Wind* (1942) of DeMille, *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) of Billy Wilder, in which she played herself and *The Women* (1939), the strange film of Cukor, in which no man appeared. Daughter of a butcher, she was born at Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania, June 8, 1890, her real name Elda Fury, and died in Hollywood February 1, 1966, after a particularly full career, in which radio, books (a rather venomous work on the world of cinema, *From Under My Hat*, published in 1952), films (her first, *Battle of Hearts*, 1916, with William Farnum) politics (fierce Republican, together with John Wayne, Ward Bond and Adolphe Menjou, she attacked with violence the leftist section of Hollywood), formed a cocktail more bitter and complaisant than agreeable. Renowned for her collection of hats . . . —P. B.

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