

the value of training in direction, the pragmatic Westerners despising film schools and training schemes and nearly all telling the young to go out and make films just like that, without money or backing; while the Easterners have massive technical knowledge behind them. Out of the chat, in fact, patterns emerge, and details of interest rather than aesthetic enlightenment. There's Bertolucci and Milos Forman, Arthur Penn and Roger Corman and Mike Nichols and the others I have quoted

or mentioned (Polanski, Lester). And there is an introduction in which Gelmis puts out the often put-out idea that soon it may "be possible to make commercially viable movies in the same way that one writes a book or makes a painting."

When that day comes, and superstars are cheap as sprats, will some of the mystique that surrounds them fade? Meantime they glitter, much more remote and splendid than the mere performers who serve their vision.

The Explosion of Film Studies

By Roger Manvell

IT WAS NOT SO LONG AGO that there was only half a shelf's worth of books with any authority on the history, art, and technique of the film. During the 1960s, the graph of book production on cinema resembled that of the growth in world population; it had the upward trajectory of a rocket. The old books, the so-called classics of comment and criticism and history, are on the dealers' rarity lists and beginning to command relatively high prices. Dover Publications in New York have started a reprint series in soft-cover of such old-timers as Hampton's *A History of the Movies* (1931, now more tactfully titled *History of the American Film Industry*) and that charming, gossipy autobiography, *When the Movies were Young* by Mrs D. W. Griffith, which first came out in 1925.

The 1920s, in fact, were the first decade of substantial writing on film in several of its aspects—historical (Terry Ramsaye's *A Million and One Nights*, 1926, garrulous, fascinating, unreliable), and aesthetic (the first essays published in French by such writers as Delluc, Epstein, Moussinac, and the Italian Canudo, as well as Pudovkin's illuminating *Film Technique*, which Ivor Montagu translated in 1928). They had all been preceded by that pioneer

theorist of the cinema in the United States, Vachel Lindsay, whose *Art of the Film* appeared in 1915.

The books to which we look back now as establishing an independent, authoritative approach to the subject are Paul Rotha's *The Film Till Now* (1930) and *Documentary Film* (1936), Rudolf Arnheim's aesthetic of cinema, *Film* (1933), and Lewis Jacobs's substantial *The Rise of the American Film* (1939), which combined in a single, detailed historical survey an account of the art, economics and sociology of the medium, while still pre-war in the United States the sociological aspects were explored further in Margaret Thorp's *America at the Movies* (1939), Leo Rosten's *Hollywood* (1941), and, a little later, Hortense Powdermaker's *Hollywood: the Dream Factory* (1951). New sights were set for post-war work in such books as Ernest Lindgren's *The Art of the Film* (1948), the large-scale historical research in France by René Jeanne, Charles Ford, and Georges Sadoul, while in Britain Rachael Low and I, sponsored by the British Film Institute, started the research which led to her multi-volume *The History of the British Film 1896-1918* (1948-51). It is good to know that Dr Low has returned to the subject again after some twenty years' interval, and that as we go to press her fourth volume covering the 1920s is about to appear.¹

ROGER MANVELL is a Visiting Fellow at the University of Sussex and Director of the Department of Film History at the London Film School. His recent books include "New Cinema in Britain" (*Studio Vista*, 1968) and, with Heinrich Fraenkel, "The German Cinema" (*Dent*, 1971). He is about to publish "Shakespeare and the Film" and is working on an *Encyclopaedia of Film History*.

THIS IS BY WAY OF background to what is happening today, when we see a proliferation of books on the cinema composed on every

¹ *The History of the British Film, 1918-1929*. By RACHAEL LOW. Allen & Unwin, £7.35.

level. Unlike the traditional arts, with their background of subsidised academic study and research, film studies have had to develop the hard way. Pioneer writers both inside and outside the industry have had to conduct their researches in their own time and mostly at their own expense, with insufficient access to the original works about which they were writing. In the earlier days, one often had to rely on a fleeting memory of a film seen once only in the past, on scattered contemporary reviews, or on inadequate references in the few books available. The establishment of the British Film Institute in the 1930s was a great encouragement, but again we had to wait until its collection of books, journals, documents, and of course the films themselves began to assume useful proportions.

This recent high output of books on the film is therefore trying to some extent to make up for lost time. Subsidised study at university level has begun in the U.S., and in this country in the Film Department at the Slade School of Fine Art, pioneered by Thorold Dickinson. Professor Dickinson's new book, *A Discovery of Cinema*², beautifully produced and illustrated, is a distillation of knowledge, devotion, and hard practical experience in a recalcitrant medium, with its built-in strife between the artist-individualist and the entrepreneur in all his forms—impresario, producer, distributor, exhibitor. Among the unique points of interest in Professor Dickinson's mainly historical survey is the way in which he relates the technical facts of the medium to its artistic development. For example, he points out that Griffith was forced to use immature girls of 15 or so as leading ladies because of "the physical nature of the film stock which could make a pleasing photograph image only with smooth, open-faced teenagers"; and he discusses the total change in photographic values which resulted from the adoption of panchromatic stock in the 1920s as a medium for black-and-white cinematography, substituting subtle gradations of tone for the soot-and-whitewash of orthochromatic stock, but at the same time sacrificing the latter's capacity to reproduce depth of

focus. He divides the historical mainstream of cinema into two channels—the cinema of *montage* derived from Griffith and Eisenstein and based on the fragmentation of the action and its subsequent assembly through editing to provide a dynamic synthesis, with deliberate visual shock, and the cinema of what the French call *plan-séquence*, the prolonged shot favoured initially by Stroheim in which the planned continuity of the action in successive camera set-ups largely does away with subsequent creativity at the cutting-bench. This is one form of cinema which has more recently supervened, especially now that depth of focus has been restored, and the large screen enables the action to be viewed more fully, rather than fragmented and re-assembled through montage-editing. Parallel with Professor Dickinson's book comes a well thought-out American study of the feature film—*The Dramatic Art of the Film* by Alan Casty.³ Chapter by chapter he analyses the nature and technical presentation of the feature film in what amounts to an excellent introduction to the medium as an entirely new form of dramatic art.

BOOKS SUCH as Thorold Dickinson's are bound to be rare events. Most serious books on the cinema are the work of the mature *student* rather than the practitioner who is also an aesthete. Few film makers of the first rank have commented in detail, at book length, on their work (exceptions include Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and more currently Hitchcock, *via* Truffaut, and Losey, *via* Tom Milne and the tape-recorder). Useful books have been assembled out of less-sustained, single-shot interviews with pioneers and others, such as those published recently in Ivan Butler's Pelican, *The Making of Feature Films*,⁴ and in hardback by Bernard Rosenberg and Harry Silverstein, in *The Real Tinsel*.⁵ *The Real Tinsel* belongs to the Terry Ramsaye tradition; it is full of good stories and personal reminiscence told by old-timers such as Zukor, Wanger, Blanche Sweet and Mae Marsh. The danger of these reminiscences, unless read purely for entertainment, is that individual memory (unchecked by research) is notoriously faulty, and the gloss given to long-distant events comes up ever brighter with the years. Such books, in fact, offer valuable raw material on which research must check as well as feed, and they remind us of the importance of securing (if only on tape for later reference) the memories of those who have built up the medium. Ivan Butler's book is

² *A Discovery of Cinema*. By THOROLD DICKINSON. Oxford University Press, £3, paper £1.50.

³ *The Dramatic Art of the Film*. By ALAN CASTY. Harper & Row, \$2.95, paper £1.40.

⁴ *The Making of Feature Films—A Guide*. By IVAN BUTLER. Penguin, 35p.

⁵ *The Real Tinsel*. By BERNARD ROSENBERG and HARRY SILVERSTEIN. New York: The Macmillan Company, \$9.95; London: Collier-Macmillan, £3.75.

concerned with present time, and records interviews with wholly contemporary film-makers, such as Foreman, Attenborough, Frankenheimer, Lumet, Polanski, Anderson, James Mason and Alec Guinness, as well as technicians in the key departments of the feature studios. Such books are always valuable because they reveal at first hand the complex background (industrial, social, technical, as well as artistic) from which feature films emerge.

CLOSE TO THESE individual reminiscences comes the current production of reference books. The iconography of the film—it has evolved its own word now, "filmography"—is an aspect of cinema which presents difficulties, and normally requires some intensive research when a writer comes to specialise in the work of a single film-maker or group of film-makers. The new generation of historians and critics, writing largely in the soft-back series, normally provides detailed lists of films, with dates and credits.⁶ The Tantivy Press, edited by the enterprising young critic and historian, Peter Cowie, has pioneered soft-cover reference books, of which recent examples have been *Eastern Europe* (compiled by Nina Hibbin), *Germany* (Felix Bucher), and now (at the time of writing) *Japan*.⁷

The Tantivy Reference books have evolved their own interesting lay-out, uniquely adapted to films. The problem has been to inter-relate film-makers (not necessarily limited to directors) and players with their films in a form which enables them to be easily cross-referenced. This has been arrived at by numbering the alphabetic biographical entries so that the master-index of film titles (which in the Japanese volume reaches 2,000 entries) can refer the user to all relevant biographies. The master-index lists not only the Japanese titles (in roman transcription) but their English

⁶The date of a film can be a complex matter; it may be made over the span of a year or more, shown initially the same, or the next year, outside its country of origin (say, at a film festival); finally released at home and then abroad often in different years. Dates of films given in the older books are frequently those when the films were released in the country to which the writer belongs. Wrong dates have been passed on from book to book. Paul Rotha became one of the early sticklers for getting the date, or dates, of a film right. To be strictly accurate, if the year of the initial public screening of a film differs from that of its general release in its country of origin, the two dates should be hyphenated together.

⁷*Japan*. By ARNE SVENSSON. New York: A. S. Barnes, \$3.50; London: Zwemmer, £1.05.

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translations, or accepted English titles. Key films also have their own entries, with full credits, synopses of plots, and technical comment. The appearance of this most useful series (there has been a Swedish as well as a German volume in the past, and French and Italian books are promised) are in certain instances associated with companion volumes giving historical surveys. All these books are profusely and handsomely illustrated, and produced at a price the younger generation of readers should be able to afford.

Another encyclopedia is the 570-page volume compiled by David Shipman, *The Great Movie Stars*.⁸ With the advantage of space, the entries here extend to biographical essays: Marlene Dietrich, for example, occupies six two-column pages, with several stills. 180 stars are included, with over 500 pictures. This book, as well as giving a vast amount of information, has its own peculiar nostalgia for the older cinema-goer. For the younger, it can give perspective to much that he may see on television.

Parallel with the reference books, the various soft-cover series offer detailed individual studies. The recent volumes have come from the twin series—now well-established and published by Studio Vista—Movie Paperbacks, edited by Ian Cameron, and the Pictureback series. Movie Paperbacks have issued a much-needed book, *Roberto Rossellini* (the first volume about this director to appear in Britain), by José Luis Guarner,⁹ and *Allan Dwan* by Peter Bogdanovich.¹⁰ Dwan is 86, and retired at the close of the 1950s after having completed some 400 films. The two books differ widely in approach. Like Truffaut's book on Hitchcock, this one on Dwan is derived from prolonged, taped interviews, taking the director through his career chronologically, at once prompting his memory and exciting his comment with intelligent questioning. As a result, Dwan relives his past experience; simple fact and opinion are recorded idiomatically, but in addition his invaluable first-hand technical comment recalls studio practice in the past. Dwan is revealed as a man of quick intelligence, humanity, humour, and complete professionalism.

The book on Rossellini, on the other hand, offers the comments of a critic completely

⁸ *The Great Movie Stars: the Golden Years*. By DAVID SHIPMAN. Hamlyn, £2.75.

⁹ *Roberto Rossellini*. By JOSÉ LUIS GUARNER. Studio Vista, 70p.

¹⁰ *Allan Dwan*. By PETER BOGDANOVICH. Studio Vista, 90p.

dedicated to the close analysis of the director's work, including his recent films for television, which Guarner sees as the climax of his career. For him Rossellini has been concerned to discover through the camera true "documentary" observation. His best films are the work of a social and moral commentator, placing his characters, whether fictional or historical, in close relationship to their environment—the bomb-damaged ruins of *Paisa* or *Germania Anno Zero*, the eruptions of Stromboli or the simple countryside of *Francesco, giullare di Dio*. Taking Rossellini's work film by film, Guarner is concerned to reveal what he holds to be the true nature of the director's genius. Whether you regard him as overstating the case or not, there is no doubt that Rossellini's work has been underestimated since the initial fame accorded him in the days of *Rome Open City* and *Paisa*. His purposes, and his films, became misunderstood during the period of his association with Ingrid Bergman. Latterly, the evident seriousness of his films for television has restored interest in his total work, an interest which this book should obviously help to further.

The other Studio Vista book is Peter Gidal's *Andy Warhol*,¹¹ a fully illustrated study of his films and paintings, written by a committed admirer. Warhol has become a legend of the 1960s, his studio—The Factory—a centre round which a "mystique" has collected, and where he and his associates expose the sexual and other taboos which society in general still upholds. His multiple-image works led straight to film; his earlier films exploited time ratios, prolonging observation over considerable time-spans as a form of confrontation. Gidal describes the addict's experience in watching such films as *Empire* or *Sleep* as "the stoned concentration on the supposedly negligible" which leads to "a re-creation of the feeling of being smashed out of one's mind", "ego-dissolution". The later films involve dialogue, action, and move in successive phases primarily towards sexual studies. The author maintains that the explicit sexual content of Warhol's films is clean in contrast to the repressed, unclean sexuality of commercial entertainment.

WITH THE FILMS of Andy Warhol we touch the periphery of contemporary cinema, a medium expanding (in parallel with technology) into uncharted areas and dimensions

¹¹ *Andy Warhol*. By PETER GIDAL. Studio Vista, 80p.

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JONATHAN CAPE

of mobile art. Recently I worked on a book with the animation director, John Halas, *Art in Movement*, in which we attempted, among other aspects of animation, to show its links with modern forms of kinetic art. Animation has in fact been the first branch of film-making to use the computer to obtain new images, and also to offer an entirely fresh mobile "canvas" to artists who want to experiment with evolving, as distinct from static form. A new book from the United States, *Expanded Cinema* by Gene Youngblood,¹² attempts to move beyond this concept into an area where "cinema" extends the very consciousness of man. "I'm writing," he says, "at the end of the era of cinema as we've known it, the beginning of an era of image-exchange between man and man." The book is not exactly free of technological jargon, but the potentials it describes go far beyond what can properly be indicated here.

Rejecting commercialised entertainment as food for "sommnambulists", Gene Youngblood welcomes only art which is itself research. Even the so-called great films are so not because they advance our real knowledge but because of the beauty with which they synthesise what is already commonly known: "new designs for old information." For this reason the greater part of his book is concerned with the "new" cinema, "a fusion of aesthetic sensibilities and technological innovation . . . the only aesthetic language to match the environment in which we live." This is synaesthetic cinema, "language suited to the post-industrial, post-literate, man-made environment with its multidimensional simulsensory network of information sources." His definition of synaesthetic cinema is "a space-time continuum. . . . Synaesthetic and psychedelic mean approximately the same thing. Synaesthesia is the harmony of different or opposing impulses produced by a work of art. It means the simultaneous perception of harmonic opposites." Some of the films of Brakage, Warhol and others apparently match these aspirations; the films are highly personal, conceptual expressions which by using the time and multi-image potential of movie aim to tran-

scend former concepts of the basic subjects presented. Films produced by new technological means (computerised techniques, video-electronics, holographic cinema, or the so-called intermedia art using various forms of multi-projection) are by these very means enabled to extend (according to Youngblood) the potentiality of human experience through experiment with new audio-visual phenomena.

Some of these films, including those of Warhol, belong to the Underground film movement, so prevalent now in both the U.S. and Europe. One of the veteran American writers on the cinema, Parker Tyler (Myra Breckinridge's favourite, you may remember) is celebrated by having two books published simultaneously in this country—*Underground Film*¹³ and *Sex Psyche Etcetera in the Film*.¹⁴ Parker Tyler has a brilliant, quick, lively pen. He welcomes the "extravagances" of the Underground cinema because it does not care a fig-leaf for the old rules and social inhibitions, but refuses to proclaim that the Underground can do no wrong. It exists, he points out, for the purpose of breaking-up effete good taste, offering what he calls a peephole into the "forbidden" areas of human activity—"the cinema as the breaker of visual taboo." He castigates mere exhibitionism, the outpouring of what he calls "fetish-footage", mere unself-critical "permissiveness"; but he welcomes the spontaneous "happening" on the screen. Many of Parker Tyler's essays on over-ground film-makers are to be found in his Pelican, where there are perceptive assessments of *I am Curious—Yellow*, of *Psycho* (which he dislikes), of the sex-goddesses of the screen, and of the Psychodrama, and its link to the Method in acting. His essay on Antonioni is titled "Maze of the Modern Sensibility." He is less sold on the French new wave; he prefers Fellini, and Bergman in his more recent phase. In Britain, too, we have just published a parallel volume, *Experimental Cinema*, by a younger writer, David Curtis, director of the New London Arts Laboratory.¹⁵ His well-illustrated book gives a brief survey of the whole field of European and American *avant-garde* film from its beginnings as silent film-making in the 1920s to the variety of contemporary forms of underground work which flourish on both sides of the Atlantic today.

¹² *Expanded Cinema*. By GENE YOUNGBLOOD. Studio Vista, £3.75.

¹³ *Underground Film: A Critical History*. By PARKER TYLER. Secker & Warburg, £2.75.

¹⁴ *Sex Psyche Etcetera in the Film*. By PARKER TYLER. Penguin, 35p.

¹⁵ *Experimental Cinema*. By DAVID CURTIS. Studio Vista, £2.75.

¹⁶ *Towards a Sociology of the Cinema*. By I. C. JARVIE. Routledge, £4.

THE LAST GROUP OF BOOKS is more concerned with the social aspects of the cinema. I. C. Jarvie, author of *Towards a Sociology of the Cinema*,¹⁶ is a professor of philosophy in Canada, and the intention of his book is to

assess the value of those publications which purport to offer sociological interpretations of the influence of the cinema. He is critical of most of them, believes them to be too "high-brow" and their comments out of touch both with the films they assess and the audiences these films are supposed to corrupt. He considers most critics and historians go out of their way to be superior about the film as a popular art which has been carefully evolved to fulfil what is good rather than what is bad in the fundamental outlook of the average audience. This book is nothing if not tendentious; readers are bound to want to dispute the author's judgments, for example, on certain films. But about one third of this large book offers an extensive annotated bibliography of books on the film in which social comments and assumptions are made, and this area of film studies was in great need of being charted. In a similar field one should note that the British Film Institute has published in

¹⁷ *Violence on the Screen*. By ANDRÉ GLUCKSMANN, British Film Institute, 40p.

¹⁸ *A Mirror for England*. By RAYMOND DURGNAT. Faber & Faber, £3.

translation André Glucksmann's *Violence on the Screen*.¹⁷ This presents, in summary form, the principal findings of those primarily social scientists who have attempted research on the effects of violence in television and the cinema on young people. Glucksmann's survey, complete to 1966, has been brought up to date by Dennis Howitt, and there is an introduction by Paddy Whannell stressing the importance of facing the popular culture of cinema and television in a positive manner, and not from the old, purely defensive position of a cultural élite trying to oppose everything which mass culture seems to stand for.

Last there is Raymond Durnat's *A Mirror for England*.¹⁸ This book takes the social and psychological attitudes represented in average British films from 1945 to around 1950, when a new, primarily working-class ethos, already established in the drama and the novel, began to penetrate the bourgeois-dominated domain of the British cinema. Discussing quite literally hundreds of examples, Raymond Durnat shows how our films (whether "good" or "mediocre") reflected the values and prejudices of the upper middle-class, resulting in a

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Dick Wilson

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Hamish Hamilton

self-portraiture which obtained for a quarter-century before working-class values began to offer an effective challenge. This exhaustive analysis was well worth undertaking, though the necessary accumulation of examples may daunt readers who lack long memories for the films discussed, for the most part, in rapid succession.

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT these new books alone, it should be apparent that study of the cinema has assumed wide proportions. Film, we must realise, is at once the great creative art and the popular entertainment of our century. Chart-

ing the vast output of the film-makers during the first 75 years of the cinema has certainly begun, though largely conducted in an *ad hoc* manner, as individual enthusiasts and their publishers pinpoint areas of the subject. History is being achieved, as it were, piecemeal, both on the "popular" and the "scholarly" levels. The various British soft-cover series, in particular, are trying to introduce some form of continuity and coordination. Perhaps the biggest need in this country is for subsidised research by competent and dedicated historians and critics who are prepared to give considerable time to the field of film studies.

Dramatic Ironies

Old Illusions, New Directions—By MARTIN ESSLIN

WHILE THEATRE AUDIENCES are diminishing and the theatre as a viable commercial proposition gets into an ever more parlous state, the publishing of plays and books on theatre seems to be booming—provided, that is, that the sheer number of play texts, critical studies of leading authors, and instructional manuals for actors which appear on the reviewer's desk is an indication of the attractiveness of this type of book for publishers.

The reasons for this ironical and paradoxical state of affairs are worth exploring. Theatre may be declining as a spectator sport, but it is definitely in the ascendant both as a participatory activity and as a teaching-aid and field of academic study.

With the growth of a suburbia-centred mass society enjoying increasing leisure (while more and more isolating its members in the nuclear family and the commuter's lonely daily round), amateur drama is clearly one of the most promising of "group activities". It brings people more closely together than evening classes and forces them to go through the motions of actual human involvement. Ama-

teur drama is flourishing. Amateur actors are looking for plays they can perform. As a result, if the choice falls on a play readily available in paperback, the local bookshop does not just sell *one* copy to a solitary reader, but probably several dozens to the actors, stage managers, property mistresses and multitudes of other people drawn into the bustling collective enterprise. Moreover: plays are shorter than novels and may be much cheaper to produce. Nobody minds paying fifty pence for what is after all a complete little work of art (like Tom Stoppard's charming extravaganza *After Magritte*¹—a surrealist tableau in the painter's style which later turns out to have a perfectly plausible and realistic explanation), even though the whole book runs to less than fifty pages of over-large print. The same publishers price John Osborne's new television play *Very like a Whale*² at only 45 pence although it actually reaches 54 pages; yet the price per thousand words is still high if you hold it against that for a whole novel. This, quite apart from the fact that the play in question is pretty dreary too—the disintegration of some industrial tycoon who displays the familiar Osborne syndrome of the bored successful man who does not know what to do with himself and all his money, and confuses his own obvious deficiencies (an uncultured mind and an impoverished emotional life) with some cosmic defect in the divine

MARTIN ESSLIN is Head of Drama for BBC Radio. His books include "Brecht: A Choice of Evils" (1959), "The Theatre of the Absurd" (1962), "Brief Chronicles: Essays on Modern Theatre" (1970), and "The Peopled Wound" (Methuen, 1970); he writes frequently on modern theatre for ENCOUNTER.

¹ *After Magritte*. By TOM STOPPARD. Faber, 50p.

² *Very Like a Whale*. By JOHN OSBORNE. Faber, £1.10, paper 45p.