

# book reviews

With Eisenstein in Hollywood by Ivor Montagu.  
International. \$1.95.

Ivor Montagu's personal account of Eisenstein's Hollywood period is a valuable addition to the literature on Eisenstein. This part of Eisenstein's career is best detailed in Marie Seton's definitive biography but Montagu here clarifies the reasons as to why their scripts of *SUTTER'S GOLD* and *AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY* were rejected by Paramount — studio politics, it seems, were as much to blame as the crackpot political machinations of Major Frank Pease and his campaign to save America from the "accursed Red dog, Eisenstein." As regards the *QUE VIVA MEXICO* affair, Eisenstein's naivete in film finances and Upton Sinclair's unfamiliarity with film production methods are offered as the main reasons for the two-sided misunderstanding that had such tragic consequences for film art.

Montagu's chapter of autobiography is filled with anecdotes and provides a fascinating account of film-making in the Hollywood studios of the 30's as well as Eisenstein's activities during this period. Also included are the two scripts they wrote for Paramount — *SUTTER'S GOLD* and *AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY* (both previously only excerpted and published here in their entirety for the first time) — complete with Eisenstein's production sketches.

Gary Crowds

Lillian Gish: The Movies, Mr. Griffith and Me by Lillian Gish and Ann Pinchot. Prentice-Hall. \$7.95.

A handsomely produced volume of recollections (among an ever increasing number of deluxe film-books), written by a lady who holds a unique place in film and theatre history and whose career spans over half a century. She begins her story with the Gish family's early struggles in theatrical touring companies and, following the meeting with Mr. Griffith (introduced by Mary Pickford), a sort of dual portrait unfolds, with more emphasis on D.W.G. than herself. She comments on their special relationship (she was allowed at one point to select her own rushes from the day's shooting, of use to her, no doubt, in her later direction of a film), gives quotes from Griffith's unpublished notes for an autobiography and tells of those pioneering days on Fourteenth Street in Manhattan and early Hollywood (Billy Bitzer, Sennett, Mae Marsh, et al). A fascinating book which deserves a large audience.

Ernest D. Burns

MASCULINE FEMININE - A Film by Jean-Luc Godard.  
Edited by Robert Hughes. Grove Press. \$1.95.

This is the first in a planned series of film scripts from Grove Press (forthcoming titles include *THE 400 BLOWS*, *RASHOMON* and *L'AVVENTURA*).

The script consists of a description of the action in each shot, a translation of the dialogue and (a new innovation in script publishing) an indication of the length of each shot in seconds. The illustrations (over 100 which are keyed to the text) are frame enlargements from the film. Also included is the Maupassant short story from which the film was supposedly adapted, an article on Godard's methods of direction, an interview and a balanced selection of critical excerpts (another innovation) from France, England and the U.S.

G.C.

An Essay on Liberation by Herbert Marcuse.  
Beacon Press. \$1.95.

An Essay on Liberation is, in many ways, only a restatement and a refinement of Marcuse's earlier writings about the necessity for radical change in advanced capitalist society. Marcuse is decidedly more optimistic in this book because he finds evidence in the advanced capitalist societies of active, subversive forces which may, eventually, trigger a revolution: the growth of the aesthetic rebellion, the politicization of the young, middle-class intelligentsia and the radicalization of the poor and the blacks. He emphasizes, however, that before these forces can bring about any kind of political revolution, they must work for a total transformation of values on the "biological" level, that "dimension in which inclinations, behavior patterns and aspirations become vital needs which, if not satisfied, would cause dysfunction of the organism." It is on this level that the various forms of radical art can best serve the revolutionary cause at this time.

The new tendencies in all areas of art are reactions against art's traditional forms, subjects, and values. Although seemingly negative and nihilistic, many of these tendencies affirm "universal human relationships no longer mediated by the market, ... no longer based on competitive exploitation or terror, ... a sensitivity freed from the repressive satisfactions of the unfree societies; a sensitivity receptive to forms and modes of reality which thus far have been projected only by the aesthetic imagination." These forms of art are "subverting forces in transition," potentially radical forces because they introduce alternative values by "reconstructing the objects of experience." They understand that "the language of art must communicate a truth, an objectivity which is not accessible to ordinary language and ordinary objects of experience."

Marcuse's idea of the relationship between art and politics is based upon his notion of the aesthetic: a dynamic process in which the imagination interacts with sensibility and reason to create a higher reality. In the present society, art is either relegated to the category of the unreal and the irrelevant or, when the

repressive, totalitarian society finds it can benefit, used for society's irrational purposes. Thus the artist is prevented from realizing the radical potential of art. Yet, Marcuse is still hopeful for there "now appears the prospect for a new relationship between sensibility and reason, namely, the harmony between sensibility and radical consciousness: rational faculties capable of projecting and defining the objective (material) conditions of freedom, its real limits and chances. But instead of being shaped and permeated by the rationality of domination, the sensibility would be guided by the imagination, mediating between the rational faculties and sensuous needs."

Ultimately, when the new society emerges, there will be a higher unification between art and reality where art will lose its quality of otherness and will be used to benefit society. At that time, "society's capacity to produce may be akin to the creative capacity of art and the construction of the work of art akin to the reconstruction of the real world — union of liberating art and liberating technology." Until then, however, art will have to maintain its sense of separateness from reality. "(The creators of the aesthetic rebellion) would have to abandon the direct appeal, the raw immediacy of (their) presentation, which invokes, in the protest, the familiar universe of politics and business, and with it the helpless familiarity of frustration and temporary release from frustration."

In the end, the reader's opinion of the book will depend on whether or not he agrees with Marcuse that advanced capitalist society is repressive and that it can only be reformed through violent revolution. The idea that art can be an essential, even radical element of politics is not a new one. Unfortunately, this reader found Marcuse's discussion of the role of art in the transformation of values and in the revolution highly abstract and theoretical. His general discussion of the subverting political and social forces already operating in the society is much more satisfactory because it is much more specific and understandable. Nevertheless, the diligent reader who is willing to piece Marcuse's various statements together will find the book, on the whole, more understandable than any of his earlier works.

Elise Solomon

Federico Fellini by Gilbert Salachas. Jean Cocteau by Rene Gilson. Crown. \$2.95 each.

At last, an enterprising U.S. publisher is now making available translations of volumes from the French "Cinema d'Aujourd'hui" series. Besides these two titles, editions on Eisenstein and Godard are shortly forthcoming.

Salachas' book on Fellini is an excellent study which avoids the pitfall of "trying to explain through exhaustive rational analysis a work that springs from inspiration and emotion," and provides, instead, a solid study of Fellini as moralist. The long essay by the author includes comments on Fellini's attitudes toward his characters ("Fellini never becomes a prosecutor who condemns his characters, not even the meanest of the lot, nor does

he ever serve as the devoted lawyer who gives them his unconditional support. He is more like a witness for the defense who perhaps...disapproves of the act, and yet at the same time feels an attachment for those beings who commit the act"), their problematical moral progress, the ambiguity of his satire in relation to religion and bourgeois morality, and his methods of dramatic structuring of his films. Also included are a number of texts by Fellini, excerpts from many of his screenplays including an unrealized film project, comments by fellow workers (Mastroianni, Rossellini, Martelli - his cameraman, Francois Perier, etc.) and a section of critical excerpts with some delightful, knock-about French film criticism ("there is no one, in the whole vast and appealing Italian cinema, who plays in Fellini's ball game. Cahiers, fold up your eternal horror, this grasshopper pedant who keeps bumping into walls with his myopic incompetence: I speak of Rossellini. You down-the-line Catholics might do well to tuck away your De Sica and Zavattini, genial and inconstant, who spend their time hanging around street corners. Cry, compromisers: too rich Blasetti, too fast Soldati, the vacillator Lattuada, Visconti, stray and bewildered. Meditate deeply, you of great talent who steep yourselves in the tortuousness of introspection: Antonioni, De Santis. For only Federico can, in one stride, clear the bridge of tissue and crystal into that spontaneous, natural expression intrinsic to a great poet." - Robert Benayoun, Positif).

G.C.

Last year two important French books were translated into English, a book by Bazin on cinema and one on modern music by Boulez. Both of them important but both of them very difficult to read because of a clumsy translation. The Cocteau volume reads beautifully and naturally, as if it had been written originally in English. The first one hundred and ten odd pages is a long essay on the films and philosophies of Jean Cocteau and very exhaustive as to the myth patterns found in his cinema and the attitude that Cocteau had taken towards myths. Next follows a section of essays, paragraphs and short discussions by Cocteau, taken from his writings and chosen by the author Rene Gilson. Excerpts from Cocteau's screenplays follow (THE BLOOD OF A POET, ORPHEUS and TESTAMENT OF ORPHEUS). More texts follow: a series of critical excerpts by critics and other film-makers such as Bazin, Chris Marker and Jacques Rivette; a section of personal recollections by friends and collaborators such as Jean Marais, his cameraman Pillaudin and others. Also included is an extensive, three-part filmography (films directed, films written for and adaptations of his other works), a bibliography, a discography and a life chronology.

Dennis Kawicki

Man and the Movies edited by W. R. Robinson. Pelican. \$1.95.

This is one of the best collections of essays on film to come along in quite a while. All of the pieces were written especially for this