

BOOK REVIEWS

By now the New Year's resolutions are being broken. The February and March "blahs" are setting in along with talk of the shortages in the future. For the book world the worst news is the paper shortage. It means prices will rise. This is not new. They have been rising steadily and it is impossible to stop them. You are paying more for your favorite magazine, paperbacks and hardcovers. The future is depressing, but need it be? Look at the past.

It is worthwhile to make a few notes on the very recent past. In the next few paragraphs before I review several books I'd like to record the atmosphere as well as a few facts about the general movie scene in Toronto. Alas, I don't know the rest of Canada's cinematic atmosphere, but here, where I live in Toronto, the film scene is an exciting and rewarding one. I also like to think of the future generation reading Cinema Canada. In the future, I hope they will wonder just what it was like to be near the emerging feature film industry. I can only hint to them about these years between 1970 and 1974, but it will be enough to whet the appetite for more. Some extraordinary seeds were planted; some flourished and some died. It was not so much that the movie crop was so splendid; it was more that people became aware of the interest and activity in and around the movies — it became a life style. For the present generation here are a few thoughts strung together. Joined here they can stimulate a scene in your mind. For the future generation, when you dig this magazine out of the back issues in some university archive, you will know we thought of you; we hoped for you; and we tried for you. These are a few snippets I wanted to pass on to you.

In the three years and some that I have been in the book business much has happened on the cinema scene. Cine Books opened and has survived so far. The Roxy (99¢) has increased its audience. Cinema Canada is in its third year. The Revue Cinema was one casualty but Bob Huber left CinemaLumiere and later took over the demised Revue and now it is working as the Revue Rep. During the past two months the Cinematek has been passing through the birth pangs and now it seems that it will survive. The Toronto scene has added many attractions for the cine buff. Why should the future not hold more benefits?

The *Handbook of Canadian Film* was published, so was *All the Bright Young Men and Women*. Take One increased its price and impoverished its content. The *Handbook* has sold very well and *All the Bright Young* etc., (although about the Czech cinema) has met a warm response both here and abroad. Looking through some old issues of Take One I can only hope that soon the editors will find their way back to the high standard of interest they created in the past. More books on the cinema are bound to be published in Canada. John Hofsess has written two books and they are both likely to appear in the fall of this year. Hofsess is a fine critic and his work in film and writing will provide the necessary background for a worthwhile book. Martin Knelman, critic of the *Globe and Mail*, is working on a book. The publication date will be, no doubt, in the near future. Here again the news is good. The future is bright.

Of course the future could be even more rewarding if all factions of the film community could find a way to work together. There have been some outstanding films produced in

the last three years. But the mistakes of the past linger. Many of the errors are growing pains. Despite any negative aspects of Canadian feature film, the young have become aware that film making in Canada is a growing part of their biography. Canadian films have more of a following now because they are Canadian. The day has passed when people say that they don't want to see a film because it is Canadian. This is one of the most encouraging and healthy signs. Those who work in film have this support and the knowledge of it may get them to co-operate and achieve the goal of a fully fledged industry.

While the smaller cinemas have been increasing their audiences and more and more people talk about film, the larger houses have tended to get worse. The price has risen in some houses to \$3.50. No matter what is said about prices it is obvious that people will pay them. If this is a fact then I want my money's worth. The *Imperial Six* is a horror show in itself, but people go to it. The *Uptown* is a nightmare, but it is well attended. What the purist has to realize is that the pop corn coke crowd pay a lot of money to see the movies. But why does it have to be so ugly? Why the bull horns? Why the garbage? Why the smoking? If areas are safe for smoking, o.k.; but in those holes where every inch is cheated for a seat what would happen in case of fire? Answer: The audience would be stomped to death in the panic. The fire would eat its way through the garbage. Whatever happened to fire marshals? Several cinemas have been added to the city through the giant complexes. An example of ugliness beyond belief is the new Four Season's duo. The colour scheme, the lay-out of this place is hideous. The Odeon circuit managed to maintain some standard of style, but, alas, we lost the Carlton.

In the areas of festivals, special events have taken place in the last two years. The revival of the Stratford Festival was a minor miracle. This year, the fourth in its second life, has been extended. Last year, even though they did not have much luck with the films (people can only put on the festivals, they can't make the films as well) this year looks better. The Women and Film Festival was a landmark both in Toronto's film life and in the life of the city. It was a stunning occasion. The films were eye openers as most films should be and often aren't. There have been a number of nostalgic festivals. The Canadian Film Summer Festival at the Poor Alex was a great achievement. The Silent Cinema, where many festivals of the silents took place, sadly, closed. In the past two years the midnight shows have been firmly established. Horror marathons boomed. All this makes our city and our cine scene more enjoyable.

The Toronto Film Society celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary. And, in connection with the society, one of the saddest events took place — the death of George Patterson — Mr. Cinema. George was known to hundreds of film buffs. He was the most respected of all filmgoers. His loss is irreplaceable.

Quite a number of film courses started across Canada. A vast number of internationally known people connected with the film world visited Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. Cannes was invaded by Canadians last year. The Canadian Film Awards in Montreal erupted. How could anyone accuse the Canadian film scene of being dull?

This is not by any means the total scene. I just wanted to

David Beard

point out that when you think of the film future, think of the very recent past. Take heart! The human spirit is not that easily doused. We have come this far we will make it.

Just to brighten any spirit that might be flagging, here is a translation of a chant. It is sung by a folk singer on the set when the cast and crew are getting in the mood to make the sequel to **The Exorcist**:

*Hark! The cine critics sing,
Semiology is all the thing.
Metz' and Wollen's symbolic fire,
Raising signs and meaning of desire.
With our working papers flying,
We will watch the auteurs dying.
Sarris has now lost his voice,
That is why we all rejoice.
Hark! The cine critics sing,
Christian Metz is all the thing.*

And Now for Something Different . . . a few books!

Film Editing Handbook: Technique of 16mm Film Cutting, Hugh B. Churchill. \$6.50

Churchill approaches film editing from the creative and physical aspects. The creative refines the film statement while the physical is simply the cutting of film i.e. mechanical. The book is written for the film student. Churchill is a teacher. The book is designed as a teaching tool. The sensible step-by-step introduction to the problem and the concise, illustrated answers to the problems are just what is needed in this field. The purpose of each chapter is stated. The related steps are explained. The section on "sound cutting" is half of the book's assets. This is not covered in other books as effectively as it is covered here for the student. Churchill can put himself in the student's chair. He can anticipate the questions. The book gives the answers.

Japan: Film Image, Richard N. Tucker, \$9.95

Theory on Japanese films is on the increase. Tucker, while he surveys the all too familiar history of Japan's entrance into the Western film market, also goes further than his predecessors by bringing in the advent of violence and finally the sado-erotic work that dominated Japan's films for so long. There is a wealth of film analysis. Alas, there is quite a deal of film synopsis. The pictures, however, make up for some of the text's shortcomings.

Several film scripts that should have appeared a long time ago are now available —

The Battle of Algiers, Gillo Pontecorvo, \$3.95, is illustrated and contains an interview with the director and screenwriter. Rossellini's **War Trilogy,** \$8.00 is a large overdue volume. It contains *Open City, Paisan* and *Germany — Year Zero*. **Memories of Underdevelopment: The Revolutionary Films of Cuba,** Edited by Michael Myerson \$4.95 presents the richness of the Cuban film achievement. It has scripts and descriptions of a number of Cuban films. The editor outlines the growth of the revolutionary movement as reflected in the Cuban film. *Lucia* should be of particular interest to those in *Women's Liberation*.



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Your casting is perfect, your cameraman the best around, all is ready to shoot . . . then your lead breaks his leg *or* your film stock is faulty *or* the weather turns bad *or* the lab messes up *and* you're in trouble . . . But that's the film game, isn't it? It is, unless you play it smart and protect yourself

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