

BOOK REVIEWS

Screenplays, filmscripts, scenarios, whatever the term, are on the increase in the book world. The following is a selection of just ten of the most recent ones published. These range from the revolutionary to the classics in the cinema. Public response to them is good. The young seem to enjoy the interview format (conditioned by *Playboy*); the screenplay is also a form they are beginning to enjoy.

El Topo, a Book of the Film, Alexandro Jodorowsky. Paperback \$3.95. The book is in two parts. The first contains a scene-by-scene, image by image narrative of the film. The following part is a conversation with Jodorowsky. The conversation is in the interview format.

A side issue of this film and the book is an economic one. Jodorowsky wants it two ways. He wants to appear as the artist, but he is aware that the business of film is mainly economic. He quotes his theories, "Fortunately, the bourgeoisie is dying. The number of young people are increasing. So the only way to keep art from being bourgeois is to make art for the young . . . and survive." This is a very questionable statement. When Jodorowsky talks in this manner he is a bore. In contrast his images, his style, his freshness in the film is another world. He knows what he is talking about when he has his film in his mind. "O.K. Ah! Such a pleasure: such a pleasure! What a pleasure it is to sing . . ." The film and the script has this feeling of singing in the delight of filmmaking.

Memories of Underdevelopment, The Revolutionary Films of Cuba, Edited by Michael Myerson, \$4.55. This is a publication of far reaching importance. It is a first and there is nothing to compare it to in the publications on the cinema. Apart from the important scripts and a list of feature films, shorts and documentaries made in Cuba recently, it contains a lengthy introduction by the editor. This essay attempts to recreate for the reader the atmosphere, the goals and the technique employed to make the cinema a political and human force in Cuban society. Myerson recounts the interest Cubans have in film from other countries even the U.S.A. He tells of the bootlegged prints that are shown in Cuba. In contrast one remembers the suppression of the First United States Festival of Cuban Films.

This publication also whets the appetite. Cuban films should be shown for all to see.

WR: Mysteries of the Organism, Dusan Makavejev. Paperback \$1.65. Seen only once in awhile, the film has no equal as a work of political comment. Yet the script recreates the comedy and seethes with the vitality of the writer. There are a number of photographs and an interview with Makavejev. And of course the complete script. It is like the film a masterpiece of political writing. The dialogue has a comic brilliance that is unmatched. When I think of films such as *M*A*S*H* in comparison, the lightness, the deftness of European political humor comes through. The North American political humor (on film) is deadly serious, ponderous and calculated. Those who peddle it know exactly what the audience wants. **WR** hits the audience with the unexpected image and the word. Always on the target; always with the spirit of freedom as its energy. Quote from script: L. "Consider yourself protected by the Yugoslav Army" J. "But who'll protect me from you?" L. "You're so fuckable." And so on . . .

Five Screenplays, Harold Pinter. \$3.95

The *Servant*, The *Pumpkin Eater*, The *Quiller Memorandum*, *Accident*, The *Go-Between*. The *Five Screenplays* cover a period of about ten years in Pinter's work. From a study point of view it is worth noting that all the screenplays were based on novels. For the student or the screenwriter this is a valuable tool to use. When one considers Pinter's plays the question arises, How could Pinter do a commercial screenplay and make it successful? The answer is in Pinter's mastery over his craft. The dialogue is superb. Cut to the bare bones it works. The scenes are compressed to a starkness that make them rich in essence. The descriptions of the objects make them almost alive in their relationship to the action: To read the screenplays is a pleasure. To read them for awareness of what a screenplay should be is wisdom.

O Lucky Man! Lindsay Anderson/David Sherwin. \$4.25. Published at a time when the film was still at its height of popularity many have read the screenplay to find out how it was put together. Anderson points out in his introduction to the work something that many must think when confronted with a new script. "When I read the same document (*O Lucky Man!*) through again to day, I marvel that we were ever given the money to make it". Anderson pays tribute to others who made a contribution to the script i.e. Malcolm McDowell. The script, as he says, does not answer questions such as Why did the same actors play various roles? In this publication Anderson has tried to assist the reader by clearing the script of extraneous material and adding items that might help. One warning. The paperback edition is shockingly bound and the cover will fall off it at page 5. At page 35 the whole book falls apart. So!

Last Tango in Paris, Bernardo Bertolucci, \$2.95. The screenplay with photographs from the film and a critical essay by Pauline Kael and another something by Norman Mailer. Like *O Lucky Man!* and *WR* the screenplay of *Last Tango* does not give the details of the individual shots and movements. The *Pinter Screenplays* provide these necessary details. The lack of coloured stills in the *Last Tango* book is unfortunate because in the film this is a decided element of importance. But for the price it is impossible to add such items. To preserve the script and Kael's comments in book form is worthwhile. The Mailer is a bit of a laugh. How he keeps doing it to us is a mystery - a rather tiresome one.

The War Trilogy, Roberto Rossellini. \$8.00. The volume includes *Open City*, *Paisan* and *Germany-Year Zero*. This publication arrives when interest in Rossellini's work is reviving. These screenplays are at the high point of Rossellini's career. While Rossellini's work has been overshadowed by other more popular directors, it is forgotten that he has made a continuous contribution to the cinema over a long period and much longer than most. His later work has not received the credit and exposure it deserves. The present volume includes a short piece by Rossellini. His comments are not bitter, but they have regret and truth. He writes, "The critics have always been against the young and the experimenters - an attitude substantially the same today as in the past." Of course the young filmmaker who stays within the tradition of commercial films will not be hampered by the critics. But like others before him

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he has suffered at the hands of the critics, but his work has also survived most of them.

The Exterminating Angel, Nazarin and Los Olvidados, Luis Bunuel. \$5.75. To this publication one cannot help but say, "It's about time". All of these scripts have been in demand and now more than ever. Bunuel has never lost his fascination. He has never been shelved. His work is still admired as he continues his career in the cinema. The volume also includes three important essays: Surrealism in the Exterminating Angel by Ado Kyrou, who also wrote a book on Bunuel; The Passion According to Bunuel by J. Francisco Aranda and the Cruelty and Love in Los Olvidados by Andre Bazin. The book forms a fine contribution to Bunuel's work and a necessary item to the study of screenplays. It is well illustrated and has almost 300 pages. That's added if you feel the price is high.

The Complete Greed, of Erich von Stroheim. Paperback \$14.45. This is a reconstruction of the film in 348 still photos following the original screenplay. It is compiled and annotated and with a foreword by Herman G. Weinberg. The paperback is a reprint on cheap paper, of course, the limited edition sold for about \$50.00. The large format and the vast amount of photographic reproductions justify the present price. Weinberg is recognized as the authority on this film. His love and care are the life blood of the book. The 50 or more production stills add another perspective to this production and the remarkable man who brought it to life - Erich von Stroheim. I suggest that a companion volume to this one under discussion be added. That is the ten hour shooting script of Greed (paper \$5.95). It too is another of von Stroheim's impressive accomplishments.

The Citizen Kane Book, Paperback \$2.50. The book includes Raising Kane by Pauline Kael and the shooting script by Herman J. Mankiewicz and Orson Welles. It has over 80 reproductions made from the frames of the film. This new edition of the **Citizen Kane Book** is the third edition in three years. The other two editions were much larger and more expensive. This pocketbook is excellent. In the other editions the frames were stretched to fill the page and the grain and damage marred the effect. In this volume the frames are not enlarged so many times and the definition is more satisfactory. Everything else is there and this paperback company, Bantam Books, is to be congratulated on a fine, sensitive presentation of this classic. There are few paperbacks I would take over a hard cover book, but this one is the exception. The material within the covers is familiar to most readers. If it is not, then add the **Citizen Kane Book** to your collection. Of all the scripts discussed this should be the first you acquire.

A variety no doubt, but I wish I could have included a title such as 'Five Canadian Screenplays, A Collection Edited by ...' A suggestion to your favorite publisher might be in order. There are certainly enough to select from and there is indeed a potential market for them. Give it a go●



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FULL TIME FILM PRODUCTION
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Experience with 16 mm Sync Sound and Super 8
required.

Professional experience and/or University or Gradu-
ate degree essential.

Bilingualism is an asset.

There may also be part-time position in Film History
and Film Production.

First consideration will be given to applications with
vitae received by April 12.

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