The Apotheosis Of Harry

The American postal authorities used to boast that neither rain nor sleet, etc. shall stay those intrepid couriers on their vital rounds. But as 1972 drew to its end, the mail was suddenly stopped by federal order. In a way, I suppose that this gesture was an appropriate one: a final kick in the teeth of the American public by the shade of Harry S. Truman.

Surely the scale and grandeur of the apotheosis of Harry Truman was unprecedented, even for a media that fawns abjectly upon all Presidents, past and present. When Ike Eisenhower — surely the best President in the past half-century, though this is scarcely a fulsome compliment — died, there was little of the media hysteria lavished upon Truman; at least I do not remember that every network lavished its viewers upon every detail of the President's life as well as his funeral arrangements. And I'm certain that the mail wasn't stopped.

But there is method in the madness. For it was the role of the little "populist" from Kansas City's Pendergast machine to bring this country into the full-scale system that has characterized us since World War II: our modern role as Corporate State at home and Emperor and Global Crusader abroad. If Franklin D. Roosevelt was the Moses who brought us toward the Promised Land of Corporate Monopoly Empire, with his Fair Deal domestic collectivism and bureaucratic socialism, with his Fair Deal and his New Deal, with his loyalty and security programs; not Joe McCarthy but Harry Truman was the real and effective opponent of civil liberties during the late 1940's and early fifties. Consider the unfortunate hacks whom Truman appointed to the Supreme Court: every one a defender of government prerogatives in every area as against the liberty of the individual. Look around at the Truman record, and there is scarcely a single area that one can observe without indignation; his administration was truly a cornucopia of horrors.

But then a serpent came to Eden. The Swami had always preached strict celibacy for his cult members, a celibacy which seemed to fit the moral law he had preached. For one of his leading disciples broke with the Master and charged in some detail that she and the Swami had been having sexual relations for some time.

Many Americans have gone in for Indian swami cults. In the swami cult, the Swami is the absolute leader whose every word and act is venerated by his adoring followers. One of the most popular and charismatic swamis has been the Swami Satchidananda, who came to the U. S. from Ceylon in the mid-60's, and who amassed, under the aegis of his Integral Yoga Institute: 25 centers, 5000 initiates, and 20,000 serious students. From the revenue from these followers, the Swami has gained a luxurious pad in Connecticut, as well as a jet-set life style and famous show biz luminaries as his disciples.

Sex Breaks Up A Cult

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But then a serpent came to Eden. The Swami had always preached strict celibacy for his cult members, a celibacy which seemed to fit the holiness and wisdom exuded by the Swami's message. But, this summer, it turned out that the Swami may have believed himself to be above the moral law he had preached. For one of his leading disciples broke with the Master and charged in some detail that she and the Swami had been having sexual relations for some time.

Grave crisis struck the cult. As Howard Smith writes in the Village Voice (Dec. 14): "All that inner peace trembled. Coast-to-coast wild rumors and racy stories swirled through the incense smoke. Emergency meetings were held, accusations flew, counter-plots and counter-coupes (Continued On Page 2)
Sex Breaks Up A Cult — (Continued From Page 1)

were rampant. General confusion led to schisms and disgust. For a while it was like Peyton Place among the Karma Cadre.  

Two factions, a pro- and anti-Swami faction, developed. The pros cleverly pointed out that the Swami: "had never actually come right out in plain words and said he was celibate. It was they who tricked themselves." The anti-wing left the whole movement in despair, maintaining that "he is a phony therefore it is all phony." The pros were also shaken, but they tried in vain to hush the whole thing up. Finally, even the pros gave the Swami two alternatives: (1) either stay as the Swami but play down the emphasis on celibacy; or (2) get out as the Swami. 

After a display of much "righteous anger", the Swami Satchidananda "took a kind of guru-ish Fifth Amendment — I am your master and therefore I shouldn't be questioned." Finally, the Swami wrote a letter to his disciples admitting nothing and telling them it was time for them to take their spiritual enlightenment in their own hands. 

Once again, as so many times in history (e.g. the Saint-Simonians, the Comtean movement). Sex had broken up a cult. Do libertarians see any parallels? 

The Pimp As Hero

By Walter Block

The honest, hard working, long suffering pimp has been demeaned unjustly long enough. It is time, it is past time, that this ancient wrong be set right. In this day and age, pimps have been singled out for ridicule because of their pinky rings, their flashy custom-made Cadillacs, their fur coats. From time immemorial, pimps have everywhere been treated as parasites who prey upon prostitutes. Even revolutionary groups, who might have been thought to be able to empathize with other downtrodden minority groups, have viciously turned on pimps.

If we are ever to make a fair assessment of this harassed minority group, we must endeavor to calmly and dispassionately take stock of what in actuality the pimp does. We can no longer depend upon old wives tales or "folk wisdom". But before we begin our analysis, we must clear up one point: the claim that pimps use coercion and the threat of violence (to gather and keep a stable of prostitutes on their payrolls). Of course some pimps do! This, however, in no way contradicts our view of the pimp as an honest and productive workingman. Is there any profession where not one practitioner is guilty of foul play? Of course not. There are bricklayers, plumbers, musicians, priests, doctors, lawyers, Indian chiefs who have gone bankrupt, and violent rights of their fellow creatures. Are these professions, then, qua professions to be castigated in their entirety? Of course not. And so should it be with the ancient and honorable profession of pimpering: the actions of any one, or even of all pimps together, cannot legitimately be used to condemn the profession qua profession, unless the action is a necessary part of the profession. It is in this way that we know, for instance, that the profession of kidnapping small children for ransom is an evil profession, qua profession. The action is evil and is a necessary part of the profession.

In this case, if some of the practitioners perform good deeds like contributing a part of the "take" to charity, or are "good family men", or even if all of them do so, the profession is still an abomination. It is an abomination because by its very nature evil acts are committed in its name. In this article then, we shall try to evaluate the profession of pimping, ignoring the evil acts performed by some pimps which have nothing to do with their profession.

The function that the pimping profession serves is that of a broker. Just like brokers of real estate, credit, insurance or the stock market in many respects rely on restrictive state laws or the stock market in many respects rely on restrictive state laws to discourage their competition. Whatever may be said of pimps, it cannot be said that they have stooped that low.

The High Priests Of Waste

By A. Ernest Fitzgerald

Reviewed By Robert Sherrill

(398 pages. Norton: $8.95.)

Ernie Fitzgerald is like a film critic who is smart enough to know that Bob Hope is a wretched peddler of wahoo humor but who is too kind hearted, or something, to hate Paramount for foisting him off on the public. In other words, Fitzgerald is an insider with an insider's short-comings as well as an insider's strengths. He is inside Arms, which under certain circumstances, can be almost as entertaining an industry as Hollywood; and having been "part of the arms-buying process for most of twenty years," he says he hopes that the criticisms written into The High Priests of Waste will result in our tidying up the Pentagon — that is to say, "will encourage efforts to try to create conditions in which the good guys may thrive rather than darning the whole Pentagon crew." If one considers the chronic mismanagement of the military affairs of our government ever since the days of Forrestal (at least), one will conclude quickly enough that Fitzgerald's wish falls far short of our need, which is that Jehovah should rouse himself from his drunkenness long enough to see to it that, in Old Testament style, not one Pentagon stone is left standing upon another and that all its shredded secrets are scattered

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to the four winds. That's the kind of tidying up we need. Then we can build anew.

Meanwhile—a word that in these days signifies preliminary despair—we do at least have Fitzgerald, and despite his kind heartedness, he is quite wonderful.

First of all there is the matter of the Fitzgerald style, the art of diluting effect of which is, like a bubble bath, hard to convey in small doses. Quite a few books in the general category of military-industrial expose have come my way in recent years and with an exception I have had to keep reminding myself, as I read them, that life is indeed a grim and unpleasant thing and that these writers were quite justified in their own deadly seriousness. Until Fitzgerald came along, I don't recall ever reading anything on the topic that provoked more than an occasional smile. Fitzgerald, on the contrary, is good for a great many laughs: "...for the first principle of the expediting art is to strive purposefully from hide-out to resting place. In addition, of course, the accomplished aerospace expeditor never leaves a place of refuge without carrying something—a part, a clipboard, or a sheaf of papers."

And then there is the matter of the Autonetics Division of North American Aviation, from whence (as Adelaide would say) Fitzgerald and his fellow consultants were summarily kicked because they uncovered a melange of costly stupidities, one of which Fitzgerald describes: 

"For a number of reasons, it is important that Minutemen missiles point more or less straight up. One of the functions of the airman manning the missile launching site was to go to the missile silo periodically and check to make sure the missile was all right up. The airman got cold doing this chore, so Autonetics was commissioned to solve the problem. Autonetics' brilliant engineers correctly concluded that a tent would be a good shelter from the bitter northern wind, confirming the decision of countless generations of Indians who inhabited the region in times past. Unfortunately, even though the ignorant savage had solved the problem after a fashion, missile gap technology was not equal to the task. All the Autonetics tents blew away, computers and wind tunnels notwithstanding."

But Fitzgerald's banishment by Autonetics was back in the days when he was a private consultant and could be kicked out by aerospace companies. Later he went to the Pentagon as Deputy for Management Systems in the Air Force, and after that the military-industrialists didn't use their feet on him; they and their allies in the Pentagon used invisible lectures to explain why it is absolutely impossible to spend fewer "megabucks" (Pentagonese for one million dollars) on a particular part, a clipboard, or a sheaf of papers."

But the official notification had gone out before he had testified to the Senate Appropriations Committee. Apparently when its officials knifed him. I really doubt that he was, though he at least pretended to be.

It took place with unusual flagrancy even for the Pentagon. Fitzgerald was called before Senator Proxmire's Joint Economic Committee and asked if the C-5A was going to suffer from a cost overrun, he answered factually: yes, a couple billion dollars worth—an overrun that had been covered up by both Lockheed and the Army in such a way that if the same trick had been pulled in a bank all officials would have wound up in the penitentiary.

That, however, was not the first outburst of honesty that had got Fitzgerald in trouble. He had also been guilty enough to complain when he found that factory labor efficiency on one Minuteman contract ranged from 3.2 percent to 7 percent of what those workers would have been expected to produce if they had been on a civilian, commercial contract. At the same time, that is, when their rate of pay was increasing five times faster than commercial contract workers.

Fitzgerald figured that if all the obvious padding were taken out of the contract—and he had itemized the soft areas for his superiors to look over—the Pentagon could save five hundred million dollars. McNamara's cost-estimating experts refused to even consider Fitzgerald's reform proposals. The reason was that he was defying the principle of "historical costs," the principle that guides the financing of all Pentagon programs. It is such an insane principle that a normal person will inevitably find it hard to follow. It comes to this: The right cost is what the contractor charges: this, then, becomes history, and therefore it is elevated to the dogma of Historical Cost, and thereafter all further cost adjustments are built upon it. No looking back is allowed, no turning away to measure the cost of that program by what it would cost if civilians out in the world were doing it.

Contracting between the giant corporations and the Pentagon, explained with precision in this book, makes up in arduous what it lacks in grace; it is experience which Fitzgerald likens to "a track meet with participation limited to middle-aged ladies, each weighing in excess of 300 pounds" and which one of the more candid generals at the Pentagon likened to "contention among bullmoose for the privilege of servicing the government cow."

It is worth mentioning that every general, subConvention, and subdelegation, and every one of the more candid generals at the Pentagon (he refers to "contention among bullmoose for the privilege of servicing the government cow."

It is rewarding love-making, however. General Dynamics, for example, lumped the cow so poorly that the milk doubled. It earned twice as much money as originally contracted for by building an F-111 that is not supposed to fly (most contractors, having something like 25 has already been granted).

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Fitzgerald received a note to the effect that the Pentagon bosses were terribly sorry but that the notice of career status had been a computer error and that actually they had meant to tell him he was no longer needed.

What was the excuse? Civil Service records — later grudgingly opened for him to see — showed that officials had compiled a list of his sins which included driving an old Rambler automobile. This, said the bureaucratic gunshoe, indicated Fitzgerald was a "pinchpenny type of person."

Lockheed and Autometrics, among others, could have told them that with his scrofulous regulations and his regulatory exploration, they would be better off with a different kind of hog. They were not.

The C & SA overrun episode is probably recounted here with as many details as most readers would desire. But there are several omissions and several interpretations that I would quarrel with. I feel the officials of Lockheed handled our money in a criminal fashion. I think Fitzgerald should have made the back-alley quality of their thievery a more palpable thing, and I think one way to have done this would have been to point out the stock juggling that was going on behind the scene among Lockheed officials at the same time they were screwing the taxpayer. This was brought out fairly thoroughly in a quiet SEC investigation, but generally ignored by the press at the time. It was also soft-pedaled by the SEC, which said it didn’t want to single out Lockheed for rebuke but felt that stock manipulations at all defense corporations should be investigated. It was also soft-pedaled by the SEC, which promised to do so. That was how long ago — three years? four years? — and the SEC has not made a move in that direction yet.

I also think Fitzgerald was far, far too easy on the spineless liberals involved in this thing. I mean such fellows as Senator Metcalf of Montana, who had made a career of talking tough about corporations but backed down when he can strike a blow against the crooked ones. Made loquacious and expansive and generous by an overdose of grape, etc.

I also think Fitzgerald was too kind to Patman, Junior, who has made a career of talking tough about corporations but backs down when he can strike a blow against the crooked ones. Made loquacious and expansive and generous by an overdose of grape, etc.

The Leftist bad guys, the New Democrat Party, which is labour backed and oriented, like the British Labour Party, now has three provincial governments (B.C., Saskatchewan, and Manitoba) and their largest number of seats ever in the Federal House. American investors are fleeing B.C. right now, and Canadian capitalists are screaming to the federal government to bail them out by preventing nationalization of federal regulated industries. Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose.

The other big gains federally were reaped by Robert Stanfield’s Progressive Conservative Party, but it cannot take over the government without 25 more seats — and the Creditistes haven’t got that many. The Tories are conservative, but in the British/European sense, not (except for a small Ontario faction) in the American quasi-libertarian sense. Hence they love mercantilism and fear gradual socialism much less. Thus NDP support for the right Welfarist concessions is thinkable, and the 

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The Other North American Election
By Samuel Edward Konkin III

While Richard Nixon bored everyone with his landslide on November 7, Canadians were treated to a cliff-hanger a week earlier on October 30. The pollsters confidently predicted a Trudeau return as Maritime provinces’ results swung slightly towards the Liberal Party, and Quebec cut the Progressive Conservative seats from four to two (out of 74). True, the Social Credit Rally (Ralliement Creditiste) increased their popular vote substantially, but gained only one seat. Then Ontario came in with the social democratic New Democrat Party and the Progressive Conservatives polling close to the Grit (Liberal) standings. And then the West.

In Alberta, all four Liberal seats were buried under a Tory (PC) avalanche. British Columbia moved the Tories even with the Grits, and brought in the NDP main strength. The Northwest Territories gave the NDP their first “frontier” seat (Grit loss) and the Tories held on to the Yukon to put them one seat up, 109-108.

Canada does not have absentee balloting, except for one special case. The Social Credit Party’s sole gain was at the expense of Jean-Luc Pepin, a Liberal Cabinet Minister involved in what Murray Rothbard called Quebec’s “White Terror” suspension of civil rights of a few years ago, and, since the Creditistes are the federal party which most free market libertarians (especially minarchists) in the West could sympathize with, it seemed like divine justice. Unfortunately, the military votes, the special forces, and their absentee ballots reversed the 100-vote margin, knocking the Creditistes back to 14 seats. Libertarians can probably read symbolism into that as well.

The final standings of 100 seats each for the Liberals and P. C.’s, 30 for the NDP, 14 for SC, one Independent Conservativist, and one Independent (speaker of the House Lucien Lamoureux — non-partisan) tell the average American nothing, assuming he even heard of them. For the libertarians wanting to know who to cheer and who to boo — as Dr. Ruthard is wont — even less. I shall undertake here to give you a programme to go with your scorecard.

The Social Credit Party used to be based in the rightist West, Alberta and British Columbia, and was a free market, pro-American party with a funny money policy they could not legislate because they had only controlled provincial governments. They never had more than a minority in the national House of Commons. In 1963, they defeated John Diefenbaker’s minority Tory government because it failed to balance the budget. In 1962, Real Cauet led his Quebecers into the House in larger numbers than the Western wing, and the party eventually split. The Western wing withdrew in favor of P. C.’s to stem the Trudeau sweep of 1968, and never recovered. Cauet kept his more orthodox Social Credit position, appealing populistically to the Quebec habitants (peasant farmers and farmers’husbands) and appealing small farmers westward, but failed to restore the party outside Quebec (although there are still a few Socred diehards lurking in rightist circles in ranch and oil country).

The Alberta provincial Socreds were thrown out of office for the first time in 35 years in 1970 by Kennedy’s Torpy Peter Lougheed, and their very survival as a party depends on Lougheed’s self-destruction. This year in British Columbia, W. A. C. Bennett’s 30-year Socred regime was ousted by the NDP in an even greater victory, making a swing from far Right to far Left in the Canadian four-party spectrum. Although Cauet increased his popular vote markedly, and signs of organization were seen again throughout Canada, the recent net effect for the “good guys” (least worst guys) is down.

The Leftist had guys, the New Democratic Party, which is labour backed and oriented, like the British Labour Party, now has three provincial governments (B.C., Saskatchewan, and Manitoba) and their largest number of seats ever in the Federal House. American investors are fleeing B.C. right now, and Canadian capitalists are screaming to the federal government to bail them out by preventing nationalization of federal regulated industries. Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose.

The big gains federally were reaped by Robert Stanfield’s Progressive Conservative Party, but it cannot take over the government without 25 more seats — and the Creditistes haven’t got that many. The Tories are conservative, but in the British/European sense, not (except for a small Ontario faction) in the American quasi-libertarian sense. Hence they love mercantilism and fear gradual socialism much less. Thus NDP support for the right Welfarist concessions is thinkable, and the
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The electorate might decide to finish the job by giving Stanfield a majority. Diefenbaker ended 22 years of Liberal government in 1963, and dissolved his minority government early in 1958 calling for just such a majority. He won a record 208 out of 265 seats.

On the other hand, Lester Bowles Pearson won two minority governments in a row of 1963 and 1965 after a Tory minority of 1962, failing to get the majority he craved. He limped along in the Centre, depending on Social Credit support.

It is in the Grits' interest to give the Tories the government, so that Stanfield can begin to alienate voters. But it's not in Trudeau's interest, as shown by Diefenbaker's ouster after his election defeat by a particularly brutal purge which caused enough resentment in the West to give Trudeau his 1968 victory in the first place. Trudeau's ouster would not be so regionally oriented, because half of the Liberal seats are in Quebec anyway, and his followers have nowhere to go but the Creditistes, the Tories being unthinkable and the NDP frowned on by the Catholic Church.

The French-English split is being played up by foreign papers, and the Separatists may be bolstered by the defeat of their centralist enemy Trudeau — but that is a Provincial effect, not a Federal one. Furthermore, resentment against compulsory bilingualism/biculturalism is found in the third of the population of non-WASP origin (mostly in the West) such as German, Ukrainian, Gallician, Icelandic, Dutch, Russian, and others who are just speaking English in the first or second generation. The only real amalgamation will be found in reviving the Social Credit and Union Nationale's (a Quebec provincial party, recently defeated by the Grits) demand for greater decentralism and provincial rights. The present trend is the other way, but Canadians are a remarkably non-revolutionary lot, pointing with pride to their "evolution" from Great Britain, as opposed to the Americans' messy violence. Quebec independence will be gained gradually if at all, by the Parti Quebec parliamentarily (with both RIN-socialistic-and RND-Creditiste-wings) and not by the ten to fifteen FLQ'.

Revolution in Canada is a bigger joke than in the U. S., and rather than radical change, resulting from elimination of Trudeau's flashy, slightly-leftist liberalism (he flirted with price controls but never implemented them, by the way) one should expect stooginess, anti-communism, which hunts from Liberal renegade Paul Hellyer, and the ominous economic changes resulting from NDP support. Canadian libertarians and their American allies should be hoping for a new election and a minority government with Creditiste swing vote power. Failing that, how about a new election and a minority government with Creditiste swing vote power. Failing that, how about Parliamentary Chaos?

**Front de Liberation Quebecois RIN = Reassemblement pour l'Independance Nationale, and RND = Ralliement Nationale. The Nationale recurring in Quebec party names has the opposite meaning of "nation-wide".

SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Before becoming a well-known libertarian activist and writer, Mr. Konkin was a Soviet activist, and Chairman of the University of Alberta Social Credit Party from 1966-68. He became senior participant in the Model Parliaments, and was involved in all Canadian and Alberta elections from 1962 to 1968. He is now a foreign student at New York University, a candidate for a Ph. D. in Theoretical Chemistry.

Arts And Movies

By Mr. First Nighter

This is the time of year for movie critics to roll out their awards and their ten-best lists, and I am forced to take a long, hard look at the cinema from the fact that I cannot come up with a "ten best" list at all. For in the cinema we must wage the same struggle that we should have been fighting in the rest of the culture since the turn of the twentieth century: on behalf of the old, bourgeois values and against the morbidity and unreason of the avant-garde. Unfortunately, the avant-garde has now become "the garde", and so it becomes more important than ever, in the movies as well as in literature, art, and music, to raise the standard of the arriere-garde — a rear-guard struggle against a diseased culture.

The carriers of the disease are of the course the intelligentsia, for the cultural instincts of the middle-class are sound, and generally they put up a lengthy resistance to the irrationalism of the cultural "elite". They then have two cultures: the sound, if often stodgy, "commercial" culture of the bourgeoisie; and the arrogantly morbid, involuted culture of the intelligentsia. This unhealthy split between the cultures did not really exist before 1900: before that, when what we might call the "classical" culture was held sway, the leaders in art, fiction, music, etc. were of the same cloth, albeit on a far greater and more creative level, as the popular artists; indeed, the greatness of the leaders — of the Rembrandts, Mozarts, Verdis, etc., was cheerfully acknowledged by the mass of the bourgeoisie. "...classical culture was profoundly morbid — but that is a Provincial effect, not a Federal one; the real question is whether the disease had not crumpled into cultural degeneracy: a degeneracy that in the 19th century plague, they were bound to lose out when permanently deprived of intellectuals and cultural allies. So in fiction, where there have been the great classical writers since Somersel Maughan? In the theater, where are the successors to Shaw and Wilde? In art, the Wyeths, John Koch and a few others have kept the realist tradition beautifully alive, but they have been largely ignored by the chi-chi art world which has rushed to lionize the Picassos, Mondrians, and Pollocks. In music, the barbarities of modern music, from the atonal to the electronic, have fortunately been checked by the customers, who insist on the recording and the concertizing of the classical masters. In popular music, however, both "classical" and "classical" jazz have lost out to the barbarities of atonal modern jazz and of acid rock.

For a long time, the movies were the last stronghold of the arriere-garde. There are two good reasons for this: one, that the movies are our nearest art form, and two, that since movies are dependent on a mass audience, the basically sound taste of the masses for a long while kept the intelligentsia on a short leash. But now the spread of irrationality has hit the movies in a big way, and the defense of the classical movie — the "movie movie" — must be a bitter struggle against the rising if not dominant tide of "intelligent" trash.

By "degeneracy" I of course do not mean pornography, which serves as a wrong-headed focus for many conservatives. Pornography had always formed a harmonious "left wing" within the Victorian-culture. The problem in the movies is not sex but unreason, an absurdism that infects both the point of view of the film and the techniques of the camera. The Enemy on the movie front is not the "California porn king, our war to the metaphorical knife is not with the makers of Deep Throat but with the Bergmans, the Brunels, the Antonionis, the Godards. The truly obscene is not the happy, fun-loving School Girl, but such monstrousties as Juliet of the Spirits and Last Year At Marienbad.

Neither the "violence" the movie critics are maintaining. Violence is a perfectly proper dramatic tool; the real question is the point of view. Is violence being used in the film. Once again: look to the intellectuals, to the avant-garde, and you will find precisely the wrong point of view. The intelligentia, for example, loved A Clockwork Orange, with its random and meaningless violence, but they hated with a purple passion those films where violence is used as an instrument of justice, of defense against crime. In short, they hate Dirty Harry or such great John Wayne films as Chisum or Rio Bravo, and they have the gall to denounce the supposedly "meaningless" violence of such Sam Peckinpah masterpieces as The Wild Bunch, because the intellectuals preferred Peckinpah's inferior Straw Dogs to Wild Bunch, precisely because the employment of violence, while still defensive, did not have the latter's clarity and point."

It is of course a standard trick of the intellectuals to take the most banal works of classical culture and to use them as straw men on behalf (Continued On Page 7)
of the avant-garde. But classical culture is certainly not a monolith; there are varying degrees of merit in classical films as anywhere else. Of course, Mary Poppins, for example, was banal and boring; but contrast it to such fine musicals as My Fair Lady and the magnificent Gigi!

The Golden Age of the cinema was the thirties and forties. It was then that we could delight in Gone With the Wind, in Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, and The Lady Vanishes; it was then that we could enjoy the sophisticated wit of the Cary Grant-Katherine Hepburn movies and the hilarious repartee of the Marx Brothers, as well as Mr. Old Curmudgeon himself, W. C. Fields. Indeed, by far the three best movies that I saw in 1972 were revivals from that better age. Two were from CBS: Major Barbara and Pygmalion. It is instructive to compare Pygmalion with the later My Fair Lady, the musical based on the former play. while Pygmalion lacks the famous music, it has far more of the original Shavian bite; also the acting in Pygmalion is far superior: Wendy Hiller is miles ahead of Audrey Hepburn, and even that excellent actress Rex Harrison is eclipsed by the cool austerity and luminous intelligence of Leslie Howard. Major Barbara, despite Shaw’s socialist beliefs, is one of the great arguments for capitalism in the history of the film, done with high Shavian wit and intelligence; and then there is the magnificent acting of Robert Morley, in addition to Harrison and Hiller.

And finally, the incomparable English film, The Importance of Being Earnest, perhaps the greatest motion picture ever made. The marvelously witty Oscar Wilde play never flags for a moment, and the acting is high-style perfection, performed by Michael Redgrave, Michael Denison, Dorothy Tutin, Joan Greenwood, Margaret Rutherford and the incomparable Dame Edith Evans. There, my friends, was a movie!

But to return to the cinematic slough of 1972. Certainly the best film of 1972 was The Godfather, which we have already hailed in these pages. The Godfather is us classicists’ candidate in the award sweepstakes. Already, of course, both the masses and the intellectuals have spoken: the masses by peremptorily making The Godfather the box-office smash of all time: the intellectuals by rejecting it for avant-garde tinsel: the

New York Film Critics choosing the eternally boring and morbid Bergman’s latest, Cries and Whispers, and the even more pretentious National Society of Film Critics selecting the irrationalist Bunuel’s latest offering. (In my view, the only good Bergman was one of his earliest, before he adopted the unbecoming mantle of Profound Thinker: his Smiles of a Summer Night, done as a high style Restoration-type farce. Which is just about the only Bergman movie that the critics don’t ooh and aah about.) I have faith, however, that the good old bourgeois Academy will spurn the Continental mish-mash and heap its awards on the truly great Godfather.

The other awards? Best director and best picture awards should usually run together, and so Francis Ford Coppola gets our accolade. For best actor it’s for me a tossup between Al Pacino and Marlon Brando in our favorite movie. Brando’s acting was a mighty and brilliant tour de force, by far the best Brando in that actor’s checkered career. But, on the other hand, Pacino’s was a far longer part, and it was a subtle and splendid performance, in which the character changed gradually but vitally in the course of the picture. For best supporting actor, Robert Duvall will probably get the Academy Award for his consigliori in The Godfather (even the New York Film Critics selected Duvall), but far superior are two splendid performances by British actors in Frenzy: either the subtle acting of Alec McCowen as the inspector, or Barry Foster’s suave and two-faced villain. For best actress, there is simply no one that I can choose: 1972 was a bad year for actresses. Please, Academy, not the impossibly awkward and pseudo-elfin Liza Minelli in Cabaret! I am afraid, however, that Liza will get the award, purely as a remnant of the still flourishing cult for one of Hollywood’s all-time worst singers and actresses: Liza’s mom Judy Garland. For supporting actresses, Vivien Merchant’s gourmet-loving inspector’s wife in Frenzy towers over an indifferent lot.

As for the “ten best” movies, I cannot find the heart to put nine other movies of 1972 on the list. Certainly one, however, is Alfred Hitchcock’s

Recommended Reading

Natural Gas Shortage. Gilbert Burck, “The FPC is Backing Away From the Wellhead”, Fortune (November, 1972) is a good, up-to-date account of the way in which FPC regulation has created a shortage of natural gas.

World War II Revisionism. In recent years, younger historians of modern Germany, in America and elsewhere, have brought a fresh perspective to the study of wartime passions and distortions to their controversial field of study. In a series of brilliant articles, the eminent left-liberal English historian Geoffrey Barraclough, a distinguished historian of Germany who in no sense can be accused of pro-Nazi views, has done a block-buster job of synthesizing the insights of the new literature. Essentially he does for Germany’s “domestic” scene what his famous counterpart A. J. P. Taylor did for German foreign policy a decade ago. Particularly important are Geoffrey Barraclough, “The Liberals and German History: Part II,” “New York Review of Books” (November 2, 1972), and “A New View of German History: Part III,” “New York Review of Books” (November 16, 1972). Must reading for revisionists.

Airport Congestion. In recent years, free-market economists have begun to zero in on the cause of airport congestion: the operations of airports, which are invariably government-owned and operated, and which systematically charge a uniform and absurdly low fee for the use of runways. In contrast, the airports grant monopoly privileges to its concessionaires (restaurants, bars, insurance, parking lots) which is turn charge monopoly prices for low-quality service. out of which the airports get a rake-off. The best monograph on the subject has just appeared, a pamphlet by Professor Ross D. Eckert, Airports and Congestion (Washington: American Enterprise Institute, 1972, $3.00).

Nisei Revisionism. One of the most barbaric acts in American history was our incarceration of all innocent Japanese-Americans into concentration camps for the duration of World War II. But most revisionist books critical of this action pin all the blame on right-wingers: racist army officers, California business competitors, and on the Japanese themselves.14 Particularly important as applied to the history of slavery in the U. S., can be found in a lengthy article by Harold D. Woodman, “Economic History and Economic Theory: The New Economic History in America,” Journal of Interdisciplinary History (Autumn, 1972).

Jerry Lewis! Chloe is one of a fascinating set of "moral tales," in which Sam and They Only Kill Their Masters. Play It is hardly in the same league with the previous Rohmer tales released here, notably Claire's Knee and Frenzy in which the Old Master returns to the fine suspense of his early English period — could it be a coincidence that he returned to England to make the film? If not for Coppola's great achievement, I would surely pick Hitchcock as the best director of the year. Another excellent film was the best of the "caper" genre in years, Peter Yates' The Hot Rock. A fine blend of humor and suspense, the excellent direction blended sterling acting performances from George Segal and Robert Redford, and featured a marvellously funny Zero Mostel as the crooked lawyer (Zero would place as the best supporting actor on my list below McCowen and Foster.)

When we get past The Godfather, Frenzy, and The Hot Rock, we have to reach a bit. The Hospital featured a slashing and witty attack on the large city hospital, highlighted by the typically excellent acting of George C. Scott. I haven't seen Sleuth, but the play was splendid and subtly changing suspense: my only prior reservation is that Sir Laurence Olivier always tends to overact and chew the scenery, especially in productions that he obviously feels are beneath him. As a result, one is supposed to applaud Olivier's acting tricks and to forget the character he is playing. (See, for example, Olivier's performance as the dervish leader in the forgotten Khartoum.) Even in classical films, Olivier sometimes ruins the picture by hammering it up, as he did in Richard III.

Also on the list, but not with very high marks, is Eric Rohmer's Chloe in the afternoon. Rohmer is one of the few French directors to continue in the classic tradition, and for this he is ostracized by the French film world. As the founder of the famous French journal Cahiers du Cinema, Rohmer kept insisting throughout the dark days of the avant-garde on the high merits of Hitchcock and even — perhaps going a little too far — of Jerry Lewis! Chloe is one of a fascinating set of "moral tales," in which Rohmer single-handedly restores intelligent and subtle dialogue to its rightful place in the cinema. Unfortunately, Chloe suffers by comparison with the previous Rohmer tales released here, notably Claire's Knee and the superb My Night at Maud's. The problem is that in Chloe both the hero and the heroine are decidedly unappealing, so that one ends up not really giving a damn whether he succumbs to temptation and sleeps with her or not (the problem of all of the Moral Tales.) Still, Chloe in the Afternoon rates as far and away the best foreign picture of the year.

Coming to the bottom of the "eight best" list, we have Play It Again, Sam and They Only Kill Their Masters. Play It is hardly in the same league with Woody Allen's hilarious Bananas, but this clumsy movie does center around a warm and affectionate tribute to the great Bogart, and no picture that does that can be all bad. Masters is a quiet, gentle detective drama, and would scarcely make any best list in a good movie year; but it is an engaging sleeper, and contains a fine, quietly wry performance from James Garner.

What of my fellow critics? Are there any whom I can generally recommend? Not really: there is unfortunately no one who is really aware of the great classical avant-garde struggle, much less wagers a consistent battle on behalf of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful. Even the best are a quivering mass of ad hoc sensibility. Perhaps the soundest of the lot is Paul D. Zimmerman of Newsweek. Unquestionably the worst is the most famous: Judith Crist of New York, who can be depended upon to love the awful movies and hate the good ones. Rex Reed of the Daily News always pitches his critiques on a note of scarcely controlled hysteria. On the other hand, Andrew Sarris of the Village Voice is better than most, being saved by his being a disciple of Rohmer. John Simon of the New Leader is often good, largely because he dislikes almost everything — but not for the right reasons. Stanley Kauffmann of the New Republic is often sensible. But all in all, a rum show.

For Closed Marriage, I see that a few libertarians, for some reason, are recommending the jejune best-seller by the O'Neills, Open Marriage. In their inspired work, the O'Neills cleverly have it both ways. By being deliberately vague and non-specific, their work can be read on two levels. On one level, it is simply another string of cliches that have come down to us ever since Shakespeare said it far far better: "To thine own self be true." The changes have been rung on this through best-sellers like Dale Carnegie and now the O'Neills. If this is all they mean, that, e.g. each partner in a marriage should fulfill his or her self to its best potential, then the "open marriage" concept is unexceptionable but tediously banal; it would be hard to find anyone to disagree. On the other hand, the book can be read on a second level, and I suspect that it is the titillation of the authors' never-quite-out-with-it that is responsible for the mass appeal: i.e. a call for sleeping around by both partners. One can hear the titters: Is that what they mean by all the hoopla about growth by the partner, etc.?

If that is what they mean, then we are simply getting the old seduction shuck: "Come on, it will rejuvenate your marriage"; "you'll bring new experiences to your (husband, wife)." If that is what they mean, then I am foursquare for the "closed marriage," the marriage in which two partners live in trust and fidelity, in which they blend into a lifelong emotional intimacy to the glories of which the promiscuous and the seduction-shuckers are deaf, dumb, and blind.

The only good Indian is . . . (1972-style)

The real problem confronting the American Indians in the western United States today is that the Bureau of Indian Affairs is carrying out the policy of the Department of Interior . . . and that policy is opposed to the private rights to the use of water of the American Indians. No one is recognizing that in substance and in effect the Indian rights are being communized . . . communized for the use of the non-Indian community.

William H. Veder, water expert, in The Indian Historian, Summer 1972

The Libertarian Forum January, 1973

From The Old Curmudgeon