

other-worldliness, to which Russian monasticism has always tended. It is certainly true that the modern world needs the vision of Teilhard de Chardin of a world in which both matter and man 'converge' on Christ, not, I would say, by the necessary movement of their own nature, but by the power of the Holy Spirit, working in them and leading them towards the new world of the Resurrection. In the Resurrection, which is also the 'time of the restoration of all things', the universe and man, both individually and collectively, are taken up into the new life in Christ, not losing their reality or their individuality by being merged in the absolute, but fulfilling themselves in a new order of being, in which man will enjoy personal communion with God and with his fellow-men and the world of nature will recover its original harmony.

This, it seems to me, is the kind of vision to which Professor Zaehner's view of religion rightly leads. If I have criticised many of the details of his exegesis, this is not to deny the fundamental truth of his vision or its immense importance for Christianity to-day. This is one of those seminal works, like that of Teilhard de Chardin himself, with which one may quarrel over the details, but which gives a new understanding of the meaning of religion and the destiny of man.

Heard and Seen

MARGINAL BENEFITS: FILMS AT VENICE

This year the Venice Film Festival was once again under new management; but there was from the start no shadow of doubt that Professor Luigi Chiarini, the new Director, was exercising effective control. A rigorous limitation of participating nations and in addition a severe system of pre-selection virtually excluded the type of film all too often encountered at festivals—lasting for three hours plus and employing most of the clichés long since outgrown by adult cineasts. The result was a festival in which almost every picture was worth seeing for one reason or another; a festival, in short, of much more consistent level with fewer peaks, perhaps, but certainly fewer shocking depths.

Moreover, the entries from the eleven countries competing were divided into two sections: 1st XI and Colts, as it were, for the established directors showed

their films with ceremony at the evening performances and many of the afternoons were reserved for *opere prime*, first works by promising newcomers to the festival world. Inevitably, I suppose, there was a strong preponderance of Italian pictures in this section and, exuberant though the Italian industry is, it could hardly produce enough films of real quality. Even so, it was an impressive contribution.

Two of these *opere prime* were set in Venice itself, which was fun for the local audience and even gave us transients a pleasant feeling of *déjà-vu*. One of them, *In Capo al Mondo*, was made by a director with the improbable name of Tinto Brass; a charming, desultory story about a boy with a couple of hours to kill before he learns whether he has a job or not. The industrial psychologist has set him thinking, and he goes sauntering through time and space for satisfactory answers. The camera work made the best of the incomparable sunny background and the young man who played Bonifacio had such an endearing face that one liked him from the start. As I listened to the audience roaring their heads off at the Venetian dialogue, I wondered how they would cope with Billy Liar's Yorkshire but they had sub-titles and I had not. The second Venetian film was a very different kind of story, and the most impressive of the Italian entries in this section, I thought. *Il Terrorista*, directed by Gianfranco De Bosio, was a grim return to the wintry Venice of 1943, with the Resistance on the run from Fascists as well as Germans. There was much argument but the film was never static, even though the real conflict took place in the leader's mind as he watched with a clinical detachment what this kind of life was doing to his integrity. It was splendidly acted, notably by Jose Quaglio, who played the Communist member of the Action Party; I shall be greatly surprised if we do not see him again. This really was a 'thought-provoking' film.

Riccardo Fellini (brother to 8½) showed a triptych of films, *Storie sulla Sabbia*, in clear, beautiful colour all set in or around the sea shore. A tiny girl called Francesca tentatively reaches out to all the new things she finds on the beach, including a couple of Sisters of Charity composing a most satisfactory pattern against the horizon. A girl gets married, and her happiness is clouded by the appearance of a boy whom she might have preferred; the hot and rowdy wedding guests contrast with her cool near-beauty, and she escapes to a swing, her white dress and veil adrift against the sky. A set of sophisticated young people go on a midnight bathing party and during the night some of their emotional problems are solved—a slight but charming work, and visually delicious. Nothing of the kind can be said about the great Zavattini's editing of an odious piece of *cinéma-verité* called *I Misteri di Roma*. How the man who scripted all De Sica's best films could lend himself to such an indefensible slice of *voyeurism* escapes comprehension.

They were, on the whole, a serious lot, these young directors. The first French picture in this section was directed by Roberto Enrico, who made the memorable short, *Rivière du Hibou*; *La Belle Vie* opened with the young hero—a new name and face, Frédéric de Pasquale—returning to Paris on demobilisation from

Algeria. We watched him coming to terms with civilian life, marriage, responsibilities, politics and, just as success comes into view, being called up once again. The topical sequences were admirably done, but there was a good deal of rather ponderous cross-cutting with newsreel material to demonstrate the previous world of war and ideology of which Frédéric and his contemporaries know nothing. A good if uneven piece of anti-militarism, it had some rewarding moments. Chris Marker's *Joli Mai*, on the other hand, was quite unerring in its aim. This very accomplished piece of *cinéma-verité* won a Critics' prize at Cannes, so its inclusion here was questionable but I was immensely glad to see it. It will be shown at the London Film Festival in the same version (cut for export by some twenty minutes by the French censor) and is an exhilarating work, with its left-wing ideas kept strictly under control and its commentary, in Yves Montand's grave, masculine voice, admirably suited to the matchless images of Paris in that month of May 1962—the first year of absolute peace for France since 1939.

The Americans entered *Greenwich Village Story*, a sad, slight anecdote about beatniks in the Village directed by Jack O'Connell, which was full of social conscience and was interesting for its portrayal of a New York more like Hampstead or Chelsea than one had imagined. Young people in the usual contemporary muddles of sexual, political and artistic life seemed very familiar, in spite of their high-sounding conversation. It did not quite come off, but certainly deserved ten for trying. From Sweden came *A Sunday in September*, directed by Jörn Donner, who is in fact a Finn and, I was told, dislikes Swedes. One rather felt this came out in the story of a love affair between two pleasant young people who cannot meet the adult demands of marriage. Divided into four episodes, it used a rather interesting technique of documentary introduction to each section which gave added weight to the emotional conflict. Harriet Andersson gave a rare performance as the girl who tired of the boy before he stopped loving her.

It is clear, I hope, from this brief survey that this was an extremely fruitful innovation in the world of festival programme-planning; one went to these films knowing that they would not show the established qualities of the films by Resnais, Kurosawa, Malle and Richardson which were to be found in the competition proper, but the exciting prospect of watching a young director's first attempt to put on the screen the images so far only moving vaguely in his mind was a reward in itself. It was a lottery that might throw up any kind of prize, and the *opera prime* had an exhilaration of their own for this reason: Professor Chiarini certainly made his mark with this, his first, Festival, the twenty-fourth of the Venetian series.

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