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Review by: James Kerans

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place. Holden, half-afraid of this strange insight, vows that he will return; he runs off to his next assignment, and an almost certain dénouement—first giving the key to a sullen colleague (Kieron Moore), another captain who has hovered in the background from the beginning of the film. At this point, a spectator surrenders himself completely to the stranglehold of cliché against which he has fought throughout the story. The key's symbolism is now jettisoned. Any experienced moviegoer knows that Holden will survive where his predecessors did not. The still-struggling hope that he will die, and give the story some ironic depth, is unfulfilled. When he returns to the flat to reassume his position as Pan, Loren runs away in desperation: Holden's lack of faith in her has destroyed their relationship.

The finale, at least, is in the Reed tradition. The lovers are unreconciled. Loren settles down alone in a railway train which Holden vainly tries to overtake. There is a shot of Loren's face, sighing with relief and new hope for whatever lies ahead. And amid the white smoke-billows of the station platform, Holden and Kieron Moore stand disconsolately. Some utterance is made by the former about "I'll find her—someday," and then, the traditional back-shot, with the two men walking away from the camera.*

The acting is uniformly superior to the story. By the very nature of his somewhat inflexible personality, William Holden is, as usual, thoughtful and genially American to the core. Sophia Loren's Stella is extremely human and beautiful to behold, but her characterization has every limitation involved with being both enigma and Cassandra at the same time. Trevor Howard is excellent.

Carl Foreman recently remarked: "*The Key* has the marks of a typical service picture. But its *not* a service picture: it suddenly goes off-beam; it changes direction; it approaches dangerously close . . . to every cliché there has ever been in this kind of film. And then it side-

steps it—at least I hope so."

But neither the character of David nor of Stella grips the emotions enough to concern the viewer deeply about the problems of fear and betrayal, and one's attention is instead drawn toward Morris' images of ships and subs, and the great gray ocean, or a bunch of raucous chorus girls in a military canteen singing "Flat Foot Floogie"—in short, toward the war. In an upstairs flat, full of hints and misses, the trio of tug-boat captains and their symbolic girl and their keys all embody a legend of sexual inertia, really telling us, in ambiguous terms, the same old story.

That Reed has managed to hold an audience's attention during this film is mostly a tribute to the great expectations we have of him. Every sequence is, however, marked by his acute sense of timing, particularly in the dialogues between Holden and Trevor Howard. But compared to similar sequences in *The Third Man* or *The Man Between*, they lack real excitement. Actually, one cannot help but feel a sense of mystified frustration at the disparate effects of this film, written and produced by the Carl Foreman who wrote *High Noon*, and directed by Carol Reed. In all of the careful planning and execution of this production, the key to the conscience of the cinema audience is never found and never unlocked.—ALBERT JOHNSON

Le Notti di Cabiria

All the Fellini virtues are here: the fluent camera, the wit, the elegant composition, the theme-and-variations style, the mélange of theatrical and religious symbol, the parabolic eloquence, the vocabulary of private motifs. *La Strada* is more exciting, because it calls for the management of material more coarse, more extravagant, more dangerous, more mysterious. But in *Cabiria* Fellini's finesse is more impressive. His command is so easy it becomes almost idle, and we are sure to hear him accused of facility and

* In the version being shown in the U.S., Holden manages to get on the train; and although Loren's face remains enigmatic, one gathers that all is supposed to end well.

decadence. Nevertheless, he here confirms his position as the greatest master now steadily producing films.

The center of the film is Cabiria, a good-natured small-time whore. She is our entrée into a series of backgrounds: the Caracalla baths, an outdoor staging area for *The Trade*; the world of loud bachelor chic into which she is briefly bought by a movie star crossed for the moment in love; a hectic, theatrical shrine, dense with believers in search of miracles; a kitschy theater presided over by a hypnotist; the spacious, nondescript byways of Rome, where she strolls with François Périer, her gentle betrayer. Everywhere Fellini makes Masina's responsiveness a vivid foil to the life around her, and there is so much plausible delight and drama in the simple shock of her intrusions that they alone nearly satisfy us. But under this literal flower is a strong formal scheme.

The story line is plain: Cabiria, robbed and abandoned by one boy friend, picks up for us her night- (and day-) life. Because she is looking (and vaguely planning) for an escape from it, she walks into a gross confidence trap set by François Périer, who promises to marry her,

then runs away with her money. But this sturdy cliché in turn supports the film's real form, which is lyrical, the expansion of a germinal formula into a dramatic meditation.

The opening (key) episode is almost a parody of *neorealismo* melodrama. Cabiria, fond and gladsome, leads her punk (not Périer) to the river at the city's edge. He snatches her purse, pushes her in, and flees. Some boys pull her out and hand her over to a group of men who, neo-realistically, pump her dry. When she awakes, she storms off, surly and ungrateful. The film then undertakes to transfigure this formula, to invert it, to give it religious, humane, and artistic dignity.

One measure of Fellini's style is to contrast the quality of the opening and closing passages of the film. The opening statement is in flat daylight, the camera distant, caustic, the motives neglected, the action abrupt, ugly, journalistic. The development, by contrast, is beautifully various in its staging, the camera endlessly caressive and sympathetic, the dramatic

LE NOTTI DI CABIRIA: *The temporary taste of luxury.*



inspection microscopic, the action delicate and suggestive. The reprise at the end is positively operatic in its amplification of the initial formula. The purse is now Cabiria's whole treasure, the locale is a glamorous cliff over deep water, twilight by a "strange light," the punk is now the sensitive, guilty (even this luxury Fellini can afford!). Périer, and the return to life is at first a solitary survival of humiliation and loss, then a dazzling welcome among children singing in the dark wood. This circling back has a formal value, but it also forces us to accept the repetition of trust and betrayal as Cabiria's destiny, whether it appears as a dingy accident or as a subtly studied complex of "things as they are" in her nature and in "the world." The beautiful sustained smile of the close is thus no vulgarly hopeful "Better luck next time," nor is it even a sign of accepted consolation. It is the sign of surviving grace, of a pure nature persisting, free, in its purity.

Grace, really, is the subject of the film. The sense that Cabiria is "chosen," whether as victim or redeemed, is established by various devices, but most directly by the number of times (and ways) she is "called" or singled out. As a prostitute she is of course open to calls, but Fellini converts this plausible condition into a significant one. Over and over again Cabiria is called—nearly always from behind (this obvious but unobtrusive device must appear a dozen times): she does not essentially *seek* to be chosen; and she usually responds with, "A me? [Who, me?]," looking for reassurance. If we ask by what sour analogy we must find, in the random, negligent, or sinister "lovers" who dispose of Cabiria's destiny, emblems of God, we may discover a rather lurid cynicism; but we would be unjust to Fellini. The lovers may choose her as a *victim*, but if they are emblems of any disposing deity, it is the god of deceit and gimcrack façade which Fellini exposes in his "church" scenes. But the impulse by which she calls herself Maria suggests a divine appointment clear of the welter of masquetry which is Fellini's governing vision of life. We may not know what power has graced her, but the tribute is offered still.

Of Masina we need only say that, as in *La Strada*, her gift is the very moral of the drama. Hilarious and moving though she is, her inexhaustible, vivid candor is no mere *tour de force*, but a declaration of life. Under the cunning tics and grimaces, the reckless awkwardnesses of costume and gesture, there persists the angelic image that tames the spectators at her hypnotic scene.

The only just praise of Fellini's planning and direction is a close commentary. In stylish technical work and symbolic density (the title, with its hints at myth and garish romance, is an example) *Cabiria* has some of his best work. If his repetition of symbols (the sea, or "backstage" religion) shows a tendency to manner, the tendency is at least still gathering excitement; and at present no one else promises so much.—JAMES KERANS.

"Madness! All Madness!"

One of the best of the war films in recent months, and there has been a spate of them, was Stanley Kubrick's *Paths of Glory*, curiously ignored when the awards were given out. Its strong indictment of war, stated in terms of the confusion felt by an officer in the line when he realizes his commanding officers do not accept his concept of human decency, can now be compared with a recent batch of more or less anti-war films which have received wide attention from both audiences and critics.

A small piece of steel, no larger than a splinter of shrapnel, would not register on a CinemaScope screen, even though it was big enough to kill a man. So we must be told in other ways that the man has been shot, and by whom—perhaps by seeing someone else drop a shell into the mortar, perhaps by something on the soundtrack. White-faced, or triumphant, the killer says, "I shot him."

One would have thought this too inconsequential to mention, but at the end of *Bridge on the River Kwai*, this year's winner of almost all the major Academy Awards, I was not at all sure who shot whom, or why. Jack Hawkins