



Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente

THE ITALIAN CINEMA

Author(s): M. G. Moscardelli

Source: *East and West*, OCTOBER 1951, Vol. 2, No. 3 (OCTOBER 1951), pp. 171-180

Published by: Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente (IsIAO)

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/29757959>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente (IsIAO) is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *East and West*

JSTOR

THE ITALIAN CINEMA

No one any longer discusses today whether the cinema is or is not art, but there is still some hesitation in admitting that it has a necessary basis of culture, on account of the many elements constantly opposed to this legitimate claim. As a rule the film is regarded as a diversion, as a relief from the hours of daily work: as such only an easy presentation, a lightness of contents, a more or less accentu-

ated superficiality in facing certain problems, are demanded of it.

If this is an actual requirement on the part of the public of the whole world, it is also the key to all the errors, deviations and disappointments of the cinema output of today. Based on an essentially commercial factor in America, a « school » has arisen which has created the current easy, well-directed film,



Raf Vallone, the leading character in « The Path of Hope » by Germi, in the scene in which he is guiding his comrades through the tragic Alpine pass.

with the sole object of setting forth an episode in the best possible manner. We cannot however deny the existence of a tendency which strives to produce exclusively artistic films, independently of the Hollywood canons.

The contradiction implied in a similar estimate of the cinema is evident. How can any human expression, destined to be presented, enjoyed and studied by a number of individuals (society), exclude all idea of culture and art? If we wish to talk about man we must make use of human words, but only art and true culture are capable of presenting such a humanity, of facing and solving social problems, of suggesting a moral.

If on the stage there has been at a certain moment a differentiated and isolated popular form of production, this has not been the case with the cinema, which by its nature is destined for everybody and must contain, to as large an extent as possible, a minimum « common factor » accessible to all. In admitting this we do not diminish its value, but we establish its very grave and delicate responsibility in its relations with society. Thousands of persons are every day, consciously or unconsciously, subject to the influence of the films which they see. These films unite in themselves the power of imagination, of words and of movement, thereby reacting on the mind of the spectator, isolated from realities, in a darkness which deadens the inhibitions of the nerves and make him ready to receive the full effect of such power.

Even the cinema, like every other expression of the human spirit, derives its true essence from the labours, the necessities and the experiences of the life of the country, therefore it is easy to distinguish, independently of external and conventional formulae, a style, a way of life, which we might define, to use a commercial expression, as a « trade mark ». In America it has thus been possible to establish a standardized and easy production, together with the « Western » expression of the Transatlantic epic.

We know that in art changes of tendency are sometimes slow in their evolution, others sudden and dramatic.

Until 1941-1942 it may be said that in Italy a « genre » style of cinema production, to use an expression current in painting, had developed. This does not mean that attempts had not been made to refine and perfect technique, but a certain conformity, dictated by political

requirements, impeded that free and outward expression of artistic values found in other countries, which were in the vanguard of this form of art. Light comedy was a speciality of ours, originating directly, by tradition and by actual technical preparation, from our best theatrical production.

Historical subjects appealed to authors and producers, but they were nevertheless dealt with in such an ingenuously superficial manner as to astonish anyone who bore in mind the wealth of historical tradition of our country.

At the same time competent and well prepared men such as Luigi Chiarini attempted to give a sound framework to our cinema production, trying to form a school, which employing all the necessary technical means, should accompany the education of taste and sensitiveness required for any form of artistic output. These methods found expression in the « Cinema Experimental Centre », whose foundations were laid by Chiarini himself; he wished to make of it a place in which the pupil, closely united and associated with the teacher, should acquire « a consciousness of his work and of himself on the historical field ». For him it was to be a school wherein « formative action should proceed all the more slowly the more closely it is inserted into the spiritual development of the individual, and should dissolve within the spirit like yeast which leavens bread; the only possible method, both as regards artistic and scientific technique, in the theoretical and practical teaching, should be the critical method, independently of all pedagogical and ideological dogmatism » (1).

In 1943 and 1944 the war destroyed everything — the buildings and the equipment of the studios (2), but it also broke the soul of the Italian people with the sufferings and horrors which it brought upon them.

From this awful nightmare something new and wholly different from what had been before was to arise. In art we had a face showing the scars of past sorrows, eyes with a new outlook on the things of the world. How could we produce carefree and light-hearted works, dream of gilded castles in an atmosphere which had indeed been ours but a few years back, and was now infinitely distant and remote?

New problems arose; life had to be considered in its deeper and more painful aspects, the social question appeared under wholly different aspects, with an entirely new morality.

The first film was a classic, presenting the

troubled years 1943 and 1944. It was but one aspect of the struggle, but it presented at least a part of our life time: Roberto Rossellini's « Roma città aperta » (Rome, open city). In a moment of happy artistic intuition, with a well-balanced technique redeeming it from many polemical attitudes, we saw our sufferings during many months objectively presented, setting forth that silent heroism which had developed behind the outer façade. In that film every type appeared: the partisan, the kindly parish priest, the plain woman of the people, small boys, the « brigadieri » (3) of Rome a peculiar feature of our city. This film made the fame of Anna Magnani, who played the principal role, presenting the type of the woman of the people, with a sense of true humanity such as has seldom been seen in the theatrical world. The fact that they were Romans, that for many years they had acted parts in Roman dialect, certainly contributed to the success of the interpretation of Anna Magnani, and also of Aldo Fabrizi in the role of a priest. In any case their perfect harmony with the subject of the film cooperated with the producer in presenting real situations interpreted in all sincerity.

This film initiated the new phase in Italian cinema production, founded on an entirely novel basis and with wholly novel aims.

At so chaotic a moment as the immediate post-war period, the fact that the value of this new form of art and of its social functions, avoiding all external banalities, had been grasped, was a sign of a serious and conscientious spirit. While all around us we were overwhelmed in a desperate effort to secure bread and other material goods, which tended to weaken our consciousness as men, we sought through the film to penetrate the depths of the human soul, to study its needs, to interpret its latent rhythm and to present its lights and shades. The importance of the film for the public was grasped, and it was made use of as an instrument for facing social and moral problems. Subjects were sought in life, in realities; hence arose what is known as « neo-realism ».

* * *

We can compare this movement with one which arose first in France, and thence spread to Italy, giving rise to a new form of literature about the middle of the last century. It was called « realism » and was a reaction against the Victor Hugo type of literature with rose-coloured and sentimental tints, in which very

often even tears are a sign of feeble effeminacy in all its outward expressions, rather than of deep sorrow for true human misfortune.

When in the XVII century Angiolo Merisi da Caravaggio dared to place over the altars paintings in which the Blessed Virgin appeared amidst the real poor, in which with his highly dramatic technique of light and shade he presented the study of a true reality without veils or attenuations, he provoked scandal and disapproval. The public had been accustomed to the paintings of the Renaissance, to the schools derived from it, to the standardized images of the Divinity wrapped up in inaccessible gilding and beauty.

It may be said that the same thing happened with regard to « realism ». The new position taken by the Italian cinema art aroused the same scandal in many quarters.

* * *

Even if « realism » in the film comes to us from France, there are substantial differences between French realism and our own « neo-realism ». The former, besides remaining in a field of literary values, does not undertake, save by implication, to face social problems, or at all events not those having a moral angle. It concentrates almost exclusively on the human soul in all its many aspects, striving to present the truth exclusively by means of an artistic technique and abstaining in most cases from laying down a pre-established thesis with a final moral, save that which each one of us can draw from what he personally observes.

The derivation of our « neo-realism » from literature is not so direct or definite. In contrast with French production it tends to dwell on a definite reality, the life of the people, and is ready to advocate a view which appears to be beneficial to the social cause and to lay down a definite moral concept. Instead of relying on a purely artistic technique, it tends to make artistic use of features drawn for the occasion from the crowd and creating personages based on daily labour. The results achieved by employing as actors ordinary men and women has really conferred greater humanity on certain films, often with very remarkable results. De Sica has made a true art of this system in « Ladri di biciclette » (bicycle thieves), of which I shall speak presently. But the true analogy with « realist » literature consists in the fact that our « new » cinema art has arisen in the hearts of certain men owing

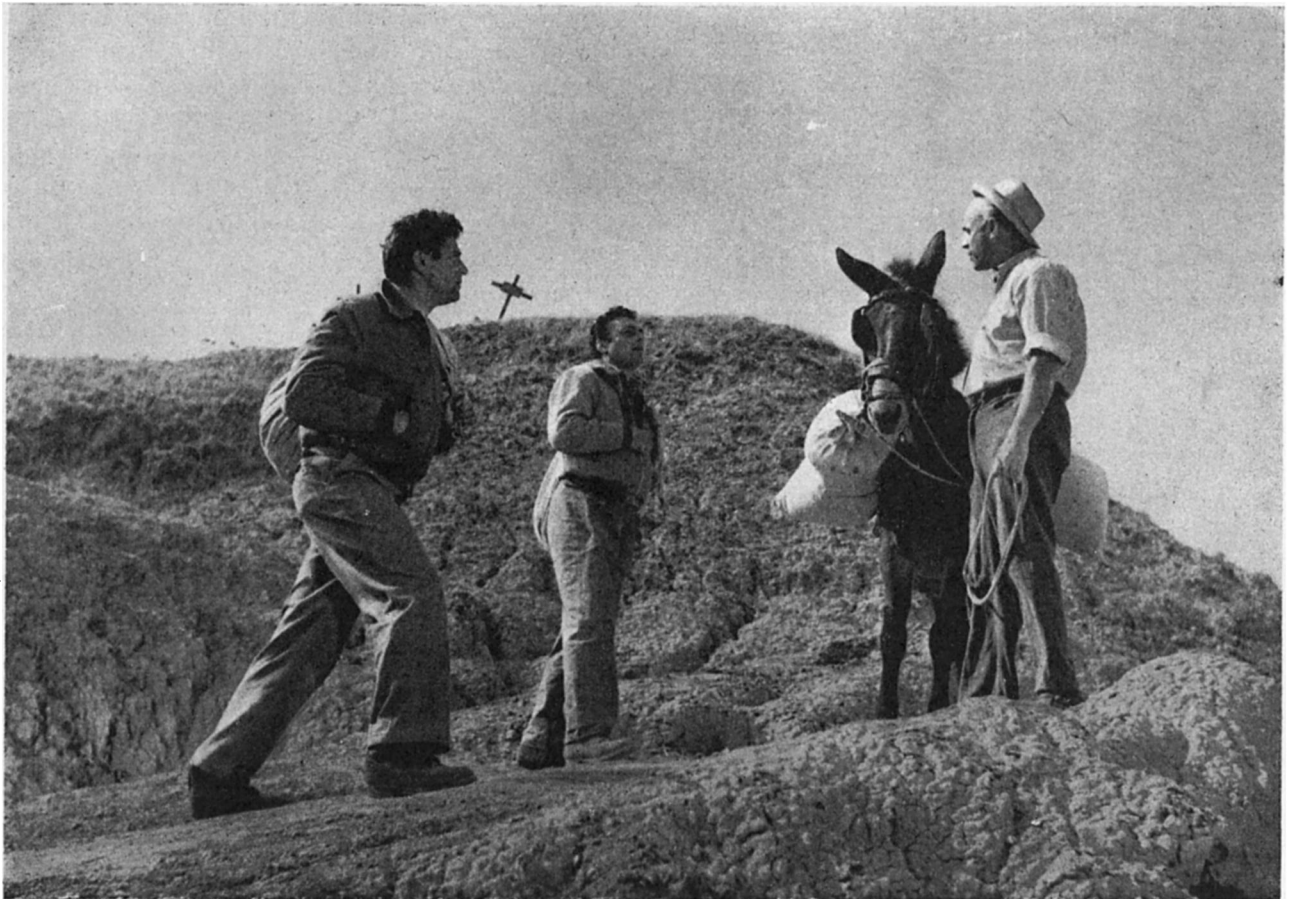
to the same requirements which inspired our writers at the end of the XIX and the early XX centuries; it has also encouraged a rich regional culture, so that we may place side by side with the dialect literature of Verga, Di Giacomo, D'Annunzio, etc., the study of the Italian people in the cinema, of its folklore, of its most intimate attitudes which differ so greatly from one region to another. Thus if the French film attains art, it is a refined complex art, full of subtle aestheticism, occasionally revealing a certain form of decadence; every time we have touched this art it is with the simplicity and ingenuity characteristic of every youthful movement, not to use the expression primitive which might lead to much opposition and discussion.

But have we always attained art with our « neo-realism »? Wherever there has been spontaneity and sincerity we have had, if not art, at least sound meritorious work. It is needless to repeat that when a new movement arises it is because one or more individual (in any case never a whole community) feel new necessities within themselves, requirements

which, while they are forming within the intimate life of the people, are intuitively interpreted by the artist. This process never occurs after a cold cerebral consideration but spontaneously takes the form of expression, and becomes the only means whereby the artist can present his thought.

It is only at a later period that a school arises, nearly always generating academic work, when it is not actually a false and cold expression. For the cinema the question is still more complex. A film is very often not the work of a single individual. Even if the producer gives himself wholly to his work, it is always a community which collaborates in its realization. It is therefore impossible to exclude politics, i.e. that spontaneous attitude in man intimately associated with his morals. This community always makes its manner of thinking felt in some way or other. On reaching this consideration it is easy to perceive how we may fall into the abyss of polemics and falsehood, if we deliberately adhere to a particular school.

Often in fact the spontaneity of our attitude



Raf Vallone - to the left - in a scene from Malaparte's film: « The forbidden Christ ».



Brunella Bovo (the girl seated), Geppa (the young man in the middle), and Paolo Stoppa (in the foreground), in their respective parts of *Edvige, Toto*, and the « bad beggar » in « *Miracle in Milan* ».

falls into a conventionality worse than that of the pre-war period, which has hindered sincerity and balance. An episode has been deliberately befouled on account of a strange belief that the truth lies only in mud. Often the determination to advocate a particular thesis leads to absurdities and to ignoring technique, the harmony of the different parts, and the true significance of the episode. In any case we must admit that in these films of ours hadly ever has the artistic or pictorial sense of the scene been wanting. It can never be said that an Italian film presents photographs in bad taste, lacking in harmony. But this quality which we have defined pictorial is not deliberately sought after, as happens in France where references to figurative arts are often obvious, but proceeds spontaneously as a gift peculiar to us Italians.

Cinema criticism, while not attenuating errors but sharply reprimanding the excesses of « neo-realism », has not thereby denied the

basic position of our film production. It simply demands « the truth », and only for love of truth does it show an aversion to all deception. Our criticism has come to be a functional organ of the cinema, inasmuch as it does not aim merely at demolition, but at providing guidance, beyond all ideological postulates which might render objective judgments vain. The leading figures in this criticism are Guido Aristarco and Luigi Chiarini, and the technical review *Cinema*. In its pages a lengthy task of preparation, clarification and correction has been proceeding for many years; the field of this work is not limited merely to an inquiry into the problems and necessities of our production, but extends to a complete and thorough study of the foreign cinema.

Our criticism is thus complete. While Luigi Chiarini undertakes to create artistic education, moulding the human mind and sensibility according to a thorough conception of what art is and what producing art means, Aristarco and others lead us to a subtle estimate of tech-

nical elements, of the dynamics of the film, by a constant comparison with the cinema in other countries, by a constant association with the past, aiming at a perfection of the present which will decide future realizations.

* * *

In spite of the above-mentioned defects and the not always reliable interpreters (the best actresses are working abroad and many good actors have retired or are dead), the enormous economic and non-economic difficulties, we have attained one of the first places in world output owing to the qualities of those films which have revealed competent and intelligent producers. It is useless to go on talking about errors and shortcomings, and it is necessary to dwell on those films which have now become the pillars of our output. They represent the position and the victories secured and mark out the path to be followed; they are the only ones which survive in a time destructive of all mediocrity.

The Cannes festival represents a remarkable success in the history of our cinema. We presented ourselves to the world with our most significant works, we received the applause to which we had long been aspiring with the intensity of our work and confidence in our cause.

The films were « *Miracolo a Milano* » (a miracle in Milan) by V. De Sica, « *Il Cristo proibito* » (the forbidden Christ) by Curzio Malaparte, « *Il Cammino della Speranza* » (the path of hope) by Pietro Germi, and « *Napoli milionaria* » (millionaire Naples) by Eduardo De Filippo.

The two first-named represented the opening of a new and more intimate phase in our cinema, presenting a super-realist attitude, seeking a compromise between fact and fable, in the first; straining after an appeal to universal conscience, penetrating the human soul, in the second.

The two last close a past cycle: our life during the last twenty years; our poor with their generous and simple hearts.

« *Il Cristo proibito* » has been the début of Curzio Malaparte, a well-known writer, in the cinema. It is the story of an ex-prisoner of war, returning from Russia to his home in Tuscany, Monte Pulciano, bent on avenging his brother killed by the Germans through the treachery of a comrade. A carpenter offers himself as a voluntary victim, convinced that only the blood of an innocent man can redeem

humanity. He wants to pay for all, even for the informer. At the end in fact the ex-prisoner casts away his machine gun and spares the guilty man. The film ends with a cry to the heavens: « Why must humanity always need the sacrifice of an innocent man? Why indeed? ». This is the theme which our producer wished to present, and he has presented it at all costs, with every means. His question naturally receives no answer, because he does not start from any form of morality or religion to solve the age-long problem. He limits himself to establishing a « fact ». He makes it at times even absurd, in order to reach that final cry. But he suggests no solution. Christ Himself remains a note of interrogation in His sublime sacrifice.

In its premisses and in its conclusions the film is ideologically very questionable, but as a production it is masterly. All Malaparte's experience as an artist is concentrated on this work, in which human reality is grasped with a sensitive and dramatic interpretation. Even the folklore, which plays so important a part in it, is rendered with poetry and taste. Admirable are the sequences of the procession, in which are revealed all the beauties of a certain popular tradition, wherein superstition, mysticism and paganism are blended together in a novel and suggestive aspect. It is in fact the custom at Monte Pulciano on the feast day of the Virgin for the men to march with stereotyped masks on their faces, in allegorical attire, Death behind the Cross leading the pageant. The Cross is bare; the man carrying it stops every now and then and cries out: « Who has the courage to sacrifice himself? Cowards, come ye forth! Do ye no longer know what is martyrdom? Cowards! ». He then resumes his progress, amid the shouting of the crowd, the rolling of the drums, and the propitiatory prayers.

This film may in a certain sense be compared with that of Rossellini, presented in Venice last autumn, « *Stromboli, terra di Dio* » (Stromboli, land of God) (4). We have to mention this film, which marks a great involution of the producer of « *Roma città aperta* ». It is a psychological inquiry into the soul of a woman, the world of a woman, a world victim of the war, an atheistic world, seeking not good, but material well-being. This world is contrasted with the believing world of the island, a world believing in a very special manner, a mixture of bigotry and primitiveness. If the personality of Karin, the protagonist

(interpreted by the famous Swedish actress Ingrid Bergman), may seem complex, in reality it appears simple in its intimate structure, revealing a woman dominated by certain basic qualities which are those of egotism, of striving after well-being, of sensuality and lack of respect — not to be taken for real force. While her husband, a poor fisherman (interpreted by a genuine local fisherman) appears simple, his spirit is in reality complex. How can the shades of his nature be deciphered, which passes suddenly from religious fanaticism to brutality when he beats his wife and locks her up in the house? From a feeling of inferiority to a powerful and dynamic sense of will? The priest pronounces words of wisdom, but, alas, only words. The conflict resolves itself into a miracle as understood from a Catholic point of view. The volcanic eruption reveals to Karin the infinite power and beauty of God, and it is in her invocation to Him, in whom she comes to believe once more, that Karin solves her own drama. A miracle in harmony with the initial words of Isaiah: « They who have sought me not have found me, I have come before those who asked not for me ».

Thus Rossellini does not fully face the problem of Karin's spiritual transformation, the drama of the whole story. Possibly he has been wrong in placing side by side two completely different techniques: the consummate academic recitation of Ingrid Bergman and that of the actor-fisherman, improvised and rudimentary. This comparison creates a perpetual lack of balance, masked by a genuinely authentic atmosphere and the presentation of certain scenes of real beauty and surprising effect. We allude in particular to the tunny fishing scene and the eruption of the volcano, a remarkable piece of photography, of which the producer is evidently proud.

« Il cammino della Speranza » (the path of hope), Pietro Germi's second masterpiece, after his earlier film « In nome della legge » (in the name of the law), presents the road which humanity has been following through the ages towards its Jerusalem. It shows us poor Sicilian miners, without means of subsistence, lacking everything and departing for France in search of employment. Deceived by the usual swindler, who gives them false passports and abandons them in Rome, they are held up by the police, but they proceed on their journey, sometimes on foot, sometimes with occasional lifts, through the whole length of Italy, until they reach the frontier. Few of

them have survived, only the strongest, those who have most faith. The others have dispersed or returned home, two of them are dead, the accountant who had followed them out of affection, and the criminal who was trying to escape abroad. It is snowing, a hurricane is blowing. Over the mountains they pass, inexorable and confident. The hurricane ceases; the French custom-house officers await them, but have not the courage to say anything to them. They look on the emigrants, they understand them and are touched; not a word has been said; they draw aside and the emigrants pass on. Before them is an olive-tree, covered with snow, far ahead a belfry. They pass on.

The end is an unanswered enigma: where are they going? Towards what happiness are they directing their steps? And will they find happiness at all?

The hand of Pietro Germi has moved firmly and unhesitatingly in composing this film. He knows the value of poverty and respects it; he depicts poetically the feelings of the human heart, which he knows inside out. Above all polemics and party spirit he describes the people and in his pages we feel the genuine perfume of our land. In him we note a close similarity with a Sicilian writer of the end of the last century, Giovanni Verga, who drew his inspiration from a deep insight into the real life of his country. His realism was tempered by a painful sense of life and by human sympathy; his style was rough, but full of deep intuition and thought. His description of the mean and tragic atmosphere of small Sicilian towns has the same value as that presented by our young producer in « In nome della legge ».

« Napoli milionaria » achieved great success owing to the cooperation of the actors De Filippo, Delia Scala, Glori, Totò, Carlo Ninchi; it presents the life of one of the characteristic little streets of Naples during the last few years. There is atmosphere and colour, but the cinematographic realization proves inferior to the play, in which the greater synthesis presents the drama more effectively. Nevertheless we find in it the best of our Neapolitan dialect literature, to which the admirable Eduardo De Filippo belongs, author, actor and producer of this film. The production gives us valuable pictorial scenes, but nothing more.

We have purposely left Vittorio De Sica for the last, inasmuch as he now represents the



A scene from Eduardo De Filippo's « Naples Millionaire ».

symbol of our film production. Our experiences, our sorrows, our hopes have been gathered together by him and interpreted with that kindly and comprehensive intelligent smile which constantly lights up his face.

De Sica's artistic formation has been lengthy; through years of a theatrical and cinema career as an actor, he has succeeded in acquiring a very personal style of his own as a producer, undoubtedly and purely cinematographic. His activities as a producer are not recent, and go back to the earlier forms, but there was in him a still subtly romantic method of writing while he remains ever smiling and calm. « Un Garibaldino al Convento » (a Garibaldian in a convent) and « Teresa Venerdì » (Teresa on Friday) are films which remind us of the literature of our youth. The war has altered both style and intentions. The same sense of depth which we perceived in his art as an actor, is visible in him as a producer. But he knows how to draw from real life a ceaseless spring of love, which suggests to him thoughts of jus-

tice and goodness, even when he presents realities in all their crudity.

We may compare De Sica with Germi. In both we find respect for pain, veneration for suffering, dignity and humility before true poverty. For both of them there are in life sudden concealed sources of good and of consolation, which their eyes discover in the purest and most secret places. As experts in narrative they emerge more on account of De Sica's greater maturity than for any eventual differences of style; these interest us but little.

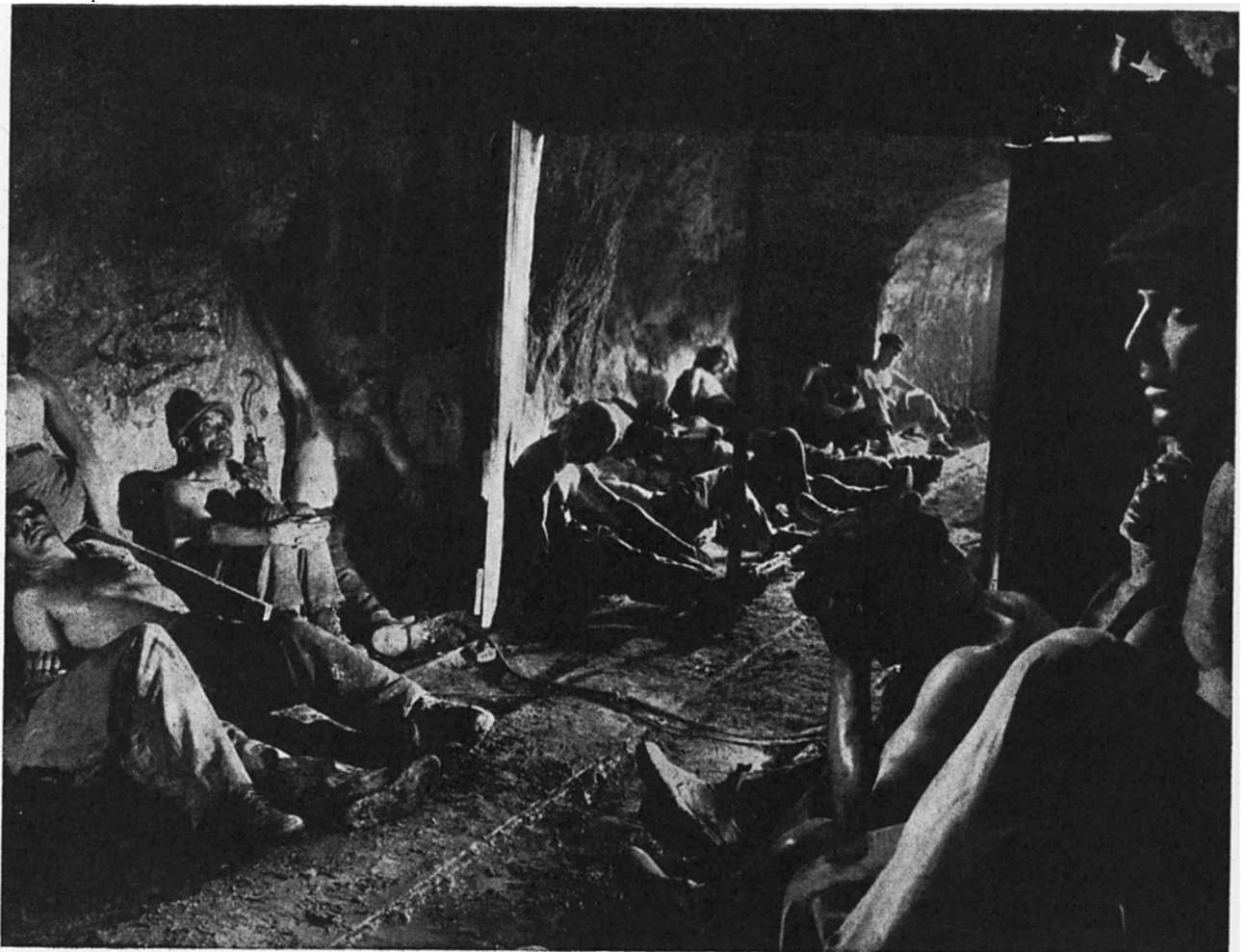
What is amazing in De Sica is this: the achievement of perfect unity between expression and contents, forming an inseparable whole, whereby this particular episode could be presented thus and thus only, and this expression was of value only because it had this particular significance. He is therefore the perfect realizer of the language of the XX century: the cinema. In other films today the difference between the manner in which the story is told and the story itself is evident, so

that in criticism we may face the two aspects separately. This we have done, for instance, with reference to Malaparte's « Cristo proibito », wherein we noticed the mastery of the producer side by side with the errors of the subject as conceived by him. In fact with light and shade, with black and white, he has created strongly dramatic plastic effects, behind which we perceive his profound cultural experience. But this is not the right way to judge. In other arts a work is of value for what it is as a whole, inasmuch as the technique is a function of the subject, and the subject is of value on account of the technique with which it is presented. It is a procedure which materializes not in two separate moments, but in one single and simultaneous inner process.

This synthesis occurs spontaneously in De Sica. It is of immense value in view of the youthful age of the cinema, a value for us Italians of a somewhat sentimental importance, inasmuch as our production is still in process of formation, amid a series of infinite difficul-

ties. But even this is a peculiarity of our people: to proceed through the work of individuals, who are able to emerge from the chaos surrounding them and bring forward by their own power the glories of the country.

De Sica had in 1946 brilliantly faced the theme of juvenile crime in « Sciuscià ». But « Ladri di biciclette » — the subject is Cesare Zavattini's — is his masterpiece. This film is now famous throughout the world. It is a fragment of real life: an unemployed workman, whose bicycle, his sole means for earning his livelihood as a bricklayer, has been stolen. He searches for it ceaselessly, even to desperation, but always in vain. In literature certain pieces are called sketches or sonnets; in the cinema a name has not yet been found for these short compositions. In this brevity there is a living world, there is a man in his relations with his son, with his neighbour, with nature. It is the struggle for bread. The emotion which it arouses is genuine because there is the beauty of life, the value of the tears shed by



Another scene from « The Path of Hope »: the miners awaiting death.

man whom fate persecutes and who finds himself alone and defenceless against an invisible enemy who crushes him. But there is also human solidarity, the genuine fraternity of those who help him only because they understand.

Taking as his subject another work by Cesare Zavattini, the book « Totò il buono » (Totò the good), De Sica has created « Miracolo a Milano », first prize *ex aequo* at Cannes. It is very difficult to speak of this film, as it is a heroic attempt to unite two heterogeneous elements: realism and fable. There are no premisses of political ideologies, or concealed polemical intentions; there is a sense of deep discouragement which, in order not to fall into the abyss of pessimism, clings to dreams and illusions.

The film aims at going beyond neo-realism, i.e. the conventional tendency which this movement is now assuming; but at bottom it is merely a reassertion of neo-realism itself, a reassertion which we find continually in those parts where fantastic solutions are abandoned and the poor are described as they really are; then the producer and the author of the subject are allowed to give way to all the poetic feeling which they have in their hearts. They render this touching human feeling with that simplicity which is true art. Thus we record the scenes in which Toto (a creature born under the cabbages in the garden of a strange old woman) on leaving school gives his bag to an old man who had stolen it only because he had a weakness for such things (« I liked it so very much », he said, bursting into tears). Here we find the poor paying a lira to observe a sunset as if it were a marvel, or hastening to warm themselves under the tepid rays which break through the winter fog. Poetry and sentiment emerge when Toto kneels down to put a shoe on the foot of Edvide, the poor Cinderella of the film.

On the other hand certain fantastic solutions leave us cold because they are artificial, such as the statue which becomes a dancer, and the police hydrants which turn against the police themselves, etc. Yet the characters spring up alive out of the whole story; they make themselves beloved even when they err, so evident is their ingenuousness in sinning. Flying broomsticks, athletic angels, the ghost of the old woman, lose their importance — intellectualized elements — in the face of such genuine poetry which bursts forth from other scenes which are simple, human and real.

With this film De Sica has once more given us a moral, a source of confidence, an encouragement to goodness. This goodness is the miraculous dove which at the end descends into the hands of Toto, as the key which solves all evils and all misfortunes. Therefore he drives us into believing that miracles may yet happen, even in industrialized Milan, provided that we have that simplicity which makes us see in the stream of milk pouring down on the earth the immense river of so great a world, and that we are ready to pay a lira because the spectacle of the setting sun is always such a beautiful thing and such a novelty for us.

* * *

There would still be a great deal more to be said, but we hope that in speaking of these films we have said enough to present the true position attained by our cinematography.

There is still much to be done, above all we must educate the public to understand. To see a film is not so easy as it seems, especially when films are full of depth and significance such as are those which we have described. We must educate ourselves in this connexion, and then we shall derive advantage and satisfaction, as when we read the pages of Dante, of Manzoni, of Leopardi, of Pirandello, and our spirit comes forth enriched by new experiences.

The seriousness of the task which we have undertaken with our new film production is ever a title of merit for ourselves, but it is also a constant stimulus to deepen our cultural foundations. This refers not only to those who make films, but also to those who go to see them and are their daily judges, the constant readers of the messages sent to them. These messages must not be sent nor read by the superficial, but demand conscientious and deeply-thoughtful audiences.

Moreover, it should be said that the Italian film leaves nothing untried.

M. G. Moscardelli

Cinema critic and writer, author of many essays on aesthetic and literary subjects, among which *La filosofia come opera d'arte individuale* (Published by « Nuovo Occidente » - Rome, 1942).

(1) LUIGI CHIARINI: « The Critical Method in the Cinema », in the *Rivista di divulgazione cinematografica*, N. 60, series II, p. 190.

(2) Establishments in which films are produced.

(3) N.C.O.'s of the Carabinieri (military police).

(4) A volcanic island in the Tyrrhenian Sea, near Sicily.