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**THE PSYCHOLOGICAL
WESTERNS OF

ANTHONY MANN**

A thesis submitted in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for
a degree of Master of Philosophy
in English at Massey University

J. S. Rothwell 2000

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To my supervisor Graeme Bassett of the Dept of English and Media Studies at Massey University, for his encouragement. To have a supervisor who was as well acquainted in the knowledge of Existential Philosophy as he was in the history of the Hollywood Western proved exceedingly providential indeed in my case.

ABSTRACT

The more notable westerns made by Anthony Mann between late 1950-58 have been characterized as “psychological” on the grounds that the westerns are as much concerned with the action which takes place internally within the film’s protagonist (a man usually obsessed with exacting personal revenge) with Mann’s camera acutely capturing his psychological conflicts, as well as devoting itself to core narrative actions which take place in the film. Mann’s scripts are spare; and in the narrative of all of these psychological westerns the hero can be observed proceeding on a journey which is for him both physical and metaphorical. To an extent to which perhaps no other director of westerns has done, Mann uses the variegated landscapes through which his protagonist proceeds in his journey to mirror the effects of the internal changes which are taking place in the protagonist. .

Mann employs an extremely subjective camera throughout much of this narrative with the intention of involving his audience with the protagonist in his progress. Mann’s westerns achieved this identification with the public in the fifties proving enormously successful in box-office statistics. The fact that the seven “psychological” westerns are still readily available (for

purchase) on the Internet suggests that they are still, indeed, very much in the public domain.

Film critics on the Continent (Andre Bazin; Jean Luc Godard; J.P. Missaien; Alberto Morsiani have admired Mann's narrative style which (in contrast to the style of westerns they see as setting out to *teach*), are characterized by them as being refreshingly *pure* (as well as primeval). They have spoken of Mann's being able to capture the tactile sense of his western terrains to the extent that his camera seems to veritably *breathe*.

With English language critics however, Mann's works have never evoked more than half-hearted interest. Indeed, to judge from the total lack of index references to him in recent books of film criticism, interest in Mann's has all but evaporated reputation, which never received more than half-hearted support from most critics, has watered down (if one is to judge by the total lack of index references to him in books of recent film criticism) to the stage of negligibility. Mann's emphasis in his westerns upon a strong storyline and adroit use of a probing camera to align strongly the viewer's interest with the fate of a protagonist whose bearing is usually well adrift from the Hollywood "heroic" mode, may well succeed very well with the public, but much less well with an English language critic who is wary of so much

involvement; whether (such identification of feeling). The rational Anglo-Saxon critic requires, rather, that a western make some kind of statement; whether it be political, sociological or at least in some way ideational in order for it to be a subject warranting a *thoughtful* analysis. The elemental western narratives of Anthony Mann which demand an identification of feeling rather than logic, tend to be either dismissed, or assigned to the “too hard” basket by most English speaking critics. This work attempts to explain this difference in response to Mann’s westerns.

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1:Mann the man.....	23
Chapter 2 English language critics' attitude to Mann	52
Chapter 3: Continental critics' attitudes to Mann.....	72
Chapter 4:TheWesterns.....	82
Chapter 5: Conclusion.....	118
Bibliography...& Filmography.....	122

INTRODUCTION

The late eminent theatre critic, Kenneth Tynan observed that: “the subject of mankind at the end of their tether lies at the heart of all drama.” Mankind at the end of their tether is certainly the subject of a series of westerns directed by Anthony Mann between 1950-1958, the director in his first two westerns seeming to exorcise a moralizing tendency in himself in *The Devil's Doorway* and his expressionistic, film noir tendencies in *The Furies* (both films bring made in 1950) concentrates thereafter his camera, as it were, on the shoulder of the protagonist (all of Mann's subjects have pasts that are too compromised to allow them to be classified as heroes) and invites the audience to follow him on a physical and metaphorical journey he is to undertake. The motivation for the protagonist making these journeys is either ultimately to avoid violence or hurt of his own past or a very deliberate seeking of revenge on his part. The very landscape through which he distances himself from his own violent past, symbolized in one instance by the rope burns on his neck - scars of an unsuccessful lynching - can seem to mirror the conflicting emotions within him as he proceeds to what may be his own or someone else's doom. The harshness of the terrain can be seen to reflect the very steeling of his intentions. The occasional softness of some of the terrain can be seen to mirror his essential humanity as he secretly questions him self as to whether he will, ultimately, be able to bring himself to carry out his revenge against a fellow human.

These movies in which the audience can view the drama's progress in the very face of the protagonist – a face which constantly dominates the film's frame have caused these

films to be characterized as the first “psychological westerns”(Wood, 1998 p32. The first of these westerns *Winchester 73* (1950), in the words of Leonard Maltin, “was largely responsible for renewed popularity of the western in the 1950s.” (Leonard Maltin: *Movie and Video Guide*, 1998, p. 1464).

The actor playing the protagonist of the first five of these films (James Stewart) was to become a millionaire by taking a percentage of the film’s proceeds in place of a salary. However, the fact that Mann’s westerns were made for four studios (Universal, M.G.M, Paramount, and United Artists) renders an assessment of the overall profitability of Mann’s ultimately impossible to determine exactly at this point in time.

However, what *is* readily accessible is a structural study of the western by Will Wright who at the commencement of his study declares that he will discuss only films which have proved themselves to be financially successful in box-office terms. To qualify in his study, a film must have earned \$4,000,000 in box office receipts in U.S.A and Canada. Wright sees each individual western as being a variation, in one form or another, on Western mythology and argues that market forces will ultimately determine those films which most successfully develop the western myth. That this view of Wright’s has some substance in fact is borne out by the evidence that of the 47 westerns between 1950-1972, which he nominates as being financially successful, 45 are reviewed by Ed Buscombe and his collaborators in the *B.F.I. Companion to the Western* (1968) devoted to significant films of the genre.

Wright's figures show that during the fifties, with six westerns over the period of eight years, Mann exceeded the financial criterion of \$4,000,000; a feat which is unique to him in film history. The particular films were: *Winchester 73* (1950), *Bend of the River* (1952), *Naked Spur* (1953), *The Far Country* (1954), *The Man from Laramie* (1956), *Man of the West* (1958).

In the fifties, John Ford, a legendary director of westerns had two films that passed Wright's financial criterion: *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (1950) and *The Searchers* (1956) while; Howard Hawks, a noted Hollywood director in several genres including western had one of the latter *Rio Bravo* (1959) accomplishing this feat.

But being a popular success can be a far cry from being a success with the cinema's received critics. The Man(n) who so demonstrably captured an audience in his westerns of the fifties, the evocative names of which (*Winchester 73*, *The Far Country*, *Man of the West*, *The Man from Laramie*) are still liable to bring instant images to those who have viewed them, goes all but unrecognized in the more recent books of popular film criticism. For example, Pauline Kael, the recognized doyenne of American film criticism in the most recently available of her collection of reviews; *For Keeps – 30 years at the Movies*, (William Abrahams Books, 1996), while making 14 references to Ford (two thirds of these relating to the westerns of this director) and thirteen references to Howard Hawks, reserves not a single space in her volume's compendious index for Mann. Similarly, in another large and comprehensive selection of her criticism:

5001 Nights at the Movies (Harry Holt & Co, 1991), it is readily apparent that none of her discussions was related to a Mann movie.

An identical situation is to be found in Kael's British counterpart, Dilys Powell's selection of her film reviews made during the years with the English *Observer* magazine: *Fifty Golden Years at the Movies* (Powell: 1989). Though Powell's is a much slenderer volume than either of Kael's collections just referred to, the same pattern of dismissal of Mann without comment and generous references to the films of Ford can be observed within her work's more limited compass. Further investigation reveals contemporary non- recognition of Mann's westerns to be nearly all pervasive. Louis Gianetti in his book: *Masters of the American Cinema* (Gianetti 1981) (multiple copies of which are likely to be held in all universities in which film studies are taught) not only fails to devote a chapter to Mann but neglects to include even an index reference to him. Similarly, James Monaco, critic, and author of several texts which have become required in many University courses on Film Studies, in his *Connoisseur's Guide to the Movies* (Monaco 1985) which contains, essentially, his list of the 1450 films most worth watching, does not find space for a Mann movie, while again, the films of Ford and Hawks are notably featured.

Eleven years after his editorship of the *B.F.I. Companion to the Western*, in editing his: *New Essays on the Western* (ed. Edward Buscombe and Roberta E. Pearson; 1998) Buscombe no longer feels the need to refer to the Mann who helped keep the western

genre alive in the financially precarious fifties. Neither the director's name nor the title of any of his films rates a single mention in this book. In the case of the (evidently) more critically respectable John Ford there exist in Buscombe's book seventy references to Ford since *Stagecoach* (1939), one for every three of the book's 213 pages. It took Ford three times as long to reach Mann's achievement of having five westerns pass the criterion of earning \$4,000,000 at the box office (his successful westerns being *Stagecoach*, (1939), *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (1949), *The Searchers* (1956), *The Man who shot Liberty Valence*, (1962), *Cheyenne Autumn* (1964). Is Mann to be accounted so much the incomparably lesser artist that his films deserve not even one seventieth of the space accorded to Fords?

However, one popular critic, Stanley Kauffmann who writes drama and film reviews for the American *New Republic* magazine, in a collection of international film criticism: *A World on Film* (Kauffmann, 1966) does mention Mann (with reference to the director's screen adaptation of Erskine Caldwell's novel: *God's Little Acre*) but his discussion hardly counts as a favourable reference as it relates more to Mann's skill (as perceived by Kauffmann) in outfoxing the Georgia censors, than to any skill he might be seen to possess as a director.

Despite the unpropitious evidence which might suggest to the contrary, those who remember the popular Mann westerns will happily find however that critical underpinning for their enthusiasm does exist. In particular, there is in existence a

(solitary) English language biography of Mann by Jeanine Basinger which includes a crucial section entitled "Man(n) of the West". In this chapter the reader is taken on a guided tour of all of Mann's westerns (including some that did not make Wright's list) which includes psychological profiles of all Mann's hero/protagonists as well as expert observations on his use of landscape and camerawork. Throughout her biography, Basinger conveys great enthusiasm for the work of Mann as well as giving evidence of her fine gifts of analysis.

When asked to comment (by the *Cahiers du Cinema* critic J.C.Messaïen in 1967) on the comparative critical neglect from which his westerns had suffered in America, Mann responded: "A prophet is not without honor save in his own country".

In this particular case however, Mann might have broadened the observation to include the prophet's own language as well, since almost all English Language critics have been equally as sparing in their praise of him.

In Arthur Miller's legendary play *Death of a Salesman* the play's author has a character describe the play's tragic hero in a phrase that has passed into the contemporary consciousness. It is observed by one of Willy Loman's associates that "he (Willy) is liked, but he's not well liked".

This phrase summarizes English-speaking attitudes to Mann. The appearance of his films in the *B.F.I. Companion to the Western* (1987) which represented Mann as being acknowledged as a popular presence by some film critics, showed that he was *liked*, if

you will. But the failure of his work to receive any acknowledgment in contemporary critical reference seems evident proof that, like Willy Loman, he is not ‘well liked’; indeed his westerns do not seem to be held in any present affection or high esteem by American and British critics.

A check with the Internet shows that (by dint of Wright’s market forces Mann’s films are very much in the *public* domain. His seven “psychological” westerns are displayed as being available (for purchase) in Hi-Fi video format (or in the case of *Winchester 73* DVD, as well) some of the viewers’ personal notes in the adverts attesting to the esteem in which his westerns are held. With these films being so readily available it remains at least feasible that some Anglo-Saxon critic might break with his colleagues and champion these films as the masterpieces they are held to be in much of the viewing world.

In international terms, however, an investigation in book form by John Kobal (Kobal; 1988) indicates that among international critics and in terms of film artistry, Mann’s westerns should not be underestimated. In his book, Kobal, in attempting to ascertain the names of the world’s most critically acclaimed international movies selected eighty critics from around the world as his respondents. He endeavoured, he claims, to strike a balance between youth and age in his respondents but his more primary concern was that the votes should be apportioned according to the number of films produced in the respective countries. Hence the number of critics in English language speaking

countries comprised less than half the number of the total. Each respondent was requested by Kobal to name the ten films they found most outstanding, whether in preferential order (.e. a list in descending order of preference¹ – 10); or as a simple list of ten. His list of English language critics might be as distinguished as one could wish. Among its numbers: Andrew Sarris, Penelope Gilliat, David Robinson, Andrew French, Susan Sontag, Lindsay Anderson, Raymond Durgnat, Derek Malcolm, John Russell Taylor, Leonard Maltin. From the responses of all the critics the results were tabulated by Kobal (with a scoring system which allowed for differential marking between films that were itemized in preferential order by a critic as against being members of a simple list). In the resulting 100 films to emerge from Kobal's study, four were westerns: *Stagecoach*, *My Darling Clementine*, and *The Searchers* by John Ford and *The Far Country* by Anthony Mann.

The results of this survey would have come as no surprise to the film critics of the Continent nor in France particularly where according to the American critic, John Tusk, in *The American West on Film; Critical approaches to the Documentary* (University of Nebraska, 1985) the westerns of Mann are accorded an even higher place than those of either Ford or Howard Hawks. The simplicity of his narrative, the spareness of his scripts, his emphasis upon pictorialness (in the vastly contrasting locations in which his films are shot) have combined to make his westerns veritable cult items on the continent. My thesis is in part an attempt to address the issue of why there should be such a wide, not to say *yawning* disparity between the views of the

Continental critics on Mann and their English language counterparts. I shall here attempt to briefly summarize the differences on which I will dwell with greater length in the main text.

One of the reasons for Mann's westerns being overlooked by the English and American critics seems to lie in the director's refusal to comment on any broader perspective in western history than he feels is warranted by the particular needs of his narrative. In John Ford's *My Darling Clementine* for instance, Wyatt's Earp's dancing with the town's school-teacher-to-be on the floor of a yet uncompleted church is calculated to evoke a sense of the town's burgeoning sense of community; its socialization. In Mann's western *The Far Country*, however, the decision of the gold mining town of Dawson to take a stand against their outlaw presiding "mayor" and their voiced intentions to build as a schoolhouse for their children as well as a church is seen to purely flow from the narrative and is in no way stressed by Mann. The event of their sudden sense of community is sufficiently evident to render any camera movements calculated to convey "a sense of occasion" unnecessary.

Mann's total devotion to the narrative of his westerns at the expense of passing up perhaps countless opportunities to comment upon details in that narrative in terms of issues (whether contemporary or historical) has ultimately damaged his reputation as a "serious" director of westerns. To

Anglo-Saxon critics Mann in his westerns has nothing academically *thought provoking* to say.

Whereas for the English language critics Mann's lack of intellectual reference is his weakest point, with the Continental critics this does not seem to be a point that is at great issue. For them, Mann's westerns, in their total concern for narrative drive are seen to have to have their unique code of self-reference which renders them universally intelligible. In his article: "The Beauty of a Western" ("Cahiers du Cinema" January, 1956) Andre Bazin, the great French theorist on cinema, describes Mann's western narratives as "pure" – i.e. free from extraneous elements. In making this judgment he differentiates them from what he calls the "super westerns" (a term of diminishment on this occasion) *High Noon* and *Shane*.

These westerns are, for Bazin, vitiated by their respective blatant messages: anti-McCarthyism in the first and a retrospective historical judgment in favor of the Wyoming homesteaders (against the open rangers) in the latter.

Continental critics seem to be much better able to identify with the plain narrative which Mann's westerns provide. This identification is only enhanced by Mann's determination towards their total involvement by means of his subjective camera and suggestions of conflict in the film's protagonist by means of the film's very landscapes. Mann's mastery of this (*emotional*)

identification process is seen to work with enormous success for these se critics who, in contradistinction to the English/American critics, find themselves *involved* in the film, rather than feeling it necessary to take the position of watching it from an aesthetically safe distance.

Beyond France, Mann's influence clearly extends into Italy where a biography of Mann, simply entitled *Anthony Mann* (La Nuova Italia; 1986) having been written by the J. P Morsiani. The director Mann is seen to bestride the pages of this book like a veritable colossus – particularly in the section in which his westerns are discussed. The bibliography which forms the closing section of Jeanine Bassinger's English language biography of Mann is characterized by her as "selected". By comparison, the bibliography with which Morsiani concludes his book is compendius, containing as it does references to articles and journals not mentioned elsewhere. Such evidence of research on Morsiani's part would seem to indicate the fact that he is no mere camp follower.

One need only glance at the inside cover of J.P. Messaien's French biography of Mann (*Anthony Mann* ; Paris; Edition Universitaire, 1964) to ascertain that the book forms one of a sequence of eighteen *Classique de Cinema* volumes, each written by a different author. To say that Mann is in good company in being one of the favored eighteen would be to express the mildest of

understatements. Apart from Mann, only four English language directors have been the subjects of biographies in this series: Ford, Chaplin, Hitchcock and Buster Keaton. The names of the remaining directors included seem ample proof of the list's prestigiousness : Vittoria de Sica, Eisenstein, Bresson, Bergman, Rene Clair, Dreyer, Jean Renoir, Antonioni, Sjostrom, Mizogushi, Kurosawa, Bunuel.

In this thesis I shall first examine Mann's general history in Broadway theatre and his early efforts in film – particularly in film noir – leading up to the point in the early 50s when he directed his first western. The particular attention he gave to the scriptwriting process will be investigated as well as his remorseless search for locations where he could effectively (to use his term) “pictorialize” his scenes and thereby render his protagonists' physical and metaphorical journey through them more accessible to the public.

I shall investigate the westerns of Anthony Mann (with particular emphasis on the seven that have been generally characterized as “psychological westerns”). I hope to show that these works are characterized by complexity as well as great symmetry; likely to bear repeated viewings by those who have permitted themselves to be emotionally engaged by them.

Throughout this thesis I make use of some terms which I think deserve a little clarification at the outset. Five questions are probably pre-eminent. Firstly; as

opposed to the average western, what is specifically unique about the westerns made by Mann between 1950-57 that has gained them the tag *psychological*?

(1). Secondly, I note that Mann is commonly held to be an *auteur* by Continental critics as well as some English language critics (Sarris; Wood; Tunks; Kitkes; Andrew). What is denoted by the term *auteur*? (2). Thirdly; I characterize Mann's early work particularly in his films noir and his first two westerns as being highly "expressionistic" in character – what do I mean to convey by this term? (3). Fourthly; what do I specifically mean when I speak of Mann's *subjective* camera? (4). Fifthly; how should the differential frame of reference between an *existential* Continental critic and a rational English language critic be explained? (5). I shall devote a short section to discussing these five questions.

Psychological Western

Raoul Walsh's 1947 western *Pursued* made for Columbia; essentially a revenge western told in flashbacks and described by *Time Out* reviewer Paul Taylor as "a superb western *film noir*" (*Time Out*; ed John Pym; 1990) is frequently referred to in writings on western film as being the first "psychological western". Charles Silver (*The Western Film*; 1976, p 87) makes reference to this earlier film of Walsh's as he discusses the character of Mann's westerns.

It can be argued that the basic thrust of Mann's work grew out of the psychological westerns like Raoul Walsh's "*Pursued*"... (Mann's) hero

is perfectly embodied in James Stewart. Their five films together literally created a new western type, nearly as compelling as John Wayne but possessed of obsessions, doubt and eccentricity.

In his book: *Horizons West: Anthony Mann; Sam Peckinpah ; Bud Boetticher*

– *Studies of Authorship in the Western* Jim Kitkes talks much as if Anthony

Mann made psychological-revenge westerns into a sub genre that was

uniquely his own (indeed as one searches through books devoted to westerns,

apart from Walsh's 1947 film, the term "psychological western" seems to be

specifically reserved only for the Mann westerns made between 1950-1957).

In talking of these revenge-psychological movies Kitkes observes:

"Characteristically the Mann hero is a revenge hero" noting that the revenge

is always dual in character. As well as the physical action which ultimately

takes place between the Mann protagonist and his enemies there is also, in

Kitkes' words:

'The revenge taken (by the protagonist) upon himself; a punishment the meaning of which is a denial of reason and humanity. In general, all Mann's heroes behave as if driven by a vengeance they must inflict on themselves for having once been human; trusting, and therefore vulnerable.'"(Such considerations account for) 'the schizophrenic style of the hero, the violent explosions of passion attended by precarious moments of self reflection.'___Kitkes 1959:43.

Kitkes observes further:

For Mann space was cosmic, the camera ever standing back to place his characters in a continuous and elemental reality, Prometheuses chained to their rocks. His contribution (to the western) was... unique, the incantation of his tragic world darkening the genre as no one else has. His neurotic characters and their extraordinary violence were a strange

personal gift to the western, extending its frontiers for both audience and film makers that were to follow. Kitkes remarks on Mann's westerns being generally 'highly modern' (in their) *preoccupation with psychology and violence* (my italics).
_Kitkes; 1959:77.

The critic Robin Wood in his substantial essay on the authorship of Mann (*Cine-Action 46*;1998) describes the revenge-psychological westerns which begin to appear in the early fifties as "adult" in the sense that their action was seen to take place "within the individual's psyche as much as in the overt action of the film. In Wood's opinion Mann's westerns offer "The finest, most fully elaborated example of this development." (*Cine-Action 46*; Summer 1998, p.26).

All seven westerns discussed in this thesis are concerned with a protagonist who is as much in fear of a loss of self control on his own part as he is of his opponent's gun. All these films are characterized by conclusions that are markedly ambivalent; and all deny the hero ultimate catharsis. Although the protagonist always finally gains his revenge, the cost to his essential humanity is shown to be massive – in its exaction he is seen to lose a part of his very self. Whether the passage of time might ameliorate his loss is the question Mann leaves open to the audience at the film's conclusion – at the same time contriving to make it pointedly clear that none of the film's attractive women who are featured in the film's final scene with the

protagonist are in themselves sufficiently adequate to fill the particular void in the hero's psyche which has been laid bare during the film's action.

AUTEUR THEORY

In his book: *The Life and Times of the Western Movie* Jay Hyams heads a short section which he devotes to auteur theory, significantly "Riding Lonesome".

In his words;

The 1950s...saw a new way of looking at films: the French *auteur* ("author") school of criticism, which holds that the director is the sole creative force behind a film. One of the leading exponents of the *auteur* school was Andre Bazin, editor of the *Cahiers du Cinema*, a French magazine devoted to film criticism. Taking their study of films very seriously, these French critics fell in love with a number of American directors of westerns, among them Howard Hawks, Nicholas Ray, Anthony Mann and Bud Boetticher. They analyzed the films and claimed to discern in them the forms of each director's personal style. The *auteur* school has left its marks on film criticism, and it is common today to consider films as the personal statements of their directors. (Joe Hyams; 1983, p.77).

However this *auteur* theory which seems to privilege the director's artistry at some height above the contributions made by the other personnel in the film's making has never been universally accepted by all critics; least of all English language critics. There seem two basic reasons for the dissident critics dislike of this term. It can lead to a situation where certain "received" directors can be perceived (by the auteur school of critics) as possessing a Midas touch which renders their every work, by definition, "significant."

Under the mocking heading “The director Cult” Kenneth Tynan theatre and Film critic observes that a “trivial escapade” like *Man’s Favoutite Sport* (a comedy) is rated a masterpiece by five out of ten reviewers in *Cahiers du Cinema*, for no better reason than that its director, Howard Hawks is one of the magazine’s “pets.” (Tynan; 1967; p.204).

In his article, Tynan addresses what is held as the second flaw perceived by critics of the “director as auteur” theory; namely its tendency to over look the artistic contributions of the rest of the film’s team. After noting that exceptional directors have won a fuller measure of autonomy in the past twenty five years Tynan asserts that “it remains true that the final shape of most pictures is dictated more by the *combined* skills of the writer, the composer, the cameraman; and the director.” (ibid; p 205). The status of the directors is not seen by Tynan to be in any way pre-eminent.¹

Pauline Kael, the noted film critic, in an essay on the auteurist theory entitled “Circles and Sqares”(1985) asserts that auteur critics approach the films of those directors they favour with a “divining rod,” claiming to find what for them are ‘interior meanings’ in works that though subjected to the closest examination but the “unenlightened” are found by them to have none. Kael’s crucial complaint about the auteur critics lies in their inability to make comprehensible to others the particular ‘elan’ that they have claimed to have

discovered. For Kael, the auteur critics have created a “mystique” which is a “mistake.” (Kael; 1985;pp 541-552).

William Goldman in his article “Auteurs” in his book; *Adventures in the Screen Trade; A Personal View of Hollywood and Screenwriting* (1985), bemoans the auteurist critics’ tendency to overlook the crucial role of the scenarist. Like Tynan, he feels that a film work should be seen as a collaborative effort involving interdependent talents. He strongly affirms the point that over-praise by the auteur critics can have unfortunate effects on artists disengaging them from their true talents; and that whether from uncertainty on their part, or even a slight touch of megalomania, causing them to produce work that is markedly inferior to their earlier more celebrated work. As evidence of this tendency Goldman cites Chaplin’s last film *A Countess from Hong Kong* (1964), and the last five films of Alfred Hitchcock: *Marnie* (1964); *Torn Curtain* (1966); *Topaz* (1969); *Frenzy* (1972) and *Family Plot* (1976). (Goldman; 1985).

Despite the controversy that still surrounds the term, the notion of “auteur” has advanced immeasurably the case for Film Studies to be taken as a serious discipline – one that is concerned with an art form rather than a mere “commodity” This is the view expressed by Pam Cook in the section on “Authorship in Film” in *The Film Book* (ed. Pam Cook; 1995, pp 114-206).

Expressionism.

In *The Oxford Companion to Film*; (ed, Liz-Anne Borden; 1976:265).

expressionism is described as:

A movement in the graphic arts, literature, drama and film which flourished in Germany 1903-33. Its main aim was the external representation of man's inner world, particularly the elements of fear, hatred, love and anxiety.

The entry goes on to observe that the migration of many German film directors (such as Pabst, Lang and Sternberg) who had specialized in the atmospheric qualities of lighting and set design which the expressionist movement encouraged helped to carry such conventions into American films; particularly the gangster films and the horror cycles of the thirties. The article concludes:

Oblique lighting, angular compositions, and menacing objects have continued to be accepted devices in conveying suspense, fear and abnormal mental states.

(Liz-Anne Borden, ed; pp 235-237).

In her "Authorship in Film" section in *The Film Book* Pam Cook cites an early Hitchcock film *Blackmail* (1929) as being a specific example of expressionism. (The extract shows) "an experimental montage editing (cutting shots of the dead man's arm against shots of the heroine's legs as she walks home after the murder, building to the climax of the landlady's scream when she discovers the body) and of the zoom in for dramatic effect. This device

both depicts (the subjects) state of mind and engages the spectator's emotions, a strategy found in much of Hitchcock's work."

(ed, Pam Cook; 1995, p126).

Subjective Camera

When talking of Mann's employment of a "subjective camera" in this thesis I do not mean to imply that Mann was using his camera in ways that were particularly new. Rather, I use the phrase as a shorthand for the French phrase *mise en scene*; a phrase that does not translate easily into English. In *the International Film Encyclopedia* its definition is given as a "French term – literally, the placing of a scene – for the act of staging or directing a play or a film." This bare outline of the term's meaning is then expanded upon:

Derived from the terminology of the theatre, the term has acquired in recent years an additional meaning in its application to the cinema. Andre Bazin , and subsequently other theoreticians and critics have used it to describe a style of directing basically distinct from that known as "montage". (Katz; 1979; p 813).

In Louis Gianetti's book *Masters of the American Cinema* in a chapter devoted to the films of William Wyler (Chapter 8 pp 205-226) the writer provides an illuminating discussion of Bazin's preferences for *mise en scene* over the method of *montage* editing (first developed by the Russian directors Pudovkin and Eisenstein. Bazin saw the montage technique of editing as falsification and as manipulative as the technique allows the viewer no choice in deciding for himself. Because ambiguities are ruthlessly eliminated in the

editing the filmmaker coerces the viewer into seeing his forces juxtapositions as the “truth” rather than the director’s own particular truth.

Bazin felt that classical editing (of the type Mann employed on his films from *Winchester 73* onward) though still far from a realistic presentation, breaks down a unified scene into a certain number of shots that correspond implicitly to the mental process. This technique encourages us to follow the shot sequence without being conscious of it. Gianetti believes that *mise en scene* editing tends to eliminate ambiguities and, to use Bazin’s term “subjectivises” an event because each shot represents what the filmmaker thinks is important and not necessarily what we would think.

Existential Critics.

Existential critics, such as are commonly found on the European Continent are likely to depend on their assessment of a film on their instinctive reaction to its images and ideas; to, as Andre Bazin describes it, its “emotional truth” as it affects the,. English language (rational) critics are less direct in their responses. Rather than instinct, they have a reflex *a priori* net of questions which present themselves to them, and by which they immediately assess the probabilities of the action and images, and weigh them against past representations of similar phenomena. With the existential critics one could say that his consciousness in assessing a movie dealing with a landscape

which is perpetually renewed (deriving as it does from a world of instinctive response). The terrain of the rational critic, filtered by his trusty *a priori* monitor is much more likely to be “tried and true” than “new” with the hope remaining that a new ideational slant will render the terrain more worth *thinking* about.