

PAT COSTA
**As I
See It**



On Christmas night, I watched the first half of the movie made from Thomas Hardy's greatest classic "Far From the Madding Crowd" and again congratulated myself at length for having a husband foresighted enough to invest in a color television set.

Overwhelmed by the spectacle in our own living room — scenes of the English farm country were breathtaking — I thought again of those who profess to disdain television.

It is hard to have patience with those who turn their backs on a medium of such great potential and even harder with those who only pretend to ignore it.

Granted, for every "Madding Crowd" there are 100 servings of drivel. But the challenge of exercising selectivity is an important part of the game called television viewing.

It can bring great rewards even if one sticks only to one's own field. For example, neither Jacques Cousteau, the NFL nor William Buckley — all excellent in their own right — happen to turn me on.

On the other hand, any kind of theater of some quality can do the trick.

And 1971 has been a year without parallel for drama in television for one reason alone: "The Six Wives of Henry VIII."

For those who missed the BBC Production on CBS this past summer, it is now being shown again on Channel 21 on Sunday evenings. And, good news for the history buff, it is

being shown in the uncut version, and without interruptions.

Even without "Wives" it would not have been a bad year on television for drama. There was Masterpiece Theater on Channel 21 including the great Churchill series. Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy and Hardy were more recent entries that come to mind plus a return of the Forsyte Saga. There was more on Public Broadcasting Service. The above are but a sampling.

On commercial TV besides the prestigious "Wives", there was Gallico's "Snow Goose" and Albee's "All the Way Home", both Hallmark presentations.

Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre" had another go around with George C. Scott and Dickens was represented thrice with "David Copperfield", "Pickwick Papers" and "A Christmas Carol."

Not in the same category were the made-for-television movies, which, if not Grade A material, were better than one has come to expect from original television on a weekly basis.

And then there were the movies such as "Madding Crowd" made for the theaters and brought to television on a "delayed" basis. "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner" and "South Pacific" are two others that were worth turning the set on for, the first for the Hepburn-Tracy starring team and the latter for its story and music.

All in all some very good reasons for admitting to being a television addict.

Once Over Briefly

Ratings from the Catholic Office for Motion Pictures on the audience suitability for current movies:—

A CLOCKWORK ORANGE — Condemned — An almost metaphysical study of lust and death. Stanley Kubrick's reading of the Anthony Burgess novel of the same title.

BEDKNOBS AND BROOMSTICKS — Everyone — A delightful Disney fantasy about the way to win a war.

BILLY JACK — Objectable — The Catholic film office rating of this highly controversial film is in dispute. Father Patrick J. Sullivan, head of the office, has taken the matter under consideration and recently wrote: "We often wish we had a classification which would read 'objectable for older people and acceptable for younger people.' Billy Jack is a cage in point."

BLACK BEAUTY — Everyone — A sadly uneven remake of the Anna Sewall classic.

DIRTY HARRY — Condemned — A violent "tough-cop" rare. The film promotes an unusually foul image of police.

DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER — Adults — James Bond is back in his own best spoof.

FANTASIA — Everyone — Disney classic that's been drawing older folks back to the movies.

GOING HOME — Adults — A man returns from prison to a house filled with bitterness.

GONE WITH THE WIND — Adults and adolescents — That perennial classic of the South is on the road again; and "frankly, Scarlett..."

HAROLD AND MAUD — Adults — A black comedy about the love affair between an adolescent psychotic and a doty old girl of 80.

IT ONLY HAPPENS TO OTHERS — Adults — A shattering drama about the death of a child.

JOHNNY GOT HIS GUN — Adults, with reservations — Dalton Trumbo's film, based on his own 1938 novel about a World War I "basket case."

KING KONG — Everyone — The start of it all. The classic film that shaped cinematic technique for two generations (and maybe more) about the Giant Monkey and Fay Wray.

KOTCH — Adults — Old fashioned sentiment without the treacle about an unwed mother.

LADY AND THE TRAMP — Everyone — A re-issue of a favorite Disney cartoon. A love story about the canine set.

ONE DAY IN THE LIFE OF IVAN DENISOVICH — Adults and adolescents — Harrowing recreation of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's magnificent short novel of life in a Siberian labor camp.

PLAY MISTY FOR ME — Adults with reservations — The barely credible take of a psycho girl and the folks she tries to destroy. Long on "ladies" magazine dialog.

SCROOGE — Everyone — Dickens with music.

SEE NO EVIL — Adults — A blind girl picks up the scent of a killer. Keep the kids away; the tension is pretty bad.

SHAFT — Adults — polished and exciting entertainment about a black private eye caught between the Mafia and the police.

SOMETIMES A GREAT NOTION — Adults, with reservations — Ken Kesey's sprawling, bawling novel is admirably transferred to the screen.

STAR SPANGLED GIRL — Adults — Neil Simon's first near-miss comedy.

THE GANG THAT COULDN'T SHOOT STRAIGHT — Adults — Jimmy Breslin's madcap Mafia sadly falters on the screen. Put your money into the paperback for a real evening's entertainment.

STRAW DOGS — Unrated — Sam Peckinpah's latest exercise in horror and violence. Generally lauded by critics.

RAILWAY CHILDREN — Everyone — A charming film with lots of the "old" values based on a favorite Victorian novel describing life in a household after daddy gets taken away by the police.

SOMETHING BIG — Adults — An inept Western with a lot of double entendres and killing, all in the name of clean fun.

SUNDAY BLOODY SUNDAY — Adults, with reservations — An unpleasant film about a homosexual, bisexual and heterosexual triangle.

SUMMER OF '42 — Adults, with reservations — An American initiation rite.

THE FRENCH CONNECTION — Adults — An inhuman cat and mouse game. NCOMP called it one of the "most exciting, as well as one of the most harshly realistic detective movies in recent years."

WALKABOUT — Adults — An Australian initiation rite.

WILLY WONKA & THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY — Everyone — A clever and enjoyable film re-issued without the oversell it suffered from the first time around.

At Home with the Movies

HEAVEN WITH A GUN (1969)

Thursday, Jan. 6 (CBS)

This is another cattlemen vs. sheepmen Western, but with a twist: Glenn Ford plays an ex-gunslinger who has come to town as a preacher who hopes to bring peace. He finally does, despite having to resort to his earlier skills when the bad guys get mean.

The film does carry a moral message — about the power of peaceful demonstration, even back in 1870 — but the movie is not exactly for kids. One of the preacher's allies is a bordello queen (Carolyn Jones) whom Ford was very friendly with in the "old days," and there is a rape sequence.

The Catholic film office rated it A-3, unobjectionable for adults.

THE LOST FLIGHT
Friday, Jan. 7 (NBC)

Lloyd Bridges stars in a made-for-TV movie about a plane that's forced to land on a deserted island, a very familiar plot contrivance. Anne Francis co-stars, as the crew and passengers try to cope with the situation — and each other.

There are no Catholic film

office ratings for made-for-TV movies.

VANISHED (Part 1)
Saturday, Jan. 8 (NBC)

This is a made-for-TV movie based on Fletcher Knebel's best-seller about the disappearance of a top Presidential adviser, which sets off national and international intrigue. Richard Widmark plays the President.

It will be shown in two parts, tonight and Monday, Jan. 10.

There are no Catholic film office ratings for made-for-TV movies.

STAY AWAY, JOE (1968)
Sunday, Jan. 9 (CBS)

Elvis Presley plays a brawling, trouble-making half-Navajo rodeo champion who talks a Congressman into helping his dad build up a herd of cattle on an Indian reservation. The plan is almost ruined — first by drunken Navajo Indians at a party Presley throws, then by several love interests.

The film was generally criticized for a very weak plot, but especially because it presents a stereotyped, prejudiced view of the American Indians, who are portrayed as laughable in-

competents. It was rated A-3, unobjectionable for adults, by the Catholic film office.

VANISHED (Part 2)
Monday, Jan. 10 (NBC)

The continuation of the made-for-TV movie begun Saturday, Jan. 8, about the disappearance of a top adviser to the President, based on the novel by Fletcher Knebel.

MURDERER'S ROW (1966)
Monday, Jan. 10 (ABC)

Dean Martin is super-spy Matt Helm in the second of a series that set out to spoof the Bond films. In this one, he's off to rescue an American scientist who has been kidnapped and before the madman can turn his evil ray on Washington, D.C. Ann-Margret is in this one.

There is the usual quota of Martin double-entendres, but not as bad as in, say, The Silencers.

Nevertheless, the Catholic film office gave it a rating of B, morally objectionable in part for all, because of "self-conscious suggestiveness in costuming and strained double-entendres."

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