



AS I SEE IT
Pat Costa

What are the qualities of a good television interviewer?

Natural curiosity, sensitivity, a superficial knowledge at least of the interviewee's forte, an ability to put the guest at ease and some gall.

All of these are important. But, they count for almost nothing if the interviewer is unable to do one other simple thing: Keep his own super ego in check.

And, it is here that Jack Paar fails the test, often miserably so.

I tuned in during Paar's latest stint on ABC late night television primarily because there were two guests I wanted to see and hear.

The first was Jean Kerr, playwright and humorist. Newspaper columnist Jack Anderson was to follow her.

By the time Mrs. Kerr's stint was over I was disgusted enough to turn off the set and go to bed.

Jean Kerr, wife of the New York Times Sunday theater critic is a witty, intelligent and talented individual. She has four sons (three of whom are currently at Harvard) and one young daughter and a set of friends in the theater.

Most important, or it should have been to Paar at this point, is that her play "Finishing Touches" a comedy starring Robert Lansing and Barbara Bel Geddes is currently the hottest property on Broadway. Paar mentioned it in

one sentence in introducing her. He also teased us with the information that one of Mrs. Kerr's other long running Broadway hits "Mary, Mary" was the story based on experiences of his own announcer, Peggy Cass.

When the audience laughed as if in response to a joke he told them it was the truth and if they listened they were likely to learn something.

Titillated by this I waited even more anxiously to hear Mrs. Kerr.

She was allowed to tell two dreadful stories illustrating how she has no clothes-fashion. End of information. No word on "Finishing Touches," no explanation of Cass' relationship to "Mary, Mary" nor other word of Mrs. Kerr's other plays or books.

Nothing about her interesting family, her friends in the theater or her life on the try-out circuit.

Instead in the middle of what was supposed to be an interview of a personality we were treated to a five minute account of a triple faux pas made by Paar and his wife at a couple of parties.

And there sat the playwright, and Miss Cass who had been described as best friends sitting like two bumps on a log.

The rumour is that Paar has failed in what ABC hoped he could do which is to grab a little of the audience away from Johnny Carson. They deserved to fail.

Tango: Arty, Not Artistic

Rockville Centre [CPF] — The highly publicized film Last Tango in Paris, has been strongly criticized by a Catholic film critic as "such an outlandishly quirky example of cinema as a means of expression that it might deal a death blow to other directors who are attempting to explore human relationships in more disciplined, relevant and honest works."

The critic, Brother Thomas Allen, wrote a lengthy critique of Last Tango for The Long Island Catholic, weekly newspaper of the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

The film, which stars Marlon Brando and is directed by Bernardo Bertolucci, was given cover treatment by both Time and Newsweek magazine and is certain to be the year's most controversial film because of its treatment of sex and crude language.

While questioning the artistic value of Last Tango in Paris, Brother Allen admitted that it will prove to be a landmark film.

"The allure of Brando and his persistent hold on the American imagination is likely to plunge the Last Tango into a broader arena of debate on modern film and public morals than has previously been witnessed in this country," he wrote.

Last Tango in Paris focuses on an American in Paris whose wife has just committed suicide. The distraught man (Brando) shortly meets a young amoral French girl (Maria Schneider) in an empty apartment, where they proceed to carry on a sex-for-sex's-sake relationship, heavy in sado-masochistic activity. He insists on

total anonymity (they do not exchange names). However, by film's end he has fallen in love with her and pursues her, only to be rejected.

The film won an X rating — and most of its notoriety — because of the film's uses of nudity (hers, not his), scenes involving rape, sodomy and masturbation (though not explicitly shown) and vulgar language.

Brother Allen praises Brando's acting in the film, but noted that "Brando does not really figure centrally in the basic controversy that surrounds the film. The director, Bernardo Bertolucci, does."

"If only Brando could be separated completely from the film, or if a non-creative, non-improvising actor had been cast in the main role, then the Last Tango would have had difficulty even opening in New York, and it would have been shunted off into the art circuits, where the really significant debate about Bernardo Bertolucci's worth as a filmmaker is still being hotly waged."

As portrayed by Brando, according to Brother Allen, "Paul is a free-wheeling display of hair-trigger transformation from violence to tenderness within a personality that is introduced as already mentally twisted and therefore not to be measured by the normal yardsticks of human behavior."

Brando's performance, he commented "is the area in which the Last Tango will be praised out of proportion and will snare a larger audience than the film deserves. The rest of Last Tango is Bertolucciville, where humanity

is non-existent and where kindness reigns."

"In the realm of Bertolucci lie the answers or at least the murky evidence on which to judge the Last Tango as either art or pornography," he continued.

"In my judgment, the film is arty, but not artistic; it is objectively pornographic, and probably not subjectively so for many adult viewers. A trip through Bertolucci's dense visuals is enough to distance any act away from voyeurism."

Brother Allen was highly critical of Bertolucci's treatment of human relationships not only in Last Tango, but also in his two previous films, The Conformist and The Spider's Stragem.

"Through these last three films, Bertolucci characters have shed the amenities of social humanity, the cementing blocks of expression between people.

"The personal relationships in each film have been decadent, destructive couplings. None of his characters greet each other normally, enjoy a meal together, dance for social pleasure, chat amiably, or use sex as an expressive, healing means of communication."

Archbishop Named To Curial Office

Washington, D.C. [RNS] — Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin of Cincinnati, 45, has become the first American Catholic prelate below the rank of cardinal to be appointed a member of the Holy See's Sacred Congregation for Bishops.

An announcement from the Apostolic Delegation in the United States here reported that he will join Cardinal John Carberry of St. Louis, Cardinal Terence Cooke of New York, Cardinal Lawrence Shehan of Baltimore, and Cardinal John Wright, prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, as the fifth American in curial office.

As the liaison with the world's Catholic hierarchy on diocesan administration matters, the Sacred Congregation for Bishops is concerned with the naming of bishops, the establishment and changing of dioceses, provinces and other jurisdictions, and publishing various documents to be circulated through national episcopal conferences.

LEADER ELECTED

Philadelphia [RNS] — The bishop of a small diocese in Iran was elected here as head of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America.

Bishop Karekin Sarkissian, 41, of Jura will succeed Archbishop Hrant Khatchadourian who has led the American Church for 15 years. Heads of the Church serve four year terms and are eligible for re-election.

The archbishop-elect is a member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches and was an observer at the Second Vatican Council.

At Home With the Movies

SOUTH PACIFIC [1958]
Wednesday, May 16 [ABC]

Even without Mary Martin, (Mitzi Gaynor takes the screen role, and does it nicely), this Rodgers-Hammerstein musical translates well to the screen. The story focuses on life and love on a Pacific plantation island in the South Pacific during World War II. Rossano Brazzi is that man Mitzi is going to wash right out of her hair — so she thinks. [A-III]

THE BATTLE OF CULLODEN [1964]
Thursday, May 17 [PBS]

Supper British production, written and directed by Peter Watkins, depicts the bloody final battle of Bonnie Prince Charlie and the Scottish Highlanders against the English might.

COUNTDOWN [1968]
Thursday, May 17 [CGS]

Exciting visual exploration of the frantic behind-the-scenes activity surrounding a space launch. James Caan is top-lined as the NASA astronaut whose life as a scientist-spaceman is complicated by domestic troubles. Good photography and revealing glimpses of the Houston Space Ground Control center and Cape Kennedy overshadow the otherwise routine drama. [A-I]

THE SERGEANT [1968]
Friday, May 18 [CBS]

This is one of Rod Steiger's best-ever screen performances (and lately, he needs all the encouragement he can get), as he utterly inhabits the characterization of an outwardly tough but inwardly very disturbed Army

sergeant. Director John Flynn and cameraman Henri Persin help enhance Steiger's performance by carefully creating the bleak postwar Army recruit who comes into conflict with his latent-homosexual sarge. As the recruit, John Philip Law is also quite effective. Finely wrought adult drama. [A-III]

LOVE IS A BALL [1963]
Saturday, May 19 [NBC]

Frothy romantic comedy is set on the glittering French Riviera and stars Glen Ford, Hope Lange and Charles Boyer (at his charming best). The plot, a necessary evil in this sort of production, involves Boyer's attempts at matchmaking, which inevitably get all crossed up — particularly where Ford and Lange are concerned. Well, at least nobody breaks into a song. [A-III]

Once Over Briefly

BLACK CAESAR—Condemned—The musical score by James Brown is all that sets this apart from other cheap exploitation films.

BLACK GUNN—Objectionable—Jim Brown and violence of every description.

BOOK OF NUMBERS—Adults—The old one-two from Raymond St. Jacques. Enjoyable.

BROTHER SUN, SISTER MOON—Adults and adolescents—The paradox of the Franciscan life is that Zeffirelli will make a lot of lire off his patron saint.

CHARLEY ONE-EYE—Adults—Somebody is going to pay You.

CHARLOTTE'S WEB—Everyone—E. B. White's classic animals are now animated.

CLASS OF '44—Adults—A Hermie, Oscy, and Benji reunion.

CRIS AND WHISKERS—Adults, with reservations—Bergman's study of women, pain, and contact.

DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE—Adults—Discreetly indiscreet Bunuel reveries.

EFFECT OF GAMMA RAYS ON MAN-IN-THE-MOON—MARIGOLDS—Adults—As good as its name is long.

FELLINI'S ROMA—Adults, with reservations—The title says it all. Rome, yes. Fellini, unmistakably.

FIVE FINGERS OF DEATH—Adults—Chinese-imported tale of Hai Karate, low quality.

HEARTBREAK KID—Adults—Neil Simon plus Elaine May equals enlightening adult comedy.

KID BLUE—Not rated—And we all took the promise of Last Movie literally.

LADY CAROLINE LAMB—Adults—Lord Byron had sense enough to drop her. Why didn't Robert Bolt?

LAST TANGO IN PARIS—Condemned—Sexually explicit Love-less Story, with an acting tour de force by Brando.

LIFE AND TIMES OF JUDGE ROY BEAN—Adults—Paul Newman as the grizzly frontier "hangin' judge."

LOLLY MADONNA XXX—Objectionable—The industry gave this brutal, inhuman film a PC stamp. The Catholic office thinks it deserves every bit of an R.

MAN OF LA-MANCHA—Adults—The impossible nightmare.

SCORPIO—Adults—A stinger of a film, with Burt Lancaster as a double agent.

SLITHER—Adults—James Caan, Peter Boyle, Louise Lasser, and Sally Kellerman on a serpentine trip.

SOUNDER—Everyone—Unquestionably one of the best films of 1972, the story of a black sharecropper family during the Depression. You can tell it's Mattel.

SOYLENT GREEN—Adults—You wouldn't want to paint your garage that shade.

THIEF WHO CAME TO DINNER—Adults—One of these days, Ryan O'Neal will wake up and find out he's not really an actor, but a department store dummy.

THEATRE OF BLOOD—Adults—Vincent Priceless.

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