

## OBITER

THE CINEMA AUDIENCE is not accustomed to concentrating for much longer than ninety minutes or so; if considerably more is demanded, then it prefers that the ordeal should be alleviated by the injection of some artificial stimulant such as is found, for example, in *Le Salaire de la Peur*, where the tension was so deliberately heightened as to obliterate time.

*Richard III* is a very long film—it lasts for something more like one hundred and sixty-five minutes—and the director never plays on the nerves for the fun of it, and yet one's attention is riveted to the screen, and when the crown of England, which had opened the film in close-up, approaches in close-up for the final fade one's reaction is a genuine shock of surprise and regret. This is pre-eminently due to Sir Laurence Olivier who directs the film as well as taking the part of Richard; supported by a team—technicians as well as players—who have worked with him before, he is able so to stamp the unity of conception on this production that it coheres from start to finish in a way only too rare in the cinema.

There is less compelling visual beauty in *Richard III* than there was in *Henry V* except for the lovely, Brueghel-like snowscapes of the journey from Ludlow to London, with its willow growing aslant a brook bleak against a bleak sky, and the final battle scenes at Bosworth lack the mounting excitement of Agincourt in the earlier film, but this is perhaps all to the good since Richard is a villain in a melodrama; not a hero in an epic as Henry was. Sir Laurence's Richard is the performance of a lifetime: all the mastery of his stage performance plus the resources of Vistavision and camera technique to extend it; he has used this above all in the soliloquies which here turn into a colloquy between Richard and the spectator. We are made free of all his relish in his own subtlety, his pleasure in his revenge against the world, his charm, and his sinister humour; and when at the end, faced by the hopeless odds of Bosworth, he gives a sudden smile of pure exhilaration at the prospect, we recognize it as one more logical expression of a character we have learned by now to know so well. He is surrounded by a galaxy of stars: Sir Ralph Richardson's Buckingham is a perfect foil in its chilly, arrogant competence; Sir Cedric Hardwick's disorganized, crumbling King; Mr Alec Clunes playing Hastings with an open-hearted generosity matched by his own good looks; Sir John Gielgud as Clarence, Miss Claire Bloom as Lady Anne and Miss Pamela Brown making of Jane Shore's lurking, silent presence something like an allegorical figure of Carnality.

Restless, ruthless, turbulent, the whirligig of time's revenges spins round before our fascinated eyes in this production; ranting or whispering in splendid phrases that sound as new as the day they were minted, these fantastic doomed creatures run their rat-race, with Richard at the heart of it all, as doomed as the rest. Saved neither by his wickedness nor his charm from the great oaf, Richmond, his dead body goes lurching out of sight, tossed carelessly across the back of a mule as Stanley cautiously frees the crown of England from the brambles in which it is caught. Richmond, in the words of *Ten Sixty-Six and All that*, may be Right, but he certainly seems Revolting after Richard's Wrong but Romantic challenge to fate.

ELIZABETH HENDY

ANNUNCIATION. Perhaps 'Announcement' (for that is what the Annunciation really was) would be a better name for the magazine of the recently formed Catholic Radio Guild. It reflects the immense progress that has taken place in Catholic broadcasting under the direction of Fr Agnellus Andrew, from whose Catholic Radio and Television Centre at Hatch End *Annunciation* is published. It is important that Catholics who are professionally engaged in radio and television should be linked together, for they are sharing in the most potent of all modern means of communication, and their contribution, to be apostolically effective, must be technically impeccable. That is why it is good to know that the Centre is to prove opportunities for training in the techniques of radio, and it is perhaps priests in particular who need to learn the discipline of a medium that presents immense possibilities for communicating the truth to millions untouched by the traditional instruments of the apostolate. *Annunciation*, apart from news of programmes to come, includes criticism of broadcasts that have taken place. This is especially valuable, for it is through building up sound and consistent criteria that a Christian judgment can have its profoundest effect.

I.E.