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Garnett's career did not develop in a cohesive manner, one that can be successfully charted. Most of his best films were made during the early part of his career. *Her Man*, a Frankie and Johnny story set in Cuba, is exceptional for its period ambience and smooth camerawork. *One Way Passage*, a sophisticated drama about a romance between terminally ill Kay Francis and con man William Powell, remains a woman's picture of the highest caliber. *China Seas*, a melodrama with Clark Gable, Jean Harlow and a stellar cast aboard a Hong Kong-bound ship, is corny but exciting. *Stand-in* is a funny, underrated satire of Hollywood.

Garnett's one outstanding post-1940 feature is *The Postman Always Rings Twice* a sizzling drama of adultery and murder, from the James M. Cain story, that is far superior to Bob Rafelson's recent remake. In fact, of all Garnett's credits, only *One Way Passage* and *The Postman Always Rings Twice* approach the level of greatness. The rest are all good examples of their respective types, but are in no way linked by any artistic vision. However, Garnett's films are generally evenly paced. Even in his less auspicious productions the narrative flows smoothly, and there is an effective union of background and storyline. Garnett was aware that a film was sometimes unevenly paced because it was too slow, rather than fast. He would often reshoot scenes, attempting to trim them down by an all-important eight or ten seconds.

Garnett was also a keen observer of actors. When necessary, he could be stern as with Wallace Beery, a difficult star with a large ego. Yet he was particularly patient with a performer (for instance, Jean Harlow) who was not naturally gifted but still was willing to work and learn. As a result, he would accentuate the strengths of his actors. He insisted on casting Humphrey Bogart, then known solely for gangster roles, as a leading man in *Stand-in*.

Andrew Sarris wrote, in 1968, "Inconsistency is the hobgoblin of Tay Garnett's career, and inconsistency can never be defined satisfactorily....For the moment, Garnett's ultimate reputation is still unusually elusive." From the late 1940s on, Garnett's films do become increasingly mediocre. At their best, however, they're likable as well as competently made, and Garnett deserves to be called an entertainer—not an uncomplimentary appellation.

—Rob Edelman

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GEHR, ERNIE. American. Born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 20 July 1943. Career: 1966—moves to New York City; sees first independent films, begins working in 8mm; 1967—makes first publicly released films in 16mm: *Morning* and *Wait*; 1970—teaches film at State University of New York at Binghamton; 1972-73—teaches film at Bard College; 1974-75—returns to SUNY Binghamton; 1977—resumes showing films publicly after hiatus of several years; 1980—begins releasing films made during 1970s; 1980—teaches at SUNY Buffalo; 1983—teaches at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Agent: Film-Makers' Cooperative, 175 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10016.

Films: 1968—*Morning*; *Wait*; 1969—*Reverberation*; *Transparency*; 1969-71—*Still*; 1970—*History*, *Serene Velocity*; *Field*; 1972-74—*Shift*; 1974—*Eureka*; 1976—*Table*; 1977—*Untitled (77)*; 1981—*Mirage*; *Untitled*.

Publications:

By GEHR:

Article—"Program Notes by Ernie Gehr..." and interview by Jonas Mekas in *Film Culture* (New York), spring 1972.

On GEHR:

Book—*Ernie Gehr* by P. Adams Sitney, Minneapolis 1980; Articles—"New Forms in Film" by Bill Simon in *Artforum* (New York), October 1972; "Some Formalist Tendencies in the Current American Avant-Garde Film" by Regina Cornwell in *Kansas Quarterly*, spring 1972; "Letter from New York" by Bob Cowan in *Take One* (Montreal), September/October 1972; "Ernie Gehr" by David Cuthell in *Options and Alternatives: Some Directions in Recent Art*, exhibition catalogue, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven 1974; "New Film Forms" by Simon Field in *Art and Artists* (London), November 1974; "Works of Ernie Gehr from 1968 to 1972" by Regina Cornwell in *Film Culture* (New York), no.63-64, 1977; "Ernie Gehr's Recent Work" by John Pruitt in *10 Years of Living Cinema*, New York 1982; "The Critique of Seeing with One's Own Eyes: Ernie Gehr's Untitled (1975)" in *Millenium Film Journal* (New York), no.12, 1983.

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An Ernie Gehr film appears, at first glance, to be very sparse. His films most frequently depict a single location, which is shown through several cinematic techniques that are applied consistently throughout. The adjectives "formal," "minimal," and "structural" have been applied to Gehr's films, though the filmmaker himself disclaims them. While there may be some relation between Gehr's filmmaking and the "minimal" art that emerged contemporaneously, his films are unique, in themselves and in the redefinition they offer for cinema.

Gehr's most acclaimed film is *Serene Velocity*. A single corridor is filmed in images four frames (about ¼ second) long; Gehr cuts between images with different focal length lens settings so that the corridor appears to advance or recede, and to alter in its spatial aspect, quite rapidly. The perceptual effects that result are complex and diverse; Gehr's choice of frame-length places his film at a kind of threshold: the images are barely perceptive as separate stills; they also begin to fuse into movement. In *Transparency*, Gehr films passing cars, from very close; their colors fill the frame with beautiful, moving flat surfaces, making an apparent metaphor for the film surface itself. in *Table*, he cuts between two adjacent views of a table, with different color filters over the lens; the mind's eye is violently divided between different representations of the same view.

Gehr avoids using subject matter or techniques that will appeal to the viewer's emotions, or encourage symbolic readings. He tries to use cinematic techniques that will dominate the material filmed so strongly as to make the two inseparable. Thus he denies that cinema can be about any "subject matter" other than film itself, and the effects that film can have. The result is that a Gehr film addresses the viewer's *perception* directly, rather than his emotions, sense of human empathy, intellect, or aesthetic sense, as most other films do. While some other independent filmmakers have appealed to their viewers' perception, Gehr's application of this form of address has been the most radical, consistent, and rigorous.

The result is that his films work on two levels. First, the viewer experiences complex, and often new, perceptual phenomena. By constructing some of his films at such a rapid pace that movement almost fuses into stillness, Gehr allows both to be experienced at once. His films hover, for the viewer, around paradoxes of depth/flatness, recognizable shape/abstract color, and stillness/movement. The films acknowledge cinema as illusion, through their devices, while at the same time trying to unmask the illusion to form a more direct relationship between viewer and work. The viewer of *Serene Velocity* or *Table* experiences optical phenomena he has not seen before, but those phenomena lead him to reconsider the nature not only of film viewing but of his own perception.

The result can be, at its best, an opening up of film's possibilities. Instead of the viewer sensing he is *receiving* messages, emotions, ideas or visions from the screen, the viewer is placed in a new position of equality with the filmic image. Indeed, the power of Gehr's technique is such that the viewer is almost forced to continually *interact* with what is on the screen. Since a Gehr film activates so much of one's perceptual/mental system, including aspects of it that may have been long dormant, the viewer comes away from the screening with a vastly deepened awareness. In an interview with Jonas Mekas, Gehr himself articulates this as a goal: "...[my] desire [is] less to express myself and more of making something out of the film material itself relevant to film for spiritual purposes...What I mean by 'spiritual' is sensitizing the mind to its own consciousness.."

—Fred Camper

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GERASIMOV, SERGEI. Soviet. Born Sergei Apollinarievich Gerasimov in Zlatoust, Ural region, 21 May 1906. Educated at Leningrad Art School in painting; studied scenic design at State Institute of Dramatic Art, Leningrad (1920-25). Career: 1920—leaves school, moves to Leningrad; early 1920s—while in college, joins FEKS group founded by fellow teen-agers Grigori Kozintsev and Leonid Trauberg; 1925-30—becomes actor in their films, specializing in villains; 1929-30—also works as 1st assistant director on their films; 1930—directs 1st film; 1930-41—works at Lenfilm Studios and is Head of Acting and Directing Master Class there, 1931-41; 1941—moves to Moscow, takes charge of *Fighting Film Album No. 1* and directs its opening short; co-directs feature with Mikhail Kalatozov; 1942-44—continues war work, makes feature and takes charge of official films of Yalta and Berlin Conferences; 1944—joins Communist Party, becomes head of Central Newsreel and Documentary Studios, Moscow; 1944—1970s—Professor and Head of Acting and Directing Workshop at Moscow Film School (VGIK); 1949—attends "Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace" in New York, makes anti-American speech; 1955—works at Gorki Film Studios as Artistic Supervisor; 1970s—serves as Deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR, Secretary of Soviet Union of Cinematographers, and on editorial board of *Iskusstvo Kino*. Recipient: Red Banner of Labor, 1940 and 1950; State Prize for *Uchitel*, 1941; Red Star, 1944; Peoples' Artist of USSR, 1948; State Prize for *The Young Guard*, 1949; State Prize for *Liberated China*, 1951.

Films (as assistant director): 1929—*Novyi Vavilon (The New Babylon)* (Kozintsev and Trauberg); (as director): 1930—*22 Misfortunes (22 Mishaps)* (co-d); 1931—*The Forest (The Woods)* (+sc); *Odna (Alone)* (Kozintsev and Trauberg) (ass't d only); 1932—*Solomon's Heart* (co-d, +sc); 1934—*Do I Love You? (If I*