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MR. ARKADAN
- DENNIS JALOG

There is a cinema of REVERENCE and a cinema of AUDACITY.

- Put another way, there is the cinema of Dreyer, Bresson & Ozu; and there is the cinema of Eisenstein, Bunuel - and Orson Welles.

If "personality" becomes the key to a progressive evaluation of Film ^{ARTHE} than it is "temperment" that is the key which unlocks the labyrinth of personality. In the middle Fifties' when French Auteur criticism was praising the long, uncut tracking shots of Ophus and Misoguchi, Welles flung in the face of these exhausted theoreticians a film utterly unlike KANE or AMBERSONS - a film of Montage fragmentation that brilliantly re-created the disintegration of a private world - the world of a immensely powerful international tycoon. Everyone knows the story of the Scorpion and the Toad, embedded in one of the most powerful and Baroque sequences of the film, that of the masked ball. And many, notably Andrew Sarris, have sought for a clue to the ultimate meaning of the film (and the film's grandiose central character) here. This might well be a red herring flung in the face of his critics, which Welles has used to throw them off the scent. There is another, much lesser known speech, the "gooseliver" monologue in which ARKADAN draws some important distinctions between himself and the rather stupid, quasi-Castorp-like figure ^{URE} of the foolish hero: "there are those who give and those who ask. Those who do not care to give, those who do not dare to ask. You asked - but you did not always know what you were asking for." This then is the theme of the film, yet another re-statement of the Book of Genesis in the tradition of Goethe and Thomas Mann: touch not the

ARKADAN (continued)

fruit of the tree of Knowledge, the knowledge of good and evil, touch it not lest ye die. ARKADAN knows, of course, to the full depths of the knowledge of good evil, his secret. The foolish hero, blindly stumbling through the maze of the film does not know. The naive questor-hero survives, of course, as ARKADAN must die. The price paid: love. Which puts Welles film square in the tradition of modern German literature. And not in the tradition of modern French aesthetics.