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# Ansichten Eines Clowns

(The Clown)

(WEST GERMAN-COLOR)

VARIETY

Berlin, March 10.

3/17/76

Constantin Film release of Heinz Angermeyer Production, in collaboration with MFG-Film/Filmaufbau. Produced by Heiner Angermeyer and Maximilian Schell. Directed by Vojtech Jasný. Screenplay, Jasný, Heinrich Boell, based on novel of same name by Boell; camera (color), Walter Lassally; music, Bernhard Schoener; editor, Dagmar Hirtz. Reviewed at Atelier am Zoo, Berlin, March 8, '76. Running time: 120 MINS.

Hans ..... Helmut Griem  
Marie ..... Hanna Schygulla  
Mother ..... Eva-Maria Meineke  
Father ..... Gustav Rudolf Sellner  
Derkum ..... Hans Christian Blech  
Sommerwild ..... Alexander May  
Leo ..... Jan Niklas  
Zohnerer ..... Rainer Basedow  
Sabine Emonds ..... Helga Anders  
Monika ..... Claudia Butenuth  
Pater ..... Ben Hecker  
Hans (as boy) ..... Wolfram Koch  
Henriette ..... Susanne Seidler  
Leo (as boy) ..... Heinrich von Busch

"The Clown" (German title: "Views of a Clown") made Heinrich Boell famous in 1963 for its biting satire of the Roman Catholic Church. The book was translated into 20 languages and was given big encouragement in the Socialist countries. Today, the attack on the Church in Vojtech Jasný's pic is water over the dam, but it should arouse dispute without fail in countries where Catholicism is strong. And Boell's rep as Nobel Prize winner may be a value elsewhere.

Story covers one afternoon in the life of Hans Schnier, a clown by profession, but in fact a social critic (he "collects moments"), who returns to Bonn where he grew up during and after the war. The visit brings back memories, and the pic is a series of flashbacks to his childhood, with bitter memories of his sister's death due to his mother's Nazi fanaticism, and his youthful first (and last) love with Marie, whom he loses to her faith by refusing to marry her in church.

Schnier is an aggressive loner, an existentialist who challenges the social order. His main gripe is with the Catholic Church, to which his mother is now as fanatically dedicated as she was before to the Nazi cause.

Schnier's other encounters are with his father and his brother. The father seeks to pacify his conscience with an offer to Hans to study for a profession, but he is again stingy if the money is only used for a life as a clown. His brother, Leo, is a convert to Catholicism and is studying at a seminary; he has no time to meet him after hours in obedience to the rules, but a brief meeting in a cemetery underscores the clown's inability to fit in anywhere. Marie has meanwhile married a Catholic, and this for Hans is the bitterest pain of all, for he still feels he is spiritually married to her. Now completely alone, he puts on a painted death-face and returns to the railroad station to sit on the steps.

At two-hour length, "The Clown" as film loses its epic character and is often confusing in the editing of the time sequences. Helmut Griem as Hans Schnier, the clown who can see through people, has the vacant look of an outsider but little else to carry the emotional side of the story. Hanna Schygulla's Marie is believable as an uncomplicated country-girl type.

But it is Gustav Rudolf Sellner who steals the show as a long suffering Lear under a harridan wife (Eva Marie Meineke) who is about to lose all his children for reasons he doesn't fully comprehend. Walter Lassally's camera has a commanding eye for detail.

This one is Germany's probable film at upcoming Cannes Film Festival. It will no doubt have an appeal to leftist segments. -Holt