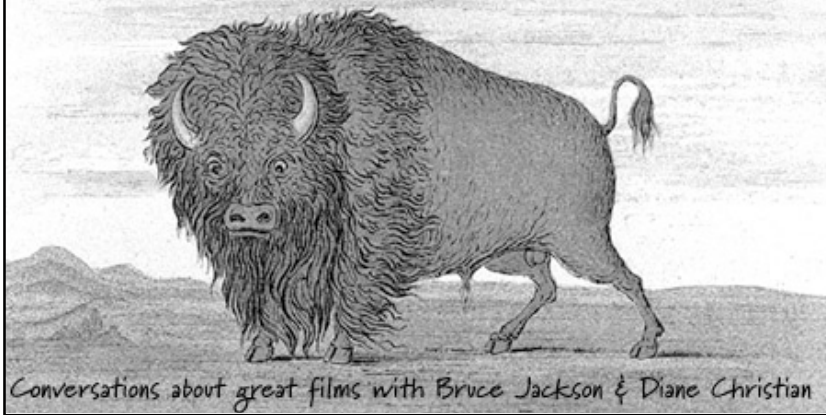


The Buffalo Film Seminars



GREED (1924)

Zasu Pitts....Trina Sieppe
 Gibson Gowland....John McTeague
 Jean Hersholt....Marcus
 Dale Fuller....Maria
 Tempe Pigott....Mother McTeague
 Sylvia Ashton....'Mommer' Sieppe
 Chester Conklin....'Popper' Sieppe
 Frank Hayes....Charles W. Grannis (proprietor, The Modern Dog Hospital)
 Joan Standing....Selina

Directed by Erich von Stroheim
 Writing credits Joseph Farnham (titles), June Mathis, Frank Norris (novel *McTeague*),
 Erich von Stroheim
 Produced by Louis B. Mayer
 Cinematography by William H. Daniels,
 Film Editing by Joseph Farnham, June Mathis, Erich von Stroheim,
 Art Direction by Richard Day, Cedric Gibbons (credited, but not involved), Erich von Stroheim
 Runtime: 140 min / USA:250 min (1999 restored version)

Selected for the National Film Registry by the National Film Preservation Board, USA 1991

Erich von Stroheim (Erich Oswald Stroheim, 22 September 1885, Vienna, Austria—12 May 1957, Paris) was the son of a Jewish hatter in Vienna and didn't pick up the "von" until shortly after he arrived in Hollywood sometime after 1909. He directed 12 films, including the most famous film no one ever saw, *Greed* 1925, based on Frank Norris's novel *McTeague*. Von Stroheim brought the film in at 7 hours. Under great pressure from Irving Thalberg, he cut it to 4 hours; the studio cut another hour before the film was released. For years it was available only in a 2:20 version, but there's a 4 hour videotape available now. In the original black and white release prints, everything yellow was tinted by hand: gold coins, a brass bed, tooth fillings, even the canary. Von Stroheim took his directing very seriously, which is probably why they didn't let him do it very often. He acted in more than 70 films, beginning with an uncredited role as a man shot from the roof in *Birth of a Nation* 1915 (a stunt in which he claimed to have broken two ribs), and including his superb performances as Max von Mayerling, a former director turned Norma Desmond's driver in Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard* 1950 and as Captain von Rauffenstein in Jean Renoir's *Le Grand Illusion* (1937). The Nazis hated *La Grande Illusion* because one of the central characters was a non-caricatured Jew played by a Jewish actor— Rosenthal played by Marcel Dalio—and because the primary vision of the German military was as jailors. They probably would have gone orbital if they'd known that the senior German officer in the film was also played by a Jew, albeit one who made his career mimicking monocled Prussians.

PHILIP CARLI, pianist for tonight's screening, began accompanying silent films at the age of 13, with a solo piano performance for Lon Chaney's 1923 version of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* at his junior high school in California. He has toured extensively as a film accompanist throughout North America and Europe, performing at such venues as Lincoln Center and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the National Gallery in Washington, DC, the Cinémathèque Québécoise in Montreal, the National Film Theatre in London, and the Berlin International Film Festival. He is the staff accompanist for the George Eastman House in Rochester, New York, and performs annually at several film festivals in the United States as well as at Le Giornate del Cinema Muto in Italy. He has recorded piano accompaniments to over fifty films for video release by the Library of Congress, a number of film and video companies, and for broadcast on the American Movie Classics and the Turner Classic Movies cable channels.

JEAN HERSHOLT (12 July 1886, Copenhagen, Denmark—2 June 1956, Hollywood). *From Leonard Maltin's film encyclopedia*: "Born

to famous Danish performers, Hersholt entered the family profession as a young man, touring Europe before emigrating to the United States in 1914. Within a year he was acting in silent films (unhampered by his thick accent), generally playing heavies. By the 1920s he was recognized as one of the movie world's premier supporting actors, who prided himself on creating his own character makeup. His films include *Hell's Hinges* (1916), *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (1921), and *Stella Dallas* (1925); he was wondrously smarmy in von Stroheim's *Greed* (1924), wonderfully endearing in Lubitsch's *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg* (1927). In the sound era he was prominently featured in such films as *The Sin of Madelon Claudet*, *Private Lives* (both 1931), *Grand Hotel*, *The Mask of Fu Manchu* (both 1932), *Dinner at Eight* (1933), *Men in White* (1934), *Mark of the Vampire* (1935), *One in a Million* (1936), *Sins of Man* (1936, a leading role), *Heidi* (1937, as Shirley Temple's grandfather), *Alexander's Ragtime Band* (1938), and *Mr. Moto in Danger Island* (1939). His success playing Dr. Dafoe, who delivered the Dionne Quintuplets, in *The Country Doctor* (1936) led to his being cast by RKO as Dr. Christian in a series of programmers *Meet Dr. Christian*, *Courageous Dr. Christian* and others). He also played the role on a radio show that ran for an astonishing 17 years. His final screen credit was *Run for Cover* (1955). Hersholt devoted himself to many humanitarian and charitable causes offscreen (including the construction of the Motion Picture Country Home and Hospital), inspiring the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences to establish a special Humanitarian Award in his name, presented periodically at the Oscar ceremonies since his death in 1956. His nephew is actor Leslie Nielsen.

ZASU PITTS (3 January 1894, Parsons, Kansas—7 June 1963, Hollywood) *Biography from Leonard Maltin's Movie Encyclopedia:* "This well-known supporting player-named, per a family compromise, after both her father's sisters, Eliza and Susan—was discovered for movies by Mary Pickford, who gave her small parts in *A Little Princess* and *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* (both 1917). She stood out in vivid dramatic roles for Erich von Stroheim in *Greed* (1924, as the gold-crazy Trina) and *The Wedding March* (1928, as the pitiful bride), but in the sound era was known almost exclusively as a comedienne. (In fact, her scenes as a distraught mother in 1930's *All Quiet on the Western Front* were refilmed with actress Beryl Mercer, because preview audiences reportedly couldn't accept her in a dramatic part.) A plaintive voice and fluttery hands became her trademarks, and in her most prolific period—the early 1930s—she was costarring in both a series of Hal Roach short subjects (with Thelma Todd) and a series of medium-budget Universal features (with Slim Summerville) while continuing to play supporting roles in movies such as *Monte Carlo* (1930), *Blondie of the Follies*, *Roar of the Dragon*, *Once in a Lifetime*, *Make Me a Star* (all 1932), *Mr. Skitch* (1933, as Will Rogers' wife), *The Meanest Gal in Town*, *Dames* (both 1934), *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch* (1934, in the leading role), *Ruggles of Red Gap* (1935), *Broadway Limited* (1941), and *Miss Polly* (1941, reunited with Slim Summerville) among others. She also played spinster sleuth Hildegarde Withers in two 1936 RKO programmers, *The Plot Thickens* and *Forty Naughty Girls*. As film roles grew scarce, she took to the stage, and worked occasionally in television, winning a sidekick spot on "Oh Susanna/The Gale Storm Show" from 1956 to 1960. Later credits include *Life With Father* (1947), *Francis* (1949), *Teenage Millionaire* (1961), and her last film, *It's a Mad Mad Mad Mad World* (1963). She authored the book "Candy Hits by ZaSu Pitts."

JUNE MATHIS (30 June 1892Leadville, Colorado—26 July 1927 New York City) was credited with 104 screenplays and scenarios, among them *Reno* (1930), *Ben-Hur* (1925), *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (1921), *Five Thousand an Hour* (1918), *Blue Jeans* (1917), and *The Upstart* (1916).

WILLIAM H. DANIELS (1 December 1901, Cleveland—14 June 1970, Los Angeles) was **Greta Garbo's cinematographer. He shot 104 films, among them** *Move* (1970), *Valley of the Dolls* (1967), *Von Ryan's Express* (1965), *Come Blow Your Horn* (1963), *Ocean's Eleven* (1960), *Can-Can* (1960), *Some Came Running* (1958), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1958), *Harvey* (1950), *Winchester '73* (1950), *The Naked City* (1948, for which he won an Oscar), *Brute Force* (1947), *Keeper of the Flame* (1942), *For Me and My Gal* (1942), *The Shop Around the Corner* (1940), *Another Thin Man* (1939), *Ninotchka* (1939), *Camille* (1936), *Anna Karenina* (1935), *Naughty Marietta* (1935), *Queen Christina* (1933), *Grand Hotel* (1932), *Mata Hari* (1931), *Susan Lenox (Her Fall and Rise)* (1931), *Anna Christie* (1931), *A Woman of Affairs* (1928), *Tillie the Toiler* (1927), and *Flesh and the Devil* (1926).

FRANK NORRIS: from InfoPlease "(Benjamin Franklin Norris), 1870–1902, American novelist, b. Chicago. After studying in Paris, at the Univ. of California (1890–94), and Harvard, he wrote *McTeague* (1899), a proletarian novel influenced by the experimental naturalism of Zola. His most impressive work was his proposed trilogy, "The Epic of Wheat," of which only two parts were written—*The Octopus* (1901), depicting the brutal struggle between the wheat farmers and the railroad, and *The Pit* (1903), dealing with speculation on the Chicago grain market. Norris spent several years as a war correspondent in South Africa (1895–96) and Cuba (1898). *The Responsibilities of the Novelist* (1903), a collection of essays, contains his idealistic views on the role of the writer." Norris is considered America's first important Naturalist writer. He died following an appendectomy.

from World Film Directors V. I Ed. John Wakeman. H.W. Wilson Co. NY 1987 entry by Richard Koszarski

(born Vienna 9/22/85 Jewish parents Benna Stroheim & Johanna Bondy. In 1919 in Hollywood presented himself as 'son of German Baroness Bondy and Austrian Count Benno von Stroheim.')

Von Stroheim was already under contract to the Goldwyn Company, directing his first picture with an American location, an adaptation of Frank Norris' novel *McTeague* that he called *Greed*.

The novel dealt with the effect of a \$5,000 lottery prize on three members of San Francisco's working class: McTeague, a huge slow-witted dentist (Gibson Gowland); Marcus Schouler (Jean Hersholt), his socialist friend who works in the local dog

hospital; and Marcus' cousin Trina, the girl they both covet, but almost as well as Vienna. In order to achieve the realism he felt the story required, he returned to that city with his crews and began shooting on March 13, 1923. A leading American exponent of the literary school of naturalism, Norris was concerned with the effects of heredity, environment and fate on the lives of his characters. They are prisoners of these forces, unable to alter their predetermined destinies.

who marries McTeague. Schouler informs the authorities that the so-called dentist has no license, and the McTeagues sink into poverty. McTeague takes to drink and torments Trina but she will

not spend a penny of her lottery winnings. In the end McTeague murders her and flees into the desert with the gold. When Schouler tracks him down in Death Valley, McTeague kills him, but not before Schouler has handcuffed them together. McTeague waits for death beside the corpse of his former friend and the gold that has destroyed three lives. To play Trina, von Stroheim hired ZaSu Pitts, a light-comedy actress whom he would later describe as “the greatest psycho-pathological actress in the American cinema.”

Von Stroheim felt that studio settings, which he had been happy to use previously, would be out of place for this production. He wanted to create a world so vividly defined that it would not be a mere backdrop but a major character in the tragedy. And in order to seem real, he was convinced that it all had to *be* real. He acquired a building at the corner of Hayes and Laguna, had the actors live in it, and proceeded to film his story with as much “documentary” detail as current technical limitations allowed. “It is possible to tell a great story in motion pictures in such a way that the spectator forgets he is looking at beautiful Gertie Gefelta, the producer’s pet, and discovers himself intensely interested, just as if he were looking out of a window at life itself,” he told a reporter for the *New York Times*. “He will come to believe that what he is gazing at is real—a cameraman was present in the house and nobody knew it. They went on in their daily life with their joys, fun, and tragedies, and the camera stole it all, holding it up afterward for all to see.”

In order to achieve this illusion von Stroheim drove his actors and technicians to achieve effects of unmatched intensity. To film scenes inside the rooms while observing the real world across the street through the windows, the interior lighting had to be boosted to unprecedented levels. His regular camera crew, William Daniels and Ben Reynolds, were able to deliver an increased depth of field that allowed von Stroheim to keep foreground and background objects clearly in focus at the same time. Never was the “world” of these characters allowed to disappear into the blurred, soft-focus backdrop fashionable at the time.

But von Stroheim wasn’t shooting a newsreel, nor was he slavishly transposing Norris’ text in a page-by-page fashion as some have asserted. Dream sequences of surreal terror appear at intervals throughout the screenplay, in vivid contrast to the realism of the main drama. And to amplify the sketchy background Norris supplied for his main character, von Stroheim created reels of material showing his life as a young goldminer, which he filmed at the actual Dig Dipper Mine described in the novel.

The climax of the film, when McTeague is hunted down by Marcus in Death Valley, was not shot in the Oxnard dunes north of Los Angeles, as the studio hoped. Instead von Stroheim took his crew to the most inhospitable corner of Death Valley at the worst time of the year—midsummer. Fourteen men fell ill of the heat, including costar Jean Herscholt, whose skin was a mass of heat blisters. Von Stroheim followed his usual habit of filming take after take of each scene, regardless of the immediate consequences. As his actors struggled in the film’s fight scene, he screamed at them, “Fight! Fight! Try to hate each other as you both hate me!”

Shooting stopped on October 6, 1923, with von Stroheim having exposed 446,000 feet of negative. By January he had begun screening a version of nine or nine-and-a-half hours to selected critics in an effort to gather support for the picture before the studio (inevitably) would try cutting it to a more marketable length. Although the few who saw hits rough-cut were astonished. Von Stroheim continued to shorten it himself, bringing it down to twenty-two reels (about four hours) by March 1924. But the

following month the Goldwyn Company merged with Marcus Loew’s Metro Pictures, and the fate of the film passed into the hands of Louis B. Mayer and his production head, Irving Thalberg. Once more Thalberg removed von Stroheim [as he had in *Merry-Go-Round*], and that December he released a version of some ten-and-a-half reels.

Critics and audiences were aghast at the intensity of von Stroheim’s vision, and his criticism of the corrupting power of money in American society. “The filthiest, vilest, most putrid picture in the history of the motion picture business,” wrote one trade paper. The film had cost \$550,000 to produce (plus prints and advertising) and earned less than half of that on the international market. MGM had not only destroyed von Stroheim’s masterpiece, but lost a fortune in the bargain. The “uncut *Greed*” soon became a holy grail for film archivists, not only for its artistic quality but because it came to epitomize the most crass machinations of the Hollywood system at a time when that system was under attack from artists and intellectuals. Von Stroheim’s career and reputation were soon tied to this will-o’-the-wisp, which began to overshadow the considerable achievements which he *was* able to accomplish.

While *The Wedding March* was being cut by Paramount, von Stroheim was able to set himself up with another independent producer, one of Hollywood’s most important stars. Gloria Swanson. Apparently at the behest of her lover and business partner, Joseph P. Kennedy, Swanson allowed von Stroheim to develop for her a script based on his story “The Swamp,” about a Ruritanian convent girl who inherits a brothel in German East Africa. The theme was daring, but Swanson had just scored a great success under Raoul Walsh’s direction in *Sadie Thompson* and apparently was looking for more of the same. The title was changed to *Queen Kelly*, and filming began on November 1, 1928.

Von Stroheim began shooting the film in his usual fashion, working eighteen hours a day, demanding numerous retakes, and generally acting as if budgetary limitations did not exist. In addition, Swanson began to worry about the censorable elements of the script, which she had apparently ignored earlier. On January 21, 1929, during the filming of the marriage scene, Tully Marshall grabbed Swanson’s hand and drooled tobacco juice on it. When informed that von Stroheim had called for this business, Swanson walked off the set and telephoned her partner. “Joseph, you’d better get out here fast. Our director is a madman!” Kennedy never arrived. He simply phoned von Stroheim and fired him.

The collapse of the film effectively ended von Stroheim’s career as a major figure in Hollywood. He had not had a commercial success since 1925, and three of his last four pictures were costly disasters. The coming of sound threw all Hollywood directors off balance, and only those with stable reputations were able to survive. Von Stroheim developed projects at MGM and Universal but they failed to go into production. He decided to try acting once more and appeared in a low budget film directed by his friend James Cruze, *The Great Gabbo* (1929). He played an insane ventriloquist, an artist driven mad, in effect a parody of his own outsized persona.

Von Stroheim was never again given the opportunity to direct almost until his death in 1957. He continued to find work as an actor, appearing in a few worthwhile pictures, including *As You Desire Me* (1932) with Garbo, and *The Lost Squadron* (1932), in which he parodied his own situation as a film director driven mad by a passion for realism. More often his appearances were in disgraceful poverty-row films like *Crimson Romance* (1934) and *The Crime of Dr. Crespi* (1935). His wife Valerie had heavy

medical bills due to burns received in a 1933 beauty parlor explosion, and von Stroheim took any sort of work in order to raise cash. He wrote a torrid novel of gypsy life, *Paprika* (published in 1935), but a hoped-for screen sale never materialized. Faced with mounting bills and no hope of real work von Stroheim attempted suicide at Christmas 1934, but was dissuaded by friends. Then in March 1935 he began work as a contract writer for MGM. For \$150 a week he doctored the scripts of other writers, adding spice and characterization. He hoped to direct a script of his own, "General Hospital," inspired by Valerie's convalescence, but it was given to George B. Seitz instead. Released in 1937 as *Between Two Women*, the finished film followed von Stroheim's script very closely, with the exception of an added happy ending.

In November, 1936, von Stroheim quit his MGM job and went to France to appear in Raymond Bernard's film *Marthe Richard* (1937). What began as a single assignment turned into an extended exile when Jean Renoir invited him to appear in *La Grande Illusion* (1937).

Von Stroheim was able to establish himself as an actor in the prewar French film industry, but his attempts to direct proved fruitless. . . . At the start of World War II von Stroheim attempted to enlist in the French forces, but was persuaded by Jean Renoir to take an opportunity offered by Darryl F. Zanuck, and set off for Hollywood for an appearance in the film *I Was an Adventuress*. . . . The fall of France made it impossible to return until after the war.

In America von Stroheim worked in a variety of films, some good (Billy Wilder's *Five Graves to Cairo*, in which he played Rommel), and some not so good. . . . Finally he agreed to accept the part of Max von Mayerling in Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard* (1950). At first, von Stroheim had resisted playing this role, that of a great silent film director reduced to working as a butler for his former star. That she was played by Gloria Swanson must have opened additional psychic wounds, but von Stroheim was artist enough to recognize the quality of the film and returned to Hollywood to appear in it. It would be his last trip there. And for his efforts he came away with his only Academy Award nomination, as best supporting actor.

In March 1957 the French government awarded him the Legion of Honor, but he was already confined to bed with cancer that would take his life a few weeks later.

Many have cited the twenty-five years in which von Stroheim was kept from directing as a tragic loss for the cinema. But unlike his great contemporaries, D.W. Griffith or Rex Ingram, von Stroheim never allowed himself to be shunted into inactivity. Unable to work as a director, this indefatigable artist diverted his energies elsewhere—to his scripts and novels, to his acting appearances, and above all else to the life of Erich von Stroheim, his most complex and intriguing creation.

Von Stroheim carefully cultivated his reputation as "the man you love to hate." Asked once if he was as brutal and sadistic in real *Greed*, von Stroheim's most important film, was based meticulously on Norris' Zolaesque novel, *McTeague*. Von Stroheim's masterpiece, it was eventually mutilated by the studio because of its unwieldy length; it was reduced over von Stroheim's protests from 42 reels to 24 (between 5 and 6 hours), and then finally cut to 10 reels by the studio. Von Stroheim's emphasis on the ugly and bizarre in human nature emerged in this psychologically naturalistic study of avarice and degradation seen in a mismatched couple—McTeague, the impulsive, primitive (but bird-loving) lower-class dentist. And Trina, the pathologically avaricious spinster member of a German-Swiss immigrant family and winner of a \$5,000 lottery. After their

life as on the screen, he replied: "Much more so." In fact, according to his friend and biographer Thomas Quinn Curtiss, "beneath the arrogant surface there was a very different inner man, kind and generous to his colleagues and associates. . . . He had in a high degree what the French call 'politeness of the heart.' He did not make friends quickly, being by nature distrustful, and he was not a good mixer. To conceal his acute embarrassment among strangers, he resorted to an iron reserve. He had a morbid fear of being mocked." Discussing his endless problems with producers, Kevin Brownlow suggested that he "required intolerable pressures in order to wring from himself the last ounce of creative energy. It could be argued that it was his own paranoia which created such conditions in the first place. The more he was given, the more he demanded."

Andrew Sarris spoke of the "technical chastity" of von Stroheim's style. Another writer, in the *Oxford Companion to Film*, noted that the director "depended little on conventional editing, achieving a singular density of dramatic effect by piling up detail within extended shots in a way which was profoundly to influence Renoir and others." Jonathan Rosenbaum, in Richard Roud's *Cinema*, maintains that while von Stroheim "tended to move his camera less often than Murnau and was less of a montage director than Griffith/ it is misleading to conclude from this that he was 'technically chaste.' . . . Stroheim could make expressive use of montage when he wanted to without any technical handicap. Camera movement plays a significant role in all his work, even if he usually resorts to it so few times in a single film as to make each occurrence a privileged one. . . . Nor does this constitute anything approaching the whole of his technical arsenal: blurred focus (generally to suggest tears in point-of-view shots assigned to heroines), superimpositions, various uses of colour (missing in contemporary prints), slow lap dissolves as carefully calculated as Sternberg's, and, above all, a masterful use of the iris and fade, are only a few of the techniques in his vocabulary. . . . Eyes have an unusual authority in von Stroheim's films, and what is frequently meant by his 'control of detail' is his uncanny gift for conveying information through an actor's eye movements."

Rosenbaum nevertheless quotes with approval André Bazin's dictum on von Stroheim's films, in which "reality lays itself bare like a suspect confessing under the relentless examination of the commissioner of police. He has one simple rule for direction. Take a close look at the world, keep on doing so, and in the end it will lay bare for you all its cruelty and its ugliness. One could easily imagine as a matter of fact a film by von Stroheim composed of a single shot as long-lasting and close up as you like."

from *The St. James Film Directors Encyclopedia* Andrew Sarris, Editor. Visible Ink Press NY 1998. Entry by Roger Manvell

marriage, Trina hoards her money as their circumstances decline to the point where the husband becomes drunk and brutal, and the wife mad. After he murders her and becomes a fugitive, McTeague ends up in the isolated wastes of Death Valley, handcuffed to Marcus, his former friend whom he has killed. Using the streets of San Francisco and the house where the actual murder that had inspired Norris had taken place, von Stroheim anticipated Rossellini in his use of such locations. But his insistence on achieving an incongruous and stylized realism, which starts with McTeague's courtship of Trina sitting on a sewerpipe and culminates in the macabre sequence in Death Valley, goes beyond that straight neorealism of the future. Joel W.

Finler, in his book *Stroheim*, analyzes the wholesale cutting in the 10-reel version, exposing the grave losses that render the action and motivation of the film unclear. But the superb performances of Zasu Pitts and Gibson Gowland compensate, and the grotesque Sieppe family provide a macabre background, enhanced by von Stroheim's constant reminder of San Francisco's "mean streets." The film was held to be his masterpiece by many, but also condemned as a "vile epic of the sewer."

from Stroheim A Pictorial Record of his Nine Films Herman G. Weinberg. Dover NY 1975

"A genius, the greatest after Chaplin," said André Bazin, foremost of French film critics, of Stroheim.

As in the films of Chaplin, the technique of Stroheim is invisible. We see only the effects of that technique. "Technique," he once said, "is grammar which should be used correctly but not consciously. I reject that technique which is used in order to be noticed."

Although Stroheim eschewed most "tricks of the trade," feeling (like Chaplin) that for what he had to say he didn't need them, one thing did interest him—color. Not films in color like the all-too-familiar all-color films which have the color value of picture postcards or chromolithographs, but the use of color as color, as he used it in his otherwise black-and-white films. The contrast enabled him to limn the color, an effect impossible to obtain in an all-color film. Thus the hand-tinted red-yellow flames of lighted candles in a candelabra in *Blind Husbands* (original version), the gold-tinting of all gold and gold-like objects in *Greed* (original version).

Greed. . . which stirred the cupidity that slumbers in everyone, but

Coming up in Buffalo Film Seminars VIII:

January 20 Lewis Milestone, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, 1930

January 27 Fritz Lang, *You Only Live Once*, 1939

February 3 Preston Sturges, *The Lady Eve*, 1941

February 10 Michael Curtiz: *Casablanca*, 1941

February 17 William A. Wellman, *The Ox Bow Incident*, 1943

February 24 Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, *The Life & Death of Colonel Blimp*, 1943

March 2 John Houston, *The Asphalt Jungle*, 1950

March 9 Stanley Donen and Gene Kelly, *Singin' in the Rain* 1952

March 23 Fred Zinnemann, *From Here to Eternity*, 1953

March 30 Akira Kurosawa, *Kumonosu jo/Throne of Blood*, 1957

April 6 Luchino Visconti, *Rocco e i suoi fratelli/Rocco and his Brothers*, 1960

April 13 François Truffaut, *Jules et Jim/Jules and Jim*, 1961

April 20 Sergio Leone, *C'era una volta in America/Once Upon a Time in America*, 1984

close to the surface of consciousness. In the film it is aroused to an uncontrollable frenzy on the part of all the principals concerned, each living in the private world of his own panic that the winning of the lottery unleashes. One has to go to Céline to find a counterpart for the fury and pessimism of this film in literature, though the saving grace of *Greed* is that it is without the nihilism of the savagely misanthropic author of *Journey to the End of Night*.

Sternberg, in his narration for *Anatahan*, reminds us that to be human is to enjoy "a classification sufficient to cover quite a variety of behavior." Of opinion, too. "*Greed* is the greatest of all films," said Renoir and Cocteau. "Stroheim is the director of all directors," said John Grierson and Eisenstein.

He wanted to show that the whole world was kin, that there was good and evil everywhere, and not always where we would expect to find them, and sometimes in the most surprising places.

All scenes of gold and gold-like metals were hand-tinted golden-yellow in the first release prints—the brass beds, gold teeth, gilt frames and canary cage, gold coins, etc.

D.W. Griffith had already made (in 1913) *Two Men in a Desert*, the first film to be shot in Death Valley. Two years later, in 1915, a screen adaptation of Frank Norris' *McTeague* appeared (antedating Stroheim's version by almost a decade) with Fania Marinoff as Trina and Holbrook Blinn as McTeague, under the direction of Barry O'Neill, for World Pictures. Stroheim's *Greed* was voted one of the twelve best films of all time by an international jury at the Brussels Exposition of 1958. No copy of the complete version of this film is known to have survived.

