

well be the spokesman for an emotional sickness to which most of us are occasionally prone, but at the same time his work may appear monotonously narrow to those of us who have not been put to bed with a chronic case.

Some such doubts obviously invade Leprohon. To him *Il Grido* seems "the most finished, the film in which the author has attained the perfection of a masterpiece," and the "richest in possible meanings" of all Antonioni's works.

Certainly *Il Grido* is inhabited by characters who reflect the variety of man's spirit. If the hero suffers from the malaise that infects most of Antonioni's people, the very fact that his condition is silhouetted against these more vigorous egos not only averts the possible boredom of too much sameness but actually invigorates Antonioni's primary theme of the futility of life for such a man at such a time in such a place.

No doubt the unmistakable whine pervading all Antonioni's work led James Stoller to conclude his appreciation of *La Notte*—one of the number of cogent impressions of Antonioni's films included in this volume—with a sigh. He found it not the film "of a young man, and perhaps by forty-five one grows exhausted and disenchanted, and the sad, repetitious patterns of love and strife by

which people define themselves with respect to one another cease to have much interest." Yet, remembering Yeats "writing at seventy of lust and vanity and disgrace," he concluded, "I am certain that I had better run the risk of being called unknowing, and ask of films what for me is real. I am finally saying, then, that *La Notte*—moving though it is—has very little, now, to say to me, and incidentally that it is thereby like too many other films."

Both for a substantiation of Leprohon's more penetrating insights and to fill out the gaps in his critique one may go to the Orion Press edition of the complete screenplays of four of the most discussed films, *Il Grido*, *L'Avventura*, *La Notte*, and *L'Eclisse*. The translation has an accent, but the substance is there. A screenplay is not the most readable literary form. Since it is a lattice work on which to hang the visual images that make up a film's real substance, it could not be.

But the screenplay has value for those who would contemplate in private what they have already experienced through Antonioni's eyes in public. And they still serve for those who have not seen the films as a lucid and accurate guide to what Antonioni's screen images mean to say and what they do say.

times makes Rodin appear styleless. And while Professor Elsen stresses the conservatism of the early successes, the mature innovations seem slighted, perhaps because they are not assessed beside Michelangelo, the gothic, or the antique. We are told of Rodin's late friendship with Degas, but little else of his cultural milieu. He felt more at home with artists less daring than himself—Carrière, Cazin, Legros—than with his revolutionary peers—Cézanne, Gauguin, Monet. Rodin's most venturesome friend may have been Medardo Rosso.

Margaret Barr's fascinating book about Rosso, the first in English, shows him as a strange and difficult character. Widely disparate affinities appear in his work: with Impressionism, Expressionism, and Futurism, with Daumier and Brancusi. An artist of limited effects and output (only thirty-nine works), he could be bolder than any contemporary, even

Sculptors of Light and Shadow

Rodin, by Albert E. Elsen (*Doubleday*. 228 pp., incl. 163 illus. Hardbound, \$8.50. Paperback, \$2.95), and **Medardo Rosso**, by Margaret Scolari Barr (*Doubleday*. 92 pp., incl. 68 illus. Hardbound, \$5. Paperback, \$2.95), monographs provided by the Museum of Modern Art to complement their recent exhibitions, elucidate the genius of the respective sculptors. John McAndrews, professor of art at Wellesley College, has been director of its Art Museum for the past decade.

By JOHN McANDREWS

AS MEMORABILIA which survive the exhibitions that brought them into being, we have come to expect Museum of Modern Art monographs to be exemplary, with an abundance of information and illustrations and the best bibliographies available. These on Rodin and Medardo Rosso merit long life.

Albert E. Elsen has not written just

another biography, compulsive reinterpretation, or *oeuvre* catalogue, but a sound study of critical moments in Rodin's career, with admirable accounts of the genesis and growth of key works such as the *Gates of Hell*, the *Burglers of Calais*, or the *Balzac*. In the welcome scrutiny of the drawings that follows one is surprised to learn how much of Rodin's unique linear freedom—he looked at the model, not at the paper, and rarely lifted his pencil from it—grew from training under a teacher who built up accurate visual memory by special optical exercises.

With the New York exhibition closed, one misses a feeling of nearness to the works, and might now welcome more notice of their physical properties, and of how different materials affected their forms. How much were surfaces altered when mat clay was translated to gleaming bronze? Was it because Rodin was more a modeler than carver that almost all his late marbles were cut by assistants, or because he was already an old man?

By opposing his fidelity to nature to others' stylizations of it, the author at



"Cambodian dancer," by Rodin (1906).

Rodin. He moved toward abstraction in the Nineties—not to the clearly defined abstract forms soon to dominate our century but to elusive and irrational forms which, while tradition-shattering, still carried an emotional content as traditional as that in the smoky-sweet work of Carrière.

Quirkier than Rodin, Rosso was less intelligent, articulate, and cultured than the former, yet it was he who bought a Van Gogh for himself and Rodin who worshipped Puvis de Chavannes. He became paranoically convinced that his work had influenced Rodin's *Balzac*, as (probably rightly) several contemporaries also believed, though Rodin, who may not have been conscious of his debt, did not acknowledge it.

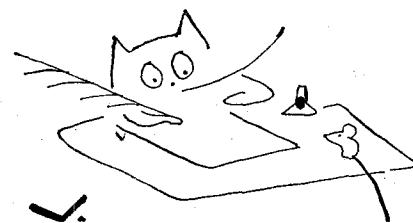
Although Rodin seems to have real-

ized his artistic possibilities to the full, Rosso was unable to achieve a potential perhaps as significant. He created nothing notable after he was fifty, though he still produced casts. How lamentable is the loss of the wildest big pieces, where form is most eaten away by light and shadow most materialized (*Impression in an Omnibus, Impression on the Boulevard*). Of what is left, who can forget the hallucinatory head of Yvette Guilbert, or of Mme. X, where the wax ought to remind one of worn soap, but instead emanates the majesty and mystery of a Cycladic marble?

Rosso applied the term Impressionist to his work, and liked to exhibit with Impressionist painters. In accord with them in an obsessive concern with effects of light, he made pieces to be seen

with illumination from a single source; one even contained a tiny lamp. Distortion of form derived often from purely optical experience, so much so that details could be rubbed out of the shadows. Some of his indulgences in painterly effects pushed sculpture to or beyond its sanctioned frontiers.

In Mrs. Barr, whose style is blessed with precision, grace, and wit (never marred by such infelicities as Professor Elsen's "heroicism" or "ludic"), Rosso has a perfect proponent. Multitudes of facts—many of them quite new—have been assembled as neatly and compactly as in watch works. Conjectures are never pushed: we make our own estimates from ample material. Mrs. Barr's book is in fact so welcome that we already look forward eagerly to her next.



the ultimate tragedy—these are briskly sketched in a lean, vivid, and efficient prose, replete with the telling episode, the revealing remark, the crucial estimate.

Throughout his account and the critical compendium that follows, the dance editor of the New York *Herald Tribune*, who never saw Isadora Duncan dance, keeps her art steadily in focus. If I am not mistaken, it is the first book that calmly envisages her as part of dance's "usable past." Parallel developments and interlocking influences are suggested. Enough but not too much is made of the revolutionary ideas Isadora espoused. One sees, in the drawings and sculptures from which many of the book's illustrations are taken, the influence she exerted upon all the arts. Critical response is ingeniously sampled, in many instances from long-buried notices that still convey a fresh immediacy, and important new data is evoked through interviews with many who saw Isadora dance.

What was it in the intellectual weather of the Eighties and Nineties which brought forth the astonishing ideas that pervade a Duncan interview when the girl was only nineteen? There was more to "the brown decades" than we have supposed, just as there was more to Isadora Duncan than her personal being. It is this "more" that Mr. Terry's book eventually adumbrates.

She Danced to Feeling

Isadora Duncan: Her Life, Her Art, Her Legacy, by Walter Terry (Dodd, Mead. 190 pp. \$3.50), evokes a dance presence that was sinner-saint and myth. George Beiswanger, professor of philosophy at Georgia State College, is former dance critic of *Theatre Arts* magazine and sometime lecturer and writer on the dance.

By GEORGE BEISWANGER

DANCE for Isadora Duncan was the body in lyric, passionate response to life. Isadora danced "what music did to her"—and poetry, and sculpture, and the sea. She danced *Ave Maria*, *La Marseillaise*, the *Internationale*. Isadora had to dance, and she had to make love. The two responses fought and left each other undisciplined. Yet no love dances significantly graced her public programs, and none of her public dances perdured.

But dance would not be what it is today if Isadora Duncan had not danced the way that she did, under the pressure of what moved her, with an assurance that was spontaneous, glorious, sublimely released. This constituted her genius and gave the art she never mastered an unforgettable dance presence, an exemplary but monitory life at once "dedicated and undisciplined," and an archetypal vision of what dancing is and dances ought to be. Thus Isadora became the sinner-saint of dance, a mistress mother-goddess, unredeemed as befits secular religion but redemptive as belongs to myth.

The myth is on record in memoirs, chapters of books, yellowing notices, interviews and monographs, and fast-thinning personal recollections. Today's dancers and dance audiences know precious little of it. The supreme virtue of Walter Terry's compact book is that it reanimates the image of Isadora and her wildly improbable career. The pastoral beginnings by the California seaside and in the drawing rooms of New York and London, the Continental triumphs, the apostolic missions to Greece, Russia, the United States, the frenetic rhythms of touring, teaching, love-making, and sheer scrounging, the peaks and abysses of personal joy and agony,

Your Literary I. Q.

Conducted by John T. Winterich

MONKEY BUSINESS

Norma Gleason of Emmett, Michigan, presents a cluster of dismembered words with simian connotations and asks you to fill in the blank spaces. Answers on page 58.

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|----------------------|---|
| 1. _ A P E _ | table linen |
| 2. _ _ A P E _ _ _ _ | edible citrus product |
| 3. _ _ A P E _ _ | hat in Paris |
| 4. A P E _ _ _ _ _ | pre-meal drink |
| 5. _ _ _ A P E | blanket worn by Spanish Indians |
| 6. _ A P E _ _ _ _ _ | inexpensive book |
| 7. _ _ A P E _ _ _ _ | one who takes another's blame |
| 8. _ _ A P E _ _ _ _ | four-sided figure with two sides parallel |
| 9. _ _ _ A P E _ _ | city on the Danube |
| 10. _ _ _ _ _ A P E | tidy |
| 11. _ A P E _ | part of coat front |
| 12. _ _ _ A P E _ | lower the value of |