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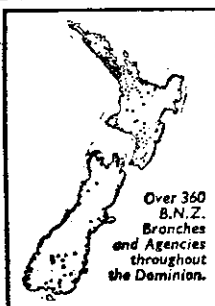
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FILM REVIEWS, BY F.A.J.

A Lady Takes a Lover

LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER

(Régie du Film-Orsay Films)

R: 16 years and over

"THIS tender and phallic novel, far too good for the public," D. H. Lawrence called his *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Aldous Huxley said it was "strange and beautiful" but "inexpressibly sad." To H. E. Bates it was an "amazing piece of sentimentality," and when he asked Edward Garnett, who discovered Lawrence, what he thought of it, he was told it was "the last pressing of the grapes before the end." My own brief encounter with *Lady Chatterley* lasted about half an hour, and I have no opinion. But Marc Allegret has certainly turned it into an interesting film—French, but so adequately titled that soon you hardly notice it.

From the bare bones of the story you might make anything or nothing. Crippled and unable to father a child, Sir Clifford Chatterley suggests to his faithful wife Constance that she should give him an heir by another man. From a casual encounter with their gamekeeper Mellors, handsome and virile, but not quite what Sir Clifford had in mind, Constance is drawn into a love affair which, alas for her husband, is the real thing.

In some of the film's best scenes Mellors speaks for Lawrence—who himself fell in love with a noblewoman, the wife of another man—about sex and sin and what this and that woman wants from marriage, and so on; and whether or not you go all the way with Lawrence, the quality of this dialogue is one reason for reckoning *Lady Chatterley's Lover* more than a mere romantic tale. A more important reason is that the characters really live. You won't expect Danielle Darrieux to have any trouble with Lady Chatterley, and she hasn't; and, whether his emotions are smouldering in love or anger, Erno Crisa, whose name is new to me, makes a fine Mellors. But the surprise is Sir Clifford—Leo Genn acting as I have never seen him act before. The opening sequence, a boar hunt with Sir Clifford in a wheel chair sounding the horn for the kill, establishes a memorable character; just as well, perhaps, since some of the succeeding scenes are no more than adequate. Others, later, are as good as the first—in Sir Clifford's last meeting with Constance in particular Mr Genn shows remarkable feeling and authority.

The film never plays down to the sensational reputation of the novel. The love scenes, beautifully done, include real insights into the human heart; the country setting has been caught in some lyric camerawork by Georges Perinal; and there's a characteristic score by Joseph Kosma. I say all this aware that *Lady Chatterley* has not been well received by some people who should know. It's not, I'd agree, a great film, but it lives and breathes as a human document—which is something not to be sneezed at.

THE HARDER THEY FALL

(Columbia)

A Cert.

ANY film that exposes the cruelty and racketeering of big boxing will find me in its corner; but what appeals to me as worth saying isn't necessarily well said, and *The Harder They Fall* doesn't quite convince.

BAROMETER

FAIR TO FINE: "*Lady Chatterley's Lover*."

FAIR TO FINE: "*The Harder They Fall*."

OVERCAST: "*Written on the Wind*."

Could a publicity campaign and a string of fixed fights really get a boxer who couldn't box at all as far as a title bout? Or do I underestimate human credulity? Anyway, it is well done, and if at first you don't quite believe, the later part of the film, when the fight that can't be fixed has to be faced, is worth waiting for if you have a strong stomach.

Mike Lane is Toro Moreno, the built-up boxer, a physical giant and a likeable, childlike fellow; but the more important players are Rod Steiger as the racketeer-in-chief and Humphrey Bogart as the out-of-work journalist turned publicity man, in charge of the build-up, but really, of course, a guy with a slumbering conscience. Both do well, though I doubt whether Mr Steiger will wear as well as Bogie did. Max Baer and Jersey Joe Walcott are pugs of different kinds, and Jan Sterling is the journalist's wife, now patient, now not. Based on a novel by Philip Yordan, well directed by Mark Robson. It has all the pace you could want; and its use of the familiar streets and places of American big cities make it seem at times remarkably like the real thing.

WRITTEN ON THE WIND

(Universal-International)

R: 16 years and over

DOROTHY MALONE'S Oscar—best supporting actress—persuaded me to see *Written on the Wind* in Wellington after I'd skipped it in Auckland a few weeks before. I was right the first time. Miss Malone and Robert Stack, as the two wild children of an oil king who play merry hell with a couple of people (Lauren Bacall and Rock Hudson) who get involved with them, might have been worth seeing in a different context or if the film had spent some time developing their characters instead of throwing them at us. They try hard enough, but they haven't a chance really, for this is melodrama all the way, slick, glossy, technically competent, but above all, pretentious and shallow.



LEO GENN, ERNO CRISA

N.Z. LISTENER, APRIL 18, 1957.