

# Kinsey on the Campus

## TEA AND SYMPATHY

(M.G.M.-CinemaScope)

R: 16 and over only

[F, like me, you had been trying this week to keep one eye on John van Druten's young Woodley and t'other on Robert Anderson's Tom Lee, you might have found it easy to agree with the perceptive M. Alphonse Karr that the more things change the more they remain the same.

They do change, of course. It's difficult, re-reading *Young Woodley* today, to understand why it initially came under the ban of the Lord Chamberlain—save that it introduced sex to the austere precincts of the English public school. In style and language, in the conventions which harass the characters—even the thoughts which torment young Woodley himself—it belongs to a generation more inhibited if not more innocent than our own. To a public which has assimilated Kinsey and accustomed itself to those vagaries of human behaviour which mass observation has revealed and the American theatre in particular has exploited, *Young Woodley* would sound a little naive. For this generation something more ominous than simple heartbreak is apparently needed to capture attention. The miseries of loneliness and shyness must be augmented by the public humiliations of persecution; the nonconformity of the intellectual in the herd of extroverts (young Woodley wrote verse, young Lee sings folk songs), must be emphasised by the suggestion that the nonconformity is also physical.

These elements, admittedly, add much to the impact of *Tea and Sympathy* and give it an acrid mid-century flavour. (The dilemma of Tom's room-mate and friend Al is an economical indictment of a society which has submitted to the principle of guilt by association.) But if something new has been added, the framework of the play is startlingly similar to van Druten's. In each the central character is an adolescent school-boy suffering from maternal deprivation, who turns for consolation and affection to his housemaster's wife. The wife in each case is herself young, childless, frustrated and emotionally at odds with her husband. In each case the husband is her second choice; in both plays the boy seeks to break out of the emotional impasse by having an affair with a local trollop. . . . Though there are varia-



KERR, ERICKSON  
A deeper note of tragedy

### BAROMETER

FAIR TO FINE: "Tea and Sympathy."  
MAINLY FAIR: "The Most Beautiful Woman in the World."

tions of detail, the similarities are more striking than the differences. Only a slight relaxing of the conventions distinguishes Laura Simmons from Laura Reynolds.

And yet, in spite of the feeling that I had encountered it all before, in spite of some unevenness in the playing, in spite of an unnecessary absolving epilogue (which quite destroyed the falling cadence of a good curtain-line), *Tea and Sympathy* moved me at times quite profoundly. It did not, admittedly, come so close to humdrum experience as *Marty* but the feelings of compassion which it inspired were of the same indiscriminating kind—pity for the boy, for the wife, for the shocked and uncomprehending father; most of all, perhaps, for the husband, struck down in the citadel of his own vanity.

Save for the tasteless epilogue, I had little fault to find with Robert Anderson's screenplay. Such excisions as have been made are of material which (on my reading of the play at least) is expendable; and I have no quarrel at all with Minelli's direction, which treats young Tom as the victim of pressures from outside rather than from within—like a prisoner who breaks down under persistent suggestion and in the end is persuaded of his own guilt. I could have wished, though, that Minelli had got farther away from the physical limitations of stage settings.

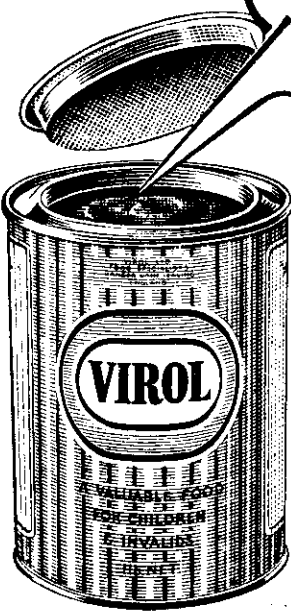
Almost all the players impressed me at one time or another, though I didn't find any one continuously persuasive. Of the three principals (all from the stage production), Deborah Kerr struck me as the most consistently good; and John Kerr (not so good at the emotional peaks of his part) will have the indulgence of all who recall the agonies of adolescence. Leif Erickson plays the housemaster a shade too broadly most of the time, yet of the three he achieves a deeper note of tragedy. *Tea and Sympathy*, in short, was well worth making and is well worth seeing. It is, of course, a film for adults but—as one American critic said of the play—it might also make adults of some who venture to see it.

## THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMAN IN THE WORLD

(Malenotti-20th Century Fox) Y Cert.

THE Most Beautiful Woman in the World—for those of you who imagined it was Ava Gardner, or Lana Turner—is none other than our little friend Gina Lollobrigida, and if your taste runs to 17-inch waists I suppose she's at least a contender for the title. My taste doesn't run that way—I keep wondering when the waist will collapse under the strain and the effect is unnerving—but there's no doubt the silhouette fits neatly enough into the pre-1914 milieu of this particular movie. Nominally it's genuine old-time theayter stuff—chorus-girl meets Prince, chorus-girl loses Prince, chorus-girl wins Prince. But since the show runs for some 10,000 feet the Prince has to get mislaid a couple of times extra, and there's room for two other lovers and a crime passionel into the bargain. Of course, the Prince and the others are really super-numerary. The film (as the title suggests) is simply another excursion into torsolatory, but while Gina has enough torso for two (except amidships) it wasn't enough to keep me from dozing fitfully.

LISTEN...



I'm the tin that holds the food that builds the healthiest babies in New Zealand. Virol. The concentrated health food prepared from malt extract, specially refined beef fat, egg, sugars (including glucose) and orange juice. Ask your chemist about Virol — today.

## Virol

MANUFACTURED IN ENGLAND BY VIROL LIMITED

Agents: WRIGHT STEPHENSON & CO., LTD.,  
34, CUSTOM HOUSE QUAY, Wellington, C.I., N.Z.

## A HOME KNITTER The Autopin



For Only  
**60/-**

## At Last!! A HOME KNITTER YOU CAN AFFORD

Simplicity itself to operate, it brings the advantages of a high-speed, serviceable and reliable knitting machine right within the reach of all. Anyone, without previous knitting knowledge, can make intricate and elaborate garments by the Autopin method. A 24" row in four quick, simple operations. Stocking stitch, garter, ribbing, fairisle, or any stitch or pattern you like—AUTOPIN CAN DO THEM ALL.

- ★ Tension adjustment automatically controlled at your own present choice of stitch size.
- ★ Stitch counting and shaping greatly simplified by numbered needles.
- ★ Knits any ply wool, double knitting, silk or even cotton can be used.
- ★ Full instruction booklet with every machine.

Send stamped, addressed envelope for full details.

COMPLETE PRICE POSTAGE PAID 60/-.

**INDEPENDENT TRADERS LTD., Room 3, 68 Willis St.,  
P.O. Box 2507, Wellington**

Messrs. INDEPENDENT TRADERS LTD.,  
P.O. Box 2507, Wellington

Please send me by return mail, postage paid, one complete Autopin Home Knitter for which I enclose remittance of £3.

Name .....

Address .....