The background of the cover features a faded, purple-tinted image of several film reels and a film strip. The reels are arranged in a circular pattern, with one in the top left, one in the top right, and one in the bottom right. A film strip is visible in the middle left, winding across the frame. The overall aesthetic is that of a classic film industry graphic.

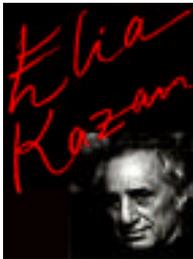
Michael Ceraolo

**Experimental
Cinema
Sonnets**

**2003 chapbook
scars publications**

Cinema Sonnet II: Elia Kazan

He coulda had class,
but he didn't;
he coulda been a contender,
but he wasn't;
he coulda been somebody,
and in a perverse way he was;
somebody honored beyond reason
both at the time and later
for making a movie touting
the 'pleasures' of informing



Cinema Sonnet III: Mary Pickford

America's sweetheart;
the first person to emerge from the anonymity
of the unbilled days to fill up the screen
and become larger than life;
the first person to become trapped in an image,
forcing her to play adolescents well into her thirties,
though she proved she could play adults when given the chance
at the end of her career;
the first (and only) to retire voluntarily,
exiting the stage before she was given the hook;
still smiling with her curls in eternity



Cinema Sonnet IV: Mabel Normand

Another petite woman who was larger than life:
a model who successfully made the transition
to pictures of motion,

and what glorious motion,
doing all the stunts in Mack Sennett's carnival;
able to stand up to Chaplin;
the only person, man or woman,
to successfully direct Chaplin;

Though
in the end done in
by her following the road of excess,

and
before she could report back from the palace of wisdom
she was dead in her late thirties



Cinema Sonnet V: Moviegoing

It was at an art house revival
that I first felt the full moviegoing experience,
that of actually attending with an appreciative audience:
no talking,

no phones going off,
no social occasion masquerading as moviegoing

Just
communal concentration on the cinematic expression,
with what wonderings of the individual imaginations
I could only wonder in rapt attention

There were no false or forced notes,

but
the harmony of a true community

And
I want to experience it again

Mystery man and maker of the most macabre movies,
 among the little that is known of your pre-movie career
 is the fact that you traveled with carnival and circus workers,

and

probably thus it was that you acquired an empathy
 for those who wouldn't conform and those
 who weren't allowed to exercise conformity
 because they had some deformity

And

the artistic result was such masterpieces as
 The Unknown,

where the main character
 pretends to be armless to hide his sideline as a thief
 and woos the heroine,

who warms to him
 because she has an aversion to being touched
 and he has no arms to hug her with,

and

thus he decides to amputate his arms for real,
 with tragic results;

Dracula,

which

you made as a silent even though it has sound
 (you need to see it with an orchestra score);

and

Freaks,

where the actual circus sideshow attractions
 star as themselves and take revenge on
 so-called normal people who wrong them
 I still get chills watching these movies
 I'm waiting for you to be re-incarnated,
 because nothing like these movies have ever
 been made by anyone else



Cinema Sonnet VI: Tod Browning

Cinema Sonnet VII: **Lon Chaney**

He used his gifts of pantomime mined
from growing up with mute parents,

and

in those day of generalization
rather than specialization

his mastery at makeup

was a skill he availed himself of constantly,
one that gave him his nickname,
“The Man of a Thousand Faces”,

and

those two talents combined in a sweet synergy
to dazzle:

misshapen men like the Hunchback,
grotesqueries like the Phantom,
men only pretending to be deformed like in *The Unknown*,
and even only the socially deformed
like the bomber in *Ace of Hearts*
or the gangster in *The Unholy Three*,
and numerous other roles that he made sympathetic,
roles that had no business being perceived as such,
were it not for his talent

And

then he went and died before his time,
before he could play the role of Dracula
It can barely be imagined what his imagination
could have conceived for his interpretation of the role



Cinema Sonnet VIII: **Edgar Bergen**

Seeing his cinematic stylings today,
both the star vehicles and supporting roles,
I am struck with the not-so-strange sensation
of watching an artifact from a simpler time

No,

make that a simpler-minded time,
for while lack of talent has never been an impediment to success
in entertainment or any other field,
only in the Age of Inanity could someone become a star
playing a ventiloquist on the radio

Cinema Sonnet IX: **Moviegoing (2)**

It was the best of both worlds:
a silent with live accompaniment,
though I'm not sure if the trio
was performing the original music

or

if they were performing a score
composed especially for the show
No matter

The bass conveyed danger and lent gravity at crucial moments;
the guitar gave the illusion of movement even in static scenes;
the harmonica rode the emotional roller coaster
so that,

at the end

of the evening,

both the movie and the music were worthy of a standing ovation

Cinema Sonnet X: Louise Brooks

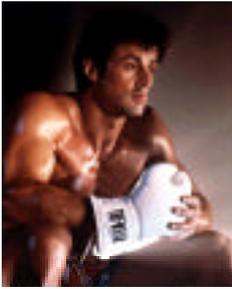


They had faces back then,
 and
 almost no one had more of a face that little Lulu
 She strode across the silver screen
 showing a little snippet of the legs
 of the dancer she had once been
 She could convincingly play an innocent for a short period of time;
 her face was way too worldly for her
 to believable be naive an entire movie
 And so she had to flee overseas to make movies
 for the more sophisticated Germans,
 and
 the two she made with Pabst still stand the test of time

And

she would get some measure of revenge
 in writing memoirs of her sojourn
 in Tinseltown,
 showing
 more of the intelligence she was not encouraged
 to show while making films in her own country





Cinema Sonnet XI: **Sylvester Stallone**

Yo!
Adrian
Do we get
to win the
war this time?
I don't know,
you sly one,
but you don't
get to teach gym
at a girls' school
in Switzerland
this time either



Cinema Sonnet XII: **Moviegoing (3)**

The art house showed two movies
outside on a summer's evening
Almost immediately they had to adapt to circumstances:
a sheet was to serve as the screen,
but tape stubbornly refuse to stick to the sandstone wall
And so the sheet/screen was hung from a window
And the films were shown
under a roof of trees and stars,
silent save for the spinning of the sprocket
and the occasional whoosh of a car going by,
a different kind of drive-in,
where people still parked their cars
but were actually here to see the movie

Experimental Cinema Sonnets

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