

Mr Perrin and Mr Traill

UK : 1948 : dir. Lawrence Huntington : GFD / Two Cities : 92 min
 prod: Alexander Galperson : scr: L.A.G. Strong : dir.ph.: Erwin Hillier
Cavan Malone, David Spenser
 Marius Goring; David Farrar; Greta Gynt; Edward Chapman; Raymond Huntley; Mary Jerrold;
 Finlay Currie; Ralph Truman

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Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 1996 review:

“Lukewarm study of progressive vs conservative schoolteaching. ** ”

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review - identical to above

Halliwell's Film Guide review:

“A handsome young master at a boys’ school incurs the jealousy of an embittered colleague. Flat, over-acted but mildly watchable picturisation of a well-known story. Writer: L.A.G. Strong, from the novel by Hugh Walpole * ”

The Good Film and Video Guide review:

“Hugh Walpole wrote several novels on the subject of male protagonists driven – most of them, at least – by destructive hatred of each other. These two are teachers at a public school: the no-bull, ex-army type (David Farrar) and the fussy, pedantic bachelor (Marius Goring), who discover that they’re both in love with matron (Greta Gynt). The tensions of the staffroom are ideal for movies, as is the descent into the macabre, but the all-important atmosphere is phoney and the handling in general pedestrian. Also supporting mortar-boards are Raymond Huntley, Edward Chapman and Ralph Truman, with Mary Jerrold and Finlay Currie. * ”

Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89 review:

“Bitterness develops between an old schoolmaster and a younger teacher when the latter makes a better impression with his winning ways. Excellent melodrama. ***½ ”

TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995 review:

“Penetrating study of the way that resentment can eat away inside a man until it makes him do something quite out of character. Marius Goring is excellent as the middle-aged schoolmaster whose idiosyncratic but secure little world begins to crumble beneath his feet when a younger teacher chips away both at his authority and his aspirations to romance. Absorbing, unusual and worthwhile drama. *** ”

Film Reel contemporary gossip:

“Greta Gynt has turned brunette for her role in "MR PERRIN AND MR TRAILL" - her last performance as a blonde was at the Royal Command Performance.”

“After her first day's shooting on "MR PERRIN AND MR TRAILL", Greta Gynt was heard to explain, "I like the change. I have been wicked too long." ”

[no listing in "The Critics' Film Guide", "A Pictorial History of the Talkies", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

It's an odd proposition that "*the tensions of the staffroom are ideal for movies*", but certainly there have been no shortage of staffroom dramas, and more often than not they resolve down to a straight conflict between conservative and liberal teaching methods. This one appears to have something of the embittered Latin master at the end of his career in "**THE BROWNING VERSION**", and something of the personality clash between James Mason and Robert Preston (the one unpopular with the boys, the other well-liked but malevolent) in Sidney Lumet's "**CHILD'S PLAY**" (72). Less obviously, it has resemblances with the 1944 Swedish melodrama "**HETS**" (aka "Frenzy", "Torment") scripted by Ingmar Bergman, in which the rivalry over a girl arises between an older pupil and his bullying schoolmaster.

Cavan Malone and David Spenser are the only boys listed for this title by Holmstrom, but the archive does include school-based films even where children are conspicuous by their absence. Spenser, of Sri Lankan/Italian blood, was 15. He apparently confined his acting chiefly to radio, while his younger brother Jeremy briefly became a boy star of the British cinema, notably in "**PRELUDE TO FAME**". Cavan Malone was 9, but seems to have baled out of film-making after "**KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS**" the following year. His earlier titles include "**WHEN THE BOUGH BREAKS**" (47) and "**IT'S HARD TO BE GOOD**" (48).

See subject index under **BOARDING SCHOOL / PUBLIC SCHOOL**, which indicates those titles focussing on teachers' lives and relationships rather than the classroom or pupils.