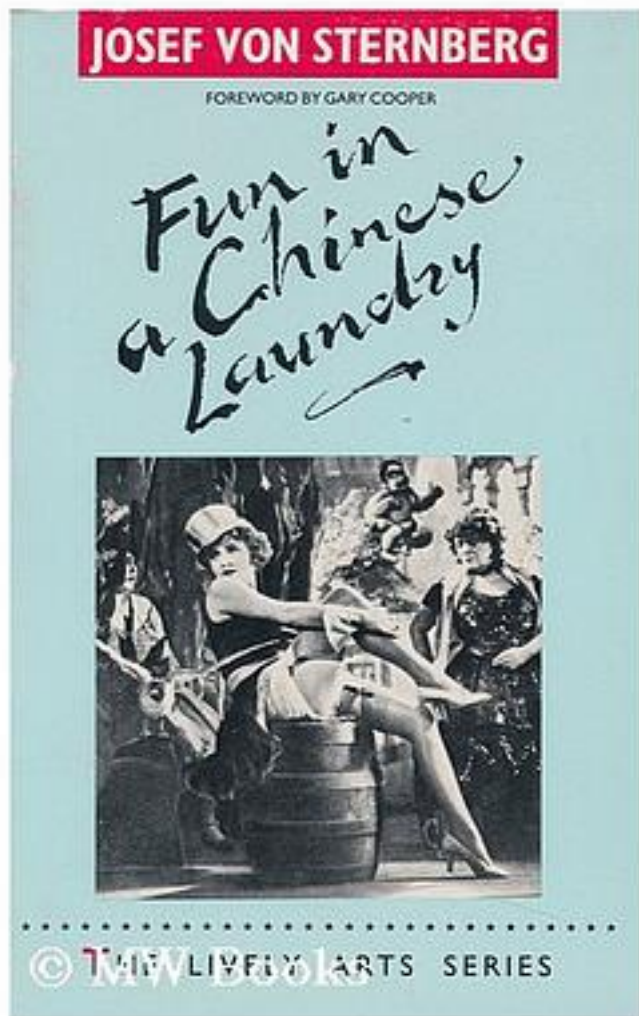


Fun In Chinese Laundry



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著者:Josef Von Sternberg

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Jo Sternberg received his first screen credit in 1923, as an assistant director. The film's producer stretched Jo's name by adding the --sef von-- to it, saying the longer title sounded regal. Sternberg hated the idea, until criticism came in from everywhere that "the Huns are taking over Hollywood." Because of this backlash, Jo defiantly chose to keep his new moniker. This vignette speaks volumes about Mr. Sternberg.

As a director, he was widely hated by dozens of actors, writers and producers. In FUN IN A CHINESE LAUNDRY, Sternberg deflects and denies every charge, yet could all those accusations be false? Jo admits that he routinely criticized actors for not following his instructions precisely, and never gave praise when they performed well. To him, blandishments would have been like "praising them for breathing." The man has nothing good to say about actors and their craft, and he takes up two entire chapters doing so. Special "attention" is lavished on the despised Emil Jannings (a "manipulator") and Charles Laughton ("masochistic" and "a daymare").

Sternberg is an excellent storyteller, particularly about the many exotic locales he'd visited. His memories of individual movies reveal a colossal ego-- every minor actor he came in contact with was immediately launched to stardom, so he claims. The director is everything; the cast and story secondary. His cinematic flops were someone else's fault-- in his own mind, Jo could do no wrong.

And yet for all the rant and egocentrism, FUN IN A CHINESE LAUNDRY is a fascinating read. Simply take Jo's occasional forays into excessive metaphoric semi-colonisms with a grain of aspirin, and wait for the good parts. You'll be more than amply rewarded.

Josef von Sternberg was annoyed that people constantly confused him with his directorial contemporary,

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