

Anthony Quinn, Unsettled

At the peak of success, self-doubt keeps him teetering between

He came out of the Los Angeles slums a tough, jet-haired kid, son of a Mexican mother and an Irish father. He had no higher education, no money and seemingly no talent or future. What he did pack, however, was a fierce drive.

That was a quarter of a century ago. Today Anthony Quinn, forty-six, famous but only semi-tamed, still has the drive. He also has a six-story New York town house, a larder swollen with choice paintings, sculptures and first editions, two Academy Awards, a history of psychoanalysis and an annual income that nestles comfortably above the half-million-dollar mark. He has won abundant praise for his acting, along with occasional catcalls. He has been applauded for his honesty and jeered for his displays of temper. Volatile, unpredictable, he is by turns introspective and extroverted, gracious and bumptious, roistering and reserved. He is, in a word, Quinn.

This could be labeled Quinn's month on Broadway. On stage, the Mexican-born actor opens next week opposite the willowy Margaret Leighton in *Tchin-Tchin*, a comedy-drama which attracted admiring notices in Paris and London. In movie houses his coarse mug will grace two major box-office contenders—*Barabbas*, a bloated spectacular in which Quinn plays the thief whom Christ replaced on the cross, and *Requiem for a Heavyweight*, a film that offers a beautifully simple portrayal by Quinn of a used-up fighter.

To this burst of current activity, there should be added such adornments as: a featured role in the blockbuster movie *Lawrence of Arabia*, which opens later this year; a co-starring role opposite Ingrid Bergman in a film which Quinn also will co-produce; and the possibility of a musical version of William Faulkner's novel *The Reivers* in which Quinn would make his song-and-dance debut on Broadway. It might also be noted that in his spare moments Quinn is sorting out a great deal of recently purchased *objets d'art* which, added to the awesome array he previously owned, now jam his luxurious house in Manhattan's East 70's.

"I'm Only Happy When I'm Busy"

Obviously Tony Quinn, professional actor and sometime writer, painter, sculptor, architect and chess wizard, is a man in perpetual motion. "I'm only happy when I'm busy," he said as he clowned with Margaret Leighton during a rehearsal of *Tchin-Tchin*. "I don't know what a vacation is. I don't want to know. If someone put me on an island and said, 'You're not to act and you're not to paint and you're not to think,' I'm sure I'd start collecting rocks. I have to be busy."

It was 1948 that marked the turning point of Quinn's checkered life. In that year he opted out of a lucrative but lackluster twelve-year-old film career and decided to tackle a Broadway play. After replacing Marlon Brando as Stanley Kowalski in *A Streetcar Named Desire* and then

touring with the show, Quinn emerged a master of his craft. He emerged, too, a curiously complex man.

Tall and rugged, his black hair streaked with firm lines of gray, Quinn appears alternately menacing and appealing. He can be gentle and gracious, yet he can also be harsh and cutting. I have seen him charm an admirer with a word—and wither a fellow actor with a glance. He inspires strong friends and bitter foes.

"Tony Quinn is professional to his fingertips," says David Susskind, the producer of *Requiem*, at one extreme.

"Tony Quinn is a selfish performer," says Ralph Nelson, the director of *Requiem*, at the opposite extreme.

Quinn is a man of extremes. He fluctuates between supreme self-confidence and strange self-doubt. Although he and his wife of 25 years, Katherine, the adopted daughter of the late Cecil B. deMille, have four handsome children and all the possessions anyone could desire, he never feels totally secure. "No one who has ever gone hungry," he says, "can escape the fear of going hungry again."

Two "Oscars" and Still Uncertain

Although he has won two Academy Awards for his supporting roles in *Viva Zapata* and *Lust for Life* and universal praise for his performances in *La Strada* and *The Guns of Navarone*, Quinn remains deeply sensitive to criticism. Two seasons back, one reviewer ridiculed Quinn's portrayal of King Henry II in the play *Becket*. Quinn is still licking the wound.

Quinn believes he has not yet delivered the performances of which he is capable. "I'm like a guy playing a horn," he explains. "There's a note I hear inside me but I can't play it yet. Someday I'm going to hit that note."

Quinn has been reaching for his high note for more than a decade, ever since he attended the Actors' Studio, home of the controversial Method.

"I use the Method," Quinn says, "but there are many ways of using it. It's like saying you're an impressionistic painter. There was Monet as differentiated from Manet, and Pissarro, who painted differently from Cézanne. They were all impressionists, but they all had their own ways of painting."

"My kind of Method actor is much more interested in content than the non-Method actor. The non-Method actor is a sort of virtuoso who does his bit and doesn't give a damn if everything is crumbling about him. I'm concerned with the total comment of the play. Each scene is a piece of the mosaic. If I'm working on a corner and put some red in it, I know it has to be relieved by some red somewhere else. I have to maintain an atmosphere."

Quinn applied his theory of atmosphere to *Requiem*, the movie adapted from Rod Serling's

TV play in which Quinn plays the boxer, Mountain Rivera. "The atmosphere of the whole picture should be like a boxing match," he said. "It should smell of leather and sweat. Figuratively, it should never get out of the ring. Once you step out of that atmosphere it's jarring."

To avoid jarring the atmosphere Quinn insisted that one scene, originally written to take place in Julie Harris's apartment, be switched to Mountain Rivera's hotel room. "If we had gone to Julie's apartment," Quinn explained, "we would have had cologne, femininity. We would have lost the sweaty quality."

As staged originally, the scene was Miss Harris's. As revised, the scene became more Quinn's. "It's much more honest now," Miss Harris said later. "Tony was right."

Not all the *Requiem* cast, however, shared Julie Harris's enthusiasm for Quinn. One day on location the cameras never turned. Quinn spent the entire session trying to get the proper feel for one critical scene. Jackie Gleason, playing Mountain's manager, spent the entire session fuming. At the end of the wasted day, Gleason called producer Susskind and director Nelson to his trailer. "If that Indian says 'I think' one more time," Gleason snapped, "I walk. Pals, don't make me walk."

"We can't promise," said Ralph Nelson. "Quinn works from the inside out."

"Tell you what," said Gleason. "I'll give him three more 'I thinks.'"

The next morning the scene was set, the camera poised. Then Quinn frowned. "Ralph," he began, "I think . . ."

Gleason bolted from the set with Susskind in pursuit. "But, Jackie," Susskind pleaded, "you promised us three 'I thinks.'"

On the set, Quinn stared blandly at Nelson. "I think," he continued, "the way we've worked out the scene now is marvelous. But how the hell can I rehearse if Gleason keeps walking off the set?"

Afterward Gleason joked about the experience. "We got along," he said. "While Quinn groped I drank."

"Great Selfishness as a Performer"

To Nelson the memory was not amusing. "I found," the director said, "that Tony has great selfishness as a performer. He thinks how each scene can best serve him. Of course when he's good he's brilliant. He just makes it hard as hell for everyone around him."

If Quinn drives his co-workers hard, he drives himself even harder. "What I'm telling an audience," he points out, "is, 'Look, you bastards, this isn't make-believe! This is you!'"

To project reality Quinn seeks to burrow within the characters he plays. "It's like taking a pill and suddenly you become somebody else," he explained. "If it's a well-written script, the response is immediate. I read in images. I see the character and then I kinda try to get inside his

Star

By DICK SCHAAP

calm and fury.

clothes. I find out where I need a little fat or a little skin. I try to fit myself into the character rather than make the character fit me."

"When you played Paul Gauguin in *Lust for Life*," I asked, "how did you get inside him?"

"I was just about to turn 40," Quinn said. "I had four children. I had to ask, 'Have I really been honest with myself? Am I happy with my whole existence?' This is the kind of soul-searching Gauguin must have gone through to leave his five children and wife to be honest with himself and with painting. I couldn't just do an interesting characterization. I had to plead Gauguin's case."

Quinn, his introspective nature reinforced by several sessions of psychoanalysis, continually questions himself. "I must keep fluid," he said. "I can't afford to let the cement set. Once the cement sets, you're through as a creator."

A Moustache, a Painter, a Boxer

Admittedly, Quinn prefers his characters to himself. "I hate to expose myself," he said. "I'm just not that courageous. I have to hide behind a beard or a moustache."

Then Quinn demonstrated vividly how well he hides. "Can you answer a few questions as characters you've played?" I asked him.

"I'll try," Quinn agreed.

"As Gauguin, why do you paint?"

Quinn buried his head in his hands. "I paint because I have a vision," he said, lifting his head, "a vision of order and beauty. I find that life is disorderly, a terrible unaesthetic experience. And since I don't find order and beauty in life I'm going to have to create it for myself. And I will create it with colors, with forms, with shapes, with—with—with my imaginary world, which is much more beautiful than anything I have seen in life."

"As Mountain Rivera, why do you fight?"

Almost involuntarily, in a fighter's gesture, Quinn scratched first his nose, then his ear. "I fight because I want a lot of things out of life," he said. "Where I came from I was pushed around because I was part Indian. I want—I want first of all to be somebody. And the only way I can be somebody is to fight."

"As Anthony Quinn, why do you act?"

Quinn reflected for perhaps thirty seconds. "I act for the same reasons, to a great extent, that Gauguin painted and Mountain fought," he said finally. "I too am looking for a sense of order. I too imagined a better world than I've found. When I was a kid I had illusions about what the world should be like and a sense of beauty that has not been verified by my experience."

"I act because I envision a better world than exists. I've seen nothing but wars and strife and hatred, and I'd like to do something about that. I'd like to bring that to people's minds and maybe stimulate them to create a better world."

Quinn paused. "And selfishly," he said, "I act because I, too, want to be somebody." THE END



Quinn on insecurity: "No one who's gone hungry can escape the fear of going hungry again."