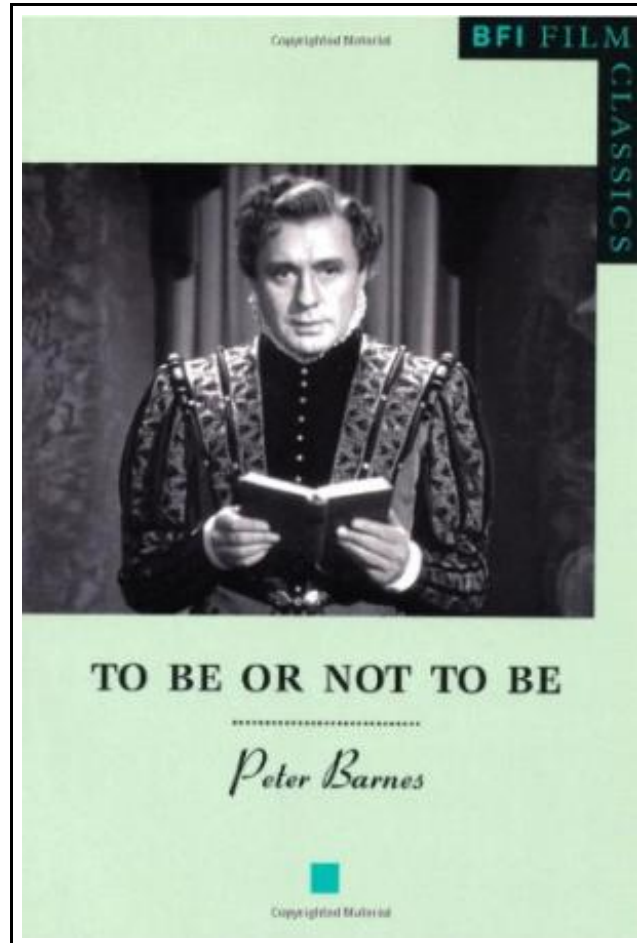


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Reviews

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British Film Institute. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, "To be or Not to be", Peter Barnes, In To Be or Not to Be (1942) Ernest Lubitsch brought his legendary comic touch to the most unpromising situation: life in Nazi-occupied Poland. The film brought light and warmth to wartime calamity, but without trivialising reality. A group of ham actors have to abandon a theatre production set in Nazi Germany as Poland is invaded. Instead they bring their dubious talents to the work of resistance, role-playing and inveigling their way under the noses of the Gestapo led by 'Concentration Camp' Erhardt (Sig Ruman). The central roles of Joseph and Marion Tura are taken by Jack Benny and Carole Lombard and their performances are marvels of comic acting. In this study Peter Barnes considers what it is to make comedy out of tragedy. "To Be or Not to Be" tells us that in the face of the brutality and unimagined ignorance of men in power, one must never lose one's style. "Lose everything but with style, despair can be kept at bay and turned into a small victory." He also shows how the comedy is achieved and in so doing sheds light on the enigmatic 'Lubitsch touch'. Peter Barnes is one of the UK's most respected dramatists, with numerous stage, screen and radio plays to his name. His work has been performed by Laurence Olivier, Alec Guinness, Peggy Ashcroft, John Gielgud and Paul Scofield (among others). He won the Evening Standard Most Promising Playwright award for "The Ruling Class" in 1969 and the Olivier Award for Best Play in 1985 for "Red Noses". His screenplay for "Enchanted April" (1992) was nominated for an Academy Award.

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