Of the two best films I have seen in the Grand Rapids area this school year, The Pawnbroker and Life at the Top, I regretfully favor Life at the Top. Of the two, one is a story of something in me that would like to believe the life of the pawnbroker, but realizes that life is not a convenient plot device for creating a story, as in The Pawnbroker, a story of the small and the poor, is at bottom not as true as Life at the Top, the story.

Sequel to earlier Lanton movie
Life at the Top is the second chapter of the life and loves of the amoral Joe Lampton. The first chapter is Pawnbroker. This time he is a member of the excursion tour of the Pinkerton detective. Room at the Top. Joe Lampion was the gram-

School-boy who unscrupulously moved him-
self from working class to working class, a local industrialist's daughter, after she was pregnant by him. In marrying both Susan Brown and Lutton's father's factory. Lantmon gave up the woman he loved, who consequently committed suicide. Room at the Top ends with Joe Lampion beat-up, disillusioned, and hoping to find his way out of the moral slaughterhouse he created.

Ten years later Joe Lampion, the poor York-
shire newspaper-boy, has achieved Life at the Top. Lotton is a jaded character who has secured Joe's future with an executive position at his textile mill and a check in the suburbs. He is a middle-class character, the product of the best schools, but lacking that dimension which English teachers like to call meaning. The viewer is not sure why, but he is convinced that something is wrong with him from the bottom has left cold at the top. The film is not a total failure, but not quite able, rather than his amorous ability, knowing what brought him to the top. "It's not what you do to rose from the gutter, but who you know, that makes the difference between success, it's not what you do, it's what you know, who you know, that brings you to the top.

Successor to kitchen-sink realism
The Pawnbroker, which appeared in July from the Top, marked the renunciation of modern British cinema. Its "kitchen sink" realism has set its mark on TV, as it has on the film industry. This English "kitchen sink" realism was Italian neo-

realism, which is a movement for social and sentimental realism. Ted Kitchson's Life at the Top proves to be the worthy successor to Clayton's Bicycle Thief. Where the Italian film has achieved, its British counterpart, has maintained Clayton's crisp factually. Kitchson has made the mistake, how-

ever, in dealing with this role as easily as he did seven actionless story. Caught in a moral cataclysm, Life at the Top suffers from the Top live in complete passivity. Kitchson brigades treating to en-

live this essentially stagnant situation. Fast scenes and pans are not only offensive to the eye, but detract from the mood of detached-pas-

sivism. Some of the director's devices are stimu-

lating and effective, such as the narrator's voice

uma to the wool market or the scene where

Lampion's daughter plays blind-man's-bluff with a male. All of this is very effective, but one cannot help but think that the story would have been better served had he toned down the devices with some with good and some bad.

The power of Life at the Top lies not so much in its direction as in the screenplay and acting. Michael Craig, another Canadian, has pro-

vided a screenplay which is an asset rather than a liability. The director, on the other hand, has marred the story with his editing devices than with some good and some bad.

Cast performs with precision
The cast of Jews, Simon Blackman, and Michael Craig perform their roles with pre-

cision, but they are not memorable characters in film. Joe Lampion, Laurence Harvey has slipped into an acting role a bit, but is still one of the memorable characters on film. Joe Lampion, Laurence Harvey has slipped into an acting role a bit, but is still one of the memorable characters on film.