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On the night of 24 May 1971, Bill Shepherd arrived at the Government Centre Theatre in Sydney. He was there by invitation of the Film Editors Guild of Australia to introduce *Orphan of the Wilderness* (1936), which remains his favourite among the 17 features he edited for Cinesound in the 1930's and 40's. The film again lived up to its reputation, and its first two reels of carefully constructed animal sequences were ample illustration of Shepherd's skill. After the film, there was to be a question-and-answer session, but Bill was totally unprepared for the ceremony that ensued. With the last question answered, F.E.G.A.'s then-President Don Saunders presented him with a plaque with read:

“To William Shepherd,
Australian film pioneer and doyen of Australian film editors.
Whose career began in our silent cinema of the twenties
And continued with great distinction and achievement through the golden years of Australian feature films of the thirties and forties.
Who has edited more Australian features than any other editor.
Who is a film editor to this day.
To whom his fellows at the Film Editors Guild
Acknowledging his outstanding contribution to film editing
Are proud to award this First Life Membership.”

With some justification, Bill was immensely moved.

Of course, there'd been kudos before. In reviewing *Thoroughbred* on 10 May 1936, the *Telegraph* wrote, “Technical excellence in Cinesound films can now be taken for granted. But the editing of William Shepherd and the photography by George Heath, are outstanding.” *Smith's Weekly*, in reviewing *It Isn't Done* on 13 March of the following year, reported: “William Shepherd did the editing; he must have special praise, for his is a job of which the public is always ignorant, and this film proves that it is as important as any.” Shepherd's role became even more important on Charles Chauvel's *Forty Thousand Horsemen*, a film which *The Observer* in August 1941 called “uncannily exciting” and whose charge sequence is as well known to many as its counterpart in Curtis' *The Charge of the Light Brigade*.

Now aged 80, Bill Shepherd looks back at a film career which spanned the years 1924 to 1961. In that time he either worked at or studied nearly every phase of production, and what he hadn't known by the mid-forties he filled in via a self-funded trip to Hollywood. Documenting everything he saw, he returned to Australia in March 1947 with the intention of applying his knowledge to the industry's growth. The industry, as history would have it, didn't go far, and Shepherd's know-how had scant application over an ensuing decade's work for the Films Division of the Department of the Interior (which later became the Commonwealth Film Unit, then Film Australia).

* * *

I first met Bill Shepherd through research I was doing into the Australian work of special effects pioneer and director Norman Dawn. That was in September 1971, and unable to resist the temptation of branching out, I continued at that time and more recently to record conversations covering his entire career. Shepherd began by telling me that his interest in film production had stemmed from the desire to be an actor. Having had his appetite whetted by watching a film company at work at the Tamarama White City, he signed himself into the acting and voice production course being run by Mr Walter Bentley. This course”, and he sent me along to the Commonwealth Film Unit, then Film Australia.

**Billy Shepherd**

On my return in 1918, I took up a building course with the Department of Repatriation. It took me a while to recuperate, so I only did the small jobs and enrolled in the film school being run by P. J. Ramster. The advertisements claimed that an appearance in a Ramster Photoplay would ensure you a career in acting, and his classes ran two or three times a week, with a different group of between 12 and 15 on each evening.

The films don't appear to have had much of a release.

If Ramster had been backed, he'd have done much better than he did. He gleaned an adequate living from the money he received from students, but certainly not enough to rise to a level of lavish production. He liked to stick to his own suggestions, but he was well on the ball. He told us, for instance, that every move you made on silent film had its own significance. It had to be part of the story or it distracted.

Which of the films were you in?
I played in *Mated in the Wilds*, *Should a Doctor Tell?*, and took the role of a 'heavy' in *The Reverend Dell's Secret*.

*Mated in the Wilds* was filmed in 1921, and Ramster asked me if I could ride a motor bike. I said "Of course", and he sent me along to the Harley Davidson agent in the city. When I got there, the salesmen came out with a brand new Harley Davidson with a side-car and walked it down the street. I looked at it and said "Give it a kick-over, will you? My foot's a bit crook." So he kicked it over and I got going — turned left into Oxford Street and went all the way out to La Perouse at the one speed. You see, I'd never ridden a bike in my life.

Did Ramster hire professionals from outside the group?
Not as far as I remember. They were all taken from the classes. He
made a film called The Triumph of Love (1922) with Jack Chalmers, the Bondi shark rescue hero, but like the others it didn't make any money. As a matter of fact, I would be interested to know how many important people of later years trained with Ramster. Not so much performers, but people fairly well up on the social scale.

It was through Ramster that you began your association with Jack Fletcher and the Standard Laboratory.

Yes. Fletcher's first job was in 1915 as a junior with Union Theatres. I met Jack when he was a page boy at the Criterion and I'd just finished installing the tanks when Arthur Higgins arrived. Arthur was fairly busy and asked Jack if he could film a kangaroo drive for him. Jack said he'd like to but had promised that in the next few days he'd complete an order of part numbers and end-ends for Universal. Arthur said, "Why can't Bill handle that?" So I heard that he had started lab work. I worked, developed and dried the Universal order for three days and two nights—straight through. That was November 24th. From that time, I stayed on. I developed and printed neg. and pos. cut and did camerawork. Fletcher had fitted his lab with a Bell and Howell printer and later got money from his father to buy a new Bell and Howell printer.

What was the camerawork?

Quite often we'd travel the country towns filming advertisements for retail merchants or whoever wanted to make themselves known through the local cinema. Otherwise we'd do freelance newsrel work for Topical Films in England, and for Kinegram and Pathé in New York. You took a job in England because this stroke of luck was about a year ahead of anybody else in the business. Fletcher being a born meddler and I added my two cents to this. I'd come out during the night, clipped the battery on, started fiddling and had crossed the wires. Naturally, the tube had shorted and blown up.

So now there was the prospect of developing our own process or giving up completely. We'd seen pictures of the Western Electric tube, and it operated on the principle of a variable light slit. From the operation of our Bell printer, we knew about the basic principle of variable density light emission. I don't recall that Fletcher did much reading on the topic, but it was a simple case of looking at the small number of available processes, and looking at the optical track on imported films and saying, "Why can't we do the same?"

The basic problem was that none of the locals who'd been experimenting were prepared to talk about what they'd found. We knew that Cinesound were battling just as desperately as ourselves, but neither of us were willing to brag about it. I knew nothing about amplification, and if somebody had started talking about megacycles I'd have wondered what the hell he was getting at.

Did you ever consider sound-on-disc?

Yes, we were thinking of discs at one stage, but we found more advantages in the optical system.

Our breakthrough into optical sound came after we'd studied Fletcher's British General Electric radio, which was known as the 'Gekko'. The 'Gekko' had a long arm that vibrated to varying widths against a magnet. Onto the end of this arm I placed a small blade of tempered steel with a fine point for one of the jaws. Suspended above this was another blade which could be moved up or down to get the required thousandth of an inch between the two of them.

So the upper blade was constant?

Yes, that's where we had trouble. We didn't know anything about the expansion and contraction of the rubber dampers which held this blade downward. As soon as the atmosphere changed, the rubber moved a quarter of a thou, and changed the density of the light being plated through the jaws.

Our first sound using the trembler blade was transferred from the record of an orchestra. We developed all our soundtracks in a 200 bath, but we had a problem with rack marks which could change the density of the track. To get over that we coated the racks with paraffin every time we developed.

Could you have used this sound commercially?

Only if we'd been able to control the damper sequence. As I said, we didn't know enough about it then.

But could you say that you evolved the first Australian sound-on-film process?
It's very hard to determine. Just off the record, I'd like to consider that we were the first.

How close was the competition between yourselves and Cinesound?

They'd been mucking about for a fair while and I know that any sound they had wasn't considered too wonderful. In fact, what they achieved before the introduction of the B.G.E. tube couldn't have been considered as sound at all. Probably realizing this, they came over to Fletcher's for a demonstration. Before their arrival, I told Fletcher that our camera needed two new 45-volt batteries. He said "She'll be right", and shortly afterward in walked Arthur Smith with Bert and Clive Cross. We were set up to make a special test of them for Union Theatres, but right at the crucial moment the batteries gave out. That was the finish of the Cinesound negotiations and they left us to it.

Two months after that, Cinesound got to hear about the British General Electric glow tube. It can't be denied, however, that Smith and Cross had more technical knowledge than we did. The main difference came with their ability to get better density with the glow tube itself. By that time, we'd abandoned the 'Gekko' for a tube we'd imported from Britain. The McDonagh Sisters approached us and asked if we'd add sound to the silent version of The Cheaters.

The McDonaghs dropped our process and moved down to the Showground, but at the same time a successful author and the McDonaghs dropped our process and moved down to the Showground, but at the same time a successful author and Mrs Thring in long-shot, we'd abandoned the 'Gekko' for a tube we'd imported from Britain. The way it happened was this. The McDonagh Sisters approached us and asked if we'd add sound to the silent version of The Cheaters.

The same principle applies to animation — what the eye sees but the mind doesn't see can be an illusion, something that's taken years to perfect. Animators have learned to short-cut movement, to emphasize without making the image too basic.

Having built speed within a sequence, you must slacken its pace before you can work in the opposite direction. An illusion can only come from an advance movement, and herein lies one of the fundamentals of editing. The book taught me that, and later on at Cinesound I'd get hold of a good American picture I'd seen, place it on the wheel and analyse the thought behind the cutting. You had to be dedicated to do that, but I remember sitting down for days to study the earthquake sequence in San Francisco (1936). Had you ever discussed this with other editors?

I met several like Mona Donaldson, but I never discussed editing technique with any of them. I merely picked up what I could along the way. In many respects, it was just cutting by instinct.

What were the negotiations between Standardtone and Efffie Studios?

I think Frank Thring Snr wanted sound at any price. He'd heard about Standardtone and came out with his wife to see a couple of our shorts. He told us that while he was reasonably satisfied, he wasn't completely sure and wanted a demonstration. Fletcher, who normally did all the negotiating, said "Yes", set up his equipment and photographed Mr and Mrs Thring in long-shot in a medium-shot and close-up. They left us. Jack took the film to his lab. for processing, and sat down to read a book. The hours passed, Jack became more involved in his reading, and by the time he'd hauled the film out of the processor, it was well cooked.

The next morning, we took this sound down to the Regent Theatres and asked Bill Marshall to pump through as much light as possible. Unfortunately, the increase in light meant an increase in background noise, which wiped out the dialogue. Naturally enough, Thring wasn't impressed and told us to forget about the deal. From there, he went to America, but if he'd purchased our equipment, Standardtone might have had a future.

Was Standardtone in trouble before the Thring negotiations?

Yes, we'd already had quite a lot of trouble by that stage. In fact, Standardtone was only really a going concern for about twelve months.

Then I'm surprised to see from your records that Standardtone was still running in 1932.

Well I went to Cinesound something like a week after Standardtone had folded. Ken Hall knew I'd been working with Fletcher and Bruce, and before I got onto features I cut a lot of A's for the standard newsreel. I think I started on the sixth edition. Then I moved onto shorts which included The Ghost of Port Arthur and Over 70 Club.

When I arrived there, George Malcolm was just finishing the editing of On Our Selection, but he didn't want to do editing, he wanted to direct. He got sick just before he was due to cut The Squatter's Daughter, so I took his place.

Malcolm gets a co-editor's credit on "The Squatter's Daughter". I know, but he didn't cut a foot of it.

You mentioned that he'd made a winding mechanism.

Yes. It made provision for the removal of any one of the four rolls that were running through the synchronizer without disturbing the others. It's still the only way to work. I made one out of the D.O.I. at Burwood that cost 30 pounds. You could change from 16 to 35 straight away and drive all four mechanisms at once. As it is today, you've got to take everything off the arm to get to the fourth roll, and your mind goes "whoof" away from the mechanics of cutting. That's why I never had a phone in the cutting room.

The whole process has changed, and it shows. Today you make most of your decisions on the Moviola. There's a foot and a half gone by the time you're through with it. You can only judge proper timing by looking at the film in front of you and keeping its shape in your mind the whole time.

The first feature I did at Cinesound was In the Wake of the Bounty (1933). Chauvel was using Cinesound's studio as well as its staff and I was taken over to work on the film. The first day that Errol Flynn came on the set all the women were around him. He was a fine looking chap — like a Greek god.

God or Goddess?

Godess. They had a big set in the studio. Too Hot to Hold had done the shooting in Tahiti and Pitcairn Island. I cut the whole thing.

How long did it take you to get a "system" going at Cinesound?

Not too long. The room was platted out, I hung 'No Smoking' signs above the benches and was given two assistants. The first two assistants were so good that when they got going they could tell you the edge number for the beginning and end of every scene.

Was the studio gearing itself for continuous production?

There'd been some doubt when they began On Our Selection, but its success had enabled them to go on. After On Our Selection, there'd been alterations to the whole studio. We took over the newsreel room and the newsreel moved somewhere else.

Were you doing your own neg. cutting?

Oh yeah, we were doing everything. The way it happened was this. The negative came up from the laboratory and the assistants would check it for scratches or dirt marks. We saw every negative. I usually had to say something about it and for that reason I was known as a bit of a bastard. Then the assistants would synchronize the sound with the negative and off they'd go for a print. We didn't have an edge-numbering machine, but we attached a rubber numbering device to a Bell and Howell sprocket, and numbered according to the section of the script. Each section was represented by a letter of the alphabet.

Hall would see the rushes with the crew, and together we'd pick the takes to be used. These takes would be filed away in the vault after they'd been used.
Running the entire master shot would have been impossible. Cinesound was firmly on its way with that film. The titles, which were in the form of book wipes were worked out by Jack Kingsford-Smith. He was a brilliant effects man. His technical printer was a Bell and Howell modified with a lot of Meccano pieces, and he later put together quite an elaborate montage of wipes for the fashion parade in Dad and Dave Come to Town (1938).

How involved were you with preproduction? I usually timed and estimated the footage of a film before it was shot, then we had a preproduction conference. There'd be the director, the set man, the sound man, sound myself — all the key members of the crew — and we'd talk about the script and the film as a whole.

Were the shots planned before Hall went out to shoot? Oh yes, we all had a rough idea to start with. The script girl would itemize what sequences were going to be done and Hall would list the shots every night before shooting.

Did you ever suggest to Hall that he cover a sequence in a certain way before he went out? No, no. He had his own ideas. I'd only make a suggestion on location if I saw that what he was shooting wouldn't cut with what he'd already shot.

What was your feeling about the use of location sound? With all due respect, I think you lose a lot of atmosphere by trying to use an alternative. Tall Timbers (1937) had the best outdoor sound we ever did. In fact, it's probably the best outdoor sound that's ever been done anywhere.

Why was that? Because it was done in the clear blue yonder. Mind you, we had a big cicada problem. The actors would run through their dialogue with this deafening noise going on, and when we were ready for a take we'd fire a gun and start cutting kerosene tins. In most cases, the damn things kept quiet for the duration of a shot.

How closely were you working with the musical director? Pretty close. After we'd finished a sequence, the musical director would come out and we'd run it for him. We'd work through together, and make another print, you could cut the prints that existed. I noticed that in "The Silence of Dean Maitland" (1934) there's a lot of cutting around in the pulp fiction scene. Yes, we had to cut it down.

Ken Hall must have shot that from about five different angles?

Could have been. The main trouble came with trying to get something out of the actor playing the scene. We had a timing device and we had to work out the timing in relation to the synch. Mark was established by start-

marks on special leaders at the head of the image and soundtrack. As a story it should never have been made. Even though it was trying to compete with something that the Americans had perfected, it did give us the knowledge of playback with music and vocals. The performers occasionally went out of synch, but the sound man and I were on the look-out. If this happened halfway through a song, I'd advise that we change the angle. We'd run right through if we could. Quite a few times we had to take it by removing frames from the film.

In 1937-38, we started pressing for a union in the industry, and the only reason I wasn't sacked was because Cinesound couldn't do without me. I thought then it was a good thing that we were going to sign up with the projectionists, who were very strong at that time. We had a meeting attended by Hall, the Cinesound employees and people from Filmco, but most of the blokes didn't have enough guts. When we went back to work the next morning, everybody was put on the watch. They'd been too strong at the meeting. We'd have got an industry going then, which would have been a terrific thing. If we'd all stuck together, everybody's wages would have been 10% above the level compatible with feature films.

Did you have much contact with overseas suppliers? Well, the biggest row of the decade was prompted by the arrival of Kodak's New York man. We'd always paid good prices for the stock we'd been using and had never thought to question them. The representative took one look at our edge numbers and said "This is terrible. All of this stock was out of date six years ago." That was about 1938, and I think that little affair earned us some respect.

They'd been able to send over inferior stock because we honestly believed it was the only way to look for. This applied to many of our activities. With the help of trade journals and hearsay, we built our own editing equipment, sound equipment, camera equipment, and even the back-projection setup. We had the occasional spare part and overseas references were vague, so that most of our equipment was built through trial and error.

Who normally did the continuity on the productions? Was there a continuity girl? No, the script girl did continuity. It was also the director's job. He had it all worked out in his shooting script.

In "Lovers and Luggers" (1937), which is in many ways quite a sophisticated film, the opening sequence is full of glaring continuity errors, with much Hughes looking from one side of the room to the other with every cut.

Well somebody must have cut the bloody film. It was never like that before. Let's get right down to this. Most of the ABC's versions were the ones that were cut in England. Instead of sending a dupe negative,
Cinesound sent the originals across to England. Quite a number of films were buggered in that way.

"Let George Do It" (1938), for instance?

Oh yeah. That was really an excellent film. Which cut it God Almighty knows.

About 18 months ago, Hall and I re-cut and re-dubbed Mr Chedworth Steps Out (1939) from the three surviving prints. The original negative had been lost. It was for the ABC and it wasn't shown because of copyright problems. But on the strength of the 35mm and 16mm prints, it was certainly the best suited for television of all the Cinesound films. Its shooting style was similar to a lot of features and series made for TV today.

Why was it shot this way?

I don't know. As you go along you develop an idea.

You've often said that your favourite film at Cinesound was "Orphan of the Wilderness".

Yes, it was. I've always considered it 'my' picture because I took particular care with the animal sequences. For weeks we filled the studio with trees, ferns, streams, kangaroos, dingoes, rabbits, snakes and koalas, and let them settle in. All together, we shot between 23 and 24 thousand feet, and I didn't really know how it was going to work until I'd run the footage and decided on how to cut one shot with the next. I wouldn't say the first two reels were without a story, but I certainly hadn't been given a storyline for that section beyond knowing the way it was going to start and end. We had footage of a snake that had had nothing to do with footage of a frog, but we cut them together to make it look as if the snake had menaced the frog. Then we had the ostrich being attacked by the kangaroo, the rabbits being frightened by the hawk, and while there was nothing preplanned, it all worked out magnificently.

Just before this, the Americans had released an animal picture called Sequoia (1934). It was well done, but a number of American trade people wrote across and said they considered Orphan of the Wilderness the best animal feature ever made. They said it was better than this interest's scenes were. I didn't think it was as good, but when you consider that it was begun as a supporting feature, it wasn't created in the cutting.

Chauvel worked on Forty Thousand Horsemen for quite a while. The thing was dragging a bit, and Hoyts were getting fed up. They came to me and said "Could you give us a date?"

I said "Oh yes", and they told me to go ahead and do what I thought best. I wanted to cut the charge down, but Chauvel didn't. I still think it's too long. I'd like to get down and cut a little more out of it. Hoyts said "If you cut it down and finish the picture, we'll give you a few quid." So we finished on time and I received an additional 25 pounds — a lot of money in those days.

At that time Cinesound was doing a lot of work for the Department of Information.

I worked on fifteen of those shorts, some of them as director. The biggest of them was Australia MARCHES WITH BRITAIN (1941), and in 1943 I directed 24,000 feet film for KNOW YOUR ALLY: Australia. Know Your Ally was supervised from America by Frank Capra and among many other things, we shot footage of Curtin and Menzies signing the declaration of war.

Did you edit any of "Smithy" (1946)?

I notice that Terry Banks receives the editor's credit.

I edited the two reels containing the flight across the Pacific. They were the main reels and Hall wanted me to work on them. The description of the trip took one page in the script, and I estimated that it would come out at 2000 feet.

How could you judge that?

I worked out how the scenes would be cut in relation to the action. It was all in my mind.

In 1945-46, it looked as though Cinesound were really going to start making films. Ken Hall was going to produce at the Pagewood studio and went across to Britain and America to buy the necessary equipment. When the British announced their austerity measures, Rydge thought better of the situation and put a stop to all the plans. The equipment, which included new cameras and the latest back-projection equipment, was sent back.

Didn't Hall try to set up several productions after that date?

Well when I was in America between July 1946 and March 1947, I got in touch with a company which financed films for the independent theatres and put forward the suggestion that Australia make Westerns. It was just the time to do that sort of thing and was years ahead of the idea of location shooting in Spain and Italy. One
of the company executives said “if you can get the money and you make an average picture, we'll buy it. You can then send us the script for the second picture and we'll send you the money.” That seemed to be a pretty good idea, so when I got back I suggested that Hall float a company to produce Australian Westerns. He thought about it for a moment, then looked at me and said “That’s alright, but you know Bill, a man’s got to think of prestige.”

Why did you go to America?

I wanted to see what they were doing technically, and I was fortunate in contacting technicians who’d been in Australia before the War. I also met up with members of the Signal Corps who had been at Cinesound during the War, and through them I managed to look at most of the major studios in Hollywood. I spent long periods at Republic, MGM and Universal, and at Universal I observed the entire production of The Egg and

At that time there was a film industry strike with the film technicians battling a studio bosses’ organisation called IA'TSE. I didn’t take part in it, but I could see the picket lines outside all the major studios and laboratories. I had to cross a picket line to get some information on the running of Consolidated Laboratories. The snap had been going on for a long time, and I said to me around said “If you wouldn’t mind, I'll show you around.” I felt quite a high standard. I had the full editing, sound editing, sound cutting rooms learning about picture looping which even though it was Max Factor, and at Republic I

My main regret is that I've acquired a lot of films for the D.O.I., and that's one of the reasons I didn't direct a lot while I was there. I had to cut down a film I directed called Channel Country (1958) from five reels to one, and another called North West Horizon (1958) down to two. North West Horizon was about minerals and started on a boat that went from Fremantle up to Darwin. Then we returned by plane and shot the rest of the stuff as we came down.

How were you treating this? Did you have a commentary?

Yes. The only two on the journey had been the cameraman and myself.

I didn’t know anything about the F.E.G.A. award. That’s one of the younger chaps there, so that being recognised like that was a quite a nice finish to my career.

My main regret is that I’ve accumulated a fair knowledge of the game, but nobody has asked me to teach those that are coming along.

Weren’t you trying this sort of thing at the D.O.I.?

Well I tried two or three times, but it never got anywhere. They asked me to teach and I was quite prepared to, but there were those that wouldn’t attend. I think I’d pick up a fair amount of knowledge in America which at the time would have been handy. But from that day to this, nobody has asked me “What about America?” Not a one.

I wish to thank Bill Shepherd for his assistance in checking the edited transcript.

Featuring


The Squatter’s Daughter (1933). Produced by Cinesound Productions. Directed by Ken G. Hall.

The Silence of Dean Maitland (1934). Produced by Cinesound Productions. Directed by Ken G. Hall.


Granddad Rudd (1935). Produced by Film Players Corporation. Directed by Ken G. Hall.


It Isn’t Done (1937). Produced by Cinesound Productions. Directed by Ken G. Hall.

Tall Timbers (1937). Produced by Cinesound Productions. Directed by Ken G. Hall.


The Broken Melody (1938). Produced by Cinesound Features. Directed by Ken G. Hall.

Let George Do It (1938). Produced by Cinesound Productions. Directed by Ken G. Hall.


Gone To The Dogs (1939). Produced by Cinesound Features. Directed by Ken G. Hall.


Dad and Dave Come To Town (1938). Produced by Cinesound Productions. Directed by Ken G. Hall.

Channel Country (1956). 2 reels — also directed.

Long Drive Home (1956). 2 reels — also directed.

Ballet Film Children (1960). Edited under contract.

OTHER SHORT FILMS


Ballet Film Children (1960). Edited under contract.


Minister of Munitions (1942). Short — duration unknown.

Road in Enemy Hands (1943). Short — duration unknown.

Another Threshold (1942). 1 reel.

A Day A Month (1949). 2 reels.


Missing (1944). 1 reel.

As Film Editor and Film Director for the Films Division for the Department of the Interior (later the Commonwealth Film Unit), edited all films below and directed where indicated between 1949-1960


War in 1943 (1943). Short — duration unknown.
The 1974 Perth International Festival was a nice change of pace from the Melbourne and Sydney Festivals for three basic reasons. Firstly the programming is more adventurous. The films are rather more energetic, and generally the work of younger directors. Some thirty-five features were shown, including a large selection of new German and Swiss cinema. Secondly Perth differs greatly in its choice of guests. This year they included Werner Herzog, Peter von Gunten, Daniel Duval, Bertrand van Effenterre, Michael Thornhill and Adolfs Mekas. For once an Australian festival has invited directors of relevance! The final point of divergence is the minimal number of shorts shown. This year there were twelve, of which many were interesting, especially the brilliant Mille Mots.

As a festival Perth is not run as meticulously as the others, but it has a vitality they often lack. This is best seen in the way the official guests are not partitioned off into reserved seating but sit amongst the audience. This makes it far easier for people to go up and talk with a director. A director's seminar is also informal, taking place after a screening in the theatre itself.

"The goal of every artist must be his own extremity". Jean Cocteau.

The Mother and the Whore's Alexandre (Jean-Pierre Leaud) spends most of his time reading in boulevard cafes because, as he points out, Bernanos needed that presence of life to work in. "I cannot write but at least I can read" he explains. Alexandre is the classic non-working intellectual, more interested in talk than action because it makes less demands. Alexandre also spends his time living off women, his love life polarized between the noble ideal of Gilberte (Isabelle Weingarten), and the earthy Marie (Bernadette Lafont). The film opens with Alexandre still chasing his noble ideal, delighting in its sense of unattainability. "Do I love her simply because she was in a Bresson film?" he mutters, only to later stand on the bridge from Four Nights of a Dreamer in a mood of similar desperation. When living with
Marle, Alexandre shows little sign of affection, no doubt saving his energies to keep the relationship at his liking. Into this situation comes a promiscuous nurse Veronika (Françoise Lebrun), who Alexandre sets about seducing. During one of Marie’s trips to London Veronika stays on at the flat, but on Marie’s return she finds the thought of sex in her hospital room abhorrent. Consequently she drifts around, occasionally dropping in at the flat. One terrifying scene has all three in bed together, a competition quietly raging over who Alexandre will screw first. When he moves onto Veronika, Marie dashes off to suicide in the bathroom before Alexandre coldly prevents her. Then in the film’s most moving sequence Veronika leans back against a wall, a tear running down her cheek, talking of her need to have sex with as many people as possible. Her promiscuity is in fact an exaggerated denial of what she feels within, that sex without love is meaningless. This denial is beautifully hinted throughout the film by her over-use of the words “minimum” and “maximum”. Finally through her veil of tears, Veronika declares that what she needs is marriage and children, because only that can cleanse the act of sex. Alexandre asks her to marry him and she accepts while vomiting with fear and drunkenness. Alexandre sinks to the ground in utter hopelessness.

The Mother and The Whore is a violent film, but also one of great tenderness. What makes it truly extraordinary however is its purity, its uncompromising honesty. Eustache has taken many characters and incidents from his personal life, and recreated them as accurately as possible. Nearly all writers, with the exception of poets, rework and sublimate their past experiences. Though a particular situation may be drawn upon for inspiration, the resultant creation bears a relation in terms of ideas only, the details being invariably changed to protect the innocent as it were. Eustache doesn’t appear to do this at all. For example Franoise Lebrun plays herself, the hospital room is the actual one, the flat is Eustache’s, as are the scarves Jean-Pierre Léaud wears, and so on. Also the usual concessions to the balancing of locations and scene lengths have not been made. If Eustache wants a sequence of say a simple telephone conversation, that’s exactly how he films it. He doesn’t try and compress it into another scene or stretch it out with dialogue. There is a fade-in from black, the phone rings, some words are exchanged, the receiver is replaced, fade to black. Similarly there are many scenes in the same location with only fades in-between. It sounds, and is, extremely simple, but very few directors are prepared to pursue such an approach. Consequently The Mother and The Whore is a very liberating experience, because it shows that one can do exactly what one feels is right, irrespective of tradition. In Eustache’s cinema only two things are necessary: simplicity, and an uncompromising desire for truth. Because he has found both, The Mother and The Whore is one of those extremely rare films that truly illuminate.

A major highlight of the festival was a retrospective of the brilliant films of Werner Herzog. Since Herzog is interviewed elsewhere in this issue, I will avoid criticism in preference for some personal impressions. Signs of Life is still for me his most moving film. It has a gentleness and peace that works cleverly against the desperation of its message. The film ends with the soldier Stroszek being driven away, now totally insane. A commentator remarks that “he was doomed to failure like all of his kind.” The final shot, taken from the back of the truck, is a virtual reverse of the first which showed Stroszek arriving for convalescence. The circle is complete and closed. What is so effective about Signs of Life, is the way it slowly gnaws away at its audience long after it has finished, and only then does its true power become apparent. In direct contrast is Even Dwarfs Started Small which is an assault on not only direct assault on its audience. Though a film of great insight, its effect dissipates on leaving the cinema and one remembers it more for the starkness of its conception than for its pain.

Both these films exist relatively freely within loose narrative structures. Fata Morgana is a more extreme example in that it abandons all form of narrative except for a tripartite secularization into “Creation”, “Paradise” and “The Golden Age”. The film itself is a highly personal impression of the deserts and towns of Northern Africa. There are, for example, endless tracking shots across sand dunes and natron lakes. At times there is a terse commentary — “In paradise you call hello without seeing anyone . . . you quarrel to avoid having friends . . . man is born dead” — but it plays as much against the film as with it, as does the music of Leonard Cohen. It is a visionary film and one can only praise Langlois for frustrating Herzog’s attempts to keep it secret.

With Aguirre, The Wrath of God Herzog has made a genre film with “something extra added”. It is more rigidly structured than his others, and for me this sometimes inhibits it. The weakest scenes are those which merely further the plot, such as the split-up of the expedition and the proclamation of the Emperor of El Dorado. However when freed from narrative the results are brilliant. The sense of a world closing in is at times so strong as to be almost unbearable. Aguirre is a film of great beauty and power.

Land of Silence and Darkness is perhaps the masterpiece of documentary filmmaking. Herzog so carefully recreates the world of the deaf and blind that it becomes as accessible to us as is humanly possible. The film’s beauty and sadness is unique, and no one will ever forget those images of a man talking to a tree with his hands, gently tracing out the shape of its branches.

Three very interesting Swiss films were shown at Perth, Death of a Flea Circus Director, The Extradition and Erica Minor. All were shot on 16 mm black and white reversal and blown up to 35 mm, and each had a budget of around $300,000. The quality of the blow-ups is extraordinarily good, the only major difference to 35 mm being the occasional loss of definition in long shots. The best of the three was Thomas Koerfer’s Death of a Flea Circus Director, a magical film of inescapable logic. Ottocaro Weiss is forced to suspend his circus when insecticide destroys the fleas. Attempts to gain recompense result only in a small sum of money. By chance Weiss witnesses an ancient plague festival and consequently decides to perform a stage play on the effects of plague. He is, helped by a wealthy industrialist, Johannes Wagner, who succeeds in introducing an exhibition of plague stricken rats. Whereas Weiss sees the plague as a liberating force which in destroying everything life-degrading makes everyone free and equal, Wagner sees it as a force of terror and repression under which the country will return to law and order. Thus two different men use the same weapon as support for opposed ideologies. However on discovering Wagner’s true designs, Weiss is forced to for­ sake the temporary and illusory world of the stage for a starker and crueler reality. In a final performance Weiss staggers onto stage stricken by plague. As is Weiss forced to re­ evaluate the strength of his ideals, so is the audience. For example, throughout the film there are quick glimpses of Wagner’s man­ nish. The first is accompanied by a classical piano work to create a desirable illusion of culture and wealth. Only as the truth about Wagner is revealed does the desirability of the house decrease, the final shot showing it boarded up and deserted, the music gone.

Peter von Gunten’s The Extradition was prompted by recent Swiss Government decisions over the screening of Chilean refugees. Despite the country’s proclaimed neutrality, selection procedures were used to avoid antagonizing the Chilean Government and jeopardizing trade agreements. This type of economic sell-out is the basis of The Ex­tradition.

After the murder of the student Ivanov, the Russian revolutionary Njetschajev escapes to Switzerland in hope of asylum. There he single-mindedly goes about his work using whatever means he can to further the cause. This even includes blackmailing Herzen’s
daughter Natalie with some love letters after she fails to join him. The Russian Government has made requests for Njetschajev's extradition but they are initially ignored. Then arises the possibility of a trade agreement between the two countries, and Switzerland agrees to the extradition to save any embarrassment. Njetschajev spends the remainder of his life in prison.

Von Gunten's film is a carefully detailed analysis of the mechanics and motivations behind extradition. However unlike the majority of political films, it is very low key and makes its points through subtlety, not assault. There seem to me two basic reasons for the film's success: (1) being a historical film it argues in terms different to slogans used today; (2) it has a historical perspective that allows the audience to view it rather more objectively than a present day situation. The film also wisely avoids moral and political judgments which contributes greatly to its accessibility.

The last of the Swiss films was Erica Minor, a film I dislike quite strongly. Despite appearances of being politically perceptive it is essentially hollow and lifeless. At one point in the film a character, speaking for both herself and the director, attacks her boss for expanding the factory she works in, claiming that all profits belong to the workers. Yet surely if one cent of the box-office returns go towards financing another film, von Effenterre is expanding in exactly the same way as the capitalist. Both were personally involved, both employed others, both charged people for use of the finished article and so on. The reason such inconsistencies occur is because Erica Minor is not the labour of a heart-felt concern for the lives of the people it portrays, but the result of pseudo-intellectual philosophizing. I consider Erica Minor a highly irritating and dishonest film, one which is ironically exposed by the phoniness behind its last caption: "The only true culture is to be part of the masses."

History Lessons is an extraordinarily fine film, a truly innovative work in a direction little explored. Straub breaks everything down to a minimum, and then carefully rebuilds in a way that allows no element to gain more importance than another. A film is a whole and if any element stands out then the film has failed to a degree. When thinking back one remembers the totality of History Lessons not isolated shots or scenes, and if one deliberately concentrates on a single element, say the first drive into Rome, one finds the image flows smoothly into the next, the first political discussion in close-up, and so on. In a film of such calculated tone and pace there could be a problem of tedium, but History Lessons avoids it with a strongly developed sense of
momentum. The use of innovatory techniques and the intense relevance of the political discussions make *History Lessons* a very important film.

Fassbinder's *All Those Called Ali* was somewhat disappointing after *Merchant of Four Seasons* and *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*. It takes a while to start moving but when it does it has a refreshingly stark quality about it. The cleaner-women talking on the office stairs for example, and the family's violent reaction to Emmi's marriage to the Moroccan Ali. Once again Fassbinder balances his film on the edge of melodramatic excess, cleverly flinging back at the audience the response he coaxed in the scene before. It is a deliberately uncomfortable film and a greatly effective one.

Michael Thornhill's *Between Wars* is reviewed elsewhere in this issue but it deserves double mention as it is, for me at least, the best of the recent Australian features. Though perhaps less carefully acted than some others, it has infinitely more to say, and it says it concisely. Thornhill justifiably views Australians as a race of ideological apathetics who end up in movements more or less by accident. The film has considerable pace and humour, which fortunately is not of the ocker type. One beautiful example is when the New Guard try to break up a farmers' cooperative picnic. The local constable arrives and quickly establishes some order. Congratulations are quickly offered, but he brushes them aside with "I don't like people trying to do my job for me."

Essentially *Ludwig II — Requiem for a Virgin King* is a film of effects. Syberberg has taken the technique of compressing backgrounds two-dimensionally to its limit, enacting all scenes in front of back-projected slides which represent the palaces and grottos of the Bavarian King. What is unfortunate is that nothing appears to have been done to avoid the ugly brown haze around each of the actors, a seemingly inevitable problem of back-projection. Another device Syberberg uses heavily is that of background music, often to the exclusion of all other sound. For example the long sequence of Ludwig kneeling at the end is played exclusively with music. However too often one's emotional response to a scene is no more than a response to a particular piece of music.

Cinematic effects, including Syberberg's excessive delight in kitsch, are justifiable only if they contribute to an overall perspective, which in this case they don't. When the barber's robe slips off to reveal a Nazi uniform one is struck by a cleverness, but it is only superficial. Clearly it suggests that elements of the Third Reich existed in the Second, but what elements? Such questions are never
answered and the film is ultimately little more than a tedious parade of technical effects.

Daniel Duval's Le Voyage D'Amélie is a comedy of great gentleness. Max, Leon, Clovis, Olso and Dan are drop-outs from a society they never can be part of. Together they plan a daylight heist but they clumsily blow it. At a loss with what to do with their stolen van, they agree to move the corpse of an old lady's husband to a country cemetery. Most of the comedy is inventive and often quite spontaneous, especially in the brilliant last twenty minutes. The film is however marred by an overnear ending, the old lady cheating them out of payment by dying.

In France where abortion is banned, Histoires D'A is a great scandal. Although documentaries on abortion are also forbidden, the film has been secretly shown all over the country. Given the difficulties of its production it is a pity the result is so mundane. Of course in such a situation as exists in France any documentary will be valuable, so it is difficult to criticize it severely. However it does have the same deficiencies of similar films elsewhere, including a tendency to polarize the issues. They either attack abortion as a form of murder, or defend it as a woman's right. Histoires D'A is clearly in favour of abortion and presents various opinions which support it. The arguments are mostly familiar though one lady has a novel insight: all male opposition is an indication of sexual inadequacy because abortion frees women to love as they choose and turns sexual prowess into a market place commodity. The major disappointment of Histoires D'A is its low key attitude towards men. Conception is a result of union between a man and woman, and consequently any discussion on abortion must include both. However like most other documentaries and articles, the male's right to a voice is totally ignored, abortion seemingly only a woman's decision. So one form of chauvinism merely replaces another.

Fuck Off Images From Finland is a disappointing documentary from Jorn Donner, especially after his excellent Anna. Despite a tendency towards boredom the film is informative, though in much the same way as Risto Jarva's One Man's War. The situation in Finland is obviously critical and attempts at rectifying it are necessary, but the film is all too sombre and depressing. It is difficult to judge though, since the print shown at Perth had already been cut by the Finnish Censorship Board, a none too enlighted body. The film's relieving humour supposedly came from various sexual encounters interpersed through the film. For example one interviewer so doggedly follows a girl through various situations that when he ends up fucking her in bed he is still questioning her.

An auto-portrait General Idi Amin Dada certainly is not. Idi Amin has an untririging ability to send himself up, but instead of leaving it at that Schroeder keeps interfering. The two best sequences in the film (the cabinet meeting and Idi Amin displaying his children) work because they simply record. Elsewhere Schroeder deliberately distorts things to raise a cheap laugh, for example the cutting in of reaction shots taken at different locations. Another film indulging in such deception is I.F. Stone's Weekly. On one occasion while President Johnson is signing some agreement, he is surrounded by a collection of delegates all at rigid attention. However to suggest some element of deviousness, Bruck cuts in a shot of the delegates shuffling around behind Johnson. This cutaway was obviously taken when everyone was waiting for the ceremony to commence. Bruck's decision to put it elsewhere for a cheap effect is dishonest and quite nauseating to watch. The truly sad thing though, is that Izzy Stone just doesn't come through it all. Instead of giving an insight into a man who is on record as saying that “the first thing a journalist should discover is that any government is run by liars and one should not believe what they say”, the film shows Izzy as just an interesting curio. His recorded speeches have little bite and consequently the strength of his stands against corruption is not conveyed.

The idea of having a black man trained by the CIA yet turning his knowledge against them has great potential, but Ivan Dixon's Spook Who Sat by the Door is merely exploitative in the manner of Shaft and Super Fly. The whites are the baddies and black is of course beautiful. Women also fit into the stereotypes of either being sold-out friends of the whites, or hookers. Spook fails because it shows no respect for its material. Dixon being much more interested in an emulation of Hollywood style slickness.

Fimpen (Stubby) was a curious selection for an international festival. Widerberg's film is an unbearably saccharine children's film, and without one redeemable quality. Seven year old Stubby becomes a superstar member of Sweden's soccer team after beating one of its champions on a local playground. However Stubby has only one trick — to kick the ball through the opponent's legs — and when he uses it for the twentieth time it is time to head for the exits. However for those who stay, the film angles off into a moral tale about Stubby being exploited by advertisers and rejected by friends. His school work also suffers and the future looks grim. However the film ends on a note of hope with ex-soccer star Stubby being asked "What is two plus two?" He gets it wrong but as his teacher says, "It is right in a sense though, but we will leave that till another day." Long live Stubby, he has made that vital effort. With films like Fimpen and heroes like Stubby, a better world is surely imminent.
Cliff Green / Scriptwriter

Interviewed by John Tittensor

Cliff Green began writing for television in the early 1960s. After a period working for Crawford Productions—the Melbourne-based producer of television dramas—he began freelancing. Since then he has become involved in a number of television and film projects. He is probably best known for his quartet Marion which was screened by the ABC earlier this year. At present he is devoting himself solely to adaptation work and original television drama, notably the ambitious Power Without Glory series for the ABC and Picnic at Hanging Rock, the film to be directed by Peter Weir.

I'd like to begin by asking how you first became involved in the kind of TV and film work you're doing now.

Well, when I was 24 I started teaching in the country, and began writing plays for the kids in the school. It was suggested to me that one of the plays could be broadcast and so I sent it off to the ABC; their response was that it was better suited to television than to radio. Now at this stage—1961—I knew nothing about TV, I hadn't even seen much of it since it still hadn't reached that part of the country, but I did what I thought was an adaptation and it went to air. This resulted in a commission for a six-part children's serial produced in Sydney, and I thought I was there; I thought I was a professional writer. But then I went through several years of not being able to get anything else on, which was very frustrating, and finally got back into the business through schools' programs, mostly television but with some radio work as well.

Then the chance came up to join Crawfords as a staff writer. I ended up staying there for three years—'69 to '71—working on Homicide and Matlock, then resigned and went freelance, which is what I've been doing since.

A lot of people have been very outspoken in their scorn for the hardline commercial stuff that Crawfords require. In retrospect do you feel that you gained anything from the time you spent there?

I gained an enormous amount. It was an apprenticeship really, and a very good one. I learned to work in close liaison with a production team, and I worked with some very good people—writers, directors, actors—and I feel that the years I spent there were important for me just as they were important for other young writers who were there. I'm sure that Australian TV and cinema writing is already starting to benefit from this bringing together of talent in much the same way that playwrights have benefitted from the Pram Factory experience—even though the original purpose was so totally different.

What about the complaint so often heard from all sorts of people who've been with Crawfords, that from the creative point of view the whole business is just intolerably restrictive?

In some ways that's a quite valid criticism: you wrote police shows and that was that, and none of it had much to do with any kind of reality; it was more akin to a PR exercise for the Victoria Police. On occasion that could be pretty frustrating, but even within the restrictions you were able to feel your way, to use the medium, and really to do quite a lot of work that you would never be ashamed of anywhere. Along with people like John Dingwall and Howard Griffiths, who were both writers on staff at the time—and very good writers at that—I feel that I learned a tremendous amount and was able to try out a lot of things.

So you feel that it helped lay the foundation for a professional approach to the kind of work—you, if you like—that you're engaged in now.

I'm sure it did. I think, though, that the trick is to know when to get out. And when I did get out I had some stocks in store for me, because although I had a certain reputation as a Crawfords writer I had to prove myself to a lot of other people in new fields and I had to unlearn a lot in order to be able to do this. I had to pull back and relax a bit, then really work to get some depth into what I was doing. Actually, having worked at Crawfords opened a number of doors for me, but they only stayed open as long as I could prove that I was capable of better work than Crawfords had been demanding. On the other hand I have to admit that there may have been some projects that I possibly missed out on because somebody said to my agent, "We don't want a Crawfords writer on this", and I know that in the initial stages of talking about Picnic at Hanging Rock there was a little uneasiness...I know too that it wasn't just a matter of walking out of Crawfords one day and doing what I really wanted to do next. There was a gradual process of development and I certainly couldn't have written Marion, for example, immediately after quitting Crawfords.

Having passed then from one kind of working situation into another quite different one, would you regard yourself now as a 'professional writer' or as a 'creative artist'—or do you think there's a middle ground?

I think it's a question of an amalgam of the two. I certainly consider myself a professional writer in that I take pride in writing to deadlines, to budgets, and even if required to specific audiences. I think that's a realistic attitude; it's no good writing in a vacuum and seeing nothing produced, nothing viewed. But I also constantly trying to expand my own horizons and to push the barriers back a little each time. I like to think that the two states of mind, the creative and the professional, can be brought together so that the spectrum of what's possible in a medium aimed directly at the public can be broadened. This is something that can't be achieved overnight, but the kind of thing the ABC is doing at present seems to me to illustrate that it's beginning to happen.

So you see Australian cinema and television as, hopefully, moving towards the sort of thing we get now in intelligent American commercial work?

In the case of film I certainly hope so. And in the case of TV I'd like to see, and I'm convinced we're moving towards, the very good situation that existed in England some years ago.

Good from the point of view of creative people, you mean?

From their point of view, and from that of the audience as well; after all, they're the consumers.

While we're talking about audiences, who do you see as your audience? Who do you have in the back of your mind while you're working?

"Granted we had to crawl before we could walk, but we crawled a little too long and a lot too slowly."

Well, no one in particular, really. I believe that we've got a broadly-based audience hungry for the kind of material management and ABC, to become less wary of what's possible in a medium aimed directly at the public can be broadened. But...I'm sure it did. I think, though, that the trick is to know when to get out. And when I did get out I had some stocks in store for me, because although I had a certain reputation as a Crawfords writer I had to prove myself to a lot of other people in new fields and I had to unlearn a lot in order to be able to do this. I had to pull back and relax a bit, then really work to get some depth into what I was doing. Actually, having worked at Crawfords opened a number of doors for me, but they only stayed open as long as I could prove that I was capable of better work than Crawfords had been demanding. On the other hand I have to admit that there may have been some projects that I possibly missed out on because somebody said to my agent, "We don't want a Crawfords writer on this", and I know that in the initial stages of talking about Picnic at Hanging Rock there was a little uneasiness...I know too that it wasn't just a matter of walking out of Crawfords..."

But you do really foresee a time when there's going to be the kind of money and facilities available for the production of local dramatic material on the scale that there has been in England in the past?

I think we're already approaching that. The important thing here is that we've learned how to do things economically, and we're not going to be any difficultymatplotlib required in England. Power Without Glory, for example is a very ambitious project, 26 one-hour episodes, and its budget was not that of comparable overseas productions. But it'll be adequate. We've got a good, lean, efficient industry, at least on the production side and we should be building on this with material relevant to the Australian scene.

Your ideas on what might constitute this material are something I'd like to come to in a moment. But in regard to the expanding local situation you've talked about are these implications for scriptwriters like yourself?

There's one major implication. In the past scriptwriters have written anything and everything: I personally have never worked on a serial, although I could have had I wanted to; but I've done just about everything else from a heavily com-
The pacing of "Marion" is very deliberate, very controlled — so much so that some people found the stories slow. This must have been a conscious thing.

I know I said that Marion wasn't a reaction to the Crawford period, but as far as pacing is concerned I think it was. I felt very strongly that having a story spinning madly along with three sub-plots all hammering away wasn't the only way to do effective television. There was also to some extent a reaction in that highly dramatic effects were avoided or at least toned down: such re-writing as took place had largely to do with that. And if I had another crack at the project there are still certain sequences, certain incidents that I would either remove or pull down. The writing of Marion was a very disciplined piece of work: very often I stopped deliberately in order to avoid pushing an idea too far. I think that TV in particular can achieve a great deal by moving away at the right moment and letting the audience involve itself retrospectively in the material. Getting the right balance can be tricky, though; you're working for a mass audience and you've got to be sure you don't leave them confused or disappointed.

Currently you're involved with Peter Weir on the planned production of "Picnic at Hanging Rock". Could you give us some background on that?

I believe it was David Williamson who originally called attention to the book's potential as a film. Peter Weir became interested, but then David was unable to continue with it because of other commitments and he suggested that I should have a go at the script. All told, the project has been waiting for this right moment and letting the audience involve itself retrospectively in the material. Getting the right balance can be tricky, though; you're working for a mass audience and you've got to be sure you don't leave them confused or disappointed.

You were talking about working as unselfconsciously as possible; in approaching "Marion" in this way were you aware of using the traditional Australian myth-making device of going back into the past and taking country people as your archetypes? I wasn't necessarily aware of that, but I suppose it is a tradition I've inherited. I cut my teeth on Henry Lawson and still regard him as a master, and to go back to the country seems to me to mean going back to a microcosm. But really, that still begs the question: I had taught in the country and had things to say about it, together with ideas from my own childhood that I wanted to bring in. And while the closed nature of rural society and its rejection of outsiders aren't new themes in our literature, there hasn't been much TV about them, and I certainly don't feel that this is an area that I've finished exploring.

Preproduction on Marion with Helen Morse (Marion) and scriptwriter Cliff Green.

The country school teacher Marion and Mr Finney (John Frawley) a conservative member of the school council.

One of Marion's pupils Anne Mason (Sally Conabere).
necessarily is confined mainly to the directions. The

Although it first appeared only in 1967 "Picnic at Hanging Rock" is written in a deliberately mannered way so that it could almost pass as a contemporary record of the events it describes. Does your treatment of the story attempt in any way to reproduce this mannered approach and to get, so to speak, on the inside of the events in the way the book does?

I really did try to write a literate script and in doing so I've attempted to get some echo of the style of the book. But this, of necessity, is confined mainly to the directions. The dialogue has to be sharp and dramatic; it's impossible to use literary dialogue in this sort of situation and it would be very false to try. The audience won't read the direction of course, but I would like to think that retaining something of the original style in the script will influence the people involved in the film to work to some extent in this style.

You've gotten something of a reputation as a thorough researcher and I was wondering just how far beyond the book itself you went in assembling material for the screenplay?

I didn't go beyond the book at all, except to visit the locations. I resisted the very strong temptation to research the basic story, my reasoning being that what I was working on was Joan Lindsay's book and not the events themselves.

Do you feel that in dealing with a specifically Australian topic like this one, while at the same time being part of a nascent, or renascent, film industry, you're perhaps hampered by a self-consciousness that creative people elsewhere simply don't have to worry about?

I think that's still a real possibility for people hung-up on the idea of doing the great thing, the definitive thing in their own field. This was a very prevalent attitude at one stage: everyone was preparing the 'great Australian statement'. But I think that's been overcome now to a great extent. Do you see that as a sign of maturity?

Yes, I think so. We set out now to make a good film, in as workmanlike a way as we're capable of, and if we get an outstanding film then that's a bonus. People realize now that it takes a lot of milk to give you just a little cream.

Looking at the same idea from, as it were, the other side of the screen, what part do you think self-consciousness is going to play in the responses of critics and audiences?

In the past this definitely weighed against us, but I think the wheel has turned now. It's always hard to say how critics are going to react, but I think our audience are very excited about seeing themselves or their past truthfully and realistically represented on the screen. It goes back to what I said earlier-on about the reception accorded recent ABC productions; there's a greater nationalism, a greater willingness to identify with the local product now, and this means that the old self-consciousness is on the wane. What we'll get, in time, is a true internationalism, with people more concerned about how good something is rather than about where it originated.

Inevitably — and I think this is a good thing — all our art forms, and cinema in particular, are going to be very much preoccupied with Australia for some time to come. But we're going to be looking at the thing from a great variety of angles and we're not going to be after the definitive Australian piece; it'll be a matter of people with some sort of creative talent and ambition expressing what's close to them and what has meaning for them. And I believe the result will have meaning for their audience. It's vital that this country should have creating, healthy, visual media; this is an essential part of our whole range of cultural self-expression. But as it becomes more relaxed, and more and more a natural reflection of what's around us it will become less and less jingoistic.

Returning to the more immediately personal side of things, could you give us a brief rundown on the projects you're involved in at the moment?

I'm doing a lot of TV work at present and finding it very satisfying. Television is moving into a very exciting phase just now; it's becoming something of a writer's medium. This is a point in the cinema hasn't reached and probably never will. I'm now working on two major adaptation projects: Power Without Glory which I mentioned before and on which I'm collaborating with several other writers; and a series of six one-hour TV plays based on some Henry Lawson stories I've been working on for a few years. In addition I've finished the first draft of a screenplay from David Martin's children's novel Hughie, although the project is in abeyance at the moment, for a number of reasons that I can't go into here. And the ABC has commissioned me to write another quartet of plays which again will be set in the country, but which will be quite different from Marion. They're set in the immediate future, actually, and they have to do with the beginnings of a country-based right-wing coup; my feeling is that I've got to get them written down soon before I'm overtaken by events!

CREDITS

TV Drama Series:
Henry Lawson (1972). Episode of "Behind the Legend" produced by the ABC.
Halfway to Anywhere (1972). Episode of "The Norman Lindsay Festival". Produced by the ABC.

Feature Films:
Hughie (1974). Two episodes produced by the ABC.

Documentary Films:
Halfway to Anywhere (1972). Episode of "The Norman Lindsay Festival". Produced by the ABC.

TV Plays:

Feature Films, in production:
Film censorship can STILL be heavy.

By ANTONY I. GINNANE

Film censorship as controversy is not much of an issue in Australia 1974 with only hard-core offerings like Devil In Miss Jones and Deep Throat still on the total banned lists, and standards generally as to soft and medium-core material, provided the right 'reconstruction is agreed on by the importer, becoming more liberal day by day. But every now and then something happens which points out to us rather sharply that the basic machinery of censorship can still be as repressive as ever.

Some eight column inches in the Melbourne Sun of October 12 announced what proved to be an event without precedent for at least the last 20 years. The Erotic Adventures of Zorro a German-American soft 'X' exploiter produced by nude operator David Friedman, passed with an 'R' and cut by the Film Censorship Board and in release at the Melbourne Chelsea and Sydney Gala some five weeks, had had its certificate of registration revoked and had been taken off the screen.

Confusion reigned as to what had happened.

Somehow or other the second, third and fourth prints of the film imported into Australia by Regent Trading Enterprises head Errol Heath had emerged from the censor's bond store uncut and the prints that had been screening in Melbourne and Brisbane were completely contrary to the Film Censorship Board's Certificate's cutting requirements. This is not the first time this has happened and this writer knows personally of at least one and possibly two other movies released in Melbourne where this has happened, but Zorro was the first to be caught out. Deputy Chief Censor Mrs Strickland advised that the Board had acted as a result of numerous complaints from the public as to the film's content, but refused to say whether the number of complaints received were more or less than normal for sexploitation films. Errol Heath, who is an oldtimer as far as independent distribution goes and has had his run-ins with the Censors back in the bad old days, blames inefficiency within the Attorneys-General's Department for the brouhaha (and it is well known that the inhabitants of the Imperial Arcade basement are not noted for either their efficiency or their consistency), but other informed sources suggested that this might be the work of the establishment getting back at Heath for his handling of the controversial Sex Aids & How To Use Them and for his blasts at the kangaroo-court Queensland Film Board of Review, both publicly at the recent Annual Exhibitor's Convention and in the pages of the trade paper Australasian Cinema.

This offshoot of Bjelke Petersen's banana republic is headed by a self-opinionated Brisbane solicitor named Draydon. It was instrumental in banning Zorro in Queensland on Friday, September 13. The Queensland Board meets in total secrecy; gives no reasons for its decisions and gazettes its decisions within hours giving distributor and exhibitor little time to attempt alternate programming. The only options open to an aggrieved distributor is an expensive appeal to the Queensland Supreme Court or a mutually agreeable reconstruction (i.e. cutting) of the film which may produce a version quite different to that screenable elsewhere in Australia (How's that for freedom of trade between the states: Senator Murphy, attention please).

Late on Monday, October 14 the matter appeared to be resolved. The uncut prints of Zorro had been cut and the Melbourne Chelsea was screening it once more. I have yet to see the cut print, but I saw the uncut print and found it far from being anything in the way of a notable censorship breakthrough. Strange to say on the Friday prior to the announcement of the Zorro ban I had viewed the Morrissey Frankenstein which has been passed uncut and which contains some of the most revolting scenes of sadomasochism ever seen on the screen. Does the Board now stoop to intellectual snobbery in that a Morrissey film is somehow immune from the rigours of life that a piece of 'Z' grade porn like Zorro must face. Haven't Prowse and Co. heard of precedents?

Whether Queensland will now reconsider its ban in the face of the federal cutting remains to be seen. Purists may argue that not many tears should be spilt over the fate of a film like Zorro, but it is the principle that is important. The total arbitrariness of the Queensland Board is obvious. The Federal Board in its action of pulling off a film at a moment's notice is just as arbitrary.

Moreover the powers of the Federal Board of Review have not been spotlighted sufficiently of late. This group composed inter alia of public servants, TV commentator and academics hears evidence for a reconsideration of the decision of the Board at first instance; then makes its decision after private discussion. It gives no reasons for its decision, (like most Australian quasi-judicial tribunals, unlike in England where detailed reasons must be given) and its decision (save for the little used appeal to the Attorneys-General) is final. One major area of censorship reform long overdue must be for both the Board and the Board of Review to have to give detailed reasons for their decisions.

Finally Deputy Chief Censor Strickland made the interesting point that had either the exhibitor or distributor in the Zorro case refused to take off the movie, Commonwealth Customs action for prohibited imports would not lie (despite the delegation of censorial powers by the State's Attorneys-General to the Commonwealth) but that the individual State Attorneys-General would have to take their own actions under the Summary Offences Act of each state and related legislation.

The time may soon come when a distributor or exhibitor may well feel that a County Court jury would be more qualified to express an opinion on the offensiveness or otherwise of a movie than a gaggle of Machiavellian ciphers trading under infallibility from a Sydney basement.
WERNER HERZOG: I try to make films because I know that I have some sort of vision or insight. The *Dwarfs* film is really like a terrifying nightmare, and I know this sort of nightmare is within most people. I cannot prove it but I somehow know it. It is some sort of subconscious knowledge and I know that with that film I was the one to articulate it. I can demonstrate it and all of a sudden it becomes transparent to others. It is very, very simple why I make films. For example when you have a very strong dream at night, the next morning you want to tell your husband or your friend about it. When I make a film I try to articulate, and I know I can do it so therefore I do it.

When you are making a film do you make concessions for an audience, or do you make it the only way you can? I do not have much choice, that’s for sure. I have only a very limited choice because if I couldn’t make films I don’t know what else I could do. Filmmaking is just something for hystericals I think. While making a film I see it so clearly that I try to come as close as possible in my directing of it. When I see a landscape I try to find it in reality, and that’s a lot of work. Film stock has its own life and it becomes somehow independent. I like to see my prints and I like to carry them around although it is very hard because they are 20 kilos and the string cuts your hand.

When asked for whom he made films, Herzog once replied: “For leaping bullfrogs and dazed dromedaries.” Given this reluctance to discuss the intentions of his films, the following interview, conducted by Scott Murray, concerns itself with personal reflections on many of his films and a general discussion of his approach to directing.

But I like to feel the weight of it, that pressure, and I know I can get rid of it because I can just leave it on the ground and walk away. Then I can come back and know it is somewhere else, maybe in Mexico, and it is a good feeling to know it. This is one of the reasons I hate T. V. because it passes on one night and that’s it. It is so good to know while shooting a film that some of your films are being shown in England or Algeria. They have got independent somehow. I see a film very clearly before I make it, so it is no problem at all to write a script. I can write as fast as I can type, so it takes me two or maybe three days to do.

Do you do your own editing? Yes, I would say so. I do my own camerawork as well but I am not the cameraman, because I tell him very clearly what I want to have in the shot. I did the editing of my short films alone, but with features it is something different. I work with an editor, an ingenious lady* who has edited all the films of Alexander Kluge, and Kluge would be a nothing, a shadow of himself if he hadn’t had that woman. She is really a genius and she has an instinct for material. When working in an editing room for two months you have to keep a distance between yourself and the material, you must become a nothing. I see so many films where I am conscious that the director has an intention with the material. They try and force it into a shape and it is an awkward feeling. When I edit a film I become an absolute zero. I just look at it as if I had found it in the street. I try to find out what the material is about, how has it developed and how has it gained its own life. Sometimes there are things in the material which you hadn’t seen before, and you only can see it when you have eradicated yourself and become a nothing.

Do you do much editing in the camera? I always do have it in mind. In my last film I usually had four minute scenes without any interruption. If I want to go closer for some details I shoot it again because then I have the possibility to shorten it later. However if the long take by itself does not work, the scene would not work even if you went from detail to detail to detail.

* Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus

You said that material sometimes gets its own life. Yes. It’s a certain instinct for the material itself. I really know how to make a film and the techniques to use, but sometimes I refuse to use them when I see that there is something in the film which is more important than my ideals about it. It’s about sincerity also. I never take it seriously what I am or what I have to do with a film because I know the film is something that is beyond me, something which has more importance than my private life. I do not care about being imprisoned in Africa, I really do not care, it’s not important. The only important thing is what you see up on the screen and then I know that whatever I have made, some of it will survive me.
Do you spend much time seeing other people's films?

Yes, I do, because sometimes it is necessary. Everything is somehow the creation of an effect.

In "Fata Morgana", there are a couple of times when you use very fast pan-shots and it is a relief when it stops. It is sort of aggressive. Is this what you were trying to do or did it just happen that way?

Yes, it's true. Land of Silence & Darkness is a very clear example. In all my films there is some sort of the terrible difficulty to make oneself understood and that consequent isolation. Land of Silence and Darkness is about the terror to make yourself understood.

What would you say if somebody suggested that in "Fata Morgana" you are almost disgusted by human beings?

Yes to some extent, because of what they have done. "Paradise" is a very cruel aspect of things and somehow it took some boldness for me to see it, and to face it so straight on and stark naked.

"Even Dwarfs Started Small" seems your most desperate film?

Yes, I shot it with an entire cast of midgets. It took me one year almost to find them and they are not dwarfs but midgets, and there is a different feeling, a different moti­tion, and they are charming and for me beautiful people. The thing which is distorted and monstrous in the film are the objects because they are of normal size. For example the motor cycle all of a sudden turns to be a monster, and it is not only the motor cycle, it is the sort of education they get, it's the table manners, the religious teaching. All of a sudden you realise that it's a monstrosity and that our life is a monstrosity because we can't walk for a mile without hitting a wall, without bumping a regulation, or a policeman. It is a very desperate sort of a film. Midgets have a certain quality which is very hard to describe, but somehow seem to me as if they are a concentration of what we are as human beings. For example there is a scene at the end where the smallest midget, who is only 2 feet tall, stands in front of a dromedary who is kneeling on its front knees with its ass in the air. It goes on for minutes and minutes and minutes, but in a humorous aspect of it you see and somehow there is a concentration of what we are as human beings.
concentration of all possible human laughter. It's a most terrifying thing.

In the last shot of "Aguirre" the camera just keeps circling. In "Signs of Life" they always keep it high. It's like a wooden owl, and so forth. Are these sorts of symbols conscious?

I just do them. After seeing all my films within one week, which happened just recently, I found out all of a sudden it was a common sort of motive. Like in Signs of Life there is a gypsy king in search of his people and they are running after each other in some sort of a dance. They also talk about processes of wood parasites which walk in processions, hundreds of thousands all lined up. They talk about defecating midgets which break the garage open and take the car out. For the rest of the film it is circling around in the inner yard without any driver at all and it's too terrible because it is so desperate, there is no way out. Somehow the people in some of my films are caught up by hermetic circles which they can't break out of, maybe with the exception of sheer violence.

However in your films so far there is no one that's ever been able to escape. They either go mad like in "Signs of Life," or they are left alone on a raft, defeated but dreaming of future conquests. Some people would claim that it's a terrifically pessimistic view. Do you see it in that way?

Well it might be, but I wouldn't say it is too pessimistic. Maybe the end of the DemocraticWorship because there is no way out and it freezes on a horrifying laughter and a camel down on its knees. I'd say it is quite desperate, but yet it seems to me as if there is something so good that day those midgets ever had, and so it was worthwhile for them. It was a really joyful day destroying everything and turning things upside down.

Oh it's really on the edge though. Like those two who go into the bedroom and can't get up on the bed.

Yeah, the man can't climb onto the bed because it is too high for him. Well you know these films are quite personal and somehow it gets that feeling that it is more than just a daydreams.

You said earlier that your films are intuitive in the way you do things. Earlier in your filmmaking did you build up a body of knowledge, or did you always have confidence that you could go out and express an idea the way it had to be?

Yes, of course. For example I never worked as an assistant and I never went to a film school. I was so confident that I started very early with 35 mm short films. I can tell you how I started. When I was in high school I used to work on an assembly line doing welding jobs. I did that for two years, from eight o'clock at night till six o'clock in the morning and during the day I slept. Then I prepared my films, and that's how I started. But I was quite selfish, I didn't even raise the question of whether I was fit to do it or not, I just did it. I didn't have the privilege to choose my profession.

What do you think of filmmaking courses in Universities?

You can learn the technical side of filmmaking in 48 hours, all the rest is not necessary. The rest you can only learn while making films. I do not really trust film schools. I don't know one single filmmaker of importance who has come out of one. You should go out and just do it. When you are writing a novel what does it cost you, what sort of teaching or learning does it cost you? It requires that you maybe learn to read what you buy, yes, but it's also. If you know that you can write a novel, all the rest you do yourself. Maybe I am too onedimensional because I find nothing autobiographical. I am very much self-made and I don't have an inclination to say that you should drop your courses and go out and steal a camera, steal some film material and make a film. If you have a good idea then you have every right in the world to steal a camera, or monkeys, or whatever it is you want. I saw in my hotel many cameras just lying around and the Russian Emrskolenko didn't leave the hotel, and they could have made a film in that time. I always get confused when I see cameras like this, lazy cameras, and I think there is a certain right to steal a camera one day. It is expropriation. I don't say that to appear leftist, I really mean it. It is some sort of vital necessity and doesn't have anything to do with ideology. If you need air to breathe and you are locked in a car and you have to take a hammer and break down the wall. It's your right.

Do you deliberately choose a subject?

How can I say it? For example I never make any plans about what to do, it just occurs, like as if an apple fell on me from a tree. It's as if you don't even know where you are going because I do not dream at all. Not at all, maybe once in two years. I am a completely dreamless person. But I have very clear sort of daydreams. When I walk, for example, whole novels occur to me, or when I drive a car for a long distance it's as if I was in a movie all the time. I do not even think of the drives, it's always through 1,000 miles, it's as if I was in a novel. So strange things occur.

How difficult was it to get your first feature, "Signs of Life," off the ground?

It was my first feature film. I had done short films before. I wrote the script when I was 20 or 21 and it took me three years to get the finances together. No one trusted in me because I was so young and they didn't believe that I was able to make that film. Years before when I was 16 I had written a script and submitted it to a company which accepted it. I wrote letters to them many times. I thought I was 40 or something like that and when I walked in and said my name it was all finished. That's one of the reasons why I become a producer myself, it was a sheer necessity because I was too young to be trusted. It's just a chain of the years of humiliation, failures and defeats. What I am right now is the product of my failures, I am just made by failures.

"Signs of Life" came from a short story, didn't it?

No, not really. There is a short story written about 150 years ago by a German author Akin von Ahm, which was based on an incident recorded in a German newspaper in 1805. For a time I was very much interested in questions of military theory and I studied a lot about war history. I had this report in a newspaper about an incident in the Seven Years War where a guy became insane and locked himself up in a tower. He fired firework rockets around himself and fought off friends and enemies. I only found out later that it was on the same subject that Akin's story was written. It doesn't have anything to do with it, but it's a beautiful story because it starts very funny. An old major who was wounded in the Seven Years War who has a wooden leg reports the story as he sits by a fireplace. While he tells the story he gets so absorbed that he doesn't realise that his leg catches fire. It's a beautiful story. But to do the film was quite complicated because I started shooting only two or three weeks after the military takeover in Greece in 1967, and the authorities and town majors were so afraid of the Colonels that they really didn't dare allow anything at all. My permissions would suddenly become invalid overnight and we really had to force our way through it. It was terrible at that time, but there are always catastrophes in my films.

Did the winning of a prize for the first feature at Berlin help in financing your next ones?

No, I wouldn't say so. That prize of the Silver Bear at the Berlin Film Festival is just a silver bear. I hoped it was hollow inside because I saw off the head to make an ashtray out of it but it was not hollow after all. So I was disappointed. However that same year during the Festival the National Film Award was given to me and that's not only a handshake by the Minister of Interior Affairs, it is also a lot of money. I received 350,000 Deutschmark which is really a hell of a lot of money. It was not for me privately, I had to invest it in my next film and that's how the Dwarfs film was made. It's a relatively good way of getting government aid. In Germany you also can submit a script in some sort of competition and a committee selects three or four of the 400 submitted. You can receive an award and 200,000 Deutschmark which is $100,000, and that's quite a lot. I also received that award for my last film, Every Man For Himself and God Against All and for Aguirre. That was a lot of help, you can really then start the financing of a film.

What have the returns been like? Have they been sufficient in Germany, or do you have to depend on world sales?

It is more world sales. In Germany I am rather unknown. The Dwarfs film didn't have any exploitation at all in Germany as only a very few cinemas showed it, and I had to rent most of them myself because the film was banned. Signs of Life had a lot of very favourable reviews but no one went to see it. I've always found it less difficult in other countries, but it is slowly getting better and Signs of Life now has bigger audiences than five years ago. It is proceeding very, very slowly, and one thing which is really strange is that people normally don't ask for one of my films, let's say Aguirre or Signs of Life, but ask about Life in a North African town as seen in Fata Morgana.

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for most of them. I found the same thing here at the Perth Film Festival, people preferring all sorts of techniques somehow they fit together. It’s like a family series, you always want to see a little bit more.

If we can move on to “Fata Morgana”. Would you say it is a more personal film than, say, “Aguirre”?

I wouldn’t say, though Aguirre has one thing which is not so personal. I tried to make a sort of genre film. I took the form of adventure movie but gave it a new sort of filling, full of new meanings. Fata Morgana I made absolutely open to everything and I tossed away my script the very first day of shooting and I let things come into me. It was like a dream, a hallucination. It is strange because I thought people wouldn’t like the film and they would find it very peculiar and I would laugh at it so I just wanted to keep it a secret all through. I planned to hand it over to my best friend before I died and then he would hand it over to his best friend before he died and so on. I tricked out of my hands after two years of hiding it by Lotte Eisner and Henry Langlois. They just didn’t hand me the print back, they gave it to the Quinines and so on. I think it’s almost right now that the film is being shown and strangely enough people like it, most of the people like it.

It’s a very accessible film though you’d think it probably wouldn’t be.

It is unprecedented to some extent and I think it is a really good thing about the film is that it was made at all. It occurred to me like a dream and it’s a very vulnerable sort of film. It’s hard to explain. I always try to have some sort of moral and insight through the story itself, a visionary sort of inner light. In Signs of Life there is an incredible shot with 10,000 Chimpanzees where it is something really deep inside you and all of a sudden you see it and it becomes a transparent vision. It’s surreal as if it was a dream. In Fata Morgana we took away all the story and just filmed many mirages, it was one of the main motives to show the other side.

What are some of the mirages because it is difficult to tell them apart from other images?

You may remember there is a bus which stops and people walk out of it in a very strange way, as if the bus was swimming on a lake, and the people are thin just like pencils in an exaggerated, stretched form. They do not walk they just drift and drift together again. We really thought for a moment it was a real bus but it was only the reflection of a bus which was may 100 miles away. We went there by car, thinking it was only a mile away, but we went for 800 miles and there was absolutely nothing, not even the track of that bus. It was really incredible.

Can you give some idea of the feelings you had when you experienced these mirages?

Yeah, it is so irrational you are like in a constant dream. A big desert like the Sahara is not only a form of landscape, it is also a form of life, a sort of solitude and silence. For months it’s totally silent and you have to have been exposed to it to understand it. There is always that sort of unreal feeling and you ask if it is real another planet. It is just incredible and I think there is nothing in the world like the Sahara.

Did you shoot all of it in the Sahara?

No, some parts were shot in Uganda and East Africa. For example at the beginning there was an airplane flying over a salt-natron lake and it looked like a strange structure. For example there is one scene shot from an aeroplane where the ground looks pink, but it is not pink colour but million flamingoes down there. But you can’t distinguish that.

Were most of these shots done from aeroplanes, like the one through the sand dunes at the beginning?

That’s not an aeroplane, that’s a sort of a road we built. For ten days we worked with an aeroplane flying over a very smooth road, and then we mounted the camera on top of the car. I drove the car because it was very important how fast it went, the rhythm of the travelling-shot. It was such a lot of toil you wouldn’t imagine. We went during the hottest season because you can expect more mirages at that time. The Saharan sandstorm which took eight days to recover from, and we ran into a rainy season in the southern Sahara and that’s the worst of all. In Uganda we were arrested and the airplane was confiscated. We are supposed to have flown over the Sahara but were arrested in Algeria for filming without permission. We were arrested several times. In Copenhagen on charges of being mercenaries there was a rather typical attempt coup which had failed and the police and military forces maintained their power by sheer terror.

Unfortunately the cameramen had almost the same name as a German mercenary leader who was condemned to death in absentia and they thought they had grabbed him when they got us. They really treated us badly. I have got bayonet scars all over my body from where they tortured me. Nobody ever will know who the actual Fata Morgana was, and so you can see how important the film was for me.

How rigidly was “Even Dwarfs Started Small” scripted?

I had a script which was the basic story. One-third was changed during shooting and a lot of the dialogue was made up on set. I had tended more to the script without any dialogue. My last script is like a prose text, but it very precisely describes what you see, how people move and what they do. Of all my films so far, Dwarfs is the most naked and direct.

Do you think that is one of the reasons why it was banned in Germany?

No there are other reasons. I mean blasphemy, for example, violence, anarchy, things like that. To tell the truth the film was banned a bit later and it was released without a single cut so I am now free to show it everywhere in Germany, but for a really final discussion with the film I was even threatened with murder for a time when I showed it in Munich. I was called up every night between three and four in the morning by people who told me ugly things.

Where did you get the idea for “Aguirre”?

It was relatively strange how the idea originated. I leaped through a book at a friend’s home and there was among some of the children’s books, one about the discoveries, on Columbus, Amundsen, Scott and people like this. Incidentally I saw about 15 lines of text on a strange Spaniard Conquistador called Aguirre who also called himself the “Wrath of God” and who led a large expedition into the Amazon jungle in search of El Dorado. He claimed one of his people as the new emperor of El Dorado and disinherited King Phillip II of Spain in a mock letter. That really intrigued me so I started to write the script the next day. There is a funny detail about it because at the time I was playing in a German soccer team and we went to Austria in a bus. By the time we were about 120 kms from Munich everyone was deadly drunk and they shouted and sang obscene songs. I sat for two days in that bus with a typewriter on my knees while they vomited around me. I wrote the script within these two days. Then I tried to raise the money because I had to produce it myself and it was really a hell of a lot of trouble.

How much did you have to raise?

Well I said I had to raise maybe $2 million to make that film but it ended up about $330,000, so I had to decide whether to dare it on that money or not. We finally made it but please do not ask how we made it, it was really terrible. We had to do it under such pressure, the pressure of finance and the pressure of nature. You shouldn’t forget that we shot the film right in the heart of the Amazon jungle with its tensions around. Nothing at all around but snakes and alligators and piranhas. It was just incredible toil and . . . well we crossed the line of power. At the end we had to make sure we were drifting down the river and nobody is alive except the leader who assumed power. Then 370 monkeys enter the raft and take over. We stole the monkeys because we couldn’t take them. We went to Iquitos Airport where there are weekly shipments to the United States for American zoos, and we claimed to be veterinarians and they said they all got shots but only half survived. They didn’t believe us.

How much time did you spend researching in Peru beforehand?

Not too much. I wrote the script in Germany and I had described the story so precisely that it didn’t have any choice, it had to be like this and it was. I was there for three months to organize it. There is an instance where I used to have to have the expedition pass through rapids on some rafts, and those Amazon tributaries have some very spectacular rapids but they’re too dangerous for people passing through with a camera and a horse. So I went down most of the main Amazon tributaries and found three rapids on the Huallaga River which we are not too dangerous, but were still quite dangerous as you can see in the film. If you see a shipwreck in a Hollywood film you can see, they did it in their bathroom, but in this film you can see it’s real, authentic danger.

Did you have many problems with the authorities in Peru?

No, not really — not like the trouble with the authorities in Greece when I made Signs of Life. In Peru it was much easier because there’s a left-wing military regime there which is very strange. Usually military regimes have a tendency to be reactionary and fascist, but in Peru those people are really alright and they liked the project. They have discovered their own past, that imperialistic past which they were formed on and hate. They like their Indian heritage and they regard us as beings of the Indians and against the Spanish Conquistadors that they liked it. In the jungle itself it’s complete anarchy, it’s not governed at all and every man does what he likes because there are no authorities around. People are in their hammocks on the river bank and they watch the river passing by all the time. It’s like life in a coma. Beautiful, it’s really beautiful.

Where exactly did you shoot?

I shot the film on three main strips though we used the Rio Urubamba which is really wild, a really incredible river. We continued on the Rio Huallaga where we shot the rapids, and ended up on the Rio Nayan which is close
The institution's governor holds one of the dwarfs in custody inadvertently causing a revolution and giving them 'the happiest day of their life'. From Even Dwarfs Started Small.

metres above the Urubamba River which the Incas had made. It was terrible to climb because it was always slippery and I ran up and down it at least four times instructing every single person precisely what to do. I did not use megaphones or things like that, so it's really some sort of athletic exercise. I always say that any one of my films is not something in my brain, it is something that comes out of my muscles. I like to have a real body feeling for things I direct. For example I built a raft myself.

How many rafts did you have?

At the end on the Rio Nanay we had 14 rafts, really big ones with sort of houses on them, Indian type houses on poles and with thatched roofs and hammocks inside. We also had one raft just for the kitchen. We used to float down the river during the day, the shooting raft about a mile ahead so we would shoot a few bends of the river ahead of the rest. At noon we would tie it onto some branches on the river bank and wait for the kitchen raft to arrive. It was a beautiful thing to do, but only afterwards can I say that it was beautiful. At the time it was horrible.

Is this difficulty important for you? A lot of your films are made on difficult locations.

Like the Sahara and Canary Islands. Well it's true, but I wouldn't say I like it. I would really prefer to make a film, like my last one, Every Man for Himself and God Against All, in Germany. That was the first film I made in Germany, apart from Land of Silence and Darkness, but I mean the first feature film. I really would like to make all my films in Germany but there is no jungle around, no red Indians or things like this. Yet after all the shooting I've done so far I have found that shooting under a certain amount of pressure and insecurity brings a lot of life into a film. It forces real life, genuine life into the film.

Yes you certainly get that feeling in "Aguirre". How did you do those shots circling the raft, particularly the one at the end? They look like helicopter shots.

Yes I wanted to have it as smooth as a helicopter but there are no helicopters in the Amazon area. The Andes are 15,000-16,000 feet high and a helicopter can't cross them. So we had a speed boat approaching the raft very, very fast and then circling around it, slowing down a little bit and circling around again. You can imagine that it was very difficult to do so, and we had to practise for a very long time, many days. When you slow a boat down your own waves will overtake you, so when you circle around you have to cut through your own wake and the image begins to shake. To avoid that we had to deflect our waves to a certain degree and that's really difficult to do. It was a hand-held camera by the way.

It's incredibly smooth. In fact the hand-held camera work throughout the whole film is excellent.

The cameraman Thomas Mauch received the National Film Award for Aguirre. He had deserved it for years and years, like for Signs of Life and the Dwarfs film. Everything he did in his life deserved it and now when it was by far too late they give it to him.

Where did you find that beautiful man who plays the flute?

Maybe I should explain that I have dedicated the film to that Indian flute player. I found him by accident in the market place of Cusco playing
It's a real contrast. Kinski is well known to be the most difficult actor in the world. He has the most contracts that nobody ever dares to make a full-length film with him, with the exception of Corbucci who used him in one western. Anyway Kinski is literally insane. From what I heard he raised a loneliness and asked, "Hombrerito why do you wear three jackets on top of each other?" He turned round to me and whispered, "To keep out the bad breath of the pyramids."

That's a very beautiful shot where you hold on him after he has finished playing.

Yes, you see how insane he is. He has such a beautiful face.

What about Klaus Kinski?

It's contrast. Kinski is well known to be the most difficult actor in the world. He has such contracts that nobody ever dares to make a full-length film with him. After shooting finished all the team had to spread out and dig because he couldn't remember the place where he had hidden them. I met him again after the shooting in Cusco and he had bought three jackets with his salary. I went up to him and asked, "Hombrerito why do you wear three jackets on top of each other?" He turned round to me and whispered, "To keep out the bad breath of the pyramids."

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'You Don’t Blow Up Ladies'

Patricia Edgar

Violence in the cinema is not new. Mack Sennett was chaining heroines to railway lines in 1913. In *Birth of a Nation* (1914) Griffith included: battle scenes, the Ku Klux Klan at work, and an attempted rape by a black man of a white girl, who chooses to leap from a cliff rather than face dishonour. Eisenstein’s *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) portrayed a massacre, and Gangster films were one of the most popular genres by the 1930's.

Current films do reflect a preoccupation with violence which rarely occurs off-screen nowadays and there are quite deliberate attempts to shock and create nausea and revulsion in the audience. Over the years the shock threshold has certainly been raised.

Researchers have asked what it all means. Is violence as a means of solving problems being endorsed? Are films instigating violence? Are we becoming desensitised? Studies have counted violent acts, surveyed populations, experimented with viewer reactions, examined delinquents’ attitudes, and the answers to the above questions are not to be found. Nor will they be with such research techniques. Experimental studies have nothing to do with violence in society. Content analysis is meaningless without an understanding of the context of film violence and of the context of that violence in society. Violence can be immensely varied in its nature and function. Official agents use violence to solve their problems. Nations go to war and sanction hijackings and terrorism. So what are we talking about when we discuss cause and effect relationships between screen violence and an individual audience member?

One of the areas that has rarely been explored is the process of perception as applied to mass media. When we sit in an audience to view a film: we do not understand, interpret or even see the same events on the screen as others around us. What we understand or recall relates to our own social context and life experience, so the same material evokes different responses from different people.

In 1971 I undertook research in order to document this process. From an initial sample of 816 secondary school students in Victoria, who ranged in age from 12 to 14 years, 159 were selected on the basis of sex and self-esteem. Self-esteem is regarded as an important sociological and psychological variable by personality theorists, clinicians and social psychologists. It is believed that self-esteem is associated with effective personal functioning and has pervasive and significant effects. Research findings indicate that persons with low self-esteem suffer from feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, self-doubt and inferiority, which handicap them in their work and social relationships. Persons with high self-esteem are generally happier, believe in their own perceptions, assume an active role in social groups and express their views effectively and frequently.

The 159 subjects in this research study were selected following their responses to a self-esteem inventory developed by an American psychologist (Stanley Coopersmith). The inventory included questions relating to four areas — the home and family, the school, peer groups and general personal interests and feelings — and each individual’s score represented the evaluation he or she made about himself/herself in these four areas. The questionnaire was repeated five months later to ensure that the individual’s evaluation was maintained over time. Those subjects with the lowest and highest self-esteem scores were selected for the study.

Significant differences were expected in the interpretation of film content between individuals who regarded themselves highly and as being worthy, and individuals who regarded themselves poorly and as inadequate.

It was predicted that, while the four major groups — male high esteem, male low esteem, female high esteem, female low esteem — would respond to film content differently as a result of their different world views, there would be an individual response, due to each individual’s unique life experience and, therefore, unique construction of reality, which would modify the patterns of response from the four groups.

The study involved the four groups viewing three films in a commercial cinema. Following each film they were interviewed, or responded to open-ended questionnaires, about their reactions to, and enjoyment of each film. Half the sample viewed the films on one day and the other half viewed the films in a different order the following day.

Descriptions of the Films

The three films chosen were *The Dirty Dozen*, *The War Game* and *Our Mother’s House*. Although many readers will have seen the films it is necessary to describe them in some detail to jog memories and to provide a reference for the viewers' responses.
The Dirty Dozen

The Dirty Dozen is set in England in 1944. The film begins with a hanging execution in an army prison, which Major Reisman, a US army officer (Lee Marvin) is called to witness. Reisman is noted for his rejection of discipline, in order to show them that he and has a record demonstrating that he is an individualist who does not submit meekly to authority. He is ordered to select 12 prisoners convicted for crimes of murder, rape and robbery with violence, and to train and qualify them for a behind-the-lines operation in six weeks. Their target is to be a French chateau, used for conferences and recreation by German officers. Their purpose is to kill as many officers as possible in order to interrupt the German chain of command prior to the Allied forces invasion of Europe. This mission is called Project Amnesty, as the men selected from the prison are not expected to return alive. But if there is any breach of discipline, they will go right back to prison.

Reisman first meets the prisoners in the prison yard, where they refuse to drill correctly. Victor Franco (John Cassavetes) defiance Reisman and says he won't march. Reisman pulls him aside and says he is going to have him kicked out. Either you march or I beat your brains out. Reisman turns and Franco attacks him. Reisman throws him to the ground and kicks him in the face. The rest of the prisoners then march.

Reisman is given a file on each prisoner and he visits each in his cell to persuade him to join the mission. All are hostile and uncooperative but agree to take part as their sentences are limited. Reisman tells them, "The mission gives you three ways to go. Either you foul up in training and you'll be back in prison, you can foul up in combat and I'll blow your brains out, or you can do as you're told. You are dependent upon each other. If any of you tries anything smart, then twelve of you get it right in the head".

The men drive off to their training site, where they set to work building their facilities and beginning the training programme which involves all the skills they will later need: scaling walls with rope, throwing ropes, fighting and killing. The dozen are an ill-assorted reluctant 'team'. Reisman continually has to control acts of defiance, and reluctance to complete tasks. When one of the dozen freezes with fear two-thirds of the way up a high climbing rope, Reisman shoots the rope from under him and the prisoner scurries up to the top midst the laughter of the others. Another of the dozen, a huge simple-minded black member of the dirty dozen, shoots the prisoner's own head and kicks his body. Reisman is summoned by the General with us."

Consequently, when Reisman arrives with his men, Breed has arranged for an inspection of his platoon and a VIP greeting. Reisman stresses the need for discipline, for exceeding orders in the field, discipline, or you can foul up in training and you'll be back in prison. Buildings are to be cancelled because of Breed's, and asks for a chance to show their worth. This chance is given during divisional manoeuvres a week later. Breed's men are assigned to defend headquarters. Reisman tells his liaison officer to get Breed off his back. He says, "Tell him anything, tell him I beat him up. I've got a secret mission and we've got a general with us."

Breed is furious and tells Reisman that he is a disgraced clown and that he is going to run him out. He gets two of his soldiers to beat up Vadislaw in the latrine to try and get information out of him. Jefferson and Posey come to the rescue, but they believe Reisman has organised the beating.

The next scene shows the men in the chateau, used for conferences and recreation. They parachute drop. They make their way to the chateau, which Reisman and Vadislaw enter disguised as German officers. All proceeds well until Maggot slits the throat of a woman who tries to come into a room where they are. Reisman then starts shooting wildly. Jefferson, the black member of the dirty dozen, shoots Maggot, and chaos and panic ensue. The Germans and their women, alerted that much is going on, come down the steps of the chateau. Reisman and Vadislaw, also pretending to flee, drop behind and lock the Germans in the cellar. Outside the German guard shoot at the rest of the dirty dozen. Jefferson is killed by a bullet hole in his forehead, and the remaining ten men are exterminated. Jefferson is shot as he finishes his run past the vents to the car that is being used for escape. Just as Franco yells "We made it, we made it", he is shot. Only the of the original fourteen survive: Major Reisman, the MP Sergeant, and the member of the dirty dozen who had been shown to be the most trustworthy, Vadislaw (Charles Bronson). His crime had been to shoot a soldier who was running off with the medical supplies. Reisman's comment when he learned this was, "You made one mistake. You let somebody see you do it!".

The final scene shows Reisman, Vadislaw and the MP in hospital. They are visited by the two generals who sent them on the mission, who tell them what a fine job they have done. When they leave, Vadislaw says, "Killing generals could get to be a habit with me".

The film is exciting and violent, filled with action, suspense and humour. It has been a box-office success, and one of the big money makers in the film industry. It was described by the director, Robert Aldrich, as a film about the redemption of men. It has been described by a reviewer as an immoral film that fails to make the point that the men are potent heroes for precisely the same reason that society imprisoned them.
The War Game

The War Game is made as a documentary of a simulated atomic attack on Britain. The film describes the events that could lead up to a nuclear attack. It opens by showing maps indicating the deployment of British nuclear bomber bases, the areas which could be attacked by Russian missiles, and the plans for evacuation. The events in Berlin and Vietnam are shown as the catalyst which could lead to the holocaust. Views of ordinary citizens and public figures are juxtaposed, demonstrating their apathy and ignorance.

The film sets up a number of hypothetical situations and extends them to their logical conclusion. The plan to evacuate women and children to other communities and the plans to protect the public are shown. The Home Office manual, on education in case of a nuclear attack, is discussed; the exploitation of those selling equipment for shelters, and plans by owners of shelters to keep others out at gunpoint are shown.

The narrator comments in documentary style: "At 11.00 a.m. on September 18, a doctor makes an emergency call. The last two minutes of peace in Britain could look this way. We are then shown the effects of the bomb blast on the family the doctor has come to visit, who are 60 miles from the point of bomb impact. Eyeballs melt and furniture and curtains ignite in the house. The shock blast follows and winds of 100 miles an hour blow people about. The scenes are set alongside a Bishop stating the world must learn to live with the bomb. "Law and order is necessary," he says, "I believe in the war of the just." The bomb blast means coma and death for victims in three minutes. The survivors are divided into categories. Some are shot, many are left to die, covered in burns, in severe pain and with no drugs. For others, shock causes permanent neurosis. One third of the area of Britain is covered by radiation and death from leukemia results in five weeks.

Juxtaposed against pictures of the suffering, an official states, "The menu will be braised steak, carrots, apple-pie and custard." A nuclear expert states, "We can't say if the way of life will be the same." Over further images of the suffering victims the narrator says, "Rat bites could not be treated because there were no drugs. People offered two pounds for a loaf of bread." Hunger riots break out and police kill rioters, provoking a civil riot against police. The narrator says, "In fifteen years thirteen more countries will have nuclear weapons and we will possibly see this happen before 1980." After four months, scurvy is rife from lack of food, refugee compounds are formed and orphans state to the camera, "I don't want to be nothing".

The film ends with an account of the stockpile of bombs, which continues to grow, and pictures of the wounded sitting waiting. Throughout, the camera lingers on the suffering of the people and the statements interspersed through the film offer no hope from public leaders. The film is so shocking in its impact that it was banned from the BBC in England for fear of the panic it might cause.

Such a film may appear to be an extreme choice, but it was chosen because of its strong impact, as all children in this age group are now used to seeing scenes of war daily in newsreels on television; the film chosen therefore had to be one which covered more than the usual war pictures shown by news reporters.
Our Mother's House

Our Mother's House is a story revolving around a family of seven children. It begins startlingly with the death of the children's mother who has been sick for a long time. Each evening the children have been accustomed to gather in the mother's room for "mother time", when she would read the bible to them. This particular evening the mother dies. The children sit in the kitchen with their cocoa and discuss the situation. They decide that they will keep the mother's death a secret so that they will not be placed in an orphanage. Dunstan, the second eldest boy says, "We have to have a funeral. God said so". Diana, the second eldest girl says, "They're not going to take mother away are they?" And Gertie, the youngest girl says, "Can't we bury mother in the garden?"

They decide to do this and to have "mother time" each night, the same as they always had in order to talk to her. They move all their mother's things to the outhouse in the garden — Our Mother's House — and each night they "talk" to mother through Diana, who goes into a trance, rocks backwards and forwards in a rocking chair and conveys the mother's "intentions". Elsa, the eldest, assumes the mother role and discharges the housekeeper (Mrs Quail). The children attempt to maintain family unity. Mrs Quail, most suspicious about her dismissal, is unpleasant to the children and threatens their scheme, as she does not accept Elsa's explanation that their mother has gone away for a holiday. Jiminee arrives home from school one day with a runaway friend, Louis, and Hugh says, "You've got to send him home". At "mother time" Diana says mother agrees that Louis can stay, so the children decide to keep him. Jiminee's teacher comes to the house to locate Louis and at the point where she enters the mother's bedroom, Charlie, their father, arrives to take over.

After the teacher has left with Louis, Elsa says to her father, Charlie, "We don't need you". Hugh replies, "Elsa he's all we've got. He's got to stay. We've got to make him stay". Elsa replies, "We're mother's children, don't forget that".

Charlie (Dirk Bogarde) takes charge, sorts out the situation and decides to stay with the children. He goes through all the papers when the children are at school, finds the bank book listing their savings and tears up the mother's will. With the exception of Elsa, the children accept Charlie and grow very fond of him. He plays with them, tells them stories and brings an air of fun and gaiety to the family. Elsa never joins in. She accuses Hugh of not caring about mother: "All I ever hear is Charlie".

Charlie has no job and uses the children's money to take them on outings, buy a car, gamble, have parties and spend on women. Jiminee always willingly forges signatures for Charlie. One night Charlie gives a party and next morning Diana walks into Charlie's bedroom with his breakfast, to find him in bed with a woman. Diana is very upset by this incident.

Mrs Quail, the housekeeper, returns and tells Charlie she knows what is going on. Charlie tries to keep her quiet by being friendly with her, but she is jealous of his activities with other women.

Elsa has been maintaining that Charlie is bad. The other children begin to take notice of her when they learn that Charlie is planning to mortgage the house and that he is using up all their money. One night Charlie returns home to find all the children sitting waiting for him. He is half-drunk when they confront him as a group. He argues in his defence, but finally loses his temper and says he's sick of their sanctimonious view of their mother, who was a whore. He tells them that not one of them belongs to him and he picks up a picture of the mother and stamps on it.

Diana, who has refused to believe that Charlie did not love them, is extremely upset. She picks up a poker and hits Charlie on the head, killing him. At this moment Mrs Quail yells at the door and tries to get in. The children remain silent and she goes away. Following the dreadful realization of what has happened, the children leave the house and walk to the doctor's to tell him what has taken place. "Will we tell him about mother?" asks Willy. "Yes", replies Elsa.

This film was chosen because it involved children of varying ages in a number of realistic situations other children could identify with: the death of a parent, a broken marriage, family rows, keeping secrets from adult authorities. These were combined with unlikely fantasy elements: successfully concealing their mother's death, successful deception of the bank manager, contact with the dead mother through spiritualist seances.
There are recurrent themes in the films; all portray violence of different types. The focus in The Dirty Dozen and Our Mother’s House is on a group who are held together, despite internal conflicts, by a common aim. The Dirty Dozen and The War Game involve the consequences of war. All three films involved human suffering and death. In Our Mother’s House only two people died and the implications of these two deaths were explored in depth. In the two war films, the death and destruction were on a much broader scale. There is no blood and gore in Our Mother’s House and the black and white medium in The War Game reduces the visual effects of the violence and blood, but The Dirty Dozen graphically shows all deaths in Technicolor. In all films, violence and religion were linked in some way.

Our Mother’s House shows the effects on the children of their mother’s distorted restricting religious views; in The War Game pious statements from clergymen supporting the stockpiling of nuclear weapons are set against the horror of the effects of atomic war; in The Dirty Dozen Maggot sees himself as an instrument of God’s vengeance on the world. He is the first to kill “in the name of God”.

**Discussion of the Results**

More than 90 per cent of the viewers in all groups enjoyed The Dirty Dozen, and thought it a funny and exciting film. It disturbed very few of them and a majority in all groups wanted to see the film again. More girls than boys reported they found the film cruel in parts, frightening and unpleasant. However this did not affect their enjoyment of the film. The War Game was liked least. There is a marked sex difference in the responses to this film. Fewer girls liked the film than boys, but within the boys’ groups more high esteem subjects liked The War Game than low esteem subjects, with 41.5 per cent of the high esteem boys saying they liked the film and 34 per cent wanting to see it again. Our Mother’s House was more popular with the girls than the boys, but again within the sex groups the high esteem groups liked the film more than the low esteem groups.

While the quantitative data shows the general patterns of response it is the detailed interview data which demonstrate most clearly individual responses and interpretations of the films. While there are patterns for the different esteem groups, individual responses within groups are sometimes quite opposite.

**Viewers’ Responses to the Dirty Dozen.**

The viewers enjoyed the film for its action, comedy, drama, excitement, adventure and suspense.

- “Real good. Funny in some parts. Don’t like war but liked that, it was real good”. (FHE);
- “The last part was exciting, starting from where they dropped in parachutes, because they were in real danger, real enemy. The war games were also exciting, because if they didn’t succeed, they would be hung”. (MHE);
- “Good because blood, killing in it. Because it got interesting as it went along”. (MLE);

One FHE subject who saw The Dirty Dozen following The War Game said it:

> “Was best. No sad parts. Nothing about nuclear war”. But not all comments were enthusiastic:

- “I didn’t like the film much because in some parts I didn’t understand it and it was too bloodthirsty. But I did like it a bit because it didn’t have any boring parts in it”. (FHE);
- “Yes, I enjoyed it, but there was too much fighting” (MHE).

All viewers were asked if the film had a message. Many thought the film had no message, but several mentioned the message the director of the film, Robert Aldrich, said he intended: “The Dirty Dozen is a film about the redemption of men”. The young viewers worded the message somewhat more simply than Aldrich and there are various levels of sophistication in their interpretations of the film’s message.

- “They become better soldiers. I can’t explain. Because you can try again, a second chance kind of”. (FHE);
- “I think it was trying to say that those men that had been condemned were not really bad right through and that with understanding and the right training they could be good soldiers” (FHE).

Some saw nobility in the soldiers’ actions:

- “These are a lot of brave men risking their lives to save their country” (MLE).

Others had a more pragmatic view:

- “Condemned men will risk dying in a mission to get freedom” (MHE);
- “They were all fighting for their life and not the army”. (FHE).

Some observations were insightful:

- “Prisoners who were murderers were shown to be able to be good soldiers” (FHE);
- “When pressed for your life comradeship can form” (FHE).

Others were more naive:

- “I think it is trying to tell us that however bad people are they are always kind at heart and this major was the only man that would give them a chance. The prisoners realised this and trusted the Major and finally they were better than any army a Major could possibly have” (FLE).

Some viewers saw an anti-war message:

- “I think the theme of this film is how awful the second world war was. It was trying to say not to start a war again” (MHE).

Overall both groups of low esteem viewers were less able to express or articulate a message for the film than were high esteem viewers.
All viewers were asked if they thought the film could happen and was realistic. Some simply said:

"I think it was all real because it looked realistic" (FHE).

Others accepted the film because:

"Almost anything is possible in war time" (MHE).

Some viewers explained the convincing nature of the film by referring to Vietnam:

"The story is real. Such things happen in war, the bombing and the shooting and all that. Take Vietnam, bombing happens there. Wars happen in real life" (FHE).

Others disagreed:

"Couldn't happen. It is not that simple to kill people (MHE);

"Couldn't happen because soldiers in armies aren't dumb. I couldn't see our Defence Minister letting an officer take 12 prisoners out to be trained as soldiers. I don't think that you could get an officer as good as that guy who played the Major" (MHE).

Several viewers questioned contrivances in the plot:

"Not likely that a person would put their foot through the roof. Lucky to get all people into one cellar" (FHE);

"Unreal how some of the men reacted after being shot. The opposite side died every time they were shot but most of the dirty dozen stayed alive when shot at" (FHE).

Maggot was described as unconvincing because:

"I've never heard of a person quite like that".

The implication from that response is that, if behaviour is unfamiliar to the viewer, then the viewer is unconvinced or finds the behaviour unrealistic.

Similarly, one viewer rejected the final scenes:

"The part where they put grenades into the cellar seems too horrible to be real. People won't do that!" (FHE).

Some viewers found the film convincing but acknowledged it was not real because it was just a film:

"Could happen. With Hitler and the Jews something similar did happen. The explosion was real, real explosives. Maggot stabbing the girl was real. But there could not be anything really real . . . cause it's just a film" (MLE);

"Real parts. Where the bloke got shot in the head in the machine gun explosion. This could happen in real life. The same too about the petrol grenades down onto the Germans. It was real too when the soldiers got shot like the one getting shot in the head. It was really good to see because it was so well acted. I know how hard this is to do well because I have done drama at school. None of it was unreal. It just was real, like real war" (MLE).

Responses to questions relating to cruelty, unpleasant scenes and frightening incidents varied considerably. Several viewers said they weren't bothered at all because what was done had to be done.

"Not frightening. Things that happened were expected, i.e., if they go behind lines some expect to be killed; natural thing to happen. The whole mission could be cruel but had to be done, so in the end when some men were killed, this was unavoidable. Not unpleasant because it was warfare and was expected . . . I like this sort of film because I like it when men band together to do something; form like a family and are loyal to one another" (MHE);

"Upset? No. Possibly the hanging; mainly because it was the start. Not really cruel . . . Would have been less cruel to shoot them (the Germans) when they were moving across the lobby rather than lock them in the cellar" (MLE).

This comment indicates an acceptance of the plot structure. The plot necessitated killing off all the Germans so the viewer commented on an alternative possibility for killing rather than no killing at all.

Another response of interest that recurs with viewers is the acceptance of violence, providing they don't see the result:

"When the people were locked in the cellar and then blown up. It seemed awful. Not upset because it didn't show details" (FLE);

"Upset sometimes. When you saw a German come outside. Maybe he'd shoot one of the twelve. Or if someone got shot I hoped he wouldn't take his hands away so I didn't see what had happened to him" (FLE);

"Cruel when they showed pictures of dead bodies lying around with eyes half popped out. They should be covered up or something done to them" (MLE).

One viewer who said he enjoyed seeing the "guy shot in the head" said:

"It was cruel blowing up ladies. Mission was not to kill the wives, only the officers. They weren't told to kill the women" (MHE).

Only one girl was reminded of any personal experience by the film. It was a fight in the school toilets.

With the boys the reminders were usually related to fighting or being picked on:

"Kids pick on me at school and Clint Walker stood up for the little bloke and that's why I like him" (MLE);

"When Lee Marvin kicked the man in the head, I was in a fight with my best mate (ex-mate). I tricked my friend. He made me fall to the ground and kicked me, not many people, but some people gang up on me and are cruel to me by chanting names. A little person punches me and I have the choice of taking it or punching the little kid back, which ends up in a fight as the rest of the gang pound me" (MLE).

Despite individual differences, there is a recur-
Viewers' Responses to The War Game

A large majority in all groups did not like The War Game. It was described in the following ways:

"Awful" (FHE);
"Hated it. Not entertaining — more educational. Should not be shown to all children; not to little children, it's okay to show it to secondary school children" (FHE);
"I wish I hadn't seen it" (FHE).

Others described it as "horrid", "sickening" and some said it was:

"Boring like a long newsmagazine";
"It was like the news. I hate the news. I like movies better" (FHE);
"I didn't like the film, it didn't get to you. It was not like a war film, it was a bit boring and I couldn't understand it" (MLE).

But for all those who were bored or who did not want to know about the film, there were other viewers in all groups who were glad they saw the film although they found it was distressing.

"In a way I did enjoy it and in a way I didn't. I liked it because I found out something I never knew before . . . I'd see it again because I can't remember some things" (FHE).

"I would like to see it again later, it would be good to put it on television so more people could see it. A television showing would give more people an idea of the effects of a nuclear attack" (MLE).

"It was an educational film. . . . I wouldn't want to see it again because it was unpleasant, but other people should see the film. Presidents and leaders of countries who use nuclear weapons" (MHE).

Far more of the MHE viewers than other viewers took a reforming attitude. Several wanted the film to be widely seen on television with a view to influencing opinion so that a nuclear war may be prevented. It may be that high esteem males feel more able to control their environment and take action to alter the course of events. There were only two girls who made comments suggesting others should be shown the film. Many girls thought it should be banned.

However, not all MHE subjects coped well with the film. Others "hated it" and found it "frightening", "morbid" and "gory". One viewer was even unsure about the capacity of anyone to film the events.

"I don't think a photographer would be able to take pictures because he wouldn't want people to see the killing or the dead".

There were several viewers who saw no message in the film, but most saw it as a warning about the possibilities of nuclear war. Some individuals saw it as indicating that England should retaliate or that one should prepare for and learn to accept the fact of nuclear war.

The War Game was described by most viewers as the most realistic, convincing film of the day.

"The first was a story, the second one was true" (FHE).

"The War Game was the most real film because they proved it was real by showing the pictures of people who were injured" (MLE).

"I would use this war as a documentary" (FHE).

"The actors were not in pain in the other two films, but in The War Game the people were really hurt, they were not faking" (MHE).

The reasons given for the realism related to human nature, the form in which the film was presented, and the perception that the people in the film were actually dead. Some viewers had knowledge of the events in Japan in World War II and saw the film as showing those events.

The War Game: "It was like the news. I hate the news. I like movies better."
Some individuals said they were unconvincing by the film, but there is ambiguity in their responses. For example:

"The film was not convincing, it just wouldn't happen today. It was unreal shooting people who were still alive, you couldn't do that. War isn't like that, only little pieces are like that. I wasn't interested. I was upset but bored too. It was asleep. It was not very nice if it happened" (FHE).

Although there were some viewers who said the film was just like playing acting, it wasn't cruel. I didn't mind watching it; the majority thought the film cruel, unpleasant, upsetting and frightening. They referred to the suffering, the pain, the burning of the dead, the blinded children, the children scarred for life, and the horror of seeing innocent people die. In comparison, the deaths in the other films were not seen as real:

"I was upset by the parts where the people were shot or just fell down dead, especially the first person who was just shot in the crowd. I have never seen a person do that before. It was more frightening than the first (film) because I could feel myself in there with them and to see people suffering like they were" (FHE).

"All the people were being killed for no reason at all. Other films had a story, here they were just dying all the time. The Dirty Dozen was about war and a few people died to save their country. In The War Game people were dying for no reason" (FHE).

"Our Mother's House didn't show bloodshed. The War Game showed the killing of thousands of people...it was a bit sickening" (MLE).

"It is not human to see people like that" (MLE).

A typical female low esteem response was:

"Nearly all of it upset me, the parts where they showed the children after the blast. The children were asked what they wanted to be when they grew up and they said 'Don't want to be nothing'. They didn't want to grow up with the thought of what sad happenings. It was more upsetting than the other two films because it made you see things are being destroyed. It made you think of the future. The effect on people - young people - might be to give them a nightmare" (MHE).

The War Game is a simulated documentary and some news presentation of war in the same way. But for many viewers in every group, and particularly in the low esteem groups, because the film was in new form it was seen as real in every detail. There was not the same healthy scepticism shown towards The Film which was towards the other two films. This makes it more important that studies of media violence and behaviour should include the study of news documentaries and current affairs programmes.

Another point of relevance to research studies relates to the need to consider the effects on viewers of portraying violence without showing its physical effects. One viewer remarked:

"The War Game was the most exciting film because it really happened. If people are acting then the film is not as real. If people see The Dirty Dozen they know they are acting. The Dirty Dozen was an act. You hardly ever see war-time films where it all happens, they usually cut out the violence" (MHE).

This point raises the controversial question, Does portraying violence and killing realistically on film deter people from violence more than removing the consequences of violence?

The War Game reminded some viewers of suffering they had seen or experienced, particularly burns. But the major form of personal identification with the film derived from its documentary form; hence its realism, and the impact on viewers who imagined themselves in the same situations as the ordinary people shown as victims.

"Think if it ever happened in Melbourne or Australia and I saw friends and the family going around like that; to see parents and family and know you are in danger and couldn't get out and be hurt. I saw enough of it, not much of a story. I took in what I saw and I won't forget the looks of the people" (FLE).

The genre of the film has influenced the viewers' perceptions of events in The War Game. Although it was made clear in the film that it was a simulated documentary, subjects were convinced of the film's reality because it was made to look like an on the spot news report. Several subjects in all groups commented on the format of the film with its interviews, shaky camera, lack of a story line and actors. They said that because the film looked like the news rather than fiction "you could not walk away and forget it". The film was more horrifying, upsetting, disturbing, sickening and terrifying because of the conventions observed in its presentation: the narration, the illusion of immediacy, the film clips from the war, the black and white cinema verite technique. As one child said, "It was like the news, not like a movie".

Because of the realistic type of presentation, the viewers were more affected, more involved, more convinced and they identified in a very personal way; they were horrified that the events might happen to them. They did not see The Dirty Dozen or The War Game as two different war films. The different genres gave the films totally different meanings and the effects, as demonstrated by their responses, were that The War Game genuinely disturbed while The Dirty Dozen did not. There was no comment from anyone speaking about The War Game to the effect that in war you expect death and killing. Rather there was concern about the suffering war brought to innocent people.

The main difference in the responses was between the MHE group and the other three groups, although more males overall said they would like to see the film again (MHE 34.1 per cent, MLE 26.7 per cent), than did the females (FHE 4.5 per cent, FLE 5.4 per cent). More MHE subjects said they found the film informative, interesting, educational and worth seeing because it made them think. 41.5 per cent said they enjoyed the film and even some who did not enjoy it said they were glad they had seen it. Some felt all people should see the film to try and prevent such a war occurring.

In contrast, many low esteem subjects either admitted hating the film and wishing they hadn't seen it or rejected its authenticity ("War isn't like that"). Some claimed they were bored but there are indications that this was not quite what they meant. For example:

"War isn't like that, I wasn't interested;"  
"Not upset, bored, not nice if it happened;"  
"Not really too involved, I would rather not know what might happen;"

One child said that if he had to see the film again he would watch it only on TV because in a cinema "The darkness helps to make it more real".

The comments indicate that defences quickly come into operation to protect the viewer. The reality of the horror seemed to produce dissonance which resulted in contradictory statements. The comments overall appear to indicate that high esteem males are more likely to be able to cope with such a disturbing film; that there is a need to look further into the effects of news and documentary violence on children, and that the context of viewing some material on film as opposed to television may be a significant variable to be considered in the study of media content and effects.

**Viewers' responses to Our Mother's House**

A surprising number of female viewers who said they liked Our Mother's House enjoyed it because it was sad:

"The film was great. It was sad, I was sorry for the kids, I would hate to be in their position" (FLE);

"I enjoyed it very much. I felt it got at my feelings, in a lot of places I would cry on and off, which made me feel I was one of the children" (FHE).

Several female viewers admitted to crying but also said they liked crying. Not nearly as many males enjoyed the film because it was sad and not one admitted to crying:

"I enjoyed it at first, I felt sick during the sad scenes. I felt as if they had all gone mad" (MHE);

"I liked The Dirty Dozen better because Our Mother's House was sad. I hate sad things. It was an upsetting film" (MLE).

But other males disagreed:

"I enjoyed the film because it was a very sad film. The music was wonderful, the actors were tremendous, all expressed their thoughts and feelings beautifully. A credit to the directors and producers" (MLE).

Another major reason given for enjoying Our Mother's House was identification with the children in the film:

"I liked this film better than The Dirty Dozen. I liked it because it was about children of our age. I felt more deeply for them than for the soldiers" (FHE);

"The film somehow made me think of myself. Almost the whole thing was real. I think a lot of kids could feel like that because I sometimes feel some of the things that were in the film" (FLE).

"It was very touching and it dealt with children" (MLE).

But viewers in all groups found the film "awful", "a bit boring", "dragged out" and "too un-
within groups there were opposite reactions:

There was nothing exciting, it was mostly sad like the scene of the mother’s death (MLE);

"It was nearly all exciting, in the hut with the mother, but it was cruel because the father went about with other women and brought them home. That hurt the children." (FLE).

Some viewers, while accepting parts of the plot, weren’t convinced by other aspects:

"no one would have enough guts to hit their father" (FLE);

"I don’t think it would happen because children aren’t left alone, we have social workers and busy-bodies who would pry into everybody’s business. But the real part was when the man loses his temper and shouts, telling them about their true Mum could happen. But hitting him on the head with the poker is most unlikely" (FLE);

"I think they tried to convey the idea of people becoming over-religious" (FHE);

"You can’t trust others" (MLE).

All groups were divided over the film’s credibility:

"It is not nice or fair. I didn’t like the way he acted. He had no respect for the mother when all the children did. He used the money the mother had saved for a rainy day and he brought other people home and had parties and told the children to get lost" (FHE);

"I was upset when Charlie pushed his daughter on the floor. My father came home drunk one night and pushed my little sister and me, and I felt very angry and felt like punching my father. It was cruel in the film when Charlie was yelling at his children to get out, when he left the kids all alone to care for themselves and when he came home drunk. I disliked their father, he acted tough, like a big shot. He didn’t care about them, he didn’t worry about them, what they did or how they did whatever it was. I don’t want to see it again, I don’t like these kinds of films" (MLE).
the same reasons, not one boy admitted to crying during the film and several boys said they hated sad films and hated this one. This sex difference in response undoubtedly relates to different socialization experiences and different definitions of what is appropriate behaviour for males and females. Girls are more emotionally expressive and to cry; boys are not. If the film evoked this response in boys they were more likely, it seemed, to reject the film. This is a possible explanation for some of the male reactions. For example:

"This one was dull. This one you have to participate in".

On the one hand, the subject seems to be saying that he found the film boring but he implied that he became involved nevertheless.

The objections to the film were that it was a frivolous slick fable with double standards, not a film, not to be taken seriously. The difference between the interviewers' comments on the War Game and the Dirty Dozen is no doubt largely due to a familiarity with the Gangster genre, even though The Godfather was more violent than usual. The gangster is a tragic hero and as a Time magazine reviewer commented we "tend to regard gangsters with nostalgic indulgence as individualistic resistance fighters against society". A Clockwork Orange like Straw Dogs or Deliverance belongs to no identifiable genre. It is inevitably of this kind which provoke reactions we can't easily categorize and cope with. They present a kind of violence that remains disturbing. It is an analysis of types of film violence, victims and non-victims that is new and further work needs to be done. Thorough theoretical investigation must precede further interest. But given an understanding of the ambiguities in our responses we are still a long way from relating film content and behavioural effect.

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BOB WARD INTERVIEW

"We blew every applecart out of business"

Tony Ginnane, independent film producer and authority on Restrictive Trade Practises legislation in the Film Industry, and Cinema Papers' editor Scott Murray interview Robert Ward, one of the two driving forces behind the Dendy Filmways group, one of the largest Australian-owned production-distribution-exhibition groups.

Robert Ward was born in 1937 into a family that was already steeped in movie tradition. His father began in the industry as an assistant projectionist at the Southern Theatre Hampton, which was one of Hoyts' suburban theatres, and then progressed to being projectionist at the Roxy Theatre in Sandringham. In 1933 he had stuck his neck out on a limb and taken a mortgage on a property that became the Prince George Theatre in Brighton. In these pre-TV days the theatre flourished screening general release movies. In 1940 building work began on the Dendy Theatre in Brighton, which despite the difficulties of war-time supply of materials opened in 1941. Through the forties both theatres survived side by side.

During his years at university in the fifties Robert Ward began to programme for the Prince George Theatre, screening English films like Kind Hearts and Coronets, Arsenic and Old Lace and others quite different from the normal run of suburban release prevailing at the time.

What sort of attitude was prevailing then towards release patterns?

It was a fixed release pattern. There was no alternative at that stage. There were Hoyts, there was Greater Union and there were the Independents. Elsternwick was in the third week of release, some other theatre was in the fourth and Brighton was in the fifth. It was take it or leave it. You didn't argue — you didn't think about it, or even discuss it — and if you did you were bad news.

But prior to TV, the business was still there, whether you screened Elvis Presley or Tarzan. And then came TV in 1956, and by the end of 1957 things were looking pretty grim. Probably more people in Australia had sets when TV opened than any other country. The Olympics gave it a big start. By mid 1958 theatres were closing so fast that it wasn't funny. Our family was associated with the partners of the Savoy Theatre in Melbourne, the Mayfair Theatre in Gardenvale and the Civic Theatre Ashburton, all of which in my opinion were excellent theatres but unfortunately we were unable to keep them going.

At the same time Ward began to experiment in moving over continental, subtitled films like Riffl and Wages of Fear from the Savoy Theatre in Russell Street (run by associates of the film's — Sir Frank Selleck, Bruce Selleck and Peter Dawson) to the theatre at Gardenvale and the Prince George.

We found that the new Dendy Theatre when it was running Bob Hope, Elvis Presley, Clark Gable and Burt Lancaster or whoever was the star of the time was taking X dollars a week. Yet the old Prince George Theatre which was 200 yards away — where there wasn't a day when a disaster didn't occur like the ceiling might fall in or the toilets would block — had become an institution in Melbourne and was all of a sudden taking more money weekly than the newer theatre. So it came to the stage that when I was at Melbourne University learning to be an Arts graduate, majoring in psychology, my father said to me "We can't keep two theatres going in the district." So we came to a family agreement that I would transfer that type of product from the old theatre to the new. Then I had to go in to the film companies — to Mr MGM, or Mr Warner Bros. or Mr Whoever and say: "Unfortunately your pictures don't make money any more with our theatre and you can all go and get stuffed. We are not going to honour our contracts because if we did we would go out of business. We are going to tear our contracts up and if you want to sue us, sue us; but if you sue us you are going to have no theatre left to release in."

How did you get on in obtaining regular sub-titled and quality films?

Well we picked up a few off United Artists. The Moon is Blue, High Noon, City Lights, Limelight, and we had revivals of movies by Gene Kelly and the Marx Brothers. At that time we were a member of a group of theatres called Regional Theatres which is what today is known as Independent I suppose, and Regional Theatres had the release pattern that we've discussed before: first week, second week, etc. down to fifth week, which had been us. By the time the film got to Brighton it was no bloody good anyway. We had to try something different. My father objected greatly at first because it was going to upset the applecart, and it did. We blew every applecart out of business because first of all we told the film companies to go and get nicked and secondly we defied the Regional Theatres committee. They said for example that we were only allowed to have certain size newspaper ads. So we took double, and they banned us from their column. We said to sell a new French or Swedish film you had to advertise it bigger. They disagreed, so we eventually broke up. We began negotiations with the Bruglers, the Blakes, the Scheinwalds and the.
Kapferers and began to show the odd Polish and French picture on a first run basis. These distributors by then were having trouble with the monopoly groups in the city and by this time (1963-64) the Savoy Theatre had been taken for a Melbourne City Council ratepayer.

So we survived very well this way, as well as with films that were rejected by the major exhibitors. Films of the sixties that come to mind in this regard are Roger Zellinger's *The Magus*, Satyricon, *The Day the Fish Came Out*, Rapture, Diary of a Chambermaid, The Bed Sitting Room, The Nanny and so on. I saw *Zorba the Greek* and thought, "What a bloody terrible overseas and was very keen on the film. I got back to Australia and I said to the manager of 20th Century Fox in Sydney, "I fancy *Zorba the Greek*" and he said, "What's that?" and I said, "It's a new film you have coming out, a Greek film with subtitles"; trying to play it down. And he said, "Oh, that's okay" just as if we didn't sell many Greek pictures." Anyway apparently someone from Hoyts had also learned about the film, and by the time it was ready for release Fox would not agree to it, even though I offered a cash amount up front and a heavy percentage. It was unusual. At first they had never heard of it, but the more I offered for it, the more certain they were that it would be a goer because we had by then proved ourselves to be successful operators. So they decided very wisely to open them in the Athenaeum where it ran two very glorious weeks and then on Mondays through Wednesdays they splashed the Hoyts suburban circuit of that day. After that we went back and instead of offering them 40 or 50 per cent we offered them 15 or 20 per cent, and they gave it to us. We ended up representing 50 per cent of that film's rental world-wide at one stage, even though we had bought it very cheaply. It had been a disaster all over; later Fox came to us and asked if we could use the advertising that we had prepared: the dancing Greek with his hands up in the air. They copied it and then the film caught on, with the help of the music.

It is probably true to say it was "*Zorba the Greek*" that put Dendy Brighton on the map as far as a first release house was concerned.

Financially yes. We were well established as a theatre with a different attitude to film buying was initiated. There you see the majors take and you are left with films that everybody would reject. Therefore you need to buy your own movies. Therefore you get together and form some kind of subscription to buy movies, to form a consortium, and it becomes no longer a question of just finding alternative sub-titled movies for Dendy Brighton, but also of finding alternative commercial movies.

We had the independents from all states together at a meeting in 1971. Sub-titles of course are still a problem outside of Victoria and N.S.W. and so we endeavoured to buy across the board.

Would it be correct to say that perhaps a more commercially correct attitude to film buying was initiated following the association of Mark and yourselves into Filmways?

Our association with Mark has been very good. In more ways than one he has taught me things about the business that we probably would not have learned otherwise. We learnt that you can't exist as a distributor unless you are part of the major companies, so you need to find money to buy pictures. We found it is better for Dendy, as far as profit on funds is concerned, to play an independent policy under the conditions subsequent to the Tariff Board Report there seems to be a new closeness between yourselves and other exhibitors. You have not only attained a certain strength, so are you now perhaps saying that it may well be a better thing for Dendy, as far as profit on funds is concerned, to play an independent policy under the conditions which may now be available to you, like "Blazing Saddles" with Village for example?

You have misread me completely. I think that competition is the thing. Three years ago I would have said we would have now been in a position enabling us to buy further, to invest in Australian films or to do something else with the money put into it. A Swiss bank and get lost, I don't know. I think that the present Government has completely changed the incentive to expand further into investment in Australian films, or building theatres, or importing films. This is not a political comment. We simply have an interest position with the banks that is unlivable. Secondly even to lend you the money you can't because it isn't there. Thirdly when you start talking to banks or finance groups or the like about films they say, "Who are you to want to know you. I understand a fairly major force in the industry is paying up to 22 per cent for money in Sydney. You can't make money on that. You are losing money. We are not a high profit industry, we never have been and we never will be. I mean a lot of people get carried away with the cattle and television industry thinking it's a grandiose bloody . . . High expenditure but not high profit?

Yes high expenditure.

Could we talk now specifically about Filmways' concerns during the Tariff Board Inquiry? I am especially interested as to Filmways' attitude to the question of the breakdown of vertical integration within the industry. I don't think our attitudes have changed very much. I agree they have changed somewhat.

Has there been a rapprochement, a coming together, an attempt to bury the hatchet on some people's parts? Oh you could put it that way, but I think the major companies have changed far more than us, because
they were more concerned with Commonwealth Government attitudes to the outcome of the Inquiry.

The general attitude seems to be that the recommendations of the Tariff Board Report, as far as the breaking up of the vertically integrated circuits, have been shelved. Bennett for example was suggesting only last Saturday that this very shelving will now provide open range once again for the multi-nationals. You obviously feel a little happier than he does.

I was out of Melbourne last weekend and I have still to read Bennett's article, but I do say that though the recommendations of the Report may have been shelved, all of a sudden they have raised their head again.

You are talking about Murphy's new Restrictive Trade Practices Act?

Right. This Act will make certain differences in the film industry, and I think on the whole the film industry is well aware of its teeth.

Are there any films that the Dendy organization has wanted, as far as first release is concerned, that it has been precluded from getting because of franchises, ties and distribution agreements of the majors, that you now feel you might have been in a position to get as a result of provisions in the Restrictive Trade Practices Bill?

Yes, The Sting and The Great Gatsby.

Seriously, are Filmways-Dendy going to make use of the teeth the new Act provides?

Yes I think so, but Dendy not Filmways, because Filmways is a supplier. Let me make it quite clear that Filmways are a completely separate entity from Dendy. Further, our Dendy in Sydney is a completely different entity from our Dendy at Malvern, and Malvern is a completely different entity from Brighton.

But it would be correct to say, would it not, that you are a common factor in each of these Dendys, and in Filmways?

Yes, but not necessarily a major factor in all. We are not in a position to be a major shareholder in every Dendy. If we were maybe the whole thing would be quite different.

Filmways unlike any of the American majors operating here, or unlike even Roadshow because of its association with Warners, has one problem that's endemic to itself, namely that any of the films that it buys, though some may be in packages, are each individual choices. There is no on-going, on-flowing source of product.

There could be if we were prepared to tie ourselves to somebody but we don't want to tie ourselves. We have companies now, major companies approaching us to handle their product.

Do you mean major companies that are presently tied to other distributors here?

Yes. Filmways will continue to endeavour to present a staple diet of good films, but it is becoming more difficult. Majors world-wide are buying what would yesterday have been available for us. But the Restrictive Trade Bill is interesting. I wonder whether I will be able to ring up CIC tomorrow and say: "Look would you mind if I ran The Sting at Dandenong and Forest Hill this week simultaneous with city?" I mean why shouldn't I be able to? I certainly would have no objections to others showing Language of Love or Loving and Laughing or Siegfried simultaneously, provided it didn't affect the screening. Now obviously a film like Kamouraska screening at two theatres is going to be affected much more than a film like Blazing Saddles or The Sting at six theatres. This sort of judgment will have to be made.

Filmways now have a release programme larger than most of the other major distributors?

Larger than Columbia and United Artists put together, larger than Fox, as large as CIC. Probably the same as Roadshow, but possibly not of such calibre, because we have to pay cash up front for our films, and I don't see any changes here. Maybe we are getting a little bit bigger, maybe the odd company is offering a compromise, but we feel that Richard Franklin, the director, has worked in America, has had experience with American International, with Paramount, Universal and Roger Corman. He has worked in many capacities, and we believe that he has more experience feature film wise than probably anyone else in Australia.

How much did "Eskimo Nell" cost? Around $250,000 Australian.

And how much of that was provided by Canada?

Nothing. They provided locations, some facilities and some talent. It was a very small amount, but we are very grateful and appreciative of the services provided. They have received cash from Australia. We sent the actors, cameraman and director to Canada to shoot sequences of the film and when Cinepix buy Eskimo Nell from Australia they will pay cash to Australia; to the A.F.D.C. and to ourselves for the release of that film in Canada.

So at this point of time the Canadian rights are still open?

No they are not even. They have snapped up Cinepix for an amount which will be paid on delivery of the print.

Is it anticipated that "Eskimo Nell" will recoup its production budget from film hire in Australia?

We hope it will multiply it by ten. As to overseas, we are considering now whether it should be dubbed before it is released overseas.

Dubbed into what language?

Into American, into English and out of Australian.

I ask this question by way of comparison with the philosophies of Hexagon, the production arm of Village. Their attitude has been that they will...
not invest in productions which they do not feel on conservative film hire estimates would totally recoup the production budget in Australia. My own reading of what you have said to me previously is that your attitudes are slightly different to Hexagon's, and that "Eskimo Nell", and indeed other mooted Filmways productions have been seen like "Cars That Ate Paris" and "Between Wars" in terms of international audiences first and Australian afterwards.

No. We hope Eskimo Nell will return four times from the overseas market what it will return from Australia, which is very different from what some others have expected.

Where and when will "Eskimo Nell" have its release?
Well that's a problem and we are a little bit concerned. I must admit frankly that if I was Hoyts or G.U. and someone came to me and said that he had this great film for me for Christmas (which is the best box office period of the year), I would say "Fine, providing it's a good film. When can I see it?" And he'd say "Look I'm terribly sorry, it's not ready yet. But we could show it to you a week before Christmas."

And you haven't got the track record like Hexagon to say it will be good?
No. I must say we couldn't complain about any company refusing to buy a film they hadn't seen. Every company we have approached has said "Great, I'm glad to see Australian production. Please show it to us when you have got it ready."

By the same token no Australian exhibitor to this point in time has seen "Towering Inferno" or "Airport "77"

No, but you are talking different things here, because you know well as I do that these films are under franchise. If it's a CIC film it's under franchise to G.U.O.; if it's a Fox film it's under franchise to Hoyts, automatically whether it is or not. The franchise may not be in writing but it has been going for many years.

Whether it's good or bad?
Whether it's good, bad or indifferent.
Whether it will make money or not?
Right. This is where the Australian film is at a disadvantage. Have I made myself clear?
You have made yourself eminently clear, and I am very glad you said that. What sort of censorship certificate do you predict "Eskimo Nell" will get?
Well on the visual side it will get an 'M', if not an 'NC'. On the audio side it could have an 'R' problem. But we haven't yet decided what exactly we are going to put on the soundtrack.

How much money have Filmways put into "Eskimo Nell"?
Oh around $70,000. We still have more to put in, production commitments, release prints and advertising. I would say our total commitment by the time we are in release will be around $100,000.

Now Filmways are already committed to another production. Could you tell us a little about this?
It is called Goodbye Norma Jean and is filming in Texas. It is the story of Marilyn Monroe between the ages of 12 and 16. Larry Buchanan, an American International veteran is directing. We considered filming in Australia, but it would have been much more expensive. In this case, and in another co-production which we were considering with Carlo Ponti, our partners told us that the Australian co-stagings were a joke. Norma Jean is being produced in the U.S. for $US100,000 and, in Australia it would have cost $A275,000 and this is 35mm colour. Because in America the location is the set, here we would have to build big sets at great cost.

It is an unfortunate state of affairs, as far as Australian production is concerned, that virtually each member of an Australian crew has film-by-film over the last 18 months demanded at least $30 to $50 more than the film he did before. Now how are we going to stop this? What sort of brakes can be applied?

What sort of brakes can you apply — economic brakes. I mean when there is work, there is work; when there is no work, there is no work; and unfortunately these people don't seem to understand an int-rent. We are looking at a third project at the moment, a 35mm colour film to be shot in Australia for around $280,000, hopefully with A.F.D.C. participation. There is also a fourth project in the Philippines which would be partly funded from America, the Philippines and Australia. But I am not in a position to comment as negotiations are still proceeding.

Are Filmways likely to be releasing any Australian films that have been made over the last 12 or 18 months which they weren't financially involved?
Well we are handing the world-wide release of Sandy Harbutt's Stone. Mark will be screening the film at MIFED this month and we will be pushing it heavily at Cannes next year.

Could we talk a little about censorship? Censorship at the moment seems almost at a standstill. On the one hand we have the federal organization which seems to be allowing soft-core films through, and is indeed leaning towards medium-core. The major distributors and exhibitors seem to be saying, "Go any further, let it be in hard-core, and we'll lose our system of uniform censorship. The states will retrieve their federal delegations of the censorship power."

Yet Queensland in fact has already done this and has banned "Erotic Adventures of Zorro", "Sex Aids", etc. Filmways has obvious moneyspinners like "Notorious Cleopatra", etc banned, but is on record as saying it doesn't think "Deep Throat" or "Devil in Miss Jones" should get through. Where is Filmways' present attitude?
Our attitude is this: we feel that the film industry is an industry to enter. Now whether it be artistically entertaining or commercially entertaining is quite separate. But we feel that the industry as a whole can't afford to accept Deep Throat, Miss Jones, Behind the Green Door and films like this. On the other hand there are movies like Panorama Blue, and though I saw only 15 minutes of it, I didn't find it objectionable. I think by and large the censor is being realistic, but things are fairly unpredictable in this area at the moment.

Do you think censorship decisions should be based on precedent, in other words if film A shows a man ejaculating and is passed, then films B and C with a man ejaculating should also be passed?
I don't think so because a hard-core film with a man ejaculating can be very different to an artistic film of man ejaculating. I think this is the whole problem with censorship. Where do you draw the line? How can you draw a line? I am relatively happy with the composition of the Censorship Board and Board of Review at the moment.

Relatively? The Board of Review apparently rejected 11 out of the 12 ads submitted by Filmways for "Wet Dreams"?
Well with that one they were worried about the title. They want us to change it, but how the hell can you change the title when a film has got 13 segments. It would cost more to change the titles than it cost to produce the film.

What sort of film do Filmways consider "Wet Dreams" to be?
Oh well I consider it to be a very intellectual, entertaining and artistic film. It is not a piece of cheese because we are not interested in that sort of film. We have never released a film at the Star or the Albany.

Have Filmways got any other films that they consider sufficiently artistic to be unsuitable for the Star or the Albany, but which are encountering censorship problems?
No. We do have Notorious Cleopatra, Country Cuzzins and The Sinful Dwarf from Harry Novak banned. They are probably a little bit above the Star, probably Roma material.

Is Filmways fighting these decisions?
Not really, what can you do to fight? Language of Love was an intelligent medical film that you can fight on
When we started, 3c. a foot, the Australian 13c. a foot. You work it out. And even before the lifting of import duty on release prints we had decided to have the release prints of Nell done at MGM Labs., Culver City. The American cost is 3c. a foot, the Australian 13c. a foot. You work it out. And more and more Australian labs are notoriously inferior quality.

And who owns the labs here?

I wouldn’t know. I understand it’s an overseas company.

Anyone we know?

No I don’t know. Somehow I just can’t remember the name.

Tank?

Think tank?

Anything else you would like to say Robert?

I think there is still a lot of faith lacking in exhibition interests in the Australian product despite the enormous success of Alvin Purple and Bazzar. I think that our own experience on Eskimo Nell will bear this out. Maybe the film will be rat-shit. I don’t know. But the point is that Filmways demonstrated their faith in it. We have put our money where our mouth is.

What about the “Language of Love” sequel? Do you predict that it will be passed by the censor?

Yes. I think the Censorship Board now realizes that there is an area of film type which can be regarded as sex education films.

Could we talk about the future for Filmways-Dendy, first of all as regards exhibition? With Collins Street now more than a year old you are about to open up in Lonsdale Street. What about in Sydney with the Licensing Regulations repealed?

First of all who said that the Licensing Regulations have been repealed? They haven’t. No way have they officially. Unofficially maybe, but officially no. Talking about involvements in Melbourne yes we are going into Lonsdale Street. We will be opening in November. We are in with Village for two reasons. One is that we believe that it is not the most prime position in Melbourne; secondly we believe that by being associated with Village we will have a greater availability of product than we would have had if we had gone in by ourselves. Now the Capitol Theatre group have gone in with Village in two theatres in Swanston Street, in the old South Seas Restaurant premises, and we think that we may have reached the maximum seating for the moment in this city. As for Sydney we are discussing with other partners. As far as the South Yarra complex is concerned, and it is again in doubt because of the current economic situation, we will also be in association with Village.

Can we talk more about Sydney?

We understand that Sydney is a disaster area. The monopolies have been in charge for so long that Sydney theatres are extremely run down. We are trying to get in, as are Village. Crows Nest was the leg in there for us, but a small leg in, a wetting of the feet.

How wet have the feet become?

Very, very dry. It is a partnership between ourselves and Selleck and Sharpe. The partnership is going very well. But it is one theatre when we should have 10. It is likely that within the next 12 months we will have other Sydney outlets. As for the other states we are happy with our releasing associates. We are not a big multi-national company and we wouldn’t attempt to control people from thousands of miles away.

Could we talk a little about the distribution future of Filmways? Are Filmways likely to continue on a film-by-film basis or are they likely to make attempts to attract certain franchises?

I will tell you the honest truth. We have been trying to take over CIC, but we could only go to $55 million and they said they wanted $56 million.

What sort of trends are Filmways going to continue over the next year or so, as far as the split between artistic and commercial releases is concerned?

Artistic releases are worrying us considerably, especially the reaction to sub-titled films. It is bad in Melbourne and much worse in Sydney. For example at Brighton we have a film on called The Gentle Sex. We originally started off the whole week with the sub-titled print. The other film Gateway to Evil is sub-titled anyway and there is no English version print available. I don’t like to run two sub-titled films on the same programme. So we tried to run a sub-titled version of Gentle Sex on Monday to Thursday and an English version on Friday and Saturday. Monday to Thursday we get abuse from people who have seen the film at the weekend and recommended their friends to see it. A week ago we ran in English for the entire week and we didn’t get a complaint. So what’s the answer?

I don’t know what the answer is, but the Rivoli Complex for example is not losing money.

Neither are we.

The Rivoli positively glorifies in the fact that it plays films in original version.

We try to show sub-titled movies when they are available, but I believe that the interest of the public has waned as far as they are concerned.

Could we conclude by talking briefly about trends in Australian production over the next 12 months? Is the Australian industry likely to go under through lack of outlets?

Not through lack of outlets, but perhaps because of cost. How can you establish an industry here when costs are already so expensive? I think the most important thing that I could say in this interview is that the Australian film industry, if it wants to establish a future for itself, must learn to live naturally. Even before the lifting of import duty on release prints we had decided to have the release prints of Nell done at MGM Labs., Culver City. The American cost is 3c. a foot, the Australian 13c. a foot. You work it out. And moreover Australian labs are notoriously inferior quality.

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The concept of genre in literature has been used at different times for both proscriptive and descriptive purposes. In cinema, genre generally has been employed rather crudely as a means of classifying the assembly line output of Hollywood with its built-in impulse to reproduce a successful formula. In this context genre becomes a class of films drawing on a tradition with a set of conventions.

A test case for the value of genre as a tool of analysis is provided by the most durable of film types, the Western. In the early fifties Robert Warshow and Andre Bazin wrote seminal essays each seeking to define its essence.

Warshow, a critic of popular culture, recognized the movies' tendency "to create fixed dramatic patterns that can be repeated indefinitely with a reasonable expectation of profit". Conventions imposed themselves on the general consciousness and became accepted vehicles of a particular set of attitudes and a particular aesthetic effect. Thus originality is only successful as an inflexion of the conventions from within intensifying expected experience rather than fundamentally altering it from without. Implicit here is the belief that there is some discernible fixed essence of the genre and this he found in the figure of the Westerner.

The Westerner is the last gentleman and the movies which over and over again tell his story are probably the last art form in which the concept of honour retains its strength.

Warshow saw The Virginian (1930), based on Owen Wister's novel, as an archetypal Western movie (as Scarface, Little Caesar and Public Enemy were archetypal Gangster films) while The Ox-Bow Incident (1943) is an 'anti-Western' insofar as it presents us with a modern social drama employing the Western setting as a backdrop. High Noon goes further in grafting a social dimension on to an essentially Western drama. To Warshow, John Ford's key Westerns Stagecoach and My Darling Clementine show an unhappy preoccupation with style and the latter, a superficial concern with historical reconstruction assimilating the outline of the legend of the lone Westerner into the sentimental legend of rural America. Warshow saw this aestheticizing tendency carried to its extreme in Shane (1953). He explained the durability of the form in terms of the medium's special character: film's ability to render the physical differences between one object and another and one actor and another. He then veers off into speculation about the role of violence in popular culture finding in the Westerner, the man with a gun, a distillation of cultural fascination with the style of violence, the certain image of a man which expresses itself most clearly in violence. The Westerner is an archaic figure "who is there to remind us of the possibility of style in an age which has put on itself the burden of pretending that style has no meaning".

If Warshow proposed the Western's essence in the archetypal Westerner and the formal simplicity of the 'B' Western Andre Bazin showed greater awareness of the genre's flexibility and its relation to authorship in the context of evolving narrative patterns. In his essay on The Evolution of the Language of the Cinema Bazin saw a classical perfection attained in both Hollywood and France, a result of the maturing of different kinds of drama developed in the thirties (though inherited in part from the silent cinema) and the stabilization of technical progress. Like Warshow he considered that the major genres had evolved clearly defined rules of content and form capable of pleasing a mass audience, with well-defined styles of photography and editing perfectly.

GENRE
A REVIEW
Bruce Hodsdon

The concept of genre in literature has been used at different times for both proscriptive and descriptive purposes. In cinema, genre generally has been employed rather crudely as a means of classifying the assembly line output of Hollywood with its built-in impulse to reproduce a successful formula. In this context genre becomes a class of films drawing on a tradition with a set of conventions.

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adapted to the subject matter, a complete harmony of image and sound. Of the genres he identified — Comedy, Dance and Vaudeville, Crime and Gangster, Psychological and Social drama, Horror or Fantasy and the Western — he wrote at greatest length about the Western. He recognized the flexibility of its iconography: action, the frontier town and landscape were by no means the unique province of the Western. The formal attributes he saw as simply signs or symbols of its profound reality, namely the myth ("the forces of evil against the knight of the true cause") and its dialectical relationship with the facts of history particularized in specific dramatic plots. The durability and universal appeal of the Western were to be found in the ethics of the epic and even tragedy, the epic style of man and landscape deriving its real meaning only from the morality which underlies and justifies it. Unlike Warshow he did not find the essence of the Western at its base — the 'B' picture so much as at a point of classical perfection exemplified by John Ford's Stagecoach. To Bazin the postwar Western of Ford — My Darling Clementine and Fort Apache — introduced certain baroque embellishments: a technical formalism and the elevation of history to the level of subject when it had previously been present only formally. He saw then films as pushing the Western to the full extent of its acceptable limits while subsequent 'super Westerns' (the 'adult' Western) foreshadowed by The Ox-Bow Incident and typified by Duel in the Sun, High Noon and Shane were seen as mutations borne of condescension on the part of the filmmakers to the classical Westerns' simplicity of form and content. Conscious of its limits they looked elsewhere for some additional interest: aestheticism, sociology, psychology, politics and eroticism, all qualities which Bazin described as being "extrinsic to the genre". While adopting essentially the same conservative stance as Warshow, Bazin could encompass, within his classical model, certain elaborations in the postwar Western. Films like Red River, Pursued, Along the Great Divide, The Gunfighter, Across the Wide Missouri, Westward the Women, Rio Grande, Silver Lode, Run for Cover, Apache, Man Without a Star and The Naked Spur were based entirely on the old dramatic and spectacle themes which were enriched "from within" with more individualized characterization and complex relationships while the elaboration of style was not dwelt upon, was not "over aestheticized". Admitting these elaborations to his classical model seems to run Bazin into logical problems: where is the line to be drawn between extrinsic and intrinsic elaboration? Bazin confuses evaluation with description. His notion of classical perfection is an evaluative term not a descriptive one. The largely concurrent thinking of Bazin and Warshow has been dwelt upon at some length because interwoven through attempts to distil the ideal form from the great mass of films both above and below the waterline of critical acceptance are at least three basic elements: iconography, myth and the relationship between themes and history. Iconography though described as familiar, recurring visual imagery, relates to subject matter or meaning rather than form i.e. the expression of themes or concepts not only by objects but also through events (e.g. the chase, the gunfire in the main street). Iconography does not shape the narrative so much as provide a unifying context and a point of access for the mass audience. It is a means of distinguishing one type of film from another and providing a framework in which the story can be told. For the individual filmmaker it can be a springboard for achieving stylistic unity through "an efficient, lucid and formally elegant code"; iconography can become dense while retaining its essentially schematic contour. Bazin and Warshow sought the essence of the Western in myth, though Bazin's emphasis was on aesthetic considerations while Warshow's was on sociological ones. Alloway raises the question of whether figures, heroic in scale, can be called mythical. He suggests that idealized characters and stereotyped plots are called mythological when in fact they are simply iconographical. Heroes are thus "a condensation of topical interests rather than the recurrence of ancient mysteries." To Alloway it is present needs rather than timeless patterns which generate imaginative imagery. He makes no allowance for the middle ground between classical myth and topicality which seems particularly relevant to the Western. Northrop Frye's notion of displaced myth is "the tendency to suggest implicit mythical patterns in a world more closely associated with human experience", expressed through the fictional modes of romance and the high mimetic whose characteristic forms are the epic and tragedy. Myth can be seen as standing at one extreme with naturalism at the other. In between is the area of romance: the tendency to displace myth in a human direction and yet, in contrast to 'realism', to conventionalize content in an idealized direction. Elsaesser, though referring to a specific period in the American Cinema (the late forties), makes a suggestion which has general value viz., the interaction between iconography and naturalism. The conventional world becomes physically convincing on film while the known world can become the corner of iconographical meaning. This is a more useful elaboration of Warshow's brief reference to the role of the medium itself in rendering physical objects in fictional modes; a highly conventionalized world can be given specificity. This is the power of the film and its potential for restoring the mythic dimension particularly in its potential for inflecting recurrent themes and situations and for setting up opposing categories as shown early by Griffith, literally taken up by illusionistic continuum. Thus the movies, more than any other medium, can, as John Flaus suggests, "embody the conflicts and aspirations of a collective anguish: compressing, transfiguring and objectifying areas of distress and yearning which society cannot bear to confront directly and they can manifest only as much reality as a common level of consciousness can bear". It is clear that there has been an accretion of latent meaning around myth and iconography which filmmakers can exploit and personalize, but it is also clear that this is not exclusive to the Western even if most overtly exemplified by that genre. It pervades the whole range of American cinema: codification and stylization of dramatic elements.

Andrew Sarris defended the application of the auteur theory to the American Cinema as a means of recognizing the trees in the forest but there is
GENRE

also the inherent danger of losing the geography of the forest altogether by focusing on the configurations of individual trees or, alternatively, a clump of trees may obscure the ways in which other clumps resemble yet differ from each other.

It is for example, difficult to establish many meaningful links between two Westerns as disparate as Henry King's Jessie James (1939) and Philip Kaufman's The Great Northfield Minnesota Raid (1972) except for the latter conscious rejection of earlier traditions in the interplay between fact and legend, dislocation and narrative line; the idealized earlier version of the legend has more appropriate connection with thirties historical romance.

The American cinema has, from the beginning, worked on audience expectations and emotion very directly through dramatic narrative structures involving the arousal of identification and catharsis. This has been achieved through the reenactment of situations which involve audience recognition drawn from their own sense of extra-cinematic reality (e.g. in family melodrama or social drama) or from their awareness of cinematic tradition (e.g. in the Western). It is a cinema which blends 'realism' (the credibility of contrived surfaces) with the formalized discourse through conventionalized narrative patterns or codes. Yet within this practice (which is not unique, but absolutely central, to the American cinema) is an unequaled responsiveness to audience mood. While Warshow saw the Western and Gangster genres in relatively static terms, Lawrence Alloway charts some of the changes in the action genres over a twenty-year period, the linchpin being the way topical events are compounded with traditional plots. Furthermore he suggests connections between themes, form and technology though not in any very systematic way.

If the idea of the West has become a repository for myth the historical West has provided not only iconographic potential but a set of circumstances which allows the mythic dimension freplay. The concentration on the period 1856-1900, only about one quarter on the actual time span of the westward movement, is not explained merely by the turbulence of these years but by the fact that it was a period in which options were gradually closing thus providing a fertile ground for a shifting ideological interplay on the idea of the West, an ambiguous grid of antimonies, e.g. West / East; populist agrarian ideal / industrialization; West as garden / West as pasture; garden / desert; savagery / civilization.

Before a blend of history and popular forms (Victorian melodrama, the dime novel, the Wild West show) played out the American obsession with individualism and community, violence and law and order. These obsessions are not the special province of the Western yet what is significant is the flexibility of the form (or Kitses puts it, "many forms") around an idea both tangible and metaphorical, historical and mythic. As has been pointed out elsewhere, history can provide a base for epics, spectacles and action films. Indian and realistic anti-Westerns while the essentially archaic world can equally provide the setting for archetypal fables, tragedies, the epics of the juvenile Westerns. Rather than finding an essence we find an amalgam of elements which do not impinge too directly on our experience. Even in the most clearly delineated of the genres flexibility and range is the key, not rigidity or classical perfection.

In the thirties the Western was dominated by the romantic mode: historical romance in the relatively few big budget films and personalized in the slickly idealized Westerner of the juvenile Western's hero/action model. The significance of Stagecoach (1939) is the way Ford brought an extra dimension to a group of stock types: a fine sense of rhythm to the action and an attention to detail in setting and characterization, lending the ring of truth to standardized iconography and one-dimensional character types. If Ford provid-

ed the impetus for elaboration it was the combined talents of a number of writers, directors and technicians which pushed the Western in separate but interacting directions. The outlines of historical romance were filled out and given truly epic proportions by the injection of a psychological dimension into characterization — a sense of characters’ motivations and individuality within standardized roles — and to the more imaginative deployment of iconography. Resonance was given to the epic and spectacular: the celebration of the establishment of civilization in the wilderness. An alternative direction was elaboration of the archetypal elements in an archaic world in the form of the fable and morality play. The interplay of both the historical perspective (closing of options) and archetypal elements tenu-

tatively created a magic potential brought to light by The Gunfighter (1950) which used the realistic drawn backdrop of the town to highlight the anachronistic position of the gunfighter. Anthony Mann's preoccupation with "a strange neo-classical conflict of passion and duty" shifted the emphasis to the archetypal concepts of individualism and community. Fifties romanticism exemplified by Ray, Aldrich and Penn coalesces with elegiac elements in the late fifties and early sixties in films like Man of the West and Guns in the Afternoon. A measure of Ford's stature is the way he ranges coherently across the whole spectrum in The Searchers (1956).

If it was the veteran directors (John Ford, Raoul Walsh, Howard Hawks, King Vidor, William Wellman, Henry King) and established
of values already undermined or questioned in the sixties and seventies. The shift from the mode of romance and high mimetic towards those of the low mimetic and the ironic spans the three decades.

Elsaesser distinguishes at least two variants of the melodramatic tradition within the essentially homogeneous practice of the American cinema. In the action genres (e.g. the Western and Adventure film's set-piece episodes) and in film noir and private-eye offshoots central conflicts are successively externalized and projected into direct action. A jail-break, a bank robbery, a Western chase or cavalry charge and a criminal investigation all lend themselves to psychological thematization of representations of the heroes' inner dilemmas. The hero is defined dynamically at the centre of a continuous movement not only from sequence to sequence but within the individual shot. In domestic melodrama, on the other hand, the world (the confines of social responsibility) encloses the characters forcing them to look inwards rather than act single-handedly. "They are each other's sole referent, there is no world outside to be acted upon, no room nonetheless could be defined or assumed unambiguously."

Seeking to delineate the underlying mechanisms of Hollywood narrative as dramatic (as opposed to temporal or stylistic) devices, the writer restores the notion of classical narrative but in the context of an audience-based aesthetic with ideological implications. It offers the potential for uniting Alway's links between topicality and character, and Warshow's and Northrop Frye's displacement of the pure and the symbolic into the potential history of the film image.

...
"The National Film Archive is more than an institution. It is the manifestation of an idea, and one of the most remarkable, and least remarked, cultural developments of the last 40 years has been the fertilization of this idea, spontaneously and simultaneously, throughout the world."

Ernest Lindgren, Curator of the National Film Archive, London, in 1970.

**The Edmondson Report**

**FILM ARCHIVES**

During the latter half of 1973, film librarian Ray Edmondson undertook a five-month study tour of overseas archives, sponsored by the Film and Television School and the National Library, to enquire into their operations, standards and techniques. He visited major archives world-wide and participated in the first international school for film archivists in Berlin. It was the first study project in this field ever undertaken by an Australian.

The results of this research, and recommendations for future growth of film archive work in Australia, are contained in a 170-page report submitted to the Film School in September.

Much of the report is taken up with description of individual overseas archives. Because of space this has been condensed here and only the main conclusions have been extracted.

Ray Edmondson joined the National Library in 1968 as film reference librarian and in January 1973 was appointed to head the new film archive unit within the Film Division. Over the last six years he has supervised the growth and organization of the Library's film archive, during a period of considerable expansion and an awakening of interest in Australia's film history.

In 1938, four of these pioneer bodies joined together to form FIAF which today has some forty members throughout the world; they differ widely in size and affluence but they subscribe to a common philosophy and a practical code of operation which have established them, in the eyes of most film industries, as bodies with integrity of purpose and methods.

FIAF Statutes, (article 5), define the objects of its members as:

(a) the collection and preservation of films, cinematographic museum objects and the documents relating to them and

(b) as far as possible, the projection of the films and the exhibition of the
documents, non-commercially, and for historic, educational, and artistic purposes.

The aims of FIAF, as set out in article 1 of its Statutes, are:

(a) to promote the preservation of the artistic and historic heritage of the cinema and to bring together all organizations devoted to this end,
(b) to facilitate the collection and international exchange of films and documents relating to cinematographic history and art, for the purpose of making them as widely accessible as possible,
(c) to develop co-operation between its members,
(d) to promote the development of cinema art and culture.

By an active programme of conferences, publications and inter-archive co-operation, FIAF has pioneered the archive concept and established its practical validity throughout the world.

As it exists overseas, the film archive is a specialised institution dedicated to the preservation of what, in the judgment of its specialized staff, has enduring artistic and socio-historical value from among the world's vast output of motion pictures and television programming. It has become to the film medium what art galleries are to painting and sculpture, both a guardian of culturally valuable materials placed in its trust, and a showplace, dissemination centre and study resource.

**OBSERVATIONS**

**AUTONOMY**

While most archives are funded, partially or wholly, by government sources their legal status or constitution varies somewhat from country to country. Some are government departments or authorities, their employees being classified as public servants; others were set up as foundations or public cultural institutions aided by — but not administratively attached to — their governments. Still others were private institutions receiving support from a variety of public and private sources.

In the course of time each archive has established formal and informal links with the film industry, with government and cultural bodies so that it effectively functions as the national film repository and study centre. In several countries — including Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Russia — the archive's national role and responsibilities have been specifically established by legislation, with statutory powers in some cases to acquire films or other archival materials, and its relationship to other film and cultural bodies defined. Elsewhere, where this step has not been taken, archives have developed relationships which give them such recognition: the National Film Archive, London, for instance, officially preserves Government-produced films (through an arrangement with the Public Records Office) and its wide ranging acquisition policy is evidence of its central archival role in the U.K.

From discussions with archive heads and senior staff it was clear that archives jealously guarded this high degree of autonomy. The following reasons were suggested to me:

1. It placed the ultimate responsibility for the preservation of a nation's film heritage squarely in the hands of dedicated specialists — where it belonged.

2. It affirmed the fact that film archive work was a coherent field of its own, requiring its own breed of specialists.

3. It affirmed public and governmental recognition of the importance of film as an art form and medium, important enough to be treated in its own right.

4. The archive was the recognizable embodiment of the nation's film traditions.

There is no statutory deposit legislation in this country, and no single archival body has defined a comprehensive and firm policy to preserve Australia's national film heritage; large areas of film and television production have yet to be properly surveyed with a view to preserving all significant material. Since no archival body presently has the authority or capacity to responsibly undertake this work an important cultural resource is in great danger of being dissipated. What is true for Australian films is undoubtedly even more true for the preservation of overseas material in Australia.

Because of the passage of time, early films, in particular silent material from before 1930, now largely are in the hands of private collectors with whom it is essential that archives develop close personal contacts to win the collector's trust and to gain access to his collections. The rarity and historical importance of this material makes it a vital area of acquisition and perhaps the one which archives treat with the greatest urgency.

**STAFF**

The one characteristic most commonly in evidence among archive staff was a personal interest in film. Not infrequently this was accompanied by an authoritative knowledge of some aspect of cinema (which found ready application in day-to-day work); collectively, I found, archives numbered among their personnel many noted film writers and critics. The characteristic was striking; coupled with the obvious dedication of key staff members to a specialized field it lent to each archive a unique atmosphere which I had not encountered in Australia, or in other films organisations.

Most archives preferred not to employ film collectors and amateur enthusiasts because of possible conflict between their personal interests and the archive's acquisition activities. At the same time they maintained close contact with them through the archive's acquisition program. Few people presently engaged in film archive activity in Australia are able to envisage it as a career; since no adequate career structure exists there is no incentive to develop skills and expertise in evidence overseas. Australians presently working in the field have varied qualifications — some have film industry backgrounds, others (as at the National Library of Australia) are required to have librarianship qualifications. This means, in practice, that few people come into the work with a background in film aesthetics or history, and sometimes come with no film knowledge at all.

Until conditions conducive to the development of specialized career staff are established, Australian archivists will lack the professional authority possessed by their overseas counterparts within the film world and the cultural community.

**FILM SELECTION**

Overall, film selection by Australian archival bodies is unco-ordinated and piecemeal. Selection is based on each body's own frame of reference and its financial limitations; because of the lack of qualified staff, there is always a danger that material will be selected or rejected on the basis of uninformed personal responses, and that important material will therefore not be preserved at all by any archival body. There appear to be no expert selection committees (as in London), capable of maintaining a broad overview of the field, operating in conjunction with any archival activity in Australia.

There is no organization in Australia where all essential preservation standards and methods are observed; few bodies with a declared preservation responsibility fully recognize them, or are even aware of them. Some (to take the National Library as an example) observe the basic physical requirements and are aware of the principles but lack the necessary physical resources and accumulated staff knowledge. Positive steps to define standards and preservation policies, and to implement them, need to be taken by a national body as an urgent priority of national cultural importance.

**STORAGE FACILITIES**

Temperature and humidity controlled storage facilities to normal archival standards, whatever for nitrate, acetate or colour-dye film, do not exist in Australia. Their construction is a vital and urgent necessity if the preservation of Australia's national film heritage is to be seriously undertaken. The recruitment and training of staff for
the proper storage, maintenance and security of the films themselves is an equal necessity.

RESTORATION

Capabilities for film restoration in Australia are largely restricted to treatment machinery available at commercial laboratories, which has been neither designed nor installed for the purpose of handling shrunk and deteriorating nitrate film. Such work is, in any case, commercially un-economic. To provide a facility equivalent with overseas archival bodies, Australia needs specialized restoration and printing machinery and the skills for expert manual repair and restoration of film.

PRINTING AND LIAISON WITH LABORATORIES

There is no specialized printing equipment in Australia built specifically for archival purposes, and again the quality of archival work is reliant upon the goodwill of commercial laboratories — for whom it is frequently uneconomic — and the limitations of their equipment. Quality control of the finished dupe is again largely in the laboratories' hands, being dependent on the time, staff and equipment which the archival body can command or may have to accept as available. Such checking is regarded as a vital archival responsibility overseas which should not, if possible, be done outside the archive itself. Some Australian archives undertake as a matter of routine the comprehensive testing of its acetate and nitrate films as a safeguard against deterioration. Consequently the chemical state of most preservation material held by Australian (and other) archives cannot be assessed. Requests for material from apparently rival archive organizations must inevitably create confusion in the minds of potential donors, who may begin to wonder how their material will ultimately be used.

CATALOGUING

Detailed cataloguing (to the extent of enabling full accessibility of the collection to all types of users) remains to be done by all bodies involved in film preservation. Title catalogues with brief summaries of content are not adequate for the kind of detailed access usually necessary in an archive collection of the film producers, students and other users are to gain full value from its contents. Film cataloguing needs to be done with an eye to the possibility of linking-in to a future FIAF standard so that the exchange of cataloguing information between Australian and overseas archives will be facilitated.

ON-SITE STUDY

Australian facilities for on-site study are very limited. The National Film Institute is planning to revive publication activities in order to provide reasonable screening facilities but its location limits the feasibility of such study except for Canberra residents. In major population centres bodies such as the National Film Theatre of Australia and the Australian Film Institute can offer only limited opportunities for on-site study of material in their collection and their activities are not principally geared towards meeting or encouraging such demands. In each case, moreover, emphasis must be placed upon the projection of films; the study possibilities of viewing machines (like the Steenbeck) remain largely inaccessible to the potential student, who would be enabled to project at his own pace and whose needs would be less demanding of staff time.

FILM LENDING

As an undertaking quite separate from their preservation activities, many archives maintained a study collection of films in 35 mm and 16 mm which were available for loan on a rental or service-fee basis to film societies (and other groups), student bodies, writers working on a service-fee basis, were happy to run the activity at a loss — sometimes (as in Oslo) receiving a special grant to support it. Others, through arrangements with a copyright holder, ran their service on a commercial rental basis, deriving from it income to support preservation activities — as at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

In content, the collections were in many ways similar — but in a number of cases there were reasonable film organizations which had made arrangements for the provision of screenings. For example, the make-up of the collections changed from year to year as distribution agreements with copyright holders were begun or concluded, and there was an emphasis on recently produced films. An extensive archive collection becomes the foundation of serious film study, and film availability, within its country: it ensures that, regardless of what damage may be inflicted on circulating prints by borrowers, or what commercial or other restrictions may be placed on the use of films from time to time, the film continues to survive in an undiminished form within the country.

Without such a foundation, film study collections in Australia will remain distribution copies through which the historical and curatorial value of any film will not be assured; print quality also will be subject to the vagaries of master material available overseas at the time of acquisition.

In Australia, no single body has assumed this foundation role in supporting film study activity.

EQUIPMENT MUSEUMS

Archives had accumulated pieces of cinema memorabilia — vintage cameras, projectors, magic lanterns and so on — either holding them in storage or using them as display or decoration purposes. A number of these are public bodies.

The simple display of vintage equipment for its curiosity value was minimized. I did have opportunity to inspect other public bodies, notably the Cinematheque in Paris, and also among them the Fine Kodak Museum in outer London — with which these favourably compared. Both archives saw great value in the museum concept, as an attractive visual means of communicating the role and importance of cinema in a cultural body (Copenhagen even has a travelling museum exhibition) and as a means of film education. Additionally they regarded it just as important to preserve the equipment — as well as the films themselves. There is little inclination (as I am) to the proper function of a film archive to carry out this work.

Hans Wetzel's Movie Museum on the Gold Coast and — probably the only major publicly accessible cinema equipment museum in Australia. It is a privately run organization. Its existence highlights the absence of any similar museum funded by the government; indeed, much important cinema memorabilia has been lost or dispersed because no national body has accepted the responsibility for its preservation.

PUBLICATIONS

Most archives maintained, or were closely associated with, publishing activities, clearly seeing it as their role not only to record the progress of their national film culture but also to translate it into the medium of filmographic publications, but to contribute — from their particular viewpoint as film custodians, historians and observers — to the national film culture through the medium of publications of film criticism and scholarship. Publications supported by archival bodies in Australia are few in number.

The National Library publishes 'Australian Film: A Periodical List', principally documentary films produced in Australia, as well as programme notes and some reference materials. The National Film Theatre of Australia publishes regular programme notes in media of index form. The Australian Film Institute is planning to revive publication activities which commenced some years ago with the first of a series of monographs on Australian film history.

There is a clear need for a comprehensive national filmography, as well as for support for the publication of relevant academic writings and works of film criticism. Such publications would not only encourage public recognition of an Australian film heritage but also prevent the lagging image of Australian cinema overseas.

In addition, in the Australian situation the publication of an archive newsletter on a regular basis would be an important communications medium, to inform users, potential users and the
industry of the archive's services, acquisitions and activities.

EDUCATION

It is indicative of the role attributed to an archive in many European countries that it is placed at the heart of any government sponsored film education activity. While only one archive (Oslo) was closely involved in directing the Government's film production training grammes, many other archives clearly felt that they had a direct or indirect influence in this field. The archives in Stockholm and Copenhagen, for instance, maintained a close involvement with their national film schools and with university departments conducting courses in film technique and appreciation; the University of Stockholm's Film Faculty is actually located in the same building as the archive and the archive screenings are planned in consultation with the faculty to include films within the curriculum.

The need to create in Australian film students an awareness of their own film history is clear, and accessibility of the contents of the National Library's archive and other collections of modern films in accordance with commercial standards is vital if this is to be achieved.

The principle that a national archive should collect and make available for study a substantial proportion of overseas films released in Australia is essential and implemented, so that current overseas production may be made accessible for continuing student use. An archive is, indeed, the only body which could maintain such a collection in a manner acceptable to the film industry.

PUBLIC SCREENINGS

Archives were not content simply to encourage on-site viewing of the material in their collection; individual viewings are essential for specific individual study purposes, and this type of usage of archive films would account for the majority of viewings that a film would receive. However, since films are basically intended to be seen in a theatrical setting by groups rather than individuals, most archives consider it an essential part of their activity to organise public screenings of films in their collection. Nor are they simply content to screen them publicly, but also endeavour to re-create the atmosphere of the original presentation, and to present the film in its original form (a technical impossibility in many commercial cinemas today), and with printed annotation and/or verbal screenings.

Screenings of an archival nature are limited in Australia. The body most active in this area is the National Film Theatre of Australia, a private body which has assumed the archival role of importing thematic seasons from overseas archives. It screens in venues in each capital city which, while sometimes adequate for good presentation of modern films in accordance with commercial standards, cannot provide the range of technical resources and audience facilities available in some overseas archives. The NFTA can be said to have established the validity of archival screenings in Australia on a wide basis, although its programming is less balanced than would be the case overseas: there is an emphasis on American cinema, while Australian cinema receives a very limited exposure.

It is clear that the activities of the NFTA should be co-ordinated with a national archive able to offer improved screening facilities and assist in the procurement of prints — either from its own collection or from overseas — to broaden the range and quality of archival screenings in Australia. Similarly, useful co-ordination should be achieved with the Australian Film Institute in the development of its chain of theatres for specialized screenings of Australian films.
INTERNATIONAL LIAISON

Potentially, the exchange system provides a viable international network for the recovery of lost films and their return to their country of origin.

The fragmentation of archival activities in Australia has produced considerable confusion among overseas archives as to how the various organizations are connected and what each of them is doing (the Film Industry). The National Film Theatre of Australia and the National Library of Australia were often confused and sometimes thought of as one body, for instance. It is possible that this confusion also exists in Australia. A film overseas archives receive research enquiries that ought to have come to an Australian archive, if the writer had known to whom to address. There was an obvious need for an identifiable Australian body to fill this role.

Because of Australia's geographic isolation from any activity overseas, the need for staff interchange is perhaps more vital than would be the case for, say, European archives, in order to build up expertise and facilitate co-operation.

The establishment of frequent, and continuing contact by Australian archives with their counterparts overseas is essential if Australia is to have a respected and individual film image abroad.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The archive concept is strongly established in most countries with a film culture of any significance, has been developed as the most appropriate answer to a clear need. It has attained a validity in the eyes of the film industry, government and cultural authorities; and archives operate on the same level as institutions like national art galleries and museums.

2. Archives operate with a high degree of independence and self-determination which they regard as essential to the role of impartial, objective and non-political guardians of their nation's film culture. A characteristic autonomy remains effective regardless of the archive's attachment to, or independence of, a public body.

3. There is a distinctive and specialized professionalism that is characteristic of archive staff, and is essential to the competent operation of an archive. It is a particular nature, standards and demands of archive work and is unique to it.

4. Preservation and usage are the two sides of the archive coin; the former justifies the existence and facilitates co-operation whereas the latter justifies the former and archives actively offer a wide range of services and facilities — screenings in specially designed cinemas, information and documentation resources, publications, film viewings, etc.

5. The laws of chemistry dictate that there are no short-cuts to film preservation. An archive that is earnest in its desire to preserve the film heritage realizes the full implications of this and organizes its resources to meet the long-term challenge of preservation with the least possible compromise — investing in storage facilities, handling and copying equipment and support staff — knowing that it must have a growing role in setting standards that will be recognized throughout the film industry.

6. Archives provide a wide range of services and facilities — screenings in specially designed cinemas, information and documentation resources, publications, film viewings — in order to give substance to their unique capability of rendering the world's film heritage most readily accessible in the most systematic way. As a result, they create a diverse range of archival functions as possible, and co-ordinating those which it does not carry out itself.

7. Geographically, archives are usually located close to the centre of their national film industry and within the major population centre of their country. This tends to enhance the accessibility of its resources and its opportunity for close personal contact with the film industry, its major source of acquisitions.

8. Archives are concerned not only with the primary responsibility of preserving their national film production but with making available for research the totality of world cinema through access to films, documentation and literature. To build such a comprehensive resource was the minimum objective of all national archives and the basic motivation in the development of archive selection/acquisition activities.

9. FIAF archives used their films with complete integrity; they did not knowingly contravene copyright and were scrupulous in observing agreements made at the time of acquisition. The reputation they have thereby acquired over the years sets them apart from other film repositories which may be less precise in these matters. Acquisition of a film does not, therefore, imply any future usage of it by the archive (e.g. for a public screening); archives recognized that the copyright owner retained complete control over his film.

10. Inter-archive activity — staff exchanges, co-operative activities, film and documentation exchanges, the researching of common problems — are given a high priority at individual archives. As a means of maintaining growth and awareness, it was clear that any archive rejecting such contact would quickly lose touch (and eventually availability) in the international archival community.

11. Archives frequently assumed a central role in their nation's film study and film education activities, encouraging and sustaining the work of film societies, film courses in schools and universities, organizing discussions and seminars and so on.

12. The provision of large and comprehensive documentation and information resources is emphasized as a preservation of films: they are aspects of the same job. The archive operates as a functional national centre for the provision of film information of all kinds, both national and foreign.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is doubtful whether much is likely to be achieved in a co-ordinated and efficient manner while individual archive bodies in Australia continue on their present course. Excluding for the moment the Australian Broadcasting Commission, Film Australia and the Australian War Memorial — Govern ment agencies with well-defined and circumscribed areas of archival operation — an effective amalgam or interlocking of activities seems not only desirable but also feasible since many of these bodies derive their finance from Government sources.

2. The geographical location of a national archive is vital to its potential effectiveness and efficiency; can be achieved as part of permanent storage and other facilities it cannot be easily moved. Three locations suggest themselves: Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra (where the National Library's film archive is presently located). While Canberra has a symbolic significance as the appropriate location for a national body, there are strong practical reasons for locating a film archive within one of the nation's two film capitals (which are also the nation's major population centres) — reasons similar, no doubt, to those which determined the establishment of many Australian Government film authorities in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra. It seems to me that Sydney is the most appropriate location for a national body; it is, in many ways, the decision centre for the Australian film industry and offers the most fruitful and efficient source for both acquisition and staff recruitment. I would therefore recommend:

(a) that an autonomous and clearly identifiable national archival body be established to perform and co-ordinate national film archive functions, comparable with the range of functions of FIAF archives overseas.
(b) that such an archive body be founded on the existing archive operation at the National Library.
(c) that the new body be set up as an independent statutory authority, or be administratively attached — as a self-determining entity — to an existing film authority (such as Department of Media or Film and Content). The light and overseas experience, and the history of archival development in Australia, this appears to me to be a logical progression from the present organization of activities.

3. Overseas archives have built their specialized staffs with considerable care over long
periods. A similar concentrated resource of professional and experienced people is vital if archive work in Australia is to reach the same level of effectiveness. Therefore, I recommend:

(a) that a career structure be established in the national archive sufficient to attract and hold and develop qualified staff.
(b) that position classification standards be sufficiently flexible to allow the recruitment of people with appropriate backgrounds in varying aspects of film.
(c) that a system of inter-archive staff exchanges be established in conjunction with overseas archives, to serve as a medium of staff training, and to establish both personal contacts and the bona fide of the archive.

4. The lack of archival storage facilities for any type of film in Australia is a major deficiency which needs to be remedied with urgency. Accordingly I recommend:

(a) that the design and construction of large-scale and permanent storage facilities for nitrate and acetate film be commenced immediately.
(b) that provision be made for the researching and development of storage facilities for colour-dye film over the next five years.

5. Since facilities for archival film restoration and printing in Australia are very limited, and in most cases not directly under the control of any archival body, it is recommended:

(a) that suitable work-room and film examination facilities be established, on the site of the storage complex.
(b) that specialized film printing equipment and restoration equipment be progressively acquired and housed in the work-room building.

6. In order to provide a functional and comprehensive film information resource in Australia, and to maximise the usefulness of existing scattered collections of film documentation, it is recommended:

(a) that within the national archive located in Sydney there be established a documentation collection organized on FIAF lines, and fully and freely accessible to users throughout Australia as an information resource.
(b) that such a collection should include all types of film literature and printed and manuscript material related to film.

7. To render the archive's collections of film and documentation accessible to the public, and to encourage their use, it is recommended:

(a) that film viewing equipment (e.g. Steenbeck) be installed in a suitable environment in the national archive as well as in regional sites, for public presentation.
(b) that reading room and documentation inspection facilities be established, with appropriate reference staff, cataloguing and information.
(c) that in the national archive building there be established a cinema with appropriately advanced equipment to permit the screening of any type of film.
(d) that the national archive itself present in its own name the thematic seasons of public screenings, using material from its own collection and from overseas archives.
(e) that the archive establish a separate collection of films for loan for use in film study courses and by film societies.
(f) that the archive institute a continuing public relations programme, including the publication of an archive newsletter, to encourage public awareness of its resources and services.

8. The geographical spread of Australian population centres inevitably renders the provision of a truly national archive service difficult, since the archive's collection and staff must be concentrated in one locality. To overcome this handicap, it is recommended:

(a) that regional archive centres be established in state capitals and other major centres, perhaps co-ordinated with State Film Centres or other appropriate film bodies, to provide as many of the services of the national body as possible, with viewing prints of films and xeroxed or microfilmed documentation being sent on request to the regional centre. Such centres would need to satisfy the security and copyright requirements consistent with FIAF standards.

9. In order to overcome difficulties caused by fragmentation of standards and acquisition policies of existing archive film collections, it is recommended:

(a) that with the exception of highly specialized bodies such as the Australian War Memorial, existing collections be coalesced to ensure uniform preservation standards and uniform accessibility.
(b) that urgent steps be taken to implement a comprehensive programme to fill in the gaps in existing collections of Australian material, that is, to incorporate a wide range of current productions into the collection and to conduct organized searches for missing early works.
(c) that also as a high priority a national selection policy covering all areas of Australian film and television production be formulated and implemented, and supervision by specialized selection committees be developed.
(d) that again as a high priority a national archive collection of overseas films compatible to similar holdings of FIAF archives overseas and relevant to film researchers be established and maintained as a continually growing resource, again developing the services and advice of a specialist professional.

10. To ensure that important material may be acquired for preservation, and to help establish the archive's role, it is recommended:

(a) that legislation be introduced by the Australian parliament to require the deposit of a copy of every film produced in Australia in the national archive, at the archive's expense and if selected by it for preservation.
(b) that such legislation also require distributors of overseas films to deposit a used print of each film handled by them at completion of release, if selected by the national archive.

It is emphasized that such deposit would in no way affect the copyright owner's control of his films, and the archive would be liable to ensure that copyright conditions were scrupulously adhered to.

11. Research into Australian film history, the identification and discussion of the elements which make up our national film culture and which need to be remedied with urgency, is vital not only for historical reasons but for the effect which it will have on the future course of the Australian film industry. As the visible embodiment of a national film heritage it is an important role for the archive to encourage such research in every possible way. Therefore it is recommended:

(a) that the national archive be empowered to provide grants of fellowships for such research.
(b) that it also be empowered to subsidize film productions which make substantial use of archive footage and encourage a wide appreciation and awareness of the Australian film industry.
(c) that it develop a corresponding publishing programme, emphasizing monographs, pamphlets or reference works dealing with Australian film production and eventually extending to a comprehensive national filmography.

The collection of film equipment is an appropriate function for a national film archive and is of great assistance to other archive activities in Australia. Accordingly, it is recommended that:

(a) a cinema equipment museum be developed on the premises of the national archive.

These recommendations propose a considerable advance and reorganization of the present pattern and scale of film archive activities in Australia. It is my belief that an advance of this magnitude is necessary, if Australia is to properly preserve its surviving film heritage and to make up the considerable leeway which causes this aspect of its international film image and activity to contrast so sharply with the accepted state of affairs in comparable countries overseas. If the importance of a national film archive is considered against other cultural priorities the recommended developments are largely a self-evident means to a cultural objective of considerable validity.

A national film archive, if it fulfills the role I have attempted to outline, will, I believe, have a national and international importance which is difficult to visualize at present. It will become — as is the case in other countries — a focus for the country's film identity, presenting it to the world as is the case in other countries — a focus for the country's film identity, presenting it to the world.
### 35mm Production Survey

#### 35 mm in Production

**A Salute to the Great McCarthy**

- Director/Producer: David Baker
- Script: John Romeril
- Budget: $1,000,000 plus.
- Shooting Australian bush in the late 1920's and is an autobiography.
- Executive Producer: Richard Brennen
- Production Manager: Richard Brennen
- Associate Producers: Richard Brennen, Alan Benjamin
- Assistant Director: Hai McElroy
- Wardrobe: Anpholde Kondos
- Make-up: Liz Mitchie
- Continuity: Lyn Gayle
- Director of Photography: John Heath
- Color Process: Eastman
- Sound Recordist: John Phillips
- Production Company: APA Lifestyle
- Cast: John Carradine, Sandy McGregor, Judy Morris, Kate Fitzpatrick, Denis Milller, Chris Heywood, Colin Drake, Barry Humphries, Colin Croft, Peter Annenson, Bruce Spence, Jack Dyer, Max Gillies, Peter Cummins.

The career of a brilliant Australian Rules full-forward — from his country recruit­ment to his final league game. Based on the Barry Oakley novel.

Budget: $260,000.

Final Editing Stages.

**A Sporting Proposition**

- Director: Don Chaffey
- Script: John Romeril
- Budget: $450,000.
- The story of a Hong Kong cop coming to Perth.
- Executive Producer: Ron Miller
- Production Manager: Peter Appleton
- Assistant Director: Mark Egerton
- Script: Rosemary Anne Sloane
- Director of Photography: Jack Cardiff
- Stills: John Brothers
- Color Process: Eastman
- Costumes: Wendy Blegen
- Sound Recordist: John Heath
- Make-up: Monique Hawkins
- Cast: Eva Griffith, Robert Bettles, John Mollison, Michael Craig.

A Sporting Proposition is set in the Australian bush in the late 1920's and is an adventure story about a boy and his Welsh pony. Based on James Aldrich's book.

Budget: $1,000,000 plus. Shooting October/November in N.S.W.

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#### THE FIRST ANIMATED STEP

**Director:** Yoram Gross
**Production Company:** Yoram Gross
**Distribution:** B.E.F.
**Production Companies:** The Movie Company, Paragon (Hong Kong)
**Executive Producers:** John Hassan, Raymond Chow
**Producers:** Yoram Gross Film Studio
**Script:** Yoram Gross
**Animation:** Sandra Gross
**Artists:** Yoram Gross
**Stunts:** Tricia Stankovitz

- Animated film in seven sequences: (1) quick history of animated film, (2) technique of film, (3) forming characters, (4) demonstration of animation techniques, (5) material needed to make animated film, (6) the mathematics of animation, and (7) the finished product.
- Budget: $43,000.
- Length: 30 minutes.
- Editing stage.

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#### SUNDAY TOO FAR AWAY

**Executive Producer:** Ron Miller
**Production Manager:** David Hannay
**Production Company:** South Australian Film Development Corporation
**Production Manager:** David Hannay
**Production Co-ordinator:** Pam Oliver
**Assistant Director:** Hal McElroy
**Director of Photography:** John Mcllwaine
**Color Process:** Eastman
**Sound Recordist:** John Phillips
**Grip:** Noel Mudie
**Make-up:** Liz Mitchie
**Continuity:** Lyn Gayle
**Assistant Director:** Hai McElroy
**Make-up:** Liz Mitchie
**Continuity:** Lyn Gayle
**Director of Photography:** John Heath
**Color Process:** Eastman
**Sound Recordist:** John Phillips
**Grip:** Noel Mudie
**Make-up:** Liz Mitchie
**Continuity:** Lyn Gayle
**Director of Photography:** John Heath
**Color Process:** Eastman
**Sound Recordist:** John Phillips
**Grip:** Noel Mudie
**Make-up:** Liz Mitchie
**Continuity:** Lyn Gayle

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#### The True Story of Eskimo Nell

**Directed by:** Yoram Gross
**Produced by:** Yoram Gross Film Studio
**Screenplay by:** Yoram Gross
**Story by:** Yoram Gross
**Camera Operator:** Brian Trenchard-Smith
**Assistant Camera Operator:** Peter Armstrong
**Make-up:** Yoram Gross Film Studio
**Production:** B.E.F.

- The story of a Hong Kong cop coming to Australia to extradite a prisoner.
- Budget: $450,000.
- Shooting October/November.

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#### The Removalists

**Director:** Don Cromby
**Executive Producer:** Richard Franklin
**Production Company:** Film Graphics
**Production Manager:** Sue Farrell
**Assistant Director:** Darryl Sheen
**Director of Photography:** John Mcllwaine
**Sound Recordist:** Sue Farrell
**Color Process:** Eastman
**Make-up:** Liz Mitchie
**Continuity:** Lyn Gayle

- Based on the original poem by Robert Service, about Dead-Eye Dick and Mexico Pete, the search for the infamous womper Eskimo Nell.
- Budget: $240,000.
- Final Mix Stage.

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#### 35 mm Preproduction

**Backstreet General**

- Director: Alan Dickes
- Production Manager: Peter Prager
- Associate Producer: Phil Avalon
- Script: Alan Dickes
- Director of Photography: Gary Hansen

A feature-length sex comedy about an Inspector Clouseau-type investigator and his involvement with escort girl services in Perth.

Budget: approx. $100,000.

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#### Cubic

- Director: David Denneen
- Production Company: Cinema Papers
- Color Process: Eastman
- Make-up: Pat Clayton
- Sound Recordist: Tony Tegg

- Final stage of script development.
- No further details.

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#### Plugg

- Director: Terry Bourke
- Production Company: Cinema Papers
- Executive Producers: Bob Rogel, Peter McNamara

- Based on the original poem by Robert Service, about Dead-Eye Dick and Mexico Pete, the search for the infamous womper Eskimo Nell.
- Budget: $240,000.
- Rough-cut editing stage.

**HELGA'S WEB**

Director: Terry Olson Production Company: Kingcroft Productions Producer: John Shaw Assistant Producer: Don Connely Production Manager: Ross Dimsey Camera Operator: Peter Bicklow Sound Recordist: Neil Cooper Art Director: Bill Hutchison Production Manager: Don Connely Camera Operator: Peter Bicklow Assistant Director: Des Boan

**CAST:**
- Graeme Blundell, Alan Finney, Frank Thring, Chantal Contouri, John Finlayson, Noel Ferrier, Bronny Behetis, Abigail, Vanessa Leigh

A gangster-adventure story set around a casino robbery. Graeme Blundell returns to play the triple roles of Alvin Purple, "Balls" McGee, and Alvin impersonating "Balls" McGee.

Budget: $250,000. Releasing December 19.

**BAZZA HOLDS HIS OWN**

Director: Bruce Beresford Associate Producer: Jane Scott

**CAST:**
- Barry Crocker, Barry Humphries, Donald Pleasence, Ed Devereaux, John Le Bouderer, Vaness Kay, Nancy Blain, Prime Minister Whitlam and wife.

**INN OF THE DAMNED**


**CAST:**
- Bill Edwards, Errol Sullivan, Vassili Daramas

**35MM IN RELEASE**

Director: Mike Thornhill Associate Producer: Hal McElroy

**CAST:**
- Mike Thornhill, John McPherson, Frank Quilter, Louise Wishart, John Morris, Graham Corry, Phil Avalon, Lionel Long.

1896. American bounty hunter sets out to investigate the mysterious disappearance of travellers on a lonely stretch of the Gippsland coast.


**THE CARS THAT ATE PARIS**


**CAST:**
- Terry Camilleri (Arthur), John Segev, Mary D'Agostino, Jeff Jaffe (Bert), Kevin Miles (Dr. Midland), Max Gillies (Mel), Peter Armstrong (Gorman), Edward Waterman (Tringham), Bruce Spain (Charlie).

The inhabitants of an isolated country town, called Paris, live by causing car accidents.

**PETERSEN**

Director: Tim Burstall Production: Hexagon Films Production Company: Kingcroft Productions Producer: Sandy Harbutt. Director of Photography: Robin Cooper Script: Jane Scott

**CAST:**
- Jack Thompson (Tony Petersen), Jacki Weaver (Susie Petersen), Wendy Hughes (Patricia Kent), Arthur Diggin (Charles Kent), Christine Amor (Annie).

An electrician goes to university and gets personally involved with a Professor and his wife.

Being released in October/November.

**STONE**

Director/Producer: Sandy Harbutt Distributor: B.E.F. Production Company: Hedon Productions Executive Producer: David Hannay Production Secretary: Marilyn Lee Mitchell Assistant Directors: Gordon Nunn

**CAST:**
- Michael Robinson Director of Photography: Graeme Lind Stills: Charles Stringer Editor: Ian Barry Assistant Editors: Gary Jackson Screenplay: Sandy Harbutt

**BEGIN AIR WAR**

Director of Photography: Sandy Harbutt Assistant Director: Jim McElroy

**CAST:**
- Sandy Harbutt (Petersen), Michael Robinson (Undertaker), Hugh Keays-Byrne (Charlie), Ken Shorter (Stone).

The life story of a doctor between World War I and World War II.

Cast: Deryck Barnes (Doctor Townes), Sandy Harbutt (Undertaker), Hugh Keays-Byrne (Toad), Les-button (Balhill), Roger Ward (Derek), Rebecca Gilling (Vanessa), Susan Lloyd (Tar), John H. Bowles (Twilight), John Ewbank (Peter), Sandy McGregor (Marge), David Phillips (Heinz).
16 mm PRODUCTION SURVEY

16 MM

AMAROO
Writer/Director/Producer.............Stephan Peters
Production Company.............Roadshow Distributors (Sydney)
First Unit
Photography....................Stephen Peters
Second Unit
Photography....................John Norton
Location Sound....................Stewart Hall
Music...............................Barry Falkner
Script Continuity...............Sheryl MacDonald
Sound Recordist.................Lloyd Carrick
Costumes........................Anna French
Editor..............................Tony Patterson
Cast: Peter Cummins, Eileen Chapman, Peter Carmody, Chris McQuade, Max Billinge, Bruce Spence.
A middle-aged businessman joins a mysterious super business organisation known as "The Firm". The film is in fact a political organisation engendering certain changes in its members.
Length: 100 minutes.
Awaiting release.

A POINT OF DEPARTURE
Director..........................Don McLennan
Production Manager.............Denis Ingram
Script..............................Don McLennan
Photography......................Peter Friedrich
Music...............................By "Skylight"
Sound Recordist................Lloyd Carrick
Boom Operator....................Chris Goldsmith
Assistant Cameraman.............Phillip Gross
30 minutes. 16 mm.
Budget $3,100.
Release print.

CHILDREN OF THE MOON
Producer/Designer...............Bob Weis
Assistant Director.............Wayne Smith
Lighting Cameraman............Bob Kolar
Sound...............................Lloyd Carrick
Cast: John Duigan and Alan Money.
Short feature. A young man retreating from city life meets a Magus and under goes substantial emotional and spiritual change.

THE FIRM MAN
Director..........................John Duigan
Lighting Cameraman............Sasha Trikoupos
Camera Assistants...............Barry Jacklin, Martin Bartfield
Sound Recordist................Lloyd Carrick
Costumes........................Anna French
Editor..............................Tony Patterson
Cast: Peter Cummins, Eileen Chapman, Peter Carmody, Chris McQuade, Max Billinge, Bruce Spence.
A middle-aged businessman joins a mysterious super business organisation known as "The Firm". The film is in fact a political organisation engendering certain changes in its members.
Length: 100 minutes.
Awaiting release.

HIGH AS A KITE
(Working Title)
Director.........................Ian Finlay
Production Company.............Max Dutch Productions
Production Manager.............Ian Finlay
Photography......................Warren Self
Colour Process....................Eastman
Sound Recordist................Main Read
Cast: Bill Moyes, Stephen Moyes.
Documentary on two kite flyers.
Budget: $26,000.
Length: 50 minutes.
Preproduction.

HOW WILLINGLY YOU SING
A film by Garry Patterson.
Production Assistant.............Jim Robertson
Story Consultant.............Charles Tabacznik
Photography......................Peter Tammer
Continuity......................Maureen Andrew
Video..............................Ruben Mow Music
Robert Patterson
Performed by......................"Inner Circle"
Written and performed by Garry Patterson, Isaac Gerson, Jim Robinson, Jimmy Powerly, Morris Gradman, Graham Glass, Allan Lish, Ron Smith, Pamela Munro, Jeff Turnbull, with Peter Haffenden, Jim Rush, Peter Weiniger, Pat Wooler, Spence Williams, Mandy and Joey Munro.
"It is a long, semi-autobiographical comedy of sorts; more like a personal, illustrated, comic-strip novel than a production-line film. It is not a consumer product." (Garry Patterson).
Budget: $14,500.
Final editing stages.

KELLY
Director.........................Rod Nicholls
Distributor.......................Vincent Library
Production Company............Acrey Plus Unit
Associate Producer...............Dira Mellor
Production Manager...............Theresa Allen
Assistant Director.............Sean Power
Script..............................Rod Nicholls
Photography.......................William Seller
Editor..............................Rich Nichols
Production Designer...............Vina Brailsford
Assistant.........................John McFadyen
Special Effects..................James O'Brien
Sound Editor.....................Murray Hird
Sound Recordist................Roger Manogue
Sound Re-recordist...............Gail Tauscher
Technical Adviser...............William Moore
Stunt Co-ordinator...............James O'Brien
Cast: Kay Lindsberg, Robert Kimber, Geoffrey Pullan, Bruce Rosen.
A political fantasy, set in 1976. Six months after the USA has gone fascist, American radical Kelly Bryant comes to Australia, the press and police coverage on her proving yet again that We Shall Not Overcome.
23 minutes.
Budget: $2,500
In release.

MAY FLY
Director.........................Kevin Anderson
Production Assistant.............Tony Stevens
Photography......................Kevin Anderson
Continuity......................Dianne Giuliieri
Sound Recordist................Darrell Gladyw
Cast: Walter Dobrowolski, James Robertson, Maureen Sadler.
Twenty-four hours in the life of a crime writer, during which he confronts the characters in his latest novel.
Editing stages.

NIUGINI CULTURE SHOCK
Directors.........................Jane Oehr, Ian Stocks
Producer.........................Ian Stocks
Production Manager.............Meg Stewart
Script.............................Ian Stocks
Stills..............................John Delacour
Colour Process....................Eastman
Editor..............................Jim Robinson
Sound Recordist................Peter Fenton
Hard hitting documentary on the effects of the European invasion of Niugini's social religions and cultural life.
Length: 48 minutes.
Budget: $30,000.
In release.

QUICK, FOLLOW THAT STAR
Directors.........................Kit Humphries
Producer.........................Stan Dailey
Production Manager.............Stan Dailey
Photography.......................Kit Humphries
Editors.........................Kit Humphries
Colour Process.............Ektachrome
Music..............................Kit Humphries
Sound Recordist................Kit Humphries
Animators.......................Kit Humphries
An animated film about the state of the world (in particular pollution and religion) as seen through the eyes of the filmmakers (portrayed by an animated 'Everyman'.
Budget: $3,800.
Length: 20 minutes.
Shooting October/November.

RELUCTANT FLAME
Directors.........................Jane Oehr, Ian Stocks
Producer.........................Ian Stocks
Production Manager.............Meg Stewart
Stills..............................John Delacour
Colour Process....................Eastman
Editor..............................Warwick Hercul
Sound Recordist................Bill Woolford
Documentary on three radical Niugini movements based in village societies and aimed at overcoming the decline in political and social life during white rule.
Budget: $6,000.
Length: 31 minutes.
Release print stage.

ROBINSON
Directors.........................Peter Tammer
Producer.........................Gary Patterson
Photography.......................Peter Tammer
Sound Recordist................Gary Patterson
Documentary on 74-year-old Reg Robinson, who has built 16 mm cameras, printers and projectors for the last fifty years. Among other achievements he directed a film in 1926 titled The Shattered Illusion, and recently has built a super 16 mm machine with Vincent Monton.
Editing stages.
In view of the rapid growth of Australian production the co-ordinator of this column would be greatly assisted by individual producers and directors sending their production details to:

"In Production",
Cinema Papers,
37 Rotherwood Street,
Richmond, Victoria 3121.

**SUMMER SHADOWS**

Director .................. Scott Murray
Production Company ........ Acme Films
Producer ................ Simon Scott
Script .................... Scott Murray, Simon Scott
Photography ............... Gordon Glenn
Editors .................. Scott Murray, Sylvie Le Ciezio
Sound Recordist ........... Lloyd Carrick
Sound Re-recordist .......... Bob Gardiner

Study of a young man's persistence in a one-way love relationship and his subsequent realization of the existence of choice.

Budget: $20,000.
Length: 80 minutes.
Preproduction.

**WE'RE ALRIGHT APART FROM THE WOMAN ON THE 2.30 FROM SYDNEY**

Written, produced, directed and edited by Andrew Psolokoskowitz.

From a short story in Stock and Land.

16 mm.
In preproduction.

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**SOLO FLIGHT**

Director ................ Ian Mills
Production Manager ..... Pat Robbins
Photography .............. Gordon Glenn
Script .................... Ian Mills
Sound Recordist .......... Lloyd Carrick
Sound Re-recordist .......... Bob Gardiner

The longing of a woman to escape the rigid framework of her everyday world and the limitations placed on her freedom by human society and human relations.

Length: 90 minutes.
Editing stages.

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**ROLLING HOME**

Directors .................... Paul Witzig, David Lourie
Production Company .......... Island Films
Producer ................ Paul Witzig
Script ................ Judy Bray, Paul Witzig
Story ....................... Concept by Craig McGregor
Photography ............... Michael Simmons, Robbie Newman
Colour Process ............. Ektachrome
Editor ...................... David Lourie

Surfing by ................. Reno Abellira

Cast: Joan and Reno Abellira, Judy Bray, David Lourie, Robbie Newman, Mindy Plater, Michael Simmons, Ian Watson, Paul and Marianne Witzig.

A surf movie in which wave-riding only constitutes ten per cent of the picture.

"There were ten of us that year who left the city far behind and headed west... we had heard stories of Aboriginal tribes, of huge mountain ranges, of vast deserts and plains, of perfect surf on hidden beaches. Our journey was a quest into the beyond; a search for new people, new places and new experiences..." (Paul Witzig and Judy Bray).

Length: 95 minutes.
Budget: $72,000.
Release print stage.

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**WE'RE ALRIGHT APART FROM THE WOMAN ON THE 2.30 FROM SYDNEY**

Written, produced, directed and edited by Andrew Psolokoskowitz.

From a short story in Stock and Land.

16 mm.
In preproduction.

---

**SOLO FLIGHT**

Director ................ Ian Mills
Production Manager ..... Pat Robbins
Photography .............. Gordon Glenn
Script .................... Ian Mills
Sound Recordist .......... Lloyd Carrick

About a young man's"
We now have pleasure in offering the Australian Film Industry the most comprehensive range of lighting equipment including 1,000 amp. — 250 amp. silent generators on go anywhere 4-wheel drive vehicles. Lightweight Brute Arcs, lanaro, Mole and Lowell lightweight equipment plus all the other “goodies” the Australian electrician needs.

Contact: Gaffer — Alan Martin
Generators — John Cummings.

Samuelson Film Service Australia Pty Ltd would like to extend to all their many friends in the Australian Film and Television Industry their best wishes for Christmas and 1975.
PRODUCTION REPORT

A Salute to the Great McCarthy
Barry Humphries as Colonel B. Miller.

Doug Elliott as the Vice-President of the South Melbourne Football Club and Ron Fraser as its coach.

The football experts: Jack Diehard (Jack Dyer) and Lou Arnold (Lou Richards).

McCarthy, second from left, looking every inch a footballer.

McCarthy (John Jarrat) under the shower with girlfriend Miss Russell (Judy Morris).
Along with Alan Hopgood's *And The Big Men Fly*, Oakley's *A Salute to the Great McCarthy* is probably the best known fictional work on Australian Rules Football. Since its publication in 1968 the novel has averaged yearly sales of approximately 15,000. David Baker bought the novel's rights outright, and began scripting with young A.P.G. writer John Romeril, assisted by script development money from the Film and Television Board. Baker then applied to the Australian Film Development Corporation to produce McCarthy on a budget of $250,000, and was offered an investment of approximately $100,000. The remaining $150,000 was raised privately. Asked whether all the money was together before the credit squeeze, Baker replied “Yes, but had I planned on a starting date some three and a half months later, I might have been in a quite different position. God knows it’s hard enough at the best of times to get hold of the dough, but wanting it now would really not be the best.”

Crew

Director/Producer ........ David Baker
Production Company .......... Stoney Creek Films
Associate Producers .......... Richard Brennan, Allan Benjamin
Unit Manager ................. Michael Martorana
Production Secretary ........ Jenny Woods
Production Accountant ........ Johnathon Toussaint
Director of Photography ...... Bruce McNaughton
Camera Operator ............. Peter James
Sound Recordist .............. Ron Green
Boom Operator ................ David Cooper
Publicity .................... Natalie Miller
Catering .................... Anna Baker

Cast

John Jarrat .................. McCarthy
Sandra McGregor .............. Vera
Judy Morris ..................... Miss Russell
Kate Fitzpatrick .............. Andrea
Deans Miller ................. MacGuiness
Chris Haywood ............... Warburton
Colin Drake .................... Ackerman
Barry Humphries ............. Colonel B. Miller
Colin Croft .................... Tranter
John Frawley .................. Webster
Tom Farley ..................... MacGuire
Bruce Spence .................. Bill Dean
Ron Pinnell .................... Burt Johnson
Reg Newsome .................. Supporter
Vivian Gray .................... Mrs Thompson
Peter Cummins ............... Rerk
Lou Richards .................. L. Arnold
Tim Robertson ................ Herb
Jack Dyer ...................... J. Dinhard
Max Fairchild ............... Thommo
Roy Day ...................... J. H. Redfern
Sally Conbere ................ Nurse One
James Bowles ................. Les
David Atkins .................. Office Boy
Archie Hull .................... Old Lag
Max Gilles .................... Stan/Boris
Bill Bennett ................... Mr Rawfield
John Finlayson ............... Vincent
Tina Bursil .................... Lois
Tom Lake ...................... Nazi Speaker
Laidley Mort .................. Henry

Barry Humphries, John Jarrat, David Baker between takes.

McCarthy (John Jarrat) and Miss Russell (Judy Morris) take to bed.

Barry Humphries, John Jarrat, David Baker between takes.

Les (James Bowles) and Stan (Max Gilles) after the bagging of McCarthy.
DAVID BAKER: The film just seems light years away from any of the football world's immediate concerns, even though it is essentially about a footballer. Even a film just on football would have seemed as remote. Did they see it as good publicity? I don't think they saw it as publicity or anything of that sort. Their attitudes appear exclusively directed to winning matches. The only PR they place any importance on is the PR that comes from winning matches; and had I been able to prove that making a film would win them matches I suppose that it would have been quite different, but I wasn't able, nor would I be able to. Eventually of course I went with South Melbourne but that was only after I had been turned down a lot of other times. It actually took me a year to get into a club.

Do you think the film will get the same reaction from football followers as from the football administration? Probably, I don't think football followers are really impressed by films about football, but McCarthy isn't about football.

Would you care to say what it is about?

It is about a chap who happens to be a footballer. I mean, if I made a film about you, would you expect it to be described as a film about journalism? Oh, it could be. As for "McCarthy" it depends on how much football there is in it.

I think it plays a fairly minor part.

So you came to the book "Salute to the Great McCarthy" not from wanting to make a film about something like football, which you thought would have box office appeal, but because you had read the book and wanted to make a film about that particular character? Oh, no. I knew I wanted to make a comedy and I knew it had to have elements which an audience could identify with. He could have been a billiards player. I suppose I say that rather blandly because playing billiards isn't quite as exciting as playing football, nor has it to do with body contact. I think the football background is more exciting, more dynamic, and just more visually interesting.

It sounds like the treatment of football in the film is quite different to the way Hollywood always used to make these sort of films. The days of the home-town boy coming up trumps in the end, winning the girl as well as the match.

Yes, well I was always conscious of the lessons learned from those films. Of McCarthy's 110 minutes, actual football might account for about seven of those minutes, whereas in those older-style Hollywood pictures the sport would take up 50 or 60 per cent. Audiences don't go to see film-ed sport, they go to see films about sportsmen which include the playing of sport.

However the story in those old ones is usually on such a simple level that the match parallels what's happening to the character. Therefore the home-run means that he has won not only the match but everything else as well — including the girl.

Yes, he may have been vain and conceited and because he goes out and plays roughly in scoring his six goals the girl turns him down.

Some reports of the shooting seem to indicate there are almost surreal elements in the film. Would that be correct?

Well I suppose so. It wouldn't have been very hard for me to develop that because it appeals to me. I find it interesting. But of course you can't do very much along those lines because you can't confuse the audience.

You consider making concessions to an audience as something necessary then?

Yes I do. I think you only fool yourself about these things at your peril. I suppose it's to do with a realistic assessment of your own position, because there are certain things that you can do and certain things that you can't do. It wouldn't have been very hard for me to have turned McCarthy into an art film. I don't see that as being inconsistent with the visceral gags that I had to dream up. The audience like viscera, they like fluids going in and out of the body because that's the sort of world they live in out there. I am also a wee bit wary of the wit in McCarthy because I don't think Australians are very witty, and I think wit is a rather dangerous quality to have in a film.

All the same there are innumerable examples of directors all over the world who have made no concessions and gone on to make many films each. Why can't that happen in Australia?

Well if that can, I don't think it can happen now.

Any particular reason?

I suppose because the notion of investing in the established commercial film production framework is so young. I mean we have really only had films for a couple of years.

Do you think this situation is more likely to come about if there were more active producers in the industry?

Yes, and I would personally favour that. I think that there are so many people involved in the industry that it is very difficult to make things happen now. Perhaps if the industry was more active producers in the future we may see the emergence of individuals who will produce only, and others who will direct only. I think that would be very good.

Do you see then the possibility of say one McCarthy-style picture in a row would allow me to make a picture that I particularly wanted to do: although I recognized it as not being as commercial in the sense of the wide identification. I would be pretty wary of such a situation simply because the sector of Australian society that one might describe as being middle class, affluent and cultivated don't seem to go to the pictures much. I think they have lost the habit. However given the changing times we live in I can quite easily imagine a situation where they all go again. So I feel a slight scepticism about transforming what I feel now into the future because it changes so quickly; and these directions of interest, or fads, zop past your eyeballs so bloody quickly that you'd better not blink, otherwise it will be over and done with before you know where you are, and the public is maybe whacking onto something else.

You are talking about the kind of material that you make?

Yes. I am talking about the contemporary receptivity of Australian audiences to Australian product.

Well there you are talking about continuity of production over a number of years. Who knows whether doing three or four McCarthy-style pictures in a row would allow me to make a picture that I particularly wanted to do: although I recognized it as not being as commercial in the sense of the wide identification. I would be pretty wary of such a situation simply because the sector of Australian society that one might describe as being middle class, affluent and cultivated don't seem to go to the pictures much. I think they have lost the habit. However given the changing times we live in I can quite easily imagine a situation where they all go again. So I feel a slight scepticism about transforming what I feel now into the future because it changes so quickly; and these directions of interest, or fads, zop past your eyeballs so bloody quickly that you'd better not blink, otherwise it will be over and done with before you know where you are, and the public is maybe whacking onto something else.

What's the alternative though?

Oh Christ, I don't know — motor mowers, long playing records, anything you like.

Aren't almost the same considerations applicable there though? I
mean turning out lawn mowers has many similar problems.

Of course, I mean lawn mowers aren't going to have the bloody field to themselves for very long. A guy might come along with a radio-active fishing rod or something.

Or even people who like their lawns long . . .

But you also see it if you look at the body of Australian literature up till recent times. Most of our better writers habitually rejected the society in which they lived, and concerned themselves with a removal from the immediate here and now to something that happened maybe sixty years ago in the bush. Contemporary social realism as applicable to the vast mass of Australians is not something we have been terrifically concerned with, and it is only recently that Australian films have used it. If you look at John Murray's The Naked Bunyip, and Stork, you'll see that they are a complete watershed of everything that went before. Remember that charming picture an artist who goes up to Queensland and concerned with, and it is only recently that Australian films have used it. If you look at John Murray's The Naked Bunyip, and Stork, you'll see that they are a complete watershed of everything that went before. Remember that charming picture an artist who goes up to Queensland and meets this girl . . .

“Age of Consent” . . .

Charming. But his relevance to those people out there is relatively distant, whereas Bunyip, Stork, Bazza, Libido and Alvin have got areas of immediate identification all over the place. It's a sort of fantastic land where some chunkily-headed old buggers boil billies out in the out-back.

Do you really see “Alvin Purple” as social realism?

To the extent that it's a comedy taking place within a socially recognizable situation with socially recognizable characters. It stimulates all sorts of fantasies such as great sexual prowess, and that's what those people have.

Is “McCarthy” similar to that?

Yes, of course it is.

Where do the elements of comedy take their starting point? The character of McCarthy?

No. McCarthy, like Alvin, is a recessive. He is boyish, likeable and uncomplicated, and he moves through a dramatic landscape teaming with Dickensian-style grotesques. They are the ones who get the laughs, because McCarthy himself does not initiate action, others do it for him. It seems to be a very strange thing, but “Between Wars”, “The Cars That Ate Paris”, “Alvin Purple” and “The Great McCarthy” have all got recessive lead characters.

Well in Cars of course he is an extreme recessive and its dramatic landscape is tremendously distinctive. I myself have not seen Between Wars, but he is in Alvin, as you say, and Bazza. Bazza's more of a primitive though.

Yes he is a sort of innocent figure, but there is something of the recessive in him. Stork of course initiates action, being a clown-like figure who imposes himself on his dramatic landscape. In terms of straight drama the most forceful and energetic character I have filmed recently would be Ken in The Family Man from Libido who was initiating action all the time. The energy comes from consistent points of confrontation — bang, bang, bang. Actually Ken always gets a lot of laughs.

Do you think it's because of an uneasy identification?

I have often thought about that, but I don't really know. I think primarily people are just reassured by the identification; they recognize it as alfish and so forth but they identify strongly with it — take any of the bloody lines that you like. McCarthy is not a subversive. If I feel anything for the picture I suppose it is because I discern in McCarthy a quality of great charm, but the thing that I know the audience will support at the box office is its body, its energy. The incidents never stop, they just go on and on.

Is McCarthy a very complex character?

Well he is much more complex than he seems.

Is he accessible without one having to delve into his complexity?

Oh yes. Sometimes I think that the film is actually romantic in its overall feel, though of course audiences would never go for that in a million years. What saves it is its consistent development. It is quite unlike Bazza and Alvin in that respect because both of those had quite rigid characters, whereas in McCarthy there is plain old-fashioned narrative and character development.

So McCarthy changes a lot during the film?

Yes he does. There is a process of maturation. When we first meet him in the country he is quite self-conscious but he develops the ability to become self-conscious. Then at the end there is a transition to self-awareness — but it doesn't interfere with the laughs or story.

Is the film going to be equally accessible to Americans and Englishmen?

Barry Oakley

“McCarthy the Great is the brilliant young footballer from the bush determined to make good in the bright lights of the city. One of the great dunce-clown heroes, McCarthy is a completely inept social climber, and his incredible adventures as he struggles to cope with the toughness and barrenness of modern urban life give rise to a series of hard-eyed observations about life in Australia.”

Producer/Director of The Great McCarthy, David Baker.

Cinema Papers, December — 357
Oh, it's immediately accessible to anyone really. Its thematic structure is to do with the role of dominance on recessive individuals, of which there are a number of unattractive examples and one very attractive one. Another thing that I feel about McCarthy is that it is a very good film for women. A lot of the middle class and cultivated sort of women would have had a distaste for Bazza. There wouldn't have been too many who liked Abin either, which I personally would have thought a much more delightful picture.

As producer of "McCarthy" what do you think of the recent criticism in the Australian film industry of the wages crews charge, relative to overseas technicians?

What is the nature of the criticism?

That a member of a crew will, after completing a film, charge say $30 a week more than he did before. Now you have a situation where some cameramen in Australia are getting more than some people like Russell Metty who has shot well over 20 big American features such as "Touch of Evil" and "The War Lord".

Well of that I don't know, but it is a continually fluctuating market. It's not my view by any means that the most well-known technicians are necessarily the most competent, and by most well-known presumably those who are able to command the largest fees. I certainly think that we have technicians in this country in all departments who can quite comfortably make $200,000 or $250,000 pictures, and this includes actors. These are probably the only technicians at the moment capable of that anywhere in the world.

So you are happy with the standard of technicians on "McCarthy"?

Yes, for this style of low-budget feature. Where I think we are going to have tremendous difficulty is going the next stage, if there is to be one. That is to very quickly cope with the further requirements of a $400,000 picture, because I don't think that our levels of expertise are there yet. This isn't technical experience, it is to do with attitudes and approaches, and not only to do with technicians. They merely reflect the values and standards of the larger spheres around them.

So you think that perhaps in the future budgets will increase, rather than stay on the quarter of a million which they are at the moment?

I don't think that, I don't think that at all. It isn't as simple as that. There are no more than 14 or 15 pictures a year that return film hire of greater than $100,000 in Australia. However Australia is going to be a very good market, and it is certainly better than England. Film audiences in the United Kingdom have dropped away quite emphatically. They have only 20 per cent of the cinema audience they had in the mid 1950s.

Well if film hire in this country is not likely to exceed $100,000, does "McCarthy" plan to gain the lion's share of its money from overseas markets?

No Sir. I am not terribly familiar with overseas markets and at the moment I am not at all that concerned because it is designed to go out and make its cash back here.

What would it have to get here in gross box office returns to cover the original investment of $250,000?

Oh, a million, million and a quarter.

How many films have done that in Australia in the last two years?

Not too many.

How often?

Maybe half a dozen. So I don't think that there's much chance in the foreseeable future of Australian pictures costing more than $250,000, unless they have access to quite lucrative markets elsewhere.

Do you see it being possible to make a film for less than that which could command a similar audience?

No I don't. You can certainly make a nice little picture for let's say $80,000 or $100,000, but to get the value into the finished product necessary to return all the money here, you have to go in my view to a figure in the region of $200,000.

How many months would it have to hold down a reasonable sized cinema in the city?

Maybe six, eight months. But to return to your previous question, talking about technicians and so forth, for me the larger question is the limitations placed on us by the sorts of people we are. The interesting thing to me seems to be those further increments of excellence that take place once you have reached 90 or 95 per cent. I am not only talking about technicians but also about the financing people, exhibition people, actors, writers, directors. I think we have always had the capacity to, in a rather breathtaking sort of way, go from the bottom, voom, straight up to 90 per cent. I think our crews and our actors are dynamic in the sense that they have fairly high energy levels. However if you wish to go from 90 to 95 per cent that additional 5 per cent is won only at the cost of a comparable amount of energy and application to the first 90 per cent. Do you follow me there? I don't think that there's much chance in the foreseeable future of Australian pictures costing more than $250,000, unless they have access to quite lucrative markets elsewhere.

Do you apply this to directorial ability as well?

Oh yes.
Is this extra 5 per cent something which you yourself require and are not getting?

Well I'm no different to you, I have got the same arms and legs and so forth. I am just a part of the whole world I move in. On occasions the absence of these increments of excellence does strike me and makes me wince, which is a quite private sort of wincing and cringing. It is not reflected in the rest of the audience or the actors. Maybe they are wincing too and they are also trying to put their finger on what it is that disturbs and unsettles them. You are running a film magazine, you have got two men and a dog, and a small amount of money. I would say that you are capable of getting about 90 per cent of your magazine done very quickly and with a considerable dynamic dash and style, but it's that extra bit, it's the last 10 per cent which is to do with relaxed authority. Massive, comfortable, elegant self-assurance, and that perhaps disturbs you too. Now that is the sort of thing that I am trying to express.

Do you think this is partly due to the unstable nature of the Australian film industry where people are always slightly fearful of what's going to happen? It is hard to be at ease in the film industry here.

I think film industries all over the world have always suffered what you describe as instability. I think it's to do with the body of Australian culture as it exists at the moment. I don't think there is really fine writing though I think there is some brilliant writing, but fineness and great assurance and authority are something else. There's excellence and on occasion there's brilliance in the industry, but it's those extra hard won points that take the thing further that are important.

It doesn't sound like these are the sort of things which mean the difference between a viable and non-viable industry, it sounds more personal. Perhaps these things are only perceived by a small percentage of the audience anyway.

Yes, I would say that. I think they are perceived outside our own social and cultural context and I think our slight anxieties, uncertainties, clumsinesses are perceived elsewhere by close observers.

These are not clumsinesses that have been betrayed, but rather are clumsinesses that shouldn't have been there in the first place?

That's right. I don't think we see them in this way because of what we are. It seems just another viable part of our own culture. I haven't thought it completely through as yet, but I sometimes do dwell on it as a half-formed sort of elusive concept.

Do you recognize it in your own work?

Well obviously not, otherwise I would as ruthlessly as possible hack it out.

So you think that it is something that once recognized can be eradicated, and it is not just a lack of expertise or professionalism?

No, I don't think it's to do with particular persons.

Is it to do with a milieu of sophisticated criticism that leads people to question such things in their work?

No, no. I suppose one could get sidetracked on this point but I don't really carry away much from most of the film assessments written by people in Australia. I feel this lack deeply. I would say there would not be more than five pictures a year that I might feel deeply enough to want to write about. It is probably fatuous to expect an individual who looks at four pictures a week and writes about 200 reviews a year to write about them on that level.

So you are saying that it is the standard of expectation and the level of criticism here that perpetuates this state of affairs?

Yes, yes. I mean when you look into your girlfriend's face . . . What I am talking about is that the indirect experience of the screen is a similar sort of thing. But I can't easily see a situation in which those further increments of excellence might be achieved, because I do think at the moment we are on the $200,000 budgets for some time.

You don't think it is possible to reach these increments in a film with that sort of budget. I personally would have thought that the budget was adequate given the ingredients were there. After all there have been a lot of good films made on a budget of $250,000.

Yes but then don't forget this: it doesn't apply only to the technicians, it is primarily to do with sensibility.

Yes, I would have thought that the technical aspect was the least important.

Yes, I think it's to do above all with writing, casting, directing and acting.

Well surely all those things are fairly independent of budget?

Well let's get back to our hypothetical $85,000 picture. I don't think, although obviously I don't know, that an $85,000 picture could get out of the Australian market $200,000 in film hire. I think you have got to pack more into your film and this packing costs a lot of money, though as you know many superb pictures have been and will be made around the $85,000 mark. When we are talking about Squeaker's Mate on the one hand and McCarthy on the other, I am talking about the difference between $20,000 and $250,000, yet Squeaker's Mate is in my view a considerable vehicle.

But nowhere near as commercial even in a lengthened form?

No, I don't think that. I think the writing's quite clearly on the wall with films like Bazza and Alvin. Audiences like high energy and rigidity, but they also like a measure of harsh subserviveness.
Film Review Information Service

The George Lugg Library welcomes enquiries on local and overseas films. On request, photostat copies of synopses, articles, reviews will be forwarded. Please detail specific information required and send S.A.E. plus 50 cents service fee to:

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Joseph von Sternberg stands at the dawn of the sound film as Edmund Spenser stands at the dawn of modern English. In 1930 von Sternberg made Morocco, the first of his six films in America with Marlene Dietrich.

Morocco, the definitive exotic place. Men come here, footloose adventurers who have ditched the past, like Legionnaire Tom Brown (Gary Cooper). Women come here, suicide passengers who have no future, like Amy Jolly (Marlene Dietrich).

Lo Tinto's cabaret is the crucible of Morocco, where wealthy Europeans and prestigious Arabs mingle at table, and the riff-raff crowd into the pit. There is to be a new performer tonight, Lo Tinto announces, Mme Amy Jolly. The newcomer waits coolly in the wings, a beautiful blonde woman wearing with brazen assurance the evening clothes of the upper-class European, complete with top hat.

The little orchestra strikes up, Amy walks on stage and waits. There is instantaneous uproar, drowning the music. In the pit the rakish and sinewy legionnaire Tom Brown leans forward interestedly while his companion of the evening, a vivacious Spanish beauty, heckles energetically.

As the storm of hooting continues unabated Amy calmly takes a chair on stage; her face has a veiled expression, watchful but unperturbed. She draws on her cigarette and prepares to wait them out. Tom gets to his feet in the pit and rudely quells his fellow groundlings.

The music becomes audible; Amy rises and steps down amongst the European gentlefolk at their tables. There is a hush as she commences to sing in French of love and tears, of death and dreams. Her voice is husky and languid; her demeanour might be vulgar if it were not so elegant; her expression might be playful if it were not so insolent.

Tom settles down to enjoy the performance, while his companion's glance flickers angrily between him and Amy. As she sings Amy saunters between the tables, pausing occasionally, shaking off a gentleman's exploring hand with scarcely a glance. Her song is punctuated by gestures, brushing back or tipping forward her top hat in some kind of amiable parody of sex role mannerisms. Her entire presence embodies a feminine mystery — she seems simultaneously alluring and inviolable.

The completion of her song brings applause as loud and sustained as her initial reception. In the pit Tom salutes airily. Amy lounges on the low rail surrounding a table where two gentlemen and their ladies are seated. One of the men offers her a glass of champagne. She discards her cigarette, bestrides the rail with masculine ease, and stands by the table. She empties the glass to renewed applause.

One of the women at the table is remarkably young and pretty. As Amy turns away the woman looks from her to the others and giggles. She is quite nonplussed by Amy, and her response is no doubt appropriate within the limitations of her own sex and class roles. The giggle is clear and sweet, and brings a silence in its wake. Amy stops and looks back calculatingly as the young woman turns toward her again. Amy reaches out and takes the flower from behind the woman's ear.

"May I have this?"
"Of course." The reply is gracious, but with a thrill of apprehension in it. Amy sniffs the flower reflectively. Then in a swift graceful movement she bends down and kisses the woman full on the lips.

It is a magical moment.

The poor thing hides behind her fan in embarrassment as a shout of surprised laughter goes up and bursts into a storm of applause louder than before. Amy tips her hat manfully and strolls across to the edge of the pit. Tom, still clapping, rises to his feet while his companion sits glowering.

Amy takes one more sniff of the flower and then tosses it straight into Tom's hands.

It is a second reversal of a sex role, as outrageous and unexpected as the first. The Spanish lady springs to her feet tigerishly. The male chauvinist is dumbfounded. The place explodes.

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5. Amy (singing huskily): "On fait serment. En sa Jolie de s'adorer . . . Longtemps, longtemps/ On est charmant,

6. Elle est jolie. / C'est par un soir/ De gai printemps, / Mats un beau jour/ Pour rien, sans cause . . .
7. L'amour se fane avec les fleurs./ Alors on reste là, Toute chose le coeur serre.

8. Les yeux remplis de pleurs ... / Lorsque tout est fini, / Quand se meurt, Votre beau rêve.

9. Pourquoi pleurer les jours ... / ... enfuis / Regretter les songes ...

10. ... partis, Les baisers sont fleuris, / Le roman vite s'achève et l'on / Reste a jamais meurtri / Quand tout est fini.

11. 

12. Man: May I offer you this glass of champagne, mademoiselle?

13. 

14. 

15. 


17. 

18. 

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19. Amy: May I have this?
Woman: Of course.
HEXAGON IS GAMBLING ON THE SUCCESS OF THE AUSTRALIAN FILM INDUSTRY

and so far, every one's a winner!

"ALVIN PURPLE"

"PETERSEN"

"ALVIN RIDES AGAIN"

"THE LOVE EPIDEMIC"

"THE BROTHERS"

"AUSTRALIA AFTER DARK"

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SLEEPER

Ken Quinnell

In a funeral oration for humour George Mikes, a man of altogether different sensibilities to Woody Allen, comments: "Humour is as dead as Chaplin, Keaton and Lloyd-films are. It cannot be rescued; it cannot survive. But it can resurrect. This age cannot be the purveyor of humour, it can — and will, one day — be the proper subject of it." For Woody Allen this age is not only the proper subject of humour, it is perfect and, in a sense, the humour that Mikes laments is resurrected in the work of this canny, spectacled New York innocent.

Sleeper is Allen's fourth film. His first was Take the Money and Run (1969) in which he played a young man whose ambition was to become a great criminal. The film established the essence of the comic's personal style which embraced a good deal of warmth and charm — qualities that screen comedy has lacked for a long time. Bananas (1971) was delayed in its release in Australia. It is a companion piece to Take the Money and Run and shares its untamed craziness. Allen plays a heart-broken New Yorker who joins the revolution in a small South American dictatorship and becomes its President. In Bananas it is clear that the uneasy relationship that exists between Allen as performer and Allen as writer-director is responsible for the stop-start structure and the frequent falling away of sequences into banality. However, it established Allen as a comedian of stature and a director of considerable resource. Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex but Were Afraid to Ask (1972) with its seven episodes, each a parody of a particular genre, began a consolidating process that is fulfilled in Sleeper. Everything displays a new precision and control over the material that is especially evident in those episodes in which Allen himself does not appear. It is not that these are the funniest or the most cinematically successful, it is rather that they show Allen as a director flexing his responses, not yet able to capture them completely through his own persona but ready to try. He does in Sleeper and in that sense the film is a beginning. Allen also scripted and appeared in What's New Pussycat? and Play It Again Sam both the work of other directors, both revealing in their way but without the comic punch of Allen's own work.

The sleeper is Miles Monroe (Woody Allen) who has been frozen in a time capsule for 200 years. Wrapped like a packet of frozen peas, Miles emerges with two centuries of sleep befuddling his mind. The world is a police state ruled by the Leader, a Dr. Strangelove-like eminence seen only in photographs and on video screens. Miles has been revived by doctors who are in sympathy with the underground movement. They need someone with no identity record to help destroy the Aries Project which is designed to wipe out all subjective elements. They are busted by the Security and Miles escapes disguised as a Domesticon robot. He is assigned to the poet Luna Schlosser (Diane Keaton) who makes sappy statements about art that recall Isadora Duncan and writes verse influenced by Rod McKuen. When she takes Miles to a Domesticon service centre to have his head replaced he kidnaps her and escapes, pursued by the bungling Security. Miles is captured and a beauty contest is used to brainwash him. Luna learns the meaning of individuality and freedom with the underground and finally liberates Miles. To counter the brainwashing they use some psychotherapy which involves Miles re-enacting the Sunday dinner at his parents' home when he told them his wife was seeking a divorce ("She thinks I'm a pervert. I drank the waterbed."). The sequence includes the playing of a scene from A Streetcar Named Desire with Allen as Vivien Leigh and Luna as Marlon Brando. Finally, they penetrate the Aries Project to learn that the Leader has been destroyed except for his nose. By a special operation known as "cloning" an attempt is being made to re-create the Leader. Miles and Luna, disguised as cloning surgeons manage to kidnap the nose and destroy it. It is unnecessary to relate the plot in any more detail than this. It is ingeniously simple, structured to contain the comic elements and provide the forward drive that the previous films lacked. Whereas earlier films were co-scripted with Mickey Rose, Sleeper has seasoned humourist Marshall Brickman as Allen's co-writer. Because silent comedy has firmly and endearingly established itself there has been a reluctance to admit the comedians of the sound era to the ranks of the illustrious. Despite critics' carping about the uneasiness of the mixture, the most successful sound comedians have reaffirmed the slap-stick tradition and overlaid it with a dazzling verbal humour. They have utilized the full resources of cinema. Though others have tried, only W. C. Fields, the Marx Brothers, Jerry Lewis and Woody Allen have succeeded. Allen, of course, has not reached the degree of sophistication in his humour that the others have, but he is pushing in that direction. He is drawing heavily on his Jewish background in a way that Jerry Lewis never has and he is writing and directing with increasingly more command over gag structure, narrative development and his own comic persona.

This has become something of a master of the comic cross-reference. As well as the broad interpolations of other comedians' styles that were prevalent in his early work too, in Sleeper he makes more subtle gestures. As well as the adoption of Chaplin's mode for the meal he eats to music there are small changes of intonation and style of delivery that refer to other comedians. In the extraordinary arguments where Miles and Luna expose their common helplessness to each other after they have penetrated the headquarters of the Aries Project, Allen and Keaton plunge through a whole range of comic duos — Jack Benny and Rochester, George Burns and Gracie Allen, Bob Hope and Bing Crosby, Abbott and Costello. The references are skilfully contained in only a mannerism or the inflection of a single line.

Most of Allen's humour revolves around sex. Even those gags that are apparently about other things, food for instance, really have a sexual basis. Since no one is free to be or not to be sexual, sex is always funny. We can repress ourselves but we are incapable of denying our sexual nature; if we do not laugh we are doomed. Woody Allen is appealing just because he makes this lack of freedom funny. His self-pity and self-mockery emancipate us, make us realise for a while that the facts of existence are more flexible than we suspected. He is essentially an innocent. His comic personality displays a wholesomeness, unity and unself-consciousness that rejects all discontinuities and seeks spontaneity, warmth and human involvement, so that even at its most bitter his humour remains curiously attractive. His humour is cleverly directed at the beliefs, social customs, political institutions of the 1960s and '70s. While Allen, like all great comedians, has constructed his own world around him, he has not trapped himself as Jacques Tati does in Mon On-
Between Wars

Left above: At the Fishermen/Farmer Co-operative Picnic, Harry the Barman (John Armstrong) pulls a beer for Dr Trenbow (Corin Redgrave).
Left: Director, Michael Thornhills checks out a shot through the Arriflex 35.
Left below: Terror in the trenches — from the First World War sequence of Between Wars.
Right above: The taciturn and diffident Dr Trenbow with his upper middle class wife Deborah (Judy Morris).
Right below: Dr Peter Avante (Arthur Dignam) reclines on the couch in the fashionable psychiatric practice he shares with his partner Trenbow in the early 1940's.

Many will be disappointed that issues seem to be reduced to the status of punchlines, and the edges of the narrative are sharpened to a point. Trenbow is ill-fitted to be a hero, or even an anti-hero. His example stirs neither crusading nor drop-out fantasies, and he is not conspicuously the victim of political or social injustice. He is not the superb creator of spiritual freedom that Charlie Chaplin became but if we are fortunate he may be soon.

BETWEEN WARS

Between Wars is not great cinema, but it is a nice solid little picture, and it's about time we were reminded of the serious kind of truth in such spectacles as the police raid on the Sydney Town Hall: here is a right-wing organization which has been proscribed by the authorities, and the police are in no position to prepare the way if they can possibly help it. We see a group of open-necked, middle-aged, care-worn proletarians — unacknowledged heroes, farmers, and thereby massage our liberal-reformist in-terest in the political situation. Within scenes Trenbow is not made systematical-ly a pathetic scene, mean and futile. Into the dim and echoing bowels of the establishment edifice burst a contingent of uniformed police and an unidentified civilian. There is a moment of con-founded horror, and the whole affair goes out with a whimper. Within a minute of screen time we have the summarized impression so many obser-

Dr. Edward Trenbow belongs to that melancholy race of reluctant heroes who are manifestly destined by struggle list to struggle with the history around them, but who are nevertheless impelled towards the centre of the hurly-burly; inclined to a settle and a modest life but uprooted by the changing of the times. Haunted by the forces of his own, Trenbow, has the spiritual affinity with Richard Mahony and Yuli Zhigov, other physicians who could not properly take root, make their mark, heal themselves.

The director further detaches Trenbow from audience engagement: Thornhill refrains from those narrative-free one-shots which can be placed in the interstices of the action — usually between sequences and which thereby induce a sense of be-ing admitted to the character's inner condition, e.g., a view of him sitting on a log or at a desk with a cup of coffee, standing on a cliff-top or at a window with a cigarette, strolling by the seaside or in an alley, gazing at the water or at a land-scape, etc., etc., or merely getting from point A to point B between scenes. These, and others of a similar kind, are common, almost routine, devices for attaching audience sympathy to a character...
The film's attitude to its material has that critical sensibility which such work shares with compassion the to-and-fro of human containing and refrain from condemnation or censure. The humour is characteristically laconic, a little sour, occasionally bordering more on the goonish kind of humour, like the stylishly shot, jarful of yellowed molars amongst the billiard balls. All these varied tones of humour depend upon precision for their comic effect.

Other humours elements depend upon insinuation, e.g. in-jokes like Trenbow at the top of the White Cliffs of Dover — commences in rag-time — commences — overflow material from plays, remembered incidents, dormant ideas. Thrown together in a grasshopper script that leaps from one idea to the other, Preminger at his peak could not have improvised so gracefully. General giving his address as "Evecat Crescent"; inverted motifs ("How do you do it, Teddy/Trenbow"); ironic visual overtones, like the country pub ('... a little one')... characters' transitions on verbal and musical cues; ellipsis of anticipated scenes (the wedding rehearsal cuts straight to the asylum gate over the wedding march in rag-time) etc.

Scenes comment ironically upon each other; Trenbow suggests to Marguerite in a therapy session that it is time that she try to convince of his way a more goonish kind of humour, like the stylishly dressed and staged Charlotte fragment which opens the 1920 section, or an image as bizarre as the asylum director exasperatedly scattering his papers on the desk before the large cast of personnel for the first time. "You have the lot," he exclaims, "at least that's how it appears to you."

The script places an artistic premium on rigour of selection, sureness of detail, lightness of touch. In its humour and general dialectic, curiously old-fashioned; simply that it testifies to a poverty of invention and a grievously flagging imagination on the part of its creators. And that is always sad to see.

As with any of Tim Burstall's recent films, Petersen has an unmistakable stamp: a kind of cheeky self-confidence, a rapid and aggressive visual impact that flouts its time and place, and is by no means unattractive. But whereas Alvin Purple had a swaggering bravado about it, and a particular elegance of imagery, Petersen has some pretensions to seriousness. It is less gaudy, less brazenly trivial, and finally hollower than its flashy predecessor. Most of Petersen's shortcomings are contained in a screenplay which successfully dodges its responsibilities. Burstall is hampered with a grasshopper script that leaps from one idea to the next with a nerveless vivacity. Most of the ideas, coming from David Williamson, are good ones; many of them, suitably developed, would make a feature film on their own, and probably a considerably better film than Petersen. It is as if Williamson had discovered and faced with a looming deadline, has dished rather desperately into his memory hat and come up with a whole litter of rabbits, black, white and brindle — overflow material from plays, remembered incidents, dormant ideas. Thrown together in a large pot, the resulting ingredients co-exist in an erratic, haphazard stew.

Thus crudely reduced, and apart from its linking themes, the screenplay reads like a Who's Who? Who can cavil with a fair quota of dead horses — the great examination dispute, women's lib, ZPG, abortion, public nudity, stuff-student and extra-marital affairs, and its product, as diversionary tactics, early in the film especially, with neatly dutiful regularity so that one is tempted to tick them off as they appear. They are produced not so much gratuitously as perfunctorily; raised, touched on just sufficiently to make a point, then abruptly discarded.
This refusal to linger and draw the most from a situation has its roots, I think, in a deep-seated fear of being bored, or boring — the great Australian obsession with speed (drink, conversation, motor cars, sex) which leads to limited expectations on the part of the suppliers to the consumers. Such expectations may very well be justified; there is a national reluctance to concentrate very long on one thing, but films which cater, however unconsciously, for this reluctance are laying themselves open to charges of superficiality, unless they are put together with a scrupulous regard for the altered dynamics of such an approach.

In some ways, Petersen reminds one of a television series: episodic in an irritatingly fragmented way. I saw the film at Melbourne University's Union Theatre with a vociferous, aisle-room-only student audience. The reception was similar to that given to an Engineering Revue — appreciative, bawdy, caustic. As each familiar theme came up it was greeted with a roar of recognition; for each familiar English department type or tutorial catch-phrase, an ironic cheer.

The episodes are loosely linked within the film chiefly because they are shoved into a common setting, or touch on one person — Petersen. Apart from this elementary unity, there appears to have been no real attempt to build up any detailed picture of Tony Petersen, electrician, third year Arts student, father. Consequently, one's involvement and sympathy with him remains depressingly low.

Admittedly, Jack Thompson has his back against the wall in trying to make Petersen — a raucous, all-Australian blond — an interesting character. Thompson's style is so plastic it veers towards a void, only to make do with one wish all the effort had been expended on something rather better thought out.

What is missing is the hard selective energy that might have discarded Williamson's red herrings and welded the remainder into something less good-naturedly compromising. The script's tentative refusal to grapple with or even confront the implications of its material results in an evasive, easy-going picture that flirts with realism and the business of living, only to make do with the soft option, the uneasy co-habitation of gravity with broad humour. It underlines the steep difficulties of making a 'serious' comedy.
THE GREAT GATSBY

Rod Bishop

“Gatsby turned out alright in the end; it is what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the moist atmosphere, what tremors closed out my interest in the abortive stories and shortwinded elations of men.”

The Great Gatsby of America began the day Paramount made a bid. According to Merill, Merill and Rudi Barch began negotiating for the property with F. Scott Fitzgerald’s daughter. Companies with products likely to benefit from spin-offs through association with the $6.4 million film, produced $8 million the ton its first six years. The hype to top Paramount’s existing $1.5 million advertising budget. (Initially, Great was to be a monument to Evans’ wife, the beautiful Ali MacGraw whose mediocrity acting talent and inactional comedy had drawn outright refusals of participation from Peter Bogdanovich, Arthur Penn, Mike Nichols, Warren Beatty, Jack Nicholson and Marlon Brando.)

Both Ford and Miss Farrow were the final choices for the main roles and Jack Clayton was signed as director. This was an odd choice, since Clayton’s poor financial track record had kept him away from film for nearly eight years. However, his critical standing on four brilliant films, (Room at the Top, The Pumpkin Eater, The Innocents and Our Mother’s House) was relatively high and despite the raised eyebrows provoked by this collection, Clayton was confident about his capacity to handle the film:

“...I wouldn’t feel qualified to do a story set in the Bronx, let’s say. But apart from the romantic side of the film and Gatsby’s obsession (and I think I understand obsession quite well), it is a story about class. Which is something I love. Didn’t Marx say there are differences between classes but basically little difference between nationalities — between the English rich and the American rich?”

Getting taken into the project, though, was only half the battle. For the chosen ones, (Clayton, Redford, Farrow, Ford, Coppola etc.), Paramount’s efforts to steamroll a superhit were overpowering. Redford felt the venture to be in a state of permanent crisis. We just prayed we have come to make a movie. The storm of course was all that same and promotional bullshit Paramount arranged that threatened to destroy us all.

At the centre of that storm was the highly volatile relationship existing between Clayton and producer, David Merrick. (The latter, believing that “long hair started with my Musical, Oliver!” hoped Great would bring back short hair for men.) Merrick appears to have undergone a number of changes during the production of the film, (see Bahrenburg’s Filming the Great Gatsby) and a mutual, if begrudging, understanding was reached by the end. However Clayton still felt it necessary to carry a Bedouin knife strapped to the inside of his leg and spent a lonely moment at the end of the film’s shooting “systematically smashing out the window in the main corridor, first with a bench and then with a bare fist.”

Panned by critics who feared the new film would destroy their nostalgic memories of the novel, The Great Gatsby is developing into a box office disaster. Its $1 million worth of fashion spreads and related merchandise is likely to benefit from spin-offs through association with the film. Clayton’s vision of the lost American dream. Fitzgerald’s Great is a fixed hero searching backward to relive his only love, is seen by some as more deserving of criticism than of homage. Nick’s inability to transform his feelings and observations into meaningful action and thus to begin changing the world into the dream is Clayton’s great failing. And never Fitzgerald’s idea of the “illusory green light.” Nick Redford doesn’t narrate. Having seen Fitzgerald’s immortal closing line from Gatsby, “So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past,” quite simply been cut from the film, and 6 Coppola don’t believe it.

But for all Jack Clayton’s essentially British attempts to infuse the film with subtlety and irony, the great irony of all may well be its resounding critical and commercial failure. Fitzgerald’s vision of the American dream and to blame Jack Clayton for dumping it somewhere in the mid-Atlantic.

Producer Merrick, for his part, has grossly mis-calculated the film’s commercial potential and must be suffering the professional consequences of having headed a large-scale failure. Yet at the close of shooting in Britain’s Pinewood Studios, Merrick’s farewell comments made it clear he had come to understand Great’s most important and unrecognized facet:

“The social implications of the film please me. Both Jack Clayton and I are politically sensitive to the idea that America is a country of wealth and capitalism Great is.”


writer Francis Ford Coppola have subtly moved Gatsby in this direction and appear to have lost almost everybody, critics and audience alike, along the way.

Clayton’s intended indictment of the rich and their pathetic cruelty necessitated the sacrificing of what Fitzgerald saw as Gatsby’s ‘heroic nature’ and its replacement with a more ‘balanced’ view of the American rich the way we see them. I’m not interested in the social implications of the film please me. Both Jack Clayton and I are politically sensitive to the idea that America is a country of wealth and capitalism Great is.”


Dave Jones is Maurice. Yakkety Yak is his film. About his film. About Yakkety Yak, that is. About the film that never got made. Or did it? No wonder Peter wants out. No wonder he can't get out. Not with all those chickens coming down the stairs. Too late to chicken out. Too late to peter out. Besides, Pete's no chicken. But where does John Flaus come in? Through the same door as the chickens. Same door as the deputy building superintendent. But the deputy building superintendent gets murdered. Maurice kills him. You see it happen. You see the truth twenty-four times a second. But did it really happen? Or only in the film? Which film? Yakkety Yak, of course.

But Yakkety Yak is a film about the Yakkety Yak that never got made. So what, the murder may have been cut out of the film that never got made. In which case it never happened. Alternatively it was scripted. And scripted things aren't real. Or are they? That's life, art, politics after all. Maybe even entropy. But is it scripted when Socrates gets knocked off? We see John Flaus hand him the poison. We see him die. Who? Socrates of course. But he's been dead for centuries. Balls, he dies here, on the screen, now. Murdered by John Flaus. Twenty-four times a second. Well, what the hell, if things get tough you can cut it and no-one will ever know. But what about Krilov? Maurice engineered his suicide. A bullet to the brain twenty-four times a second. It's the truth. But is it scripted? Is it left in the film that was never made? Maybe it never happened. But Maurice's shirt is covered in blood. Mishima's, Krilov's, Socrates' (from poisoning?), the deputy building superintendent's blood. Looks real. The chickens look real too. Might be plastic though. Things are never what they seem. Least of all when they are what they seem. It's a matter of what they seem to be. Yakkety Yak explores the seamy side of things. They seem to pluck the chickens. To beat them to death. To beat each other to death with chickens. Can you beat that? After all that's life (art, politics). That's film. Film about film. Film about plastic. Film about plastic film. Plastic film about plastic film. See how the levels of meaning accumulate? A thousand critics at ten bucks eleven times over. But it can't last. Nothing lasts. Except plastic. Otherwise entropy all round. Entropy? Entropy? Entropy? A ten minute dolly for discussion of entropy. And screwing. But no screwing for Maurice. Not with this dolly. Caroline has screwed 1,983 guys. She wants to remember Maurice as the one she didn't. That way she won't confuse him with all the others. Maurice looks disappointed. Is he disappointed? Is he human? Is he Maurice? Is he Dave Jones? He looks like Norman Mailer. Even a bit like Johnny O'Keefe with his eyes straightened. Could be anybody. Take your pick (axe, revolver, machinegun). What says you can't shoot films around corners? Who says you can't shoot film crews around basements? Who says you can't watch a film that was never made? Who says that what happens in a film that never got made? Ask Jerzy Toeplitz, your average man in the street/ in the know/ in the film (what film?). But why ask him when film authority John Flaus is right here in the film we are making about John Flaus helping to make the film we are making about which never got made? John, why does the film never get made? Sorry John, that could have been a stupid answer but we'll never know, twenty-four times a second. Cut to Maurice, strong, invisible. You can make a film about anything. A shoe, a clothesbrush, a film — anything. So why ask John Flaus? His answer may have been scripted, who can tell? Who wants to know anyway? The important thing is that we are thinking. Not like Hollywood, weighed down with too much theory, too much practice. We are perfectly free, but even so it's gonna be really difficult. What is? The film. What film? Yakkety Yak. You mean the film about Yakkety Yak? That's what I said. That's what I thought you said, but shit, Maurice, what about all these bodies, how do we explain that? Explain?
We'll cut it all out. It never happened. And now watch me commit ritual suicide a la Socrates, Krilov, Mishima, by letting a 20,000 pound block of concrete fall on me. But shit, Maurice, it fell on you twenty-four times a second and you're still alive. Of course I am. Did you think I was gonna make the same mistake as all the others and actually go through with it? This is a fake 20,000 pound block of concrete. After all, that's lie, fart, politics. But Maurice, is the film a fake too, Maurice? Did we think you were gonna make the same mistake as all the others and actually go through with it?

The above is intended solely, and pointlessly, for those who have already seen Yakety Yak. To others it should appear as slovenly, perverse and incomprehensible as Yakety Yak does to its admirers and detractors alike. Blame Dave Jones, not me. But don't miss Yakety Yak. It's a very entertaining film. Or something.

YAKETY YAK. Written, directed, produced and edited by Dave Jones. Production Company, Acme Films. Photographed by Gordon Glenn. Assistant Director, Rod Bishop. Sound recordists, Peter Beilby, Lloyd Carrick. Sound assistants, Ian Armet, Andrew Pece. Props, advertising, Ros and Keith Robertson. Made with the assistance of the Experimental Film and Television Fund. Players: Dave Jones (Maurice), John Plass (Steve), Peter Carmody (Zig), Peggy Cole (Caroline), John Cleary (Assistant Building Manager), Rod Nicholls (Krilov), Doug White (Socrates), Andy Miller (Mishima), and Jerzy Toeplitz (as himself). Black and white. Australia 1973. 80 minutes. 16 mm.

ASYLUM

Meaghan Morris

In the case of non-commercial films of political significance there is perhaps an incidental advantage to the customary delay with which such films are released in Australia. Since the early sixties popular political mythologies have been created and deflated with great rapidity, and when a film produced for a myth is screened during the deflation period the significance of the film is changed, a distance is created; if it no longer quite provides the exalting experience of a communion for devotees, it becomes a little more thought-provoking. If there is an element of disillusion involved, still the political significance is probably deepened rather than the reverse.

This is very much the case with Peter Robinson's film Asylum, a documentary of life in the Archway Community in North London, one of the psychiatric communities which succeeded R. D. Laing’s legendary Kingsley Hall. Laing was certainly one of the great political forces of the sixties, despite his numerous assertions of intentions to the contrary, and there is still a great deal of magic in seeing the Man himself Alive on film. Laing the psychiatrist should be distinguished from Laing the sociological phenomenon. As a psychiatrist, he effected a tremendous reform in the theory and method of contemporary psychiatry — though I think the film now illustrates that it was no more than a reform.

As a phenomenon, through the popularity of The Divided Self, The Politics of Experience and the monstrous Knots, he gave the Liberation movements an impetus which was and still is positive, but a legacy of sacred rites to structure the impetus which now seems distinctly negative. 'Experience' sanctified the confessional, which could and did transform the release of talking about oneself in a consciousness-raising group into a series of circular monologues, an intellectual version of hippy navel-gazing which comfortably replaced political action. Vietnam, working-class women and murdered homosexuals were all thankfully in the mind with various other paraphernalia. Knots turned out to be precisely that, a kind of paralysing suspicion of all possible...
ASYLUM

relations between Self and Others; and while the notion of the divided self helped to redefine madness to the eventual advantage of the notion of schizophrenia. It is, however, important to note that the term schizophrenia is not equivalent to madness. The term schizophrenia refers to a mental disorder characterized by a disruption in the normal functioning of the brain, including hallucinations, delusions, disorganized thinking, and reduced emotional responsiveness. Madness, on the other hand, encompasses a broader range of behaviors and experiences, including those that are not necessarily caused by a medical condition.

In this context Robinson's film is fascinating because it deals with the idea that madness has been used to justify the power of the state over individuals, and that the language around madness has been manipulated to serve this purpose. The film explores the ways in which madness has been used to control and manipulate individuals, and it challenges the idea that madness is an inherent flaw in the human condition.

The film is based on a true story, and it follows the experiences of six people who were held in a mental hospital in the 1960s. The film shows how the hospital was used as a means of controlling and suppressing those who were different, and how the language around madness was used to justify this control.

The film is a powerful commentary on the ways in which power and control are used to suppress those who are different, and it is a reminder of the importance of challenging the language and narratives that are used to justify this control.
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AMARCORD
Sue Adler

Amarcord stands in interesting comparison to 8½, the film that occupies the central position in Fellini’s oeuvre to date. In 8½ Guido, the semi-autobiographical director, seeks the advice of a critic on overcoming his creative block. He proposes to utilize and ideas recalled from his childhood to comment obliquely on the Catholic conscience in Italy. The critic replies that films of childhood and memory are pointless as they offer little substance to reviewers, and that work of this kind is dangerous as it can easily be second-rate. The critic of 8½ was right: it is dangerous, but that is the reason to do it. There must be an element of danger in anything truly creative. In this sense Fellini’s films between 8½ and Amarcord are safe. In Giulietta Degli Spiriti he worked at one removed from childhood memories through his wife Giulietta Masina in a film that can be seen as a reworking of his neo-realist Le Notti di Cabiria. In the same terms Amarcord can be seen as a reworking of the earlier I Vitelloni. Roma with its accent on memory and impression pointed the way; although it showed us a Fellini still experimenting with form. Amarcord realizes a development that now seems inevitable but which Fellini almost seems to have been postponing in the ten years since 8½.

Amarcord shows a more controlled, a more observant Fellini, a Fellini who once again has the intensity of the director to explore those beautiful eccentricities of human behaviour that were blown out of focus behind the spurious vitality and flamboyance of more recent films. The director’s understanding of, and affection for, his characters provides a rich fund of reaction to the invention of the tightening process in Amarcord must be attributed to Fellini’s co-writer Tonino Guerra who has scripted many films, including all Antonioni’s since 816. It is worthwhile to note here that Guerra is Fellini’s contemporary and that he too is a native of the Romagna region.

In the early thirties in a small village on the Adriatic, the villagers celebrate the death of winter; which is blown to the ground in a similar way to the puffballs, borne on the first spring breeze.

In an initial sequence which brings out in parade the film’s main characters, a witch is burnt in a huge bonfire in the town square.

The film is structured around the passage of the seasons, through which pass the various episodes and events in the town’s life. Fourteen-year-old Titta and his schoolmates form the film’s epicentre. Titta endures an intensely passionate adolescent crush on the town’s beautiful family life with his father who longs to have the epicentre. Titta endures an intensely passionate adolescent crush on the town’s beautiful family life with his father who longs to have the epicentre. Titta endures an intensely passionate adolescent crush on the town’s family life with his father who longs to have the epicentre. Titta and the rest of Fellini’s adolescents accept the amazing universe and never make judgements.

While discussing masturbation with his local priest, Titta (Bruno Zanini) fantasizes about the town’s reigning beauty Gradisca (Magali Noel) is Fellini’s Amarcord.

It is set in the thirties, but really the thirties is an American notion put abroad by Jean Harlow with a bit of a push from the Hollywood dream machine. For Titta and his pals, in fact for the whole village (Gradisca’s Marcel wave bears witness to it) America is the promised land, a mythical place populated by Gary Coopers and Ronald Coleman, the object of their fantasy aspirations.

Why, Pinwheel the peanut vendor even had an uncle who’d been there. Nino Rota makes superb use of the thirties night club music idiom in his score.

Although it is an extremely personal film there is no improper intrusion of self in Fellini’s view of adolescence. It is a film intimately engaged with one aspect of time and space, and Fellini establishes the process of recollection (more properly, perhaps it is a process of rediscovery) within an adult universe. He is preserved from spiritual solecism by the homogeneity of his vision and his ability to accept the fundamental pattern of beliefs that adolescence is founded on. In a comic strip of school room sequences the boys play their delightful pranks in defiance of the teachers. The teachers themselves are caricature adults with no sense of the movement of the individual personalities of the boys and, it would seem, no recollection of their own childhoods.

But the thirties in Italy also meant Fascism. Here Fellini comes into his own. He shows what little effect Fascism had on the day-to-day existence of the villagers. In one memorable sequence we find the town again out in full array; this time, however, native colour gives way to a touch of black and scarlet, nonetheless it’s still a festive occasion and an opportunity for spectacle. The whole town is decked about the entrance of the railway station waiting on the arrival of a Fascist dignitary. We sense he has arrived as the band has just struck up. Yet, we never see the train, only a pestiferous cloud. The waiting crowd cheers anyway and when the Fascist does appear, it is through an ominous fog of embers and, later the Fascists are celebrating when the socialist hymn is being sung. Actually it is a gramophone record that has been defiantly set to play on top of the church tower. They shoot it down like a dangerous enemy and swagger off down the street triumphantly, leaving the amplifier tube to its death throes in the town square. The true face of Fascism, its grubby stand-over brutality shows itself when Titta’s father is interrogated about the incident. Some writers have seen the warm feeling of intimacy in the film as an affirmation of Fascism. Whatever Fellini’s shortcoming as a filmmaker or as the man he has shown himself to be through his work, it is certain he is unequivocally anti-Fascist. He is not in Amarcord presenting an intellectualized, geometricized, dehumanized or even tendentious view of the Fascist era. For these townspeople Fascism proposes a complex of forces beyond their control, beyond their vision. Fellini deals with Fascism as it was then experienced, as a web of rumour and lies. He shows something of the states of mind, what the people had been trained to feel and what they fancied themselves to be thinking about the events of the day. He exposes the bourgeois nature of the Fascist regime, and he understands well the reasons for the fear and error the Italians have always taken to in the field of politics.

When winter comes, the first flakes of snow drift to the ground in a similar way to the puffbolls of spring. Then spring itself returns. We see Gradisca wed to a bald and rather smirly Carabiniere. From the opening with a pagan ritual the film has moved to the Christian ritual of the marriage celebration. And the cycle, it would seem, is complete, for this is where the film ends. Yet one is left with the feeling that the film is beginning again, or rather that it hasn’t got an end. The overall impression is that one has been permitted for over two hours to sit and watch while somebody’s memory and fantasies have been projected against the screen. Although with Amarcord, Fellini has made, again, a film obliquely about himself: he has learned not to intrude.

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Underground Film A Critical History
Parker Tyler

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Stardom
The Hollywood Phenomenon
ALEXANDER WALKER
partments. And this is where he differs most from Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation. He says intrusions of power politics. He feels that politics on the bourgeois establishment with its think there was a homosexual theme in grade one way or another. Tyler'certainly has and quite a few other heterosexuals who make the hermaphroditic god of homosexual love who is place in an artistic tradition of such represen­ tations.

For this book he has invented a new myth, a hermaphroditic god of homosexual love who is called Homeros (Homo plus Eros); and we follow Homeros through his/her (mostly his) metamorphoses, from youth to age, from tragedy to comedy, from poignancy to pornography, and in and out of dress, undress, uniform and cross­dresses. Homosexual love is depicted very wryly, so that it includes transsexuals, transvestites, latent homosexuals, supposed homosexuals, bisexuals, people who hate each other, heterosexual stars who are cult figures to some homosexuals, and quite a few other heterosexuals who make the grade one way or another. Tyler certainly has some surprises in store for us. I bet you didn't cotton on to the phallic symbolism of the cucumber sandwiches in The Importance of Being Earnest. However, many of Tyler's insinuations are very plausible, and have already started to colour my memories of films.

One of the author's aims in this book is to plead the cause of "total sexual freedom" and "peaceful eroticism". The villains in the case are rather shadowy, but he seems to blame sexual repression on "the bourgeois establishment with its hypocritical moral codes", Christianity, and the intrusions of power politics. He feels that politics and sex can and should be kept in separate compartments. And this is where he differs most from Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation. He says that although a woman may feel politically and economically oppressed in her relationships with men in general, and her husband in particular, in the act of intercourse she can put all that aside, and enter a realm of equality, harmony and bliss. While Tyler regards politics as a violent and un­savory business, he is rather complacent about American society. We live, he says, "in a political climate which, for all its ambiguous wars, is democratically live-and-let-live".

Parker Tyler is not only seeking in this book to defend sexual freedom, he is also out to enjoy himself, to relive past experiences of film, and, as he might say, to cruise the transcendental pantheon — and where better to look for "talent"? It would be more fun for the reader if the writing was better. He has a knack for finding or in­venting redundant and clumsy words. Take for ex­ample, "The basic offbeat sexual structure is archetypal of the human race. Such relation can exist too actually as well as in culturally abstract patterns." As Gore Vidal noticed, that sort of thing is an off-peg send-up of intel­lectuals, no alterations necessary. Tyler's arguments proceed backwards or sideways; and when he finishes discussing anything, he always drops it suddenly, picks up something else, and comes back later, like a neurotic dog with too many bones. His worst fault is evasiveness. There are some topics but which he is very uncertain, and that is no crime, most of us are uncertain about most things these days, but Parker Tyler is really sneaky about it: he contradicts himself again and again, but the language is so mud, and his language is so muddied, and perhaps he hasn't noticed. He really can't decide whether it is necessary to have a big penis, or even if it is necessary to have one at all, whether unisex is bor­dering on and honest, or a step in the direction of Homeros, whether Gay Lib's where it's all at, or just a lot of scruffs wasting their time picketing, whether Women's Liberationists are tedious Philistine lesbians, or prim Lysistratas engaged in long-term industrial bargaining with heterosex­ual males, whether sadomasochism means the emancipation of the spirit, or the profanation of Homeros.

Of course, as Tyler points out, evasion, mystification and disguise are part of the camp tradition, the secret codes of the oppressed; but mystification and disguise are part of the camp evasion here is unnecessary and in bad faith. Another part of the camp tradition is kitsch, things "so bad that they're good". And Parker Tyler writes so badly, that it cradled my mind that he was trying to be kitschy. If that is so, he is doomed to failure, like the pop artists Nick Cohn and Allen Jones, because the glory of kitsch is its innocence, and that glory never descends upon those who try.

Following the example of the Black movements and Women's Liberation, some Gay Liberationists have suggested that homosexuals must reclaim their own culture. But where and what is gay culture? It is clear from Tyler's book that there is a culture created by and for homosexuals, but it is not altogether clear that it is worth reclaiming. The case against gay culture has been put most strongly by a small group of New York feminists, who have said that Revolutionary Effemists. They say in their Manifesto, "faggots ... are offered a subculture in the patriarchy which is designed to keep us oppressed and also increase the oppression of women. This subculture includes the domination, of anti-human mimicry and self-mockery known as camp ..."

Certainly the films for and by gays which Tyler mentions are almost all made by men. The main exception is a lesbian film, The Pit of Loneliness, which was directed by a woman, Jacqueline Audry, and written by Cocteau from the novel Olivia by Olivia. Of course there are many films about lesbians made by and for men. But Tyler does not grasp this distinction at all. He even describes Goldfinger as representing an anti-male war cult "from the female side!" And after dis­cussing Albicocco's The Girl with the Golden Eyes he sententiously remarks, "Remember, by the way, that part of being a lesbian is to compete in terms of dominant-male psychology." Well, that's not the way I play the game, Mr Tyler.

While Tyler gives us some evidence for the existence of a gay culture, he gives us much more evi­dence to support an observation made by a friend of mine — that it is often homosexuals who, in a strange and self-deceiving collusion, define and elaborate the heterosexual stereotypes for the rest of society. Among others, Tyler men­tioned the great love of Luchino Visconti.

Tyler is at his best writing about stars. His pen portraits of Mae West, Katherine Hepburn, Burt Reynolds, Frank Sinatra, Clifton Webb and Jerry Lewis, are crude but funny. He writes of Mae West, "What homo society in comic art would seem to need is the perfect assurance of Mae West, its Mother Superior, whose suavity is of a candid diplomat and whose tact authority is that of the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. Her comic code is: 'It's not the man in the know — it's the know that's in the man.'"

And perhaps there is an answer to a puzzle there. I have always wondered why certain women become cults among homosexuals, (mainly male homosexuals), and others do not. Why Mae West, Eve Arden and Anita Loos' fictional Lorelei? Why not Elizabeth Taylor or Sophia Loren? The heroines of the sub-culture are feminine even to the point of absurdity, but they are uniformly and invariably triumphant. There are two partial ex­ceptions, Fijal and Garland, but they managed, as Lou Reed does now, to make their continued ex­istence, their very presence with us, into a prodigious triumph. The heroines are different from other women because they are always winners. And it is quite understandable that when men want to identify with women, or even tem­porarily become women, they want all the glamor and the triumph, and none of the pain.

Because it darts about so much, and its pre­occupations are so limited, this book cannot be recommended as a work of reference. And
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because of the turgid writing I won't blame you if you don't read it all. But there is something we can learn from Parker Tyler, and that is that a film never has just one meaning. It is necessary to ask questions of films as he does, to cross-examine them, to ask the obvious questions and the imaginative questions, to ask the thing you first thought of, and the thing you don't dare mention, and after that, still more questions.

VIGNETTE FILM: The American Avant-garde
P. Adams Sitney, Oxford University Press, New York, 1974

MOVIE JOURNAL: The Rise of the New American Cinema 1959-71
Jonas Mekas, Collier Books, New York, 1972

UNDERGROUND FILM: A Critical History

Abbie Thoms

The American avant-garde film has been publicized widely and written about extensively in film journals and books. Despite all this, we have had few opportunities to see much in Australia, where the American narrative film has a firm grip on our culture.

The popular press has done the American avant-garde a disservice in sensationalizing their work (at a time when they disregarded the taboos on depicting sexuality), or ridiculing their explorations (Andy Warhol's Empire has been a standing joke for almost ten years), and the more serious writers have generalized about the films in ways that are flip (Renan), cynical (Tyler) or accurate (Youngblood). With the rare glimpses of the films that have been possible in Australia, it is not surprising that the American avant-garde is not regarded as important and that an M.A. student at an Australian university can write a thesis on contemporary film theory and ignore the American avant-garde altogether.

What happened in the United States about the time of the Second World War was that individual filmmakers decided that the theatrical and literary traditions, from which cinema had derived most of its aesthetics in the previous forty years, were exhausted, and that new cinema ideas could be found in the aesthetics of painting, photography, dance. The film poems that resulted opened up new directions for cinema, even the avant-garde movement that emerged was very related to the European avant-garde film tradition, transposed to the USA during the war with the artists who originated it.

At the time the movement was called 'Experimental', an unfortunate name that implied something tentative that was secondary to the mainstream of cinema. Ignorance has led to this same misconception perpetuated in Australia some twenty years later by the Australian Council for the Arts. Just as poetry is not regarded as less worthy than prose or drama in literature, so the poetic cinema is not any less worthy than the narrative cinema. And it is quite stupid to judge the poetic cinema in terms of the narrative cinema. Different aesthetics apply.

The search for new aesthetics for film has been the concern of the American avant-garde over the last thirty years, demonstrated not only through filmmaking, but also in critical and theoretical writings that paralleled the production of films. Much of these were published in the New York journal Film Culture, and an anthology of these writings was edited by P. Adams Sitney for filmmakers in the 1970s. He two film critical works of the American avant-garde are Stan Brakhage, with his concept of the camera-eye (an eye that looks as much inward into the filmmaker's being as outward to his external world) and Peter Kubelka, who teaches at the American University in Washington (frequently lectures in Australia) with his concept of the frame as the essential unit of filmmaking.

In the forefront of the critical writers of the Americans are Sitney, Adams, Jonas Mekas and Parker Tyler. Tyler has been associated with the avant-garde from the forties, but has been rather contemptuous of developments since the late fifties, when the American avant-garde began to leave the European avant-garde film tradition behind, abandon the film poem and create a cinema that derived from tectonic concerns in the filmmaking process. Because of this Tyler's cynical and rather superficial study of 1969, now reprinted by Penguin, is hardly worth the paper it's printed on.

Mekas's criticism has often tended to be irrelevant, resulting from his highly impassioned style, and his flip, cynical (Tyler) or accurate (Youngblood) judgements and all, into his perception of others' work. Most of it has been published in a weekly column in the Village Voice in New York under the title of 'Movie Journal', a record of the choices he makes in the film scene of New York.

The selection of these columns, published by Collier in 1972 as Movie Journal: The Rise of the New American Cinema 1959-71 reflects Mekas's deepening involvement with the American avant-garde. He was quite hostile to it in the fifties (when he founded Film Culture), and his anguished attempts to come to terms with the radical changes in film conception that he came to champion through Filmmakers' Co-operative, the filmmakers' Circle, and more recently through Anthology Film Archives.

Mekas's fellow curator of Anthology is P. Adams Sitney, responsible with Mekas for the massive New American Cinema programs that toured Europe in the 1960s, a man deeply involved with the films and filmmakers of the American avant-garde. He once told me how he used to hang around school when he was in New York and meet filmmakers who went into film festival and film magazines, discussing films and thinking about film. I heard him deliver a lecture on Dimitri Kirsanov's Menilmontant (1924) that was the most incisive talk on film that I have experienced. He brings the question of film into the American avant-garde film historical and theoretical development implied, with the structural film, the mythopoetic film, the diary film, the structural film. There is a much better selection of these columns, published by Collier in 1972 as New American Cinema 1959-71, and reprinted in Penguin Books, is hardly worth the paper it's printed on.

Sitney's book expands one's appetite for the American avant-garde, not only creating the desire to see all those films that have never been seen in Australia, but also the desire to see others again, and to view them many times, as Sitney has done.

It is a book that will be of considerable importance in the American universities where avant-garde film is studied. Here, where avant-garde film is studied, I mean a film that attempts things that are untried before in the cinema, that attempts to create a new language and style, that attempts to create a new cinema. If you are interested in the move to acquire a collection of these films for the National Library. And it also serves as a model for those attempting film criticism — for it is clear that Sitney watches a film over and over again, an hour and a half, having read every frame, reads what the filmmaker has written, listens to what he has said, and brings the full weight of his knowledge to bear in analysing the films. Such writing helps the filmmaker in the development of his film, and in his appreciation of the filmmakers work, and deepens our understanding of the art of film.
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Dear Sir,

In my review of the film Number 96 in your July issue, I referred to the poor quality of the blow-up to 35mm and said that this "emphasizes the inadequacies of local laboratory facilities." Color-film, the laboratory involved in the production at the 16mm stage has written to me pointing out that the blow-up to 35mm and the 35mm prints were done overseas. In this instance I wish to set the record straight and apologize to Color-film.

Yours sincerely,

Ken Quinnell

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Dear Sir,

Phil Taylor and Ross Cooper in their article "A Private Collection" (Cinema Papers, July 1974) have focused attention on the lack of a true national film archive in Australia and on the deficiencies of the National Library in Canberra in performing some of the functions of a film archive. However, in some respects the article is regrettable. It is clearly a plea for the establishment of an Australian national film archive and cannot be considered simply as a vehicle for "providing insights into the motives of a film collector."

The 'great Australian apathy' is not entirely to blame. Few Australians know or have had an opportunity to learn anything of the full range of activities performed by the various film archives in other countries. You could render a great service to the preservation of Australian history by telling Australians through the pages of Cinema Papers what film archives are all about, what we are missing out on, and specifically where the distribution Library is falling down on the job.

There is no question but that a great debt is owed to film collectors throughout the world; to people like Harry Davidson. The commercial film trade is notoriously careless with its product once it has reached its primary market. Many great and famous films made in many countries of the world have been thought lost to posterity. Some will never be found, but copies of others have been lost in private collections, and what of the great and many others. The reason I should have read "The Inn of the Damned" and The Removalists" is that many rare prints of films are projected for the entertainment of collectors and their friends. Running a rare film through a projector is an invitation to disaster, and at the very least it will add to the machine, strain the almost fragile sprocket holes, and bring close the day that the print is unusable. No film archive will run a rare print through a projector. It is well to remember at this point, that some of the longest established and most respected film archives in the world were established by film enthusiasts and 'collectors' who have laid down most rigid rules and procedures for film preservation.

I too would like to see an original tinted print of Murnau's Faust, Fritz Lang's Metropolis, and many others. The reason I cannot be economically is that it costs much more to make tinted prints, and the film study market and the film archives are not yet able to support this cost except on an occasional basis. But it is coming: prints of Intolerance with colour segments can be rented in Australia. The black and white 16mm print shown silent is admittedly a poor substitute for a tinted print with music accompaniment, but it has permitted tens of thousands to see films at many hundreds of screenings which would have long since reduced the collector's original 35mm nitrate prints to ruined, tattered ribbons of celluloid.

As well as drawing attention to the shortcomings of the National Library, you should be describing the positive achievements of the library staff in preserving Australia's and other countries' film heritage. You should be informing your readers that even if the National Library's film vaults are inadequate, they are infinitely superior to the powder kegs represented by private collectors' homes, and you should be inviting people with cans of film at home to contact the National Film Collection at the National Library, or in W.A., the Archives Officer at the State Film Archive (24 3841). Yours sincerely,

B. E. King

(The writer is Secretary of the Australian Council of Film Societies, a member of the State Film Archives Sub-Committee of the A.A. State Film Centre, and has studied film preservation methods at a number of overseas film archives.)

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UNITED SOUND APOLOGY

The editors wish to apologize for the typographical errors which occurred in the advertisement placed in the July issue by United Sound Pty. Ltd. The films referred to as "Damned" and "Removalists" should have read "The Inn of the Damned" and "The Removalists".

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contributors

ROD BISHOP has reviewed a number of publications and is currently compiling a 50 minute fictional film titled Rainbow Farm. JOCELYN CLARKE is a tutor in practical science at La Trobe University. ROSS COOPER is a film historian, currently lecturing at Monash University. PATRICIA EDGAR is a lecturer in media sociology at La Trobe University's Media Centre. Ms. Edgar is co-author of the recently published book Media She. JOHN FLAUS lectures in film at the Media Centre, La Trobe University. TONY GINNANE is a Melbourne based film critic and independent distributor. GORDON GLENN is the Director of Photography at La Trobe University's Media Centre. He is currently compiling a documentary on the mysterious Australian Thylacine with Keith Robertson. BRUCE HODSON is a tutor in film and Adult Education at Sydney University; a programme coordinator for the National Film Theatre of Australia and a regular contributor to various film society bulletins. CHARLES MERE-WETHER is film critic for the Melbourne University Boat Club. MEAGHAN MORRIS is an ex-psychiatric patient, feminist and occasional contributor to The Digger. JOHN O'HARA is the long-time film critic for The Australian Broadcasting Commission. KEN QUINNELL is a regular contributor to Cinema Papers and has written film criticism for a number of periodicals. MIKE RICHARDS is a journalist and political scientist. He is currently lecturing at Melbourne University and editing a volume of essays titled The American Connection. GRAHAM SHIRLEY is an independent film-maker and a graduate of the Film and Television School. DAVID STRATTON is the director of the Sydney Film Festival. ALBIE THOMS, the director of the Sydney Film Makers, Co-operative, is a film-maker, TV producer and regular contributor to film magazines. JOHN TITENSOR is a teacher and regular book reviewer for a number of newspapers and magazines.

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