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Peter Beilby
Phillippe Mora
Scott Murray

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which all makes for an Australian Film Industry.
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*Suggested price only.
GOVERNMENT
FILMFUNDING EXPANSION

The South Australian Film Corporation, now well established with two feature films, Away and Picnic at Hanging Rock, has set an example which the governments of other states seem keen to emulate. Victoria's Hamer government led the way by announcing that legislation was being prepared to set up a State Film Corporation which would invest in South Australian production facilities (notably a sound stage of full feature size) presently lacking in Victoria.

While the legislation was being prepared, the Arts Advisory Board (under whose aegis the new corporation presently is) stated that it had committed funds to three productions: Paul Lovelock's Break of Day; Homestead Films' Both Ends Against the Middle; and Fred Schepisi's The Devil's Playground. The latter investment is an advance to cover distribution - exhibition costs. The first two were made by private companies while the first two were actual production funds.

Legislation has now gone through Parliament and the members of the recently announced Corporation were Graham Burke (Village/Roadshow/Hexagon); Cliff Green (with a small piece of Picnic at Hanging Rock); Nigel Dick (Crawfords); Natalie Miller (Sharmill Films); John Macklachlan (Channel 0); Fred Schepisi. The Corporation's chairman is Peter Rankin (of John Clemenger Advertising, advertising consultants to Village theatres). The Corporation has yet to set up administrative offices for funds application, but this has not deterred a number of would-be applicants approaching its members.

Almost immediately after the announcement, Victorian Corporation members, Neville Wan's NSW government announced the imminent formation of a state body. In the same time, it was made public that the NSW government would invest $120,000 in Joan Long's production, The Picture Show Man.

Wran consider Ms Long's Caddie track record, as well as the fact that the film would be shot entirely in NSW. He lamented the fact that many filmmakers were leaving the state because of the inactivity of the previous state government in his field. He then appointed two of the three members of the interim committee of the New South Wales Corporation. The chairman is Paul Ninnomlay, of Atzex Services, and the member is Jack Maccabe (producer-director).

In Queensland, where at least four Australian companies are in the planning stage and two are about to commence production, the state government announced that a major move was being undertaken. Mr Bjelke Petersen, it was pointed out, was keen to invest in Queensland. And what Mr Petersen wants in the deep north, he usually gets. It seemed that the government is determined to observe whether this clamour of state legislatures to invest in film money into film production will result in a corresponding increase in investment interest from the private sector.

"I'M STILL HERE, ETC": POSTSCRIPT ON 7 KEYS

In spite of the optimism for the future expressed by its founder and chairman in an interview in the last Cinema Papers, the future of 7 Keys, the maverick Australian and British distribution set up, looks increasingly less rosy.

In a page-one story in the British trade paper Screen International, and picked up by Variety the following week, Andrew Gaty conceded that in a high slice refund the British company had managed to run up debts of over $150,000. Seven non-advancing investors are Technicolor Labs ($14,000); Rank Film Laboratories ($45,000); the Curzon; Cinema (where 7 Keys four walls the American Film Theatre under the title British Film Theatre); Chevron Advertising and the Inland Revenue Department. Only Technicolor have so far issued a writ, and Gaty took the view that it might be possible for the company to trade out, rather than go into immediate liquidation. This will, of course, depend on the combined attitude of his creditors (more than 80 in course, depend on the combined attitude of his creditors (more than 80 in number). But it may well be that, like the creditors of the ill-fated Byrant Corporation, the British companies consider allowing the company to continue trading as this could be the only way they will retrieve some of the final cut. But as most of the major British personnel have employed, this may be easier said than done.

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FOREIGN PRODUCTION NEWS

FRANCE

Chabrol's two latest films, Magicians and Folies Bourgeoises (The Twist), are to start on Alice, a fantasy set in Ireland with Sylvia Kristel. This will be followed by The Basque Beret; St, Petersburg; — Cannes Express, with Julie Christie and Donald Sutherland; and Monday's Child, the love story between a woman of 30 and a boy of 16. Alain Resnais' Providence is still in production and stars Dirk Bogarde, Sir John Gielgud and Ellen Burstyn. Resnais hopes to shortly film his latest, Le Village d'Amerique from a script by Jean Grunat (Adele H, L'Enfant Sauvage, Julia) and the Assassin).

Alain Fleischer's Dehors-Dedans with Catherine Jourdan has been the centre of much controversy in Paris. Ms Jourdan has been extremely busy this year, starring in De Grey (Chabrol), Marriage a la Mode (Michel Montand) and Blondy (Sergio Gobbi). Her most famous film, Alice au Pays des Merveilles, is being directed by Claude Lelouch and his wife, Jeanne Moreau's new film, Les Chiens, which stars Alain Delon and Diana Rigg in Vienna.

UNITED STATES

It seems everyone is making sequels at the moment. There is John Boorman's Exorcist II: The Heretic; and the follow-up to The Omen to be called The Omen II. Paramount Pictures has asked Leonard Nimoy to produce the second Bad News Bears, still untitled. And the final episode of Sheriff Buford Pusser films will be Walking Tall Part 2, Walking Tall. Ninki Maslansky, remembered for her involvement with Terry Bourke's Plugg, is in the U.S. negotiating a screen version of Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex. The sequel to The Dyke, directed by Fred Zeterling, will direct and shooting is planned to start in December. Peter Yates is directing Peter Benchley's sequel to Jaws — The Deep. Robert Shaw, who starred in the first, is participating as is Jacqueline Bisset. Martin Ritt's Casey's Shadow is in post-production along with Jack Smight's Damnation Alley. Alvin Sargent has scripted a feature from a character in Gone With the Wind. Eileen Brennan's Pimienta called "Julie", the film, also entitled Julia, is being directed by Fred Zeterling. "Exiled" British director, Michael Winterbottom's film shooting The Nelson, while Martin Scorsese is directing New York, New York from a script by Paul Schrader and quilted "Woody Allen Film. And the director of the marvellous Something for Everyone, Woody Allen, is making A Little Night Music with Elizabeth Taylor and Diana Rigg.
BRITAIN

British independent film producer, Michael Klingler, is planning a sequel to Shout at the Devil. He hopes to again use Barbara Parkins, Roger Moore and Lee Marvin.

In a four-page ad in the September 1 issue of Variety, Albert B. Broccoli and other Artists announced the start of the 10th James Bond film, The Spy Who Loved Me. This little-known Ian Fleming, it was even banned in Australia for many years was scripted by Christopher Wood and Richard Maibum, Roger Moore is a main Bond, and Lewis Gilbert is to direct. The world’s largest stage is under construction at Pinewood Studios for the film. After the runaway success of Monty Python and the Holy Grail, Berry Gillam is making Jabberwocky with Max Wall and Warren Mitchell. Producer of the two Musketeers films, Ilya Salkind, has produced The Prince and the Pauper, using Richard Fleischer as the director. Many actors from the Lester films are starring, including Charlton Heston, Oliver Reed, and Raquel Welch. Ilya Salkind will then be joined by Alexander Salkind to produce Guy Hamilton’s Superman, with Marlon Brando as Superman’s father, and Gene Hackman as Luthor, “the greatest villain in the world!” Director of Farewell My Lovely, Dick Richards, is making March or Die with Max Von Sydow, Gene Hackman, Terence Hill and Catherine Deneuve. Shooting is in Madrid.

CENSORSHIP: 1976’s PHOENIX RESURGEMS

Since the Chipp regime liberalized Australian film censorship by introducing the “R” certificate legislation to protect minors, special exemption policies for film festivals, a general tolerance for serious works of cinema and open range for soft to medium core violence and sexploitation material, the average Melbourne or Sydney filmgoer could be forgiven for believing censorship had become a non-issue.

Yet, in fact, however, there is strong evidence that the new Liberal government, aided and abetted by certain state governments, is in the process of pulling in the reins. The process started with the setting up of a Board of Review in Queensland (Act 31 of 1974 of the Queensland government). Censorship of films has always been a state responsibility, but Chipp had managed to persuade the various State Attorneys General to delegate their censorial powers to the Federal Film Censorship Board, thus providing for a logical, uniform censorship all over Australia. (In fact, a Premiers’ conference in August 1946 had achieved token agreement from all States, except South Australia, for such a scheme; and certain legislation was passed by Queensland, West Australia and Tasmania in January 1949. But it was not until Don Chipp took over as Minister for Customs and Excise that this became an Australian reality). Queensland, however, quickly became disenchanted with the post “R” liberalism and the result was the Act in question.

The Queensland Board operates in the manner of a kangaroo court wielding the threat of a ban as a big stick to prevent exhibitors opening contentious films in Queensland. The Board, although it has only banned some 35 films since its inception, including (for drive-ins) for (all theatres) Fantaesia, both Australian productions, it has effectively prevented the release of some 200 films or more. No exhibitor can afford to spend thousands of dollars developing a film only to find it banned after one or two days in release. As the recent annual Exhibitor’s Conference at Surfers Paradise, exhibitors and distributors from all over Australia passed a motion condemning the double censorship of

After his successful film version of the Nobel Prize Winner Heinrich Boll’s “The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum” Now Volker Schloendorff’s Le Coup de Grace based upon the novel by Marguerite Yourcenar

Starring:
Marguerite von Trotta
Matthias Habich
Matthieu Carriere
A German-French co-production
Bioskop-Film Munich
And Argos Film Paris
First prints available June 1976

10. Matters for Board’s consideration in determining whether a film is objectionable. For the purpose of this Act, the Board, in determining whether a film is objectionable, shall have regard to —
(a) the nature of the film generally and in particular whether —
(i) it unkindly emphasizes matters of sex, horror, terror, crime, cruelty or violence;
(ii) it is blasphemous, obscene, indecent, likely to be injurious to morality;
(iii) it is likely to encourage depravity, public disorder or the commission of any indictable offence or
(iv) generally outrages public conscience;

(b) the persons, classes of persons and age groups to or amongst whom the film is intended or is likely to be exhibited;

(c) the tendency of the film to deprave or corrupt the persons, classes or persons or age groups or any of them referred to in subparagraph (b), notwithstanding that other persons or classes of persons or persons in other age groups may not be similarly affected thereby;

(d) the processes in which the film is exhibited or is intended to be exhibited in the State;

(e) the scientific or artistic merit or importance of the film, in the event that a film shall not be determined an objectionable film unless, having regard to the matters specified in this section and all other relevant considerations, the Board is of the opinion that the exhibition of the film in the State would have an immoral or misleading tendency or effect.

FILM CENSORSHIP, MARCH 1976

(Reproduced from Australian Government Gazete No 2/71, May 25, 1976.)

FILMS REGISTERED WITHOUT ELIGIBILITY FOR EL R

For General Exhibition (G)

Abapi Ka Tlhoe
Efrin
Embarcator
Gambol
Interlude
17 Meine Tä Dünrgen
Losers’ War (16mm)
The Miracle Man
O Maha
On Senna Luce (Blind Eyes)
A Plane
Tragic Confession (Greek subs-titled version)
Not Recommended for Children (NRC)
Amar Prem
And Then There Were None
Droga Ktaba
Mafia
My Hustler (16mm)
No Time for Tears
Potop Part 2 (The Deluge)
The Return of the Tall Blond
Man in the Glass Booth
The Man With The Golden Gun (Italian version)
Mardo en Vacaciones
Mr. Haskell Against Karate (Italian)
My Sweet Lady
Tag pax Foras Times (16mm)
Ori
Polyp Part 3 (The Deluge)
The Quarter
The Return of the Tall Blond
NumberOf Children (Italian version)
So Far
The Voyage (Italian version)

For Mature Audiences (M)

Abar
Bug
Car
Dark Alley
Der Kloake Soldat
The Devil's Playground
Golconda
Ernst Haas Signes
Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Sex But Were Afraid To Ask (M)
The First
For A Few Dollars More (b)
Fowards
Gabriel
Lamboy
La Casa del diablo
James Dean - The First American Teenager
Mr. Major
Mr. Hustler
Mr. Number
Mr. Man Alla (Not Only But...)
Mr. Queer
Mr. Show Lung Foo
The Man in the Glass Booth
Vesuvio (Italian version)
Wanted: Baby Sitter
A Woman For All Men

Continued on P.191

Cinema Papers, September—105
Forms and Feelings
Under the Rising Sun

NAGISA OSHIMA

Jan Dawson

"I feel that unless we make clear the secret spirit of the Japanese, who hurry to live and hurry to die, Japan will soon be led to war again."

Nagisa Oshima writing in "Tokyo Shimbun", January 18, 1971

It was in 1969 that Oshima’s work first made any significant impact on Europe, when his most recent film, Boy, was screened at the Venice festival. By Christmas of the same year, not only Boy, but Death by Hanging (1968) and Diary of a Shinjuku Thief (1969) had also been screened in London, where all three eventually found commercial distribution.1 As did The Ceremony (1971) within a year of its completion.

Critical reaction to the individual films was laudatory: “Fascinating”, “Brilliant”, “The most exciting Japanese director since Ichikawa”, “Truly original and startling”. Yet, in spite of the enthusiastic praise, critics maintained a certain respectful distance, as if dealing with a visiting foreign dignitary to whom they had not been properly introduced. Few hazarded any attempt at synthesis (though Tom Milne, on the evidence of Shinjuku Thief, did suggest an extended analogy with Genet).

Even as late as 1971, in his “Screen Series” study, Japan, Arne Svenson confined his brief entry on Oshima to general career details, going on to note “the repeated attacks on established values” and the frequent choice of criminals as heroes, before concluding that “Oshima respects the word more than the image.” Similarly, in the following year, in his entry on Oshima in The International Encyclopedia of Film, John Gillett merely noted that the director’s “biting attacks on bourgeois traditions and hypocrisy . . . combine social comment with outbursts of violence and sex”.

Three specific factors have probably contributed to the general reluctance to define Oshima as an auteur. First, the fact that his films reached the West in anything but chronological order, and that 12 of the 13 features made before 1969 have still to be seen. Second, those films which did arrive appeared at first so different in idiom (naturalism in Boy, surrealism in Death by Hanging, formalism in The Ceremony) that critics were leery of situating Oshima’s work under any rubric less general than eclecticism. Third, and certainly most significant, was the films’ total foreignness: not merely the fact that they were rooted in an alien culture and tradition towards which the West had maintained a rather lofty ignorance (no such inhibitions deterred European critics from formulating ingenious theories about Brazil’s cinema novo), but rather the fact that nearly all Oshima’s films referred, with varying degrees of obliqueness, to specific incidents in Japan’s post-war history.

As early as 1960, in his fourth feature, Night and Fog over Japan (withdrawn from circulation after its premiere and virtually suppressed for the next 10 years), Oshima was already deploying the system of coded references which was to prove one of the distinguishing (and inhibiting) characteristics of The Ceremony. A marriage ceremony provides the film with its point of departure, re-uniting the former members of a student militant group from the 1950s, who in turn recall other shared ceremonies, love affairs and moments of more energetic reunion.

Apart from the fact that the film was light years ahead of its time (eight years before La Chinoise, Oshima already has his militant cell kidnapping the wrong victim), Night and Fog is a brilliant study of both radical factionalism and eroding idealism. The ideological splits, compromises, reconciliations and realignments that emerge from its mosaic of flashbacks, and the increasingly bourgeois settings in which its characters meet (the only one to remain true to his political principles is significantly absent from almost the entire film) are instantly and internationally recognizable phenomena. Yet although even this general a reading of it leaves the film a totally fascinating experience, Night and Fog has acquired, on the basis of its few European airings, the reputation of being an ‘insuperably difficult’ work.

This is true only to the extent that the more one knows of the political background, the richer and more complex the film becomes: the general bourgeoisification of its intellectual characters and their individual crises do in fact correspond to specific political events. Thus the defection from the fictional group of one student, Sakamaki, has its ‘real’ basis in Stalin’s 1950 critique of the Japanese Communist Party for deviating from the internationalist line; the outbreak of the Korean war and Japan’s profitable ‘peace treaty’ with the U.S. not only explain the increasing militancy of the student cell but have their specific counterparts in the hostilities and alliances within the group; the redefinition of the Party line in the wake of both the Korean war and Stalin’s death is paralleled by the bride of the opening sequence, Nozawa, changing to a less doctrinaire lover and, eventually, to a ‘respectable’ husband with whom the film begins. Etcetera. Clearly Night and Fog over

Shinjuku Thief, however, never obtained a censors’ certificate and was restricted to club screenings.

1  Shinjuku Thief, however, never obtained a censors’ certificate and was restricted to club screenings.

In Australia, Diary of a Shinjuku Thief is available on 16 mm: The Ceremony has been released in 35 mm by Ronin Films; and Boy was a highlight of the 1970 Sydney and Melbourne Film Festivals.

Nagisa Oshima directing the execution sequence from Death By Hanging.

Oshima rehearsing his actors, Eika Matsuda and Tatsuya Fuji, on the set of Empire of the Senses.
Japan offers, on one level, a different experience
for the Japanese New Left than it does for avid
international art-house audiences, who must
concern themselves to its more general truths and
its stylistic brilliance.

To some extent, the same must hold true for
The Ceremony, even though weddings and
funerals fall more within the general experience
than does attendance at secret revolutionary
meetings. Once again, Oshima employs what is
essentially a variations-on-a-theme technique.
Through the formal family reunions of the
Sakurada dynasty, and through such changing
details as the replacement of dinner mats by
tables and chairs, and of kimonos by mink stoles
and business suits, he unemphatically shows us
the Americanization of Japanese traditions,
while side by side with this, through the film's
succession of incestuous liaisons, he signals the
survival of the old, empire-building urges. Once
again, the individual deaths and liaisons corres­
dpond to specific, and larger, events in the public
domain. The marriage of Masuo's card-carrying
uncle, and the round of folk songs and anthems
which marks that particular ceremony, has its
'real life' equivalent in the 'popularization' of the
Japanese Communist Party line in 1956; the
baseball-playing Masuo's own wedding, with the
invisible 'pure Japanese girl', follows closely on
the signing, in 1960, of the unpopular U.S.
Japanese defence treaty . . . And so on for each
of the characters' changes of situation.

Yet, although the films repay detailed in-
vestigation — in the sense that the more one
knows of the specific references, the more subtle
their development becomes and the more dimen-
sions they operate in — it would be false to con-
vey the impression that they have anything in
common with, say, some of Nabokov's intellec-
tual parlour games. As the prefatory quotation
confirms, it is "the spirit of the Japanese" rather
than any text-book chronology that is the real
subject of Oshima's explorations; and the land-
marks of his national history provide his
material only to the extent that they seem to him
the material embodiment of that death-hungry
spirit.

The degree of historical knowledge necessary
to appreciate his 'difficult' films is equivalent to
that required by, say, Brecht's Arturo Ui. Like
Brecht, Oshima reduces historical movements
and personages to tableaux and stereotypes,
from which an assortment of stylistic devices
determinedly distance us. Like Brecht, too, he
reveals the myths behind apparently banal daily
realities, and the crass matter that underlies
many a potent myth. Indeed, many of the
critically erected obstacles that have branded his
cinema as inaccessible collapse if one
approaches the films as Brechtian, rather than
hermetically and inscrutably Oriental.

Two precepts from Brecht's Short Organum
deserve particular consideration here. First,
"A visit, the treatment of an enemy, a lovers'
meeting, agreements about politics or business,
can be portrayed as though they were simply il-
ustrations of general principles valid for the
place in question. Shown thus, the particular and
unrepeatable incident acquires a disconcerting
look, because it appears as something general,
something that has become a principle." In
other words, it is possible that while we from the
West are busy decoding his precise references,
Oshima is busy camouflageing them for Japanese
audiences in order to allow the general principle
to emerge from the specific incident.

Second, "If we ensure that our characters on
the stage are moved by social impulses and that
these differ according to the period, we make it
harder for our spectator to identify himself with
them." In complaining, for instance, that they
can't respond to The Ceremony, because they
can't tell where realism stops and surrealism
takes over ("For all we know, it may be
customary for Japanese weddings to go ahead
without the bride"), Western audiences are mak-
ing the possibly erroneous assumption that
Japanese spectators (of which at least one
generation was taught from text books in which

A geisha observes as Sada feeds Kichizo some food bathed in her sexual juices. Empire of
the Senses.

Masuo Sakurada (Kenzo Kawarazaki) recalling when he
played baseball on the beach as a child. The Ceremony.
all references to national military activity had been inked out) are historically far more knowledgeable than they are.

It does not really occur to us that confusion is an element that Oshima has deliberately created (through the complicated chronological structures of both *Night and Fog* and *The Ceremony*, or the inclusion of 'invisible' characters in both *The Ceremony* and *Death by Hanging*), or that Japanese filmgoers may be as unsure of imperial funeral rites as we would be of the correct social forms for sipping tea in Victoria's Buckingham Palace.

If Oshima is concerned to show the present as historically rooted in the past, he may also be explaining the past's stranglehedge by the fact that the mythical version of it is usually all the populace knows. Our foreign-ness, far from placing us at a disadvantage in reading his films, may actually place us in precisely the degree of alienation he has employed so much artistry to create.

Again, like Brecht, because it is the movements of history rather than its decorative details which determine the shape of Oshima's subject matter, a reading of the headlines rather than the fine print is really all that's required. In *Death by Hanging*, Oshima even uses screen titles to focus the argumentative content of the next dramatic scene. And while his 'epic' films can be reduced to a succession of historical headlines (like those Hollywood montage sequences, some of them by Sam Fuller, which whisk us in 30 seconds through some era of escalating crisis), the inspiration for the more 'limited' films often lies in some 'human interest' item tucked away on the back pages. What the French call the *fait divers*.

Boy was inspired by a true case which received brief notoriety in the Japanese press in 1966, of a child trained by his parents to fall in front of moving cars and simulate injuries to extort money from the terrified drivers (and preserve their "no-claims bonus"). Even the more obviously 'imaginative' *Death by Hanging*, in which the condemned man embarrassingly sur-

...
effects to prevent the specific drama on the screen from obscuring the general principles it illustrates.

With even this crude and inadequate model in mind (Oshima’s style requires a small volume of its own), it is clear that the disparate surfaces of Oshima’s films disguise a coherent development of certain themes, strategies and obsessions. To which he remains as true in 1976 as in the 16 years preceding it. With his new film, Empire of the Senses, he has, however, broken through the barriers of critical inhibition (no one bothers about the film’s foreign-ness, everybody’s confident he understands it all) only to encounter the more powerful inhibitions of censorship and moral reprobation, both at home and abroad. In Berlin, the Criminal Police, who had shown no interest in either Night and Fog or The Ceremony, seized the film after its first festival screening in the Young Film Forum; a local magistrate judged it lacking in artistic merit (this in a city where pornography is openly screened, and advertised) and the Forum’s organizer must now face a tribunal empowered to jail him for a year.

As everyone must know by now, Empire of the Senses is a film about l’amour fou (for which there’s significantly no Anglo-Saxon word). Based on a real case which attracted wide public interest in 1936, it concerns the impossible love between Kichizo, a married inn-keeper, and a serving girl, Sada, whose elopement culminated in Sada, with his consent, killing her lover and being arrested four days later, radiantly happy, with his severed organ in her pocket.

Castration never having been a big turn-on in the West, it’s perhaps hard for us to understand that Sada became something of a folk heroine and a symbol of oppressed liberty. This fact alone should have given the authorities pause in judging Oshima’s version of her story. But no. In Germany, at least, it’s an open and shut case of pornography.

Yet, the extraordinary thing about Empire of the Senses is that although its principal characters spend almost the entire film copulating (in 20 different rooms and almost as many positions), it is not their bodies which interest us. The couple appear doubly restricted, first by the society which outlaws their union, and then by their own bodies, the limited means through which they endeavour to express their virtually boundless desire. Their constant lovemaking — while they eat, play music, talk, receive visitors — is less an imperative need (though it’s plainly that as well) than a rite through which they endeavour to express a truly ineffable emotion, a sense of one-ness which their human condition belies. Like all rituals, it ultimately proves confining: the tension between forms and feelings becomes intolerable, and all other attempts at securing a more permanent fusion or mutual possession having failed, the couple devises a final solution satisfactory to both.

This may not sound much like a political film, yet apart from the our own inhibitions, there’s no valid reason why love-making should not provide as potent a metaphor for the Japanese spirit as, say, sake drinking. The film’s title is not idly chosen: the sensuality it depicts is effectively suppressed (or confined to a professional house) by that other Empire whose troops are seen mobilizing in the streets in one of Kichizo’s rare moments outdoors. The fusion of roles to which the lovers aspire (at different moments, each ‘becomes’ the other’s love object to a third party) is a subversive ambition in a hierarchical society where domination is a powerful value.

A long tradition of hara-kiri — of death as the means to preserve the ideal and/or eclipse the real — might help explain the original public reaction to Sada’s ‘crime’. Yet, though more squeamish about mutilation and our private parts, we in the West also have a long tradition of linking love and death. A literary tradition, which buries the graphic, phallocentric reality beneath an avalanche of chivalrous imagery. Was it really Samson’s hair Delilah cut off? And what were Tristan and Isolde about, if not an insatiable need for each other’s bodies?

Yet, though the love-making is graphic (quite different from pornographic), Oshima’s film is never prurient. He keeps the audience distanced from the subject, and aware that what they are watching is not life, but an attempt to capture the ‘over-riding passion’ within the film the ciphers for our own voyeurism. The chorus of embarrassed chambermaids, geisha girls and tea ladies who interrupt (but don’t curtail) the couple’s love-making brings up any romantic illusions of sharing in a privileged private moment. They also bring home the fact that such over-riding passion is still, socially, out of place. It rests, almost literally for most of the film, balanced on a knife edge. To object to the anatomical region on which the great axe falls is mere hypocrisy. By the final sequence, we have surely come to reflect that we are all implicated as part of the continued social system which makes such love impossible. It is not Sada, but the censor who ultimately wields the knife. *
Empire of the Senses

The following extracts from an interview with French novelist Andre Pieyre de Mandiargues are taken from the May, 1976, issue of Positif. It is included as a complement to Jan Dawson’s article on Oshima and, in particular, Empire of the Senses.

Empire of the Senses was to have been shown at this year’s Perth Film Festival, but the Commonwealth Censor strongly suggested that it not be imported. Given this attitude by someone who has yet to see the film, and whose knowledge is limited to sensationalistic reports from overseas, it is important that a case for Oshima be heard.

Empire of the Senses is the first film by Oshima that I have seen: it gives me a great desire to know this director’s work better, since he seems to be one of the most fascinating directors of the new Japanese cinema.

Empire of the Senses is a totally erotic film. To say that is not to state an affirmation, because now “erotic” has come to be employed frequently for any common sexual manifestation, for everything that the French with their beautiful language call “smutty talk”, all that the words “erotic” brought up call “cunt”.

Watching this film I thought, almost all the time, of Mishima and his great book L’Ordalie des Roses. In Empire of the Senses it is at an absurd of sex that one assists. A man, in the same way as St. Sebastian is pinned to the tree, is riveted by his sex to the woman who loves him and who will mortally strike him with her impalable love.

It is almost too obvious to quote, in relation to this film, Georges Bataille’s famous definition of eroticism, “being the approbation of life until death. Certain scenes, and I am thinking particularly of the one in which the mistress forces her lover to make love to the old ‘Geisha’, who reminds him of his mother’s corpse, seem to me not only very akin to Bataille’s thinking, but even directly inspired by his work. The significance of such a scene in fact goes far beyond the notion of communion with the Senses.

Throughout the film, the young woman plays with a knife. The man meets her for the first time, when she is brandishing a knife at his wife. Later, when they live together, every day as she shaves him she shows him the blade that will serve in the last rite. The surprise, if surprise there be in the film, is that the ritual killing of the lover is not with a knife, which is used for the ablation of the sex. I insist on the word ablation here, rather than castration, because it is not a question of deprivation, of a diminution, on the contrary. When the woman holds up the man’s sex like a torch — the sex she has just cut off — to fingers that achieved the ultimate objective of love. The woman’s soul seems to be wholly concentrated in the man’s sex.

What seems very Japanese to me, and which is very beautiful, is the representation of the sexual power of the woman, that the Japanese knew and know how to show with astonishing intensity. The famous amatory engravers, Utamaro and Hokusai, have thousands and thousands of times drawn the face of a woman embellished by sexual ecstasy, transfigured by the wave of pleasure, exalted by the orgasm. It is quite surprising that until now the influence of Utamaro and Kosukai has not been felt on the Japanese cinema — to my knowledge, I am not an expert. It could be said that Oshima consciously used these splendid watercolours and wood-engravings for the numerous close-ups of faces, which never cease to recall the beauty of Japanese eighteenth century engravings.

It is advisable that we should be a man, the director Oshima, who shows such veneration for feminine eroticism. In Empire of the Senses, the virile character, sexually abnormal because he is in a state of almost perpetual erection, is little more than a reduced role of object. Towards the end of the film, he is ready to die, he only asks to be finished off. The desire to possess fully the object of her love, the fear of killing her male, seems to me a normal female fantasy, and I might add that nothing can flatten a man as much as such desire, which unfortunately is shown much less often than one might wish.

The association between the sex and the knife inevitably refers to De Sade. We are tempted to see a definite allusion in the first name of Sada, chosen by Oshima for his heroine. However, this is a fairly common name in Japan, and I consider that one should rather see in this coincidence a sign of natural sympathy or spontaneous agreement between De Sade and the sensitivity of the Japanese people. Perhaps because of the aristocratic refinement of the Marquis’ eroticism, when one thinks of Japan, the notion of aristocracy always arises. The Japanese masses with their canned foods, cluttered with cameras and transistor radios seem as common and ill-mannered as are the American masses. However, there are in Japan a few artists, a few writers, a few poets whose position is incomparable above the rest of the country. Oshima is one of these great lords.

It is particularly interesting that the story of Sada was not invented, but concerns an event which really took place in Japan in 1936. It is significant that this young woman, by her act, became a national heroine in Japan, a sort of Joan of Arc — and I must insist on the comparison. That it can be seen as a forewarning of the acts of the Kamikazes, I would not deny. Another connection, if not relationship, between Joan of Arc, Mishima and very present-day Oshima.

NAGISA OSHIMA FILMOGRAPHY

Features:
1959: To Kibe No Machi (A Town of Love and Hope)
1960: Seishun Zankoku Monogatari (Naked Youth)
1960: Taiyo No Hakaba (The Sun’s Burial)
1960: Nihon No Yoru To Kiri (Night and Fog over Japan)
1961: Shikku (The Catch)
1962: Amakusa Shiro Tokisada (The Revolt)
1964: Chisarana Boken Ryouku (A Simple Adventure)
1964: Watsachi Wa Bellet (I Am Bellet)
1965: Ensrakuro (The Pleasures of the Flesh)
1966: Yabposhi No Nikki (The Diary of Yangbog)
1966: Hakuchu No Torima (Violence at Noon)
1967: Ninja Bugeicho (Band of Ninja)
1967: Shunshu No Zu (The Dream of Sex)
1968: Muri Shitajii Nihon No Natsu (Japanese Summer: Double Suicide)
1969: Koshiki (Death by Hanging)
1969: Kalekatekia Yapparai (Three Resurrected Drunkards)
1970: Hanashii No Tsuzuki (The Diary of an Unknown)
1972: Nato: Tai-To To Bunkadaikakumei (Mao Tse-tung and the Cultural Revolution)
1973: Nihon Shunka-Ko (Sing a Song of Sex)
1975: Kaettekita Yopparai (Three Resurrected Drunkards)
1976: Shonen (Boy)
1976: Tokyo Senso Sengo Hiwa (The Man Who left his Will)

NAGISA OSHIMA

Television films:
1962: Kitori No Naka No Seishun (A Youth in the Ice)
1963: Wasurerareta Kogon (The Forgotten Army)
1964: Shonen No Toribe-Hachihimenjo (Fort of Revolt)
1964: Seishun No Hi (A Tomb for Youth)
1965: Asia No Nechuno (The Dream of Asia)
1966: Dakina Senso (The Pacific War)
1966: Shomen: Tai-To To Bunkadaikakumei (Mao Tse-tung and the Cultural Revolution)

Cinema Papers, September—111
Born in Paris in 1949, Australian filmmaker Philippe Mora became well-established as a painter at an early age. And it was while painting in London that Mora made his first feature, "Trouble in Molopolis". Several years later, he co-scripted the documentary feature, "The Double Headed Eagle", for producer Sanford Lieberson. Then, in 1973, he directed and co-wrote his famous compilation film, "Swastika". This personal account of Hitler and the Third Reich was an immediate critical success and was chosen as the British entry for the Official Festival at Cannes that year.

Whatever happened to "Double Headed Eagle"?

Well, Swastika didn't get a very wide distribution, although it's starting to in the U.S. Double Headed Eagle was seen at a few film festivals, but it wasn't as immediately gripping as Swastika.

How did you get the idea to do "Eagle"?

I came to the subject of Hitler in a most lateral way, really. I wrote a screenplay named The Phantom Versus the Fourth Reich, which was a black comedy about the Phantom, the comic strip character, tracking down Hitler in South America. Hitler was 80-years old and he had a 21-year old son called Heinrich Hitler, who wore shorts and long white socks. Peter Sellers was going to play Hitler at 80. And Heinrich. And the Phantom.

Who decided that?

Peter Sellers.

And how did you, a nice boy from Melbourne, get a big name like Peter Sellers to agree to such a thing?

Because Sandy Lieberson was Peter Sellers' agent, before he became a producer, and Lieberson once bought a painting of mine at an exhibition in London. So I gave him the Phantom script since he thought Peter would be very interested. I then met with Sellers, and this went on for about a year. Ted Kotcheff was going to direct it and Leslie Lindner produce it. It was going to be financed by King Features Syndicate, of New York, who own the Phantom, but the whole thing fell through — and that was my first hard lesson in show-business.

Anyway, in the course of working on the black comedy, I started doing serious reading about Hitler, and at the end of that year I did a treatment for a straight documentary of how Hitler came to power, which was The Double Headed Eagle.

And Swastika came out of that?

Could you have used the same technique of lip-reading and dubbing? It's tremendously effective in "Swastika"...

Well, that was one of the reasons I was able to raise the money for both films. I argued to the producers — who in this case were the financiers — that documentaries were a lost art and that they could be fantastic if certain things were avoided.

For example, the narration should be avoided so that audiences could make up their minds and not merely be told what to think. However, abolishing narration would mean that the people making the film, namely me, would have to work harder to make a coherent story knowing that there was no fall-back of, "Oh well, we can get a narrator in to patch it up." And that's how most documentaries are made. They cut it all together and then they get in a voice to cover the splices.

The concept of dropping the narrator was very important to Swastika — it was the key point because it meant that the story had to be told with images, and that's what made it unusual.

Is the same thing true in "Mad Dog"?

Not nearly to that extent, but still to a great extent. You see I am very visually oriented, because I started off as a painter. For example, in Mad Dog I would draw the shots the night before in comic strip form. I have always been involved in comic strips; most of my paintings were comic strip orientated. These drawings I would then show to the people on the set the following day, that way everyone knew, and could see, what was going to be done.

Hitchcock and Kubrick used the same technique...

Oh, it's as old as the hills. Eisentein used it for many of his films. A lot of directors do it...

Do you see any parallels between "Swastika" and "Mad Dog"?

A lot of the techniques that went into Mad Dog went into Swastika. But it would be difficult for me to pinpoint the actual similarities.

I would say, however, that Mad Dog is not nearly as innovative a feature film as I knew that Swastika and Brother, Can You Spare a Dime? were, and that's because it was the first film that I had done on that scale. I just wasn't confident enough to be tremendously innovative. I was definitely reserved and played safe a lot of the time.
Do you regret that?

No, not at all.

Why not?

I had to. I was very conscious that I was being conservative in style: wide-shots, deep focus, no zooms — that was one of the things I said straight out: "No zooms". Also, no low-contrast filters. So everything is hazy and dreamy and Vilmos Zsigmond and The Long Goodbye. It was all sort of textbook...

What about Hopper? Did you really have trouble with him? There are many versions of what went on...

The one thing that you must remember is that I selected Dennis to play the part.

Why?

Because, well... he certainly wasn't the first choice. The first choice was Stacy Keach. I should say straight out that Dennis ended up being the choice after speaking to all these people, but the first choice was Keach and next was Martin Sheen. I spoke to both actors, and I also spoke to Jason Miller, and he was a definite possibility.

Jason Miller from "Nickel Ride"?

Yes, I haven't seen the film, but I've spoken to him. I mean, how would you know whether Dennis Hopper can act after seeing Gunfight at the OK Corral? You can't judge actors from their films, you really can't!

Anyway, Dennis was almost an afterthought. When I spoke to him — I'd sent the script ahead — he was obviously involved in the character, and to a degree that the other actors weren't.

Don't you think his reaction might have been connected with the fact that he isn't exactly what you might call busy, and the others are?

It could have been. That's always a factor that can prejudice an actor towards any particular part, but I don't believe it was that way in this case. The thing is that Dennis wasn't getting a lot of money for Mad Dog. He had made one film, Tracks, which he did very cheaply, but the film that he made before that was Kid Blue, for which he got $400,000 — about the budget of Mad Dog at the time that we started. Money doesn't come into it with actors when you are working with a low budget as we had on Mad Dog.

What did Hopper bring to the role?

He brought an insanity to the role, and an intensity to it that most actors would have found impossible to create.

Did you have to control that? Or was he able to sustain that through shooting?

Dennis' public image, and he cultivates it because he enjoys it, is as you know a very wild, hard-drinking, hard-living, 24-hour party. But in fact, he is an actor who has had 20 years experience in Hollywood, working with some of the toughest directors in terms of discipline — the "old guard" of Henry Hathaway and George Stevens, people like that. As a result, his technical skill is quite astonishing.

For example, if we did a wide-shot and I said, "Just go, and I won't tell you when I'm going to cut", which I often did, Dennis was quite remarkable. If I didn't say "cut" when he expected me to, which was very rarely, he could instantly duplicate that improvisation in close-up afterwards.

The technical side of that kind of acting is usually neglected in Dennis' case, for a start because he is modest about it, also because he enjoys the public image of being crazy. I would describe Dennis as a very highly-skilled technician. I would definitely use him again if there was a part.

So you don't think that his personality could cope with actually having to conform to the role rather than...

Well, there are two schools of acting. On the one extreme you have Laurence Olivier, who is the supreme technician, and on the other you have Marlon Brando, who is the supreme intuitive interpreter, and who, incidentally, has recently started to become a supreme technician. There is that kind of polarization in actors.

What about the other actors in the film? How much did they bring to their roles and how much did you have to give them?

That depended to a great extent on the importance of the part in the structure of the story. For example, Frank Thring: I discussed his part with him in quite a bit of detail. We mutually decided that Cobham would be based on Charles Laughton's performance in Island of Lost Souls; and that's what Frank did.

What about other casting? You appear to have been at some lengths to create conflict between the individuals in much the same way as the characters would have been in conflict with Morgan — say, the penultimate sequence with Wallas Eaton...

That's a beautiful example of Dennis' skill: he somehow understood the class differences intuitively. Most of the bushrangers were Irish, and the Colonialists were English — it was Ireland all over again — and the bushrangers, if you want to take it that far, were more political outlaws than criminals. But it's true, he did understand the class system, because that's the whole point of the scene; the whole pathos of it.

What helped there was that although Wallas had, as he told me, been involved with improvisation before — with Joan Littlewood — he was still, essentially, an actor in the more traditional mould.

When he was about to do the scene, I said to him: "You know, Dennis is tremendously emotionally involved, and he's, er, you know, Method." And Wallas said: "Don't worry about that, I've done a lot of improvisation before." But he hadn't, I think, bargained for what he got with Dennis, who really put him through the ropes. But Wallas was very good because he reacted in exactly the way MacPherson would have in that situation. He was really very, very good: almost to the point of upstaging Dennis.

It was a real class hostility...
between the two individuals because they were of two acting styles and the confrontation reflected itself in a real way, in a qualitative way. They really had respect for each other.

You re-created the gap, then...

Yes. There was a cultural gap in the story and there was a cultural gap in reality.

So you made the casting choice deliberately for the effect...

Some of the exchanges were lucky, but a lot of the film was cast on that basis. In other words, a real conflict as opposed to a conflict that is artificially constructed over a number of hours of rehearsal. It's much easier if you can make it real.

Well, frankly, there were quite a few actors who were freaked out by being faced with Dennis Hopper. But if that's being filmed and they are in costume, then they are freaked out by Daniel Morgan. You can't often artificially re-create genuine feelings to that degree of intensity. And Dennis was aware of this element — I don't know to what extent, but he was aware of the fact that he genuinely was freak ing people out on screen in the same way that Daniel Morgan would have done. But to get that exact feeling across, Dennis Hopper doesn't have to be Daniel Morgan; he has to be Dennis Hopper freaking some other actor out while being filmed doing it.

Did you run many old films for people involved, to give them the feel of what you intended?

No. The only person I watched films with was Mike Molloy, the Director of Photography. We looked at most of the bushranger films that still exist; we got them from the National Archive. In terms of photographic style, Prime Cut, for example, would have been a film we looked at very closely to see how they got those effects. For example, the sequences in the sunflower fields. That was the look of the film that I wanted and I wanted to show Molloy.

What other films did you look at?

We screened Ned Kelly so that we would know what not to do.

What did Molloy bring to the film?

Molloy brought a lot. I should preface this by saying that Mike Molloy is one of my oldest friends in the film business and we had been talking for at least 10 years about the film that we would one day make. Mike was the first guy I met who was professionally involved in filmmaking — I think he was a newsreel cameraman with Cinesound or something when I first met him in Melbourne. He brought all his experience — which is vast — to the film. He was a camera operator on Performance, Walkabout, A Clockwork Orange, and he shot a lot of Barry Lyndon. But no one had given him the opportunity he needed to be Director of Photography. Yet, I would regard him as being one of the top 10 cinematographers in the world. He is outstanding.

You wrote the "Mad Dog" script yourself and it was obviously immensely successful in terms of conveying what you intended, because you raised the money on the strength of it. How did you learn to write a "selling script" like that?

I learned to write scripts in school, writing essays in English classes. I have always been more articulate on paper than I have been orally, but I don’t think that Mad Dog is a particularly outstanding script. As far as its appeal goes, I think it’s obvious, in as much as it’s the archetype of the underdog and the rebel, which is a theme that is instantly recognizable and understandable all over the world. While analyzing Mad Dog on the most elemental level, I would say it’s about a guy who is beaten about, but whose spirit isn’t broken.

The film has been accused of being excessively violent. Has this reaction given you any second thoughts about that facet of the film’s content?

No. I just find that ludicrous. I don’t see the film as violent in as much as I don’t think of it as being gratuitously violent. But it’s something that didn’t come up until the film was completed; the issue never emerged. The censor was the furthest thing from my mind when I was making the film, and it was only after we cut it together that people began saying, "Well, you might get an ‘R’.

Would that have mattered?

Not to me, it wouldn’t. As it happened we got an ‘M’, which pleased the distributor. You see, I don’t know by what standards people would call it violent. It’s just absurd. But you are talking about Australian critics.

But surely there is something in the film that causes that reaction: the exploding head, for example...

It’s amazing; because that shot is only 15 frames long, which is virtually instantaneous. The thing is that Mad Dog is an emotionally violent film. If you examine it cold-bloodedly, it is not a violent film: such violence as is there is underlying the whole time. And because it is a violent film emotionally, that’s why people talk of it as a violent film. They are reading into it, and it becomes a combined effect. Certain critics are confusing their emotional reaction with what is actually shown on the screen, and as far as I am concerned, that is a tribute to a film. And that’s how it should be. I mean, it is emotionally violent because it tells a terrible story — a hard story.

Were you concerned about this during the scripting and making of the film?

I couldn’t say that I was. I mean when I was making Mad Dog I was more concerned about whether the rushes would be delivered in time for me to see them before the next day’s shooting.

You may laugh, but it’s true. The crucial creative decisions are made before shooting and after shooting: who is in it and what is left out. But the actual shooting of a film, on the kind of budget we were working with, is really down to the basics of, "If it rains today we’re screwed, because we haven’t got a thing to shoot indoors”.

Continued on P.188
Kate Millett observes with her usual lucidity in *Sexual Politics* that:

"Although 'straight' society may be affronted at the thought homosexual art is by no means without insights into heterosexual life, out of whose milieu it grows, and whose notions it must, perforce, imitate and repeat, even parody."

The trouble is that, when we look at the homosexual cinema, that is largely where it has stayed.

It has failed to create a new consciousness, however much it sowed seeds in the unconscious. It has collaborated in every repressive action, and failed, for reasons of low collective strength and economic power, to contest the system in which its audience is oppressed.

What is gay cinema? A leviathan monster, swimming in the depths, manifested by odd shapes on the surface. An art, like that of all the other maker groups in cinema, largely taken over by its patron. Yet to read most criticism, biography and even anecdotal writing about the cinema, is to receive a contrary impression, all the more revealing because it is so virulently anti-gay. Here is a piece of neat poison from the melting-hearted fantasist of goodwill, Frank Capra:

"Judging by contemporary Hollywood films, the United States was made up of sexpots, homosexuals, lesbians, Marquis de Sade's, junkies. Forgotten were the hard working stiffs that came home too tired to shout or demonstrate in the streets... who paid their bills and taxes, and prayed they'd have enough left over to keep their kids in college, despite their knowing that some were pot-smoking, parasitic parent haters. In England the homosexuals minced across the screen and waved their hankies at the audience. So few real actors could get work. Peter Sellers had to play all the parts."

Need it be said that the reality was otherwise? As late as 1969, 63 per cent of red-blooded Americans thought that gay people were "harmful to American life" and dealt with them accordingly.

Whatever novelists or dramatists wrote before he hit the screen, the 1940s homosexual became neatly transposed into an alcoholic (Wilder's *Last Weekend* in 1945) or a Jew (Crossfire in 1947). When he did appear as himself late in the 1950s, what a model he provided. You have your choice of going straight (Tea and Sympathy in 1957), being eaten (Suddenly Last Summer), or simply committing suicide at the decent moment (Advise and Consent in 1962, The Children's Hour in 1962, and The Sergeant in 1965). Show me a happy homosexual and I'll show you a gay corpse was the message long before *Boys in the Band*. The same melancholic line is found in the British "problem" film like Vielien (1961), *A Taste of Honey* (1961) and *The Leather Boys* (1963).

Worst of all are the later American offerings of this kind. In these films, the homosexual graduates from being a monster to a Disturbed Person, much as Szasz describes the medieval witch being transformed into the modern hysteric. These films are particularly pernicious. Homosexuals are embedded in situations: neurotic parties, murder, crime, gools, loonie bins, in which, whether or not the situation is their fault, they must cop it in the end. Like adulterous women in nineteenth century novels, their fault, they must cop it in the end. Like neurotic parties, murder, crime, gools, loonie bins, in which, whether or not the situation is their fault, they must cop it in the end. Like adulterous women in nineteenth century novels, their fault, they must cop it in the end.

In these films, the queer is a necessary character in international society — Il Mare, Darling, Night Games, Boom, La Dolce Vita; (iii) The homosexual feelings of the normal man undergoing a crisis — Bergman's *Hour of the Wolf*, or Jodorowsky's *El Topo*; and (iv) More loonies and sickies, preferably artistic like Tchaikovsky or Ashenbach/Mahler.

Unfortunately, the experience of trying to gain any identity from these films is like sucking a dry orange. Whatever homo-erotic content the Dream had, it kept it pretty latent. *Bonnie and Clyde* is a typical late example. Its scriptwriters, Newman and Benton, originally thought of making Clyde gay. But normally prevailed. Instead, Clyde — like his pal C. W. Moss — suffers from some unspecified sexual hang-up. Once again "the love that dare not speak its name" received a bonk on the head just in case it started muttering.

Best survivors are the subversive icons set up...
almost in spite of themselves: Brando's heavy-lidded slut in The Wild One. Jutted after furti­
vely by Lee Marvin and explicitly quoted in the ero­
tic fantasies of Anger's Scorpio Rising. 

Recently a number of gay critics such as 

Parker Tyler of Movie editor Robin Wood, who 

has just "come out" in print, the reviewers for 

Fag Rag, Gay Sunshine, Gay News, and 
equal an number of enlightened sexualists like Ray­

mond Durgani, have began to play their part in 

enlarging a gay response to cinema. Most of 
them, however, are still considering the depic­
tion of homosexual types within films, or films 
about gays. 

It must be clear that what we understand by 

gay cinema cannot merely be the same as the 
depiction of gays in films. It includes the whole 
creative process and working relationship 

experienced by a gay mentality employed in 
cinema. In this area, we are concerned not so 
much with a cinema about gays as with a cinema 
by and for gays. That means, in the first in­

stance, the economic power of the producer; in 

the second, the consciousness of the gay director; 
in the third, the skill of the gay actor; and in the 
fourth, the interpretative power of the gay critic. 

And the contemplation of the present state of 
such a nucleus makes a sad enough spectacle. 

Of homosexual directors of the first rank, 

Pasolini is murdered, Warhol taken over by the 

moralist Morissey, and Paradjanov still im­

prisoned in a Siberian labour camp. Of homo­

sexual producers, most certainly prefer to direct 

porn, and make no bones about it. And of 

homosexual actors, most are in the role of ser­

vicing the sexual fantasies of a society other than 

their own; i.e. by participating almost exclusive­
ly in straight films. As for criticism, the science of 
gay aesthetics has suffered by being used as a 
data-gathering system for sociology.

So, having steadfastly pushed Barbara 

Streisand, Frank Sinatra and the statisticians 
down the drain, what's the next step that a gay 

film criticism can take? Whatever homosexual 
satisfaction one may derive from Tarzan, 

Bomba the Jungle Boy, Robin Hood, Tom 

Sawyer, Flash Gordon, Maciste or Hercules, 
one pays the penalty exacted either by regression 
or camp; i.e. a slight but definite softening of the 
mind.

The first task is one of reclamation, of 

redefinition of the work of the gay impulse in 
classic cinema. With a different focus then, let's 
look at the careers of some notable directors and 
actors.

I DIRECTORS

Sergei Eisenstein discussed his homosexuality 

as freely as he could with his first biog­

rapher, Marie Seton. (Significantly, it is a topic 

completely ignored by Yon Barna's more recent 
account). In these Moscow conversations, the 
director chose to view it as a neurotic phase 
which he was gradually expunging through his 
films. He explained the creation of the Crown 
Prince Dimitri in Ivan, for example, as a direct 
working out of a homosexual mother fixation, 
thus accepting the insulting masterstroke of psy­

chiatry in which "queer" and "motherfucker" 
reached identity.

Eisenstein's dutiful swallowing of this last 

hoary old chestnut probably owes as much to his 

fear of Stalinist reaction as to his reading of 

Freud, who himself tried to move beyond it. Like 

Freud, he was fascinated by the homosexual 
Leonardo, drawing many of his ideas on dialect­

cical montage from the earlier artist's drawings 
and notebooks.

But from the late 1920s he was still under 

strong State and popular pressure to view homo­

sexuality as a weakness. Though homosexuals 
might be creative geniuses, they were still flawed 
by mysterious oedipal complexes. In their 
narrative line, Eisenstein's two epics accept, 
therefore, every traditional cliche of hetero­

sexual relationships: strong, authoritative 
heroes, pale and beautiful heroines, suitors in 
comic rivalry.

His visual and lyric feeling, however, finds 

constant expression in the landscapes of 
muscular male flesh in erotically tortured 
position. The beginning of Potemkin in the 
crew's quarters, the end of Bezhin Meadow, the 
battle scenes of Ivan and Nersky, the Mexican 
footage throughout, call to mind Michelangelo's 
similar expressions of confined and enslaved 
energy.

The boil almost burst during the location 

shooting in Mexico, financed by Sinclair Lewis, 

and production managed by his brother-in-law. 
The accusations of homosexuality in this fiasco 
serve primarily the same function that they 
always do in right-wing oppression. That is, they 
weaken and smear; so it is difficult to disen­
tangle a correct line from them.

Thus one can derive a certain bitter amuse­
ment from reading accounts of the last days of 
the Nixon government, with Kissinger, Erlich­
mann, Dean, Nixon and Haig, all jibing about
each other’s limp wrists and men friends. In each case, an oppressed class is merely used by the oppressors as a method of competing with each other.

What seems clear is that Eisenstein, free of the drill exercises of the Soviet Union and the silly closets of Hollywood, began to relax and expand in the sensual sun of Mexico. He got Bacchic with his handsome chauffeur, took photos of bare flesh; he did drawings of Jesus Christ naked on the cross with his penis snaking up the two thieves. 

But this was too much, not just for the Catholic Mexicans, but for the sober, authoritarian and puritan Stalinism of the Lewises as well. Customs scandals, border confiscations, and Kremlin denunciations in telegram form, suddenly left Eisenstein in the position of many another hapless poofter caught with his trousers down.

Sans film, sans money and sans practically everything, he was left to survive as best he could in the black rathole of the Soviet 1930s, bravely defending his ‘degeneracy’, and living asexually with sympathetic women friends.

“...And many people here, including myself, think he is some kind of pervert?”, was what his shocked production manager wrote to Lewis from Mexico.

Friedrich Murnau was an alien, first in Germany where he was born, and then in California, where he was killed in a car crash. The fact that his Philippino chauffeur was also his lover immediately gave rise to a long tradition of Hollywood legends which had them having sex at the time of the crash. (Similar stories were later told about Jayne Mansfield, Kenneth Anger accepts them as symbolic truth. Lotte Eisner, Murnau’s biographer, gives a different account).

Murnau’s homosexuality existed in a 1920s colony as long as it was not broadcast outside. Being fixed, the human body in a way never seen in moving images since Maybridge Tabu, moreover, was shot on location in the South Pacific. Collaborating at first with the documentarist Robert Flaherty, Murnau finally made his clearest film celebrating the beauty and cruelty of human sexuality.

Jean Cocteau, of all the workers in cinema considered here, was certainly the most fortunate existentially. His life spanned a period in Paris when homosexual art and lifestyles were a major ingredient of the beau monde and of French culture.

Since he knew personally Proust, Gide, Diaghilev, Poulenc, Genet, and a host of minor gay artists, such as the actor, De Max, and the critic, Daudet, he had at least a feeling of living freely, and indeed swimming, in an environment in which his sexuality was not unique.

It was, of course, still subject to attack, notably from Breton and the surrealists on the one side, and from the conservative academicians on the other. But Cocteau was cushioned by his wealth, his ingenuity, his contacts in high places, and his general alliance of himself with that part of society which did the oppressing, rather than being the oppressed. Moreover, he had the good fortune to ask his actors to audition for him naked, and subsequently to live with several of them.

Ulli Lommel’s Tenderness of the Wolves.
In spite of these advantages, Cocteau was still hedgy in his films about the subject of homosexuality. In *Blood of a Poet*, the hotel of the unconscious is full of children and hermaphrodites. Naked black angels bear away the casualties of repressed and ambiguous love. Cocteau, in both style and content, thus becomes concerned, not with Sartre’s being (être), but with Paraître — “appear” in both senses of the word. Manifestation in this process may also become surface and disguise.

Cocteau’s inner process of homosexuality becomes outwardly translated as monstrosity, (*Beauty and the Beast* and the Man-Horse and Man-Dogs in *Testament of Orpheus*), or into a formal fascination with the process of translation itself. (See particularly the arcane hieroglyphic prologue to *Blood of a Poet*).

On a further level of technique, foreshadowing Genet, Cocteau’s mythopoetic transcendence of the notion of “inversion” gives rise to a cinema whose greatest stylistic characteristics are reverse-motion, mirror reflection and switch of positive/negative.

Vincent Minnelli’s biography is not clear whether he was gay or genuinely bisexual. But his creation of a particular style of cinema is sufficiently striking to merit attention. While Cocteau’s Gaystyle is classical, Minnelli’s is New York rococo, all cirlcique, penthouse, chiffon and the New Look. Even in his non-musical films, this taste expresses itself in a fascination with shooting through a decor, e.g. the wrought iron gates in *Two Weeks in Another Town*.

In Minnelli’s comedies, pair-relationships are disguised by being part of a musical gang, though they remain fundamentally heterosexual and are resolved two-by-two. The apotheoses of this society is always the Show. In spite of measles, hell and high soda water, It always Goes On, chinned up by some little battler like Judy; and it is always a hit.

These comedies of manners reveal Minnelli’s economic commitment of his sexuality to the wealthy and ruling class (the “angel”, the producer, the fashionable audience), just as thoroughly as Cocteau’s romantic tragedies do his. Without Cocteau’s genius and Minnelli’s talent, this sort of thing is merely camp, and even in Minnelli’s best films it slides into it.

Fashion parades and miniature drag shows abound; Gene Kelly with a check tablecloth over his head frequently doing his apfelmadchen routine. A set of still frames from *An American in Paris* alone would provide a catalogue of the classic gestures and facial expressions of camp. Camp in the critical sense, (as distinct from the popular Australian sense where it is still synonymous with homosexual), is an adoration for Vincent Minnelli’s biography is not clear whether he was gay or genuinely bisexual. But his creation of a particular style of cinema is sufficiently striking to merit attention. While Cocteau’s Gaystyle is classical, Minnelli’s is New York rococo, all cirlcique, penthouse, chiffon and the New Look. Even in his non-musical films, this taste expresses itself in a fascination with shooting through a decor, e.g. the wrought iron gates in *Two Weeks in Another Town*.

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Part of the trouble with camp as a cultural phenomenon, in spite of the biting power of its parody, has been its determined and insensate frivality. Combined with a fuckwitted romanticism inherited from women’s weepies (desertions, bathroom vomitings, tantrums in expensive restaurants) it is the perfect art-form for an oppressed minority with newfound economic power, determined now to flounce and loll around, and be the collective twit that everyone envied. With Nita Naldi in *Blood and Sand*, Rudolph Valentino was hysterically adored by women and envied by straight men for their screen roles as heterosexual masters. With Nita Naldi in *Blood and Sand*, Rudolph Valentino was hysterically adored by women and envied by straight men for their screen roles as heterosexual masters. With Nita Naldi in *Blood and Sand*.

II ACTORS

The great examples from the early period of the cinema are the twin pin-ups, Rudolph Valentino and Ramon Novarro. Hypsterically adored by women and envied by straight men for their screen roles as heterosexual masters, they were at the same time set up as sexual objects, passively posing in a near nudity astonishing for its time, or quite directly the victims of male sadism (the flogging in *Son of the Sheik*). And the flogging in *Blood and Sand*. Yet, all went further even than this. The fact that Novarro’s gayness came to light only when in later years he was the victim of a particularly
In Rebel Without A Cause, the love between James Dean and Sal Mineo almost surfaces, though a woman (Natalie Wood) always presides as a chaperon.

brutal murder. His killers escaped with the sort of sentence usually reserved for shoplifting — after all, they were defending their virtue. The last victim in this line of outright killings, as distinct from life-long oppressions, was Sal Mineo, the boy James Dean never fucked in Rebel, shot by a youth in 1975.

It's easy to see why gay actors should generally keep it quiet. The affairs with other men conducted by Charles Laughton and Laurence Harvey were made public only after their deaths. Montgomery Clift was in a semi-permanent state of nervous breakdown. John Gielgud plays it all with his usual reserve and decorum, and Helmut Berger is presented to the cinema submedia as “bisexual”. And when room was made for actors to express this sexuality in screen parts, the types created, however good the performances involved, almost always had perjorative associations: blackmailed headmaster (Dirk Bogarde), giggling psychopath (Richard Widmark) portrait-of-Dorian-Gray (Helmut Berger), sinister international queen (Sidney Greenstreet), nervous nelly (Harry Langdon) or anaesthetic pedant (Clifton Webb).

Nazimova's lesbian circle was replaced by Dietrich's liberated ladies, and there was even the usual double-standard heterosexist relish of female homosexuality. The affairs of Dietrich, Claudette Colbert and Celeste Holm were popular gossip and were more or less condoned. But a sure way of denoting a male star was to paint him queer. Cary Grant, with his flip wit and zany clowning, was a natural target, and soon appeared in print as “the Queen of the Fairies”.

A wide and contradictory variety of others found themselves in bed together, tarred with the same brush and feathered from the same pillow: Van Johnson, Danny Kaye, Tony Curtis, Richard Widmark, Burt Lancaster — the butch-er the better. And the more wild and inaccurate the sexual reports the less the scandal sheets cared, since many of these men were straight.

Continued on P.179
John Heyer is known to most Australians for his film about the mailman on the Birdsville Track, “Back of Beyond” (1954). He is an internationally acclaimed filmmaker with a long list of short films and an impressive array of awards to his credit. Much of his work has been in producing and directing sponsored documentaries, a field in which he demands and receives complete freedom. He has spent many years with the Shell Oil Company whom he regards as an enlightened sponsor.

A critic’s filmmaker, his films have consistently won major international awards. “Back of Beyond” won the Venice Grand Prix Assoluto in 1954, and, in 1958, Britain won the Coupe de Venizia with six short films, four of which were produced by John Heyer. At 66 years, he is still working at full pace, dividing his time between his London and Sydney offices. When interviewed for Cinema Papers, by Gordon Glenn and Ian Stocks, Heyer was at Supreme Films in Sydney putting the final touches to his feature documentary for the Australian Conservation Foundation, “The Reef”.

Did you choose to make a career in documentaries, or was it a matter of circumstances?

Until such time you get a reputation, and people give you money with no strings, documentary provides the greatest freedom.

I started my career working in a studio, Effett Films in Melbourne, and gravitated towards documentary by creative and economic necessity. When you start out, you take anything you can get, because there is the prime requirement of earning money. I made commercials, training films, anything.

My first documentary was for a mining company. I heard they were interested in making a film and I presented myself to them. The man in charge was a Mr MacKenzie. I showed him some of my poetry and still photographs. I like to think they influenced him; maybe I am kidding myself.

Did the war provide a stimulus to the making of documentaries?

It definitely helped. A small group of us were able to get close to the politicians through the Government Documentary Films Committee in 1940, then the Prime
John Grierson had already come to Australia. Did he create an interest in documentary?

The dear man tried to, but he didn't get anywhere. He got a very poor reception. He was very bitter when he left, and made his famous remark as he stepped into the plane to return to London: "I always said this would happen if you exposed cockneys to the sun", or words to that effect.

Was he trying to set up a Government Film Board?

He was trying to establish a basis of worthwhile filmmaking in the social sense.

Did you have much to do with him?

As much as I possibly could. He was mainly tied up in Canberra trying to get the politicians to do something. If it hadn't been for him there perhaps wouldn't have been any Documentary Films Committee. But his total effect was really very small. It was men such as Alan Stout, John Metcalfe, and D.W.K. Duncan, men in top social and academic positions and who had the respect of the political people, who really laid the basis — as key members of the Government Documentary Film Council.

When the Film Board was set up we asked for two things: money for production and money for distribution. They gave us only the money for production. Distribution was, and still is, the key to it, but nobody will touch it. You know you've got this present flash-in-the-pan, and a lot of activity, but there is no basis to it, no stability. Of course, it is good to have a school and it is good to have a law saying that commercials must be made here. But I spoke strongly against the commercials legislation. Too many people in the industry said: "We are getting a start. We are in the business". This just hoodwinks the main issue. Some people will get experience, but what a hard and wasteful way to get it.

When you went to Shell in 1948, was that move prompted by the distribution problems in the Film Board?

It was one of the reasons. There were other reasons. We had our own distribution at Shell. We had projectors and vans in each State and libraries. Back of Beyond was seen by a million people in a year and a half. In Sydney, the queue went half way around Wynyard Sq. to the Shell House cinema. It was incredible. We had hoped this would happen with the Film Board. Small theatrettes everywhere, but they didn't start one, not one. They just didn't see the message.

Television, of course, has changed everything. There should be a much closer link-up, in my view, between the ABC and Film Australia.

Providing daytime programming?
Mrs Watson, her baby, and Chinese servant, Ah Sam, escape from Lizard Island after being attacked by Aborigines. (1851) The Reef.

Xavier Herbert (left) and John Heyer. Heyer is planning a feature based on Herbert's Capricornia.

Providing program material of all kinds. Also television should be much more specialized. There should be a series of programs unless you've got an enlightened government.

Well the ABC is going in the other direction, so there is no more hope there . . .

It is all very easy to snipe on the side, but it's very difficult unless you've got an enlightened government.

At Shell you had complete freedom to choose the subjects and how you would treat them. Was that the first time it had happened in Australia?

Oh no. Geoffrey Bell had been there and had soldier Shell very successfully with a film called Alice Through The Centre, which was a jolly good effort and made a big impression. Geoffrey was with Film Centre, London, which consisted mainly of Stuart Legg and Arthur Elton. They were film consultants and managed to convince Shell London that it would be a good idea if one of them went to Australia. Shell London got Shell Australia to invite Geoffrey out and while he was here he made Alice. Shell Australia soon learnt they had the benefit of having a good film unit for their ordinary workday films as well, whether it was how to lubricate a car, or a Shell ad.

Did you work on them as well?

Oh yes. You did everything!

Oh yes, that is a minor price to pay. Much better than working in a studio on rubbish. It was enlightened patronage in a way, but it was more than that. I remember Luxton (chairman, Shell Australia) — he was a very intelligent man — saying it wasn't charity and it wouldn't have been a good thing if it was.

The discipline didn't do us any harm and you soon weeded out the men from the boys. The big shot wants to make the great epic, but the film lovers will do anything, particularly if it leads somewhere. This was a big weakness in the early government film set-up. If we put someone on we were stuck with them. At Shell, if they proved no good we fired them next week.

Continued on P.190
Patricia Edgar

While Western sociologists continue to disagree about the effects of film and television, and our educators assign them to the periphery of their consciousness, regarding them as irrelevant to education, the Chinese acknowledge their potential and actual impact and utilize them as a potent political resource. Film and television are taken very seriously in China.

From 1966, peasants increasingly produced and put on their own lantern-slide shows. Chao Chi-chun, the deputy secretary of the Communist Party committee of Changhi county, Hopei province, who was in charge of cultural and educational work there, reported[1] that amateur lantern-slide groups had grown from only one (in his province) at the beginning of 1965, to 453 by mid-1966. The activities of the lantern-slide groups were closely geared to the class struggle in very entertaining style to their owners confessed to being regular viewers.

In Peking, there are two channels which screen news events, documentaries, operas, and films. The night I spent watching, story tellers from different provinces told their political tales of the class struggle in very entertaining style to their regular viewers. Films, on the other hand, are seen to sell stock to China and communist leaders wanted to use film to spread Mao Tse-tung's thoughts throughout the country. It wasn't until 1968 that China was able to produce colour motion picture films of sufficient quality and in quantities that would make her self-sufficient. China's workers in the chemical industry were given the incentive to go into film stock production when other governments refused to sell stock to China and communist leaders agreed about the effects of film and television, film and television are taken very seriously in China.

Last year, 10 billion viewers saw a film; that is every man, woman and child in China saw at least 12 screenings each. Getting films to the people has been one of the objectives of the great Cultural Revolution. Today, 11 300 prints are made of each film produced: 300 in 35 mm, 3000 in 16 mm, and 8000 in 8.75 mm.

Film distribution through the National Film Corporation and film showings are now so well organized that films reach every village in China. Projectionists with mobile units make the rounds of the villages. Stories are told[2] of the tireless efforts of projection teams in getting films to remote areas — climbing hills, confronting blizzards and crossing flooded rivers. Film has become an important vehicle for political communication.

The fundamental task of all China's cultural products, including art, literature, opera, dance, film and television, is to create images of the worker, peasant and soldier heroes, and to reflect the belief that the Chinese Communist Party is the vanguard of the revolution. Back in January 1944, Mao Tse-tung said after seeing a performance of the opera Driven to Join the Liangshan Mountain Rebels:

"Having seen your performance, I wish to express my thanks to you for the excellent work you have done. Please convey my thanks to the comrades of the cast! History is made by the people, yet the old opera (and all the old literature and art, which are divorced from the people) presents the people as though they were dirt, and the stage is dominated by lords and ladies and their pampered sons and daughters. Now you have reversed this reversal of history and restored historical truth, and thus a new life is opening up for the old opera. That is why this merits congratulations. The initiative you have taken marks an epoch-making beginning in the revolutionization of the old opera. I am very happy at the thought of this. I hope you will write more plays and give more performances, and so help make this practice a common one which will prevail throughout the country."

Mao considered that serious attention should be given to discussion and criticism of reactionary films. In 1951 he personally led the attack on the cultural and ideological fronts with his criticism of The Life of Wu Hsun. Wu Hsun, a landlord, was portrayed in the film as a "great man" willing to sacrifice himself to provide poor peasant children with a chance to study. Mao said of the film:

"Questions raised by The Life of Wu Hsun are fundamental in character. Living in the era of the Chinese people's great struggle against foreign aggressors and the domestic reactionary feudal rulers towards the end of the Ching dynasty, people like Wu Hsun did not..."
Another film attacked by Mao was Inside Story of the Ching Court, which in 1950 was still being widely shown in Peking, Shanghai and other cities. The debate about this film was the first major cultural struggle between Mao's views and those of a number of top Party personnel who viewed the film as patriotic and progressive and refused to criticize and repudiate it.

Inside Story of the Ching Court was regarded by Mao as promoting fear of imperialist aggression and bourgeois reformism by advocating constitutional reform and modernization if China was to become rich and strong. However, it was not until the Cultural Revolution in 1966 that Mao succeeded in having this film widely and publicly criticized.  

By 1967, Mao's line had prevailed and there was a 'festival' of bad reactionary films shown to mass audiences in several cities and subjected to mass criticism. Most of the films shown had been released after 1949. Workers, peasants and soldiers, Red Guards and others of the masses were invited to send their criticisms to the press after seeing the films. The result was that the films were unanimously denounced. The campaign of criticism was regarded as "an important part of the mass campaign to criticize and repudiate the top capitalistic-roader in the Party and an important part of the deep-going struggle between the two lines — the proletarian revolutionary line and the counter-revolutionary revisionist line — on the literary and art front".

Since then every effort has been made in the films produced to see that "the orientation is correct, the revolutionization successful and the artistic quality good" (Chairman Mao 1964). Revisionist films were discarded or remade using the "correct" line. Green Pine Ridge, originally made in 1966, was remade in 1972-73 in colour. It is the story of the class struggle in a rural people's commune. There is a strange dead tree near the village which frightens the horses when they pass. Only one horse driver can control the horses, but he is a class enemy of the people in the commune and is attempting to restore capitalism. He opposes the new ideas and is especially opposed to the young people who are encouraged by the Party Committee to rid the commune of all the bad elements. The class enemy hands over to the young people the whip he uses to drive the horses, but they are unable to control the horses. An older man helps the young men to mature and entrusts them to drive the cart. In the end, the revisionist enemy is exposed and the young people prevail.

Another film, The Guerilla on the Plain, originally made in the 1950s, was remade in 1975. The film is about the Japanese occupation of rural China and the newer version stresses the struggle against the Japanese. The hero, the leader of the guerillas, disguises himself in many ways and leads surprise attacks on the Japanese aggressors who fear him. The Japanese are so afraid that once they hear his name they fear he is just near them, or that he could appear any time. The earlier version of the film showed the peasants in too passive a role to satisfy the revolutionary cause.

Most films today are based on modern ideas and are not recreated old stories. There are still a few films made in black and white, but most are now in colour. Feature film production has geared up again after a period when the directors and cameramen took time off to study Chairman Mao's thoughts and criticize films.

The major film studios are in Peking, Shanghai and Changchun. We visited the largest studio, which is in Changchun. The studio was set up by the Japanese in 1934 and used by them for cultural aggression. It was taken over in a seriously damaged condition from the Kuomintang in 1946 to be repaired and enlarged into a comprehensive studio which now produces feature and documentary scientific and educational films. The studio has its own film processing laboratory with 10 machines processing 1200 metres of film an hour. It takes 24 hours for 20 copies of a feature film to be made in the laboratory. This year, eight feature films will be made in Changchun.

All films are shot in 35mm and reduced to 16mm and 8.75mm. The shooting ratio is usually 1:5. A feature takes a four months to produce and the budgets range from 400,000 yuan (A$16,600) for a black and white feature, and 500,000-600,000 yuan for one in colour. Since 1946, 44 films have been made at Changchun and 400 films from other countries have been dubbed there. The studio includes a sound studio, a large property room and space for the construction and setting up of several sets.

A staff of 1900 people work at the studio including 20 directors and 20 editors. Scripts are solicited from "the people", and at the start of each year the annual production schedule is sent to the Ministry of Culture for approval. The director, editor and cameraman work strictly to a prepared script.

Actors and actresses are selected according to the needs of the part and are not paid any more than anyone else. Although the star system is not encouraged, it was apparent that particular actors and actresses in films and opera were especially popular with audiences. The actors are very much aware of the role they play in serving the Party. An account by Li Hsiu-ming of her performance as the barefoot doctor in the recent film Spring Sprout, "indicates her pride in the heroic character she portrayed. She concluded, 'I have learned that the barefoot workers, peasants and soldiers well and to create artistic images that they love, an actor must plunge into the heat of struggle and get to know and love the workers, peasants and soldiers'".  

We saw two feature films while in China, *Spring Sprout* and *Breaking With Old Ideas*. As films they had a few technical problems, mainly related to sound and dubbing, and there were lapses in continuity that a Western audience would notice, but they were stirring films for the Chinese audiences.

*Breaking With New Ideas* is a film about the proletarian revolution in education. The film creates the heroic image of Lung Kuo-cheng who dares to break with the revisionist line. The film is based on the Kiangsi Communist Labour University, a new socialist school which emerged in 1958 during the Big Leap Forward and the revolution in education, which trained students to be educated labourers with socialist consciousness. The film presents the conflict between revisionism and Mao's revolutionary line. The ‘bad guy’, the capitalist-roader in the Party, is beaten in the battle by the ‘good guys’, the worker peasants, who at the end of the film cheer with tears in their eyes and cry out “Long Live Chairman Mao”.

*Spring Sprout* is the first feature film depicting the events of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The film is primarily about a young peasant woman who becomes a barefoot doctor as a result of involvement in the struggle in her village between the two classes and two lines in medicine. She proves fearless in her battle against the capitalist-roaders inside the Party. The screenplay is by three young writers who were activists during the Cultural Revolution. They stress the heroine's fighting spirit while at the same time making her highly politically aware.

Both films stress the issues of the present debate in China — revisionism versus Mao's revolutionary line. They attempt to inspire the people with militant spirit and to repudiate the views of revisionism. The extent of revisionist support within the Party is an unknown fact, but the Vice-Prime Minister, Teng Hsiao-ping, before his downfall, walked out of a private screening of *Spring Sprout* openly rejecting the position the film so clearly promotes.

It is no doubt because of the single use of film for propaganda and teaching purposes that the Chinese felt so outraged and betrayed by Antonioni's film *China*, which they described as “vicious”, “despicable”, “deadly venom to the core”. Antonioni chose to ignore the new spirit, friendliness and enthusiasm of many of the Chinese people, the new face of China and the accomplishments of the Chinese revolution. But his film is probably less of an attempt to undermine China than the Chinese believed. Regardless of whatever Antonioni's motives were, he has succeeded in achieving a complete ban on the use of 16mm film equipment by foreigners in China. There were around 20 applications through the Australian embassy last year for permission to film, from sporting groups and others including Film Australia, but all requests were politely refused.

China is still a closed society for most Australians. At present we are not able to see China's films of China, or foreigner's films of China. Without them we have a more difficult task in attempting to understand the complexities of the philosophy that guides a quarter of the world's population. But even the visitor who stays briefly, learns that the media and the arts in China are being used as a potent educational force for a national purpose. In Australia we still argue about whether the media has effects at all and those who control them are the first to say they don't. Have we completely wasted our media resources, or are their functions just better disguised? ★

Jean-Marie Straub and Daniele Huillet

THE POLITICS OF FILM PRACTICE

"I think that more and more the work we've got to do — though I have some reservations — is to make films which radically eliminate art, so that there is no equivocation. This may lose us some people, but it is essential to eliminate all the artistic, filmic surface to bring people face to face with the ideas in their natural state."

— Jean-Marie Straub, in interview with Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, 'Enthusiasm', No. 1

Since the events of Paris in May, 1968, the question of the ideological function of film has been the cutting edge of a number of politically radical movements in film theory. Cahiers du Cinema led the way, with a brief succession of editorial manifestos in October, 1969, declaring the need for film studies to take scrupulous account of the total political, economic and ideological structure — superstructure, if you will — in which a film is produced, distributed and consumed.

This was considered logically necessary, if there was to be a valid science of the semantics of film, because the means of production of a film clearly limits much of the intended meaning a film can have. And it was considered practically necessary, if the permanent revolution declared in 1968 was to stay in motion, since the conscious (and subconscious) ideological intentions of the ruling class are constantly to be detected in the minute flaws and 'sutures' in the otherwise seamless fabric of the 'imaginary' reality, that is substituted for lived experience, in every cultural artefact, from bus timetables to every textual analysis of films, to the films themselves, seems almost non-existent. And the internal coherence of the model (models) being invoked is a matter that can be seen only after an arduous apprenticeship in the relevant French intellectual traditions, and a painstaking acquisition of the vocabulary and grammar peculiar to semiotic discourse. Few complete the curriculum, and many decide at the outset not to enrol. But the chief irony is that what was launched as an effort to remove the blight of cultural mystification thrust upon 'art' by the bourgeoisie, and to systematically tear down the intricate sub-conscious apparatuses that constantly evolve to obscure lived reality from the consumers of cultural products, has worked its way into such tight, obscure, and intellectually elite, corners, far from political usability. And, truly, it is necessary to write sentences like that to invoke the semiotic stance in film theory.

If your were forced to search for a name, a tradition, for the Straubs' politics of film practice, it might be Brecht. But only recently, only in specific films, and really not at all, without further lists of qualifications. Probably the most Brechtian thing about the Straubs is that, as for Brecht, the mental work involved in the making and perceiving of their work is sufficiently fine, distinct and intense to be its own tradition. Richard Roud has emphasized that Straub is, like Brecht, that rarest of creatures, a politically-radical formalist. And that this formalism is strongly classicist, in temperament, is suggested by the source material of the films—Bach, Schoenberg, Corneille, Heinrich Boll, Brecht.

Yet, while it is easy to sense the gulf between the Straubs and academic film theory of the recent past, it is harder to go on to characterize their theory of political film praxis. For a start, the fundamental point of differentiation is that it is impossible to separate the political from the aesthetic convolutions in works that are literally at work, and not at play, in the medium. The political ideas have an intellectual beauty, and the aesthetic ideas have a political force. But this "political aesthetic" is neither programmatic in any sense, nor accessible to any of the usual terminologies, political or aesthetic. And instead of the "significance" of the political ideas being rendered by the manipulation of the aesthetic means of filmmaking, the "political aesthetic" of the Straubs' films is matter to be sensed by the intellect, and comprehended by the senses. The only analogy I can think of is the intellectual sensuousness of Cezanne's paintings — which are also political in the sense that Straub's least overtly political film is political, the Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach. (Straub offered it as "my contribution to the struggle of the Vietnamese people against the Americans".)

It is political in that such a perfected and exhilarating sense of things in their proper place and moment must also, in the political sphere (if the political sphere can be considered separately), discover the justice of a situation with equal impeccability. In Chicago, the Straubs wanted to visit just two things — the
The outstanding feature of the work as a corpus is that the Straubs come to each film as if inventing cinema anew. But the constant of the work is the sense that each film is formed by powerful notions of what constitutes proper and acceptable film practice. (And, naturally, “proper” and “acceptable” have both political and aesthetic meaning here.) In fact what appears to be a continual stylistic shift in the work is the outcome of fixed principles of the Straubs’ political aesthetic — for example, the stand against cinematic language.

ON CINEMATIC LANGUAGE

“We try to fight against cinematic language. (Could there be a cinematic language that is not the language of Hollywood, and that might be politically acceptable?) If cinematic language is not the language of Hollywood, it is the language of the ruling class. You have to choose. All the history of the cinema is a zig-zag between two kinds. On one side, the kind represented by Dziga Vertov, or the early Griffith, or, on the other hand, the kind represented by the last Eisenstein films, and by Hollywood. You can try to accept this zig-zag, and to work with it, but even that is a choice.

“I’m trying to make films that have no language, and when I sense that there is a cinematographic language, I try to destroy it before it is born. I’m trying to eliminate all the obstacles between the spectator and what I’m showing or reality, or between me and reality. Language in this way would be an obstacle... If in 50 years someone sees one of the obstacles between the spectator and what I’m showing or reality, or between me and reality. Language in this way would be an obstacle... If in 50 years someone sees one of Strauss’ films, he will not be able to understand anything but rhetoric, or ‘language’, or ‘art’, or the ‘filmic’ aspect, and that is what I’m trying to avoid.”

Straub said of Not Reconciled, for example, a film whose ‘narrative’ spans nearly 50 years of German history with (at first) extraordinary ellipses of time and none of the usual cues of an ellipse of time.

live sound entails enormous responsibilities to every reality heard, as well as seen, in the space included and implied by the camera. "Off-camera space exists. That’s another thing one discovers when one shoots with live sound. Filmmakers who shoot silently can’t
be aware of it. And they are making a big mistake there, because they are going against the essence of the cinema . . . that is, something that photographs in two dimensions a three-dimensional reality . . . It's sound that gives space. So that someone who shoots silently can forget that he's shooting space.

He cites an example of his inability to dismiss lightly any of the record that a sound take represents. A take shot silently can be set up very differently to one shot live. A character can approach from any distance, but the shot can be taken from just that moment the character enters the field of vision.

"Whereas if you hear him coming, you can't simply cut his steps at any point whatever, you can't simply toss them into the wastebasket like that." Similarly, the receding sound of a character who has left the field of vision is profoundly important. Many people have commented on the extreme beauty of the rhythm in the cutting of a Straub film; yet Straub insists, in his insistence on live sound, that the 'reality' of the shot determines this beautiful element of rhythm, as well as the existence of 'empty scenes' after a door has closed, or walls has been left empty where a character had been.

"Now it's quite clear that these elements of rhythm take on not a 'signification' but a "sense". There is a blank in Not Reconciled at the moment where the school is in embrac ing her son and she says, "Forgive me, I couldn't save the lamb"; we cut there on the white door, and one sees nothing, and one hears it opening. At the same time, but I couldn't cut it because it had a certain sense. After she speaks . . . you hear the noise of the latch, and you see that white surface, and then you see only Robert, her son, who comes into view six feet further down the hall, having passed through the door. There, it has a sense. A white surface, the sound of a firearm after a phrase, fine. If you see characters who leave a scene, living, and if you make them leave, living, and then you see the ruins when they have left, it's obvious that that has a sense . . ."

This intense respect for the reality of a take is bound up with Straub's sense that film is about the condensation of time, the crystallization of the threat that is in every moment, and that can be 'surprised' by the filmmaker whose ears and eyes are opened to it, and who permits himself to find the rhythm of the shot (the edited take) only in terms of discoverable sense, and not compositional signification.

"... it's the pure present condensed. What passes, and what never happens again, and what is there, what the viewer feels as condensation. That is to say, he feels. One could say that this fact of showing death at work should give people a taste for living, because they must realize that every moment that passes, it's done with, and they can never recuperate it. There must be a threat in it. Because if they don't realize that, they're not living."

For Straub, the 'idea' of a space recorded on film is far from just the significance intended by the script:

"Everything — the insect suffering in one corner, or the wind coming through the frame or the space itself, or a changing light — everything is as important as the human being you are framing.

And, "If a film doesn't open the eyes and ears of people, of what good is it? It's better to give it up . . . The only thing one can do with film is give information and open ears. That's a lot, but if one does the opposite, it's better to change your profession, and go fishing, or learn grammar.

The one instance in which Straub was persuaded it would be cheaper to dub sound is the street sequence in his first film, Machorka-Muff. Not only did he find the experience of post-synching "meaningless", and intensely "boring", his respect for detail caused amused comment.

"At that time they also wrote in Der Spiegel that I would go into film history because I had gone to Bonn to record the tramways, and they should be the same in Munich or anywhere. But that isn't true, the sound is very different. First they aren't the same kind of ears and carriages, and the sound on a corner in Bonn is not the same as on a corner in Munich. (["This is the usual opinion that the sound is just an illustration of the picture. Something a man makes in the backroom with two pieces of tin."]) Exactly. Because they don't believe in film . . . and so in cinematography, the 'matter' — the matter as in the pictures by Cezanne, which is so laid-on — they deny this simply because they don't know that it is a complex of image and sound, and not an illustration of the sound by an image or an illustration of the image by a sound!

Clearly the political aesthetic of the Straubs is as deeply respectful of audience as it is of the details of reality.

ON DETAIL

" Ninety per cent of films are based on contempt for the people who go and see them. The sentence we heard most often, even before Machorka-Muff, when we insisted on a certain detail, because we thought, there are no details — everything is detail or specific things or one thing is just as important as another — they always said, 'Nobody will notice, nobody will get it'. This is based on contempt for the audience, or on cheating, which comes to the same thing."

Going further:

"I think we should make films that have absolutely no signification, because if not we're making trash . . . since (such a film) confirms people in their cliches. A film must destroy, every second, what it has said the minute before. I believe, because we are suffocating in cliches, because it is important to help people destroy them."

And, "What I mean is that you can never make your films intelligent enough, because people have enough stupidity to put up with in their work and daily lives. The life they lead is horrible, it makes them more and more stupid. They can't take any more; you destroy them and finish them off. That is why it doesn't make sense to burden them with more stupidities.

And in terms of the Chronicle of Anna Magdalene Bach, in which the Straubs' research into historical details had unearthed things that ran contrary to audience expectation, such as clear glass in Baroque churches of the time, and Bach's use of the thumb in keyboard fingering:"

"Castro, or someone else, said once, 'The revolution is like God's grace, it has to be made anew each day, it becomes new every day, a revolution is not made once and for all, it's exactly what happens in daily life.' There is no division between politics and art, art and politics. That is also why this film interested me, because Bach was precisely someone who reacted against his own inertia, although he was deeply rooted in his times, and was oppressed. But apart from that, if the film had been made about any street-sweeper, we would have gone to the same amount of trouble with the technical things and with the problems. I think one has no other choice, if one is making films that can stand on their own feet, they must become documentary, or in any case they must have documentary roots. Everything must be correct, and only from then one can rise above, reach higher . . . If a button is wrong in a film, it can still be nice as detail, but only if the film is good, but for that the rest must be correct. And it must be better, if this button were right too."

The same kind of fervorous energy is directed towards finding the proper angle, frame, and moment, in the setting up of every shot. This is something that cannot be captured by experiencing the austere beauty of the films.

"I believe that a film cannot be too beautiful. It's only a question of what kind of beauty. Even Brecht said, towards the end of his life: 'We won't do it, without a concept of beauty'. You have to try not to forget that you are working with two-dimensional space, the third dimension given only by sound, and not to forget that a shot is a brick in the wall. And you have to work with space to make out of space time, because film is condensed time . . . A shot is framed, and to find your frame you have to know which distance is the one you want, and then find the distance you want, you don't find the frame . . . And a shot has an angle, and is coming before and after another shot, and you have a construction and you have to know after which angle one goes, and before which. A shot is sense. Film is also what happens between the shots, and this is often as important as the shots themselves . . . And you have to know that the angle you choose is what lets you feel the exact relations between the characters, and between the characters and their space, and the world around them — not just in terms of sound, but in terms of the angles of walls and so on."

Continued on P.184
In this third part of the 19-part series, Cinema Papers' contributing editor Antony I. Ginnane and Melbourne solicitor Leon Gorr discuss the role played by the agent in the process by which a producer obtains a production-distribution contract. Other situations in which a producer will make use of the services of an agent are also discussed.

In part one of this series, our model producer acquired literary rights to a property. In part two, he commissioned and received a completed screenplay for the property. His course now is to get financing for his production; either from a group of private investors, a distributor, the Australian Film Commission or some other foreign cash source. By this stage, unless he has obtained some pre-production funds from the AFC, he will have expended some thousands of dollars of his own money. If the project does not go ahead, he will have no way of recouping them and neither will they be of any tax advantage to him.

Generally, the producer may know the hands of those distribution companies in Australia which are likely to invest in local production. He may even know some business acquaintances who have at one time or another expressed interest in putting money into films. But that will probably be the extent of his film financing skills. He will have no knowledge of the major and minor sources of film production or distribution entities or governments, all of whom may have funds available for utilization in some fashion, for filming here or abroad.

This lack of knowledge is overcome by access to an agent, preferably one based in New York, London or Hollywood. Strictly speaking, an agent is merely one who acts on another's behalf in certain legal and para-legal situations defined by agreement in consideration of a prescribed fee. But the larger international talent agencies which represent film producers, agencies like William Morris or Creative Management, both of New York, Los Angeles and London, frequently have continued access to the executives in charge of productions at the major American studios and have personnel skilled both in making creative contributions to the project, via suggestions, advice, etc, and in being able to engage in packaging.

This latter element of packaging deserves comment as it may or may not work to the advantage of a particular producer. In dealing with both film company and bank personnel, it is true that the more definite and certain a producer is in sketching his project, the more likely he is to succeed in obtaining finance. Thus, in addition to providing a screenplay, and himself as a producer, if he can submit a detailed budget, a shooting schedule, a proposed director and one or two principal members of the cast, he is in much stronger position.

The larger agencies represent actors and actresses, directors and writers, as well as producers. It has become quite common for a producer who shows a property he has acquired to an agent, to find the agent becoming keen on the project, not merely because it has intrinsic merit, but because it has a great part for actor A or B, etc. The danger here, of course, is that the producer may find a large measure of his choice in the various elements of the film severely restricted because of the way he has become locked into a package situation. If the agency's commission for the combination of talent A, B and C outweighs that of the producer, there may be a temptation for the agent to attempt to snowball the producer into accepting the package against the producer's better judgement.

The typical agency agreement (two samples of which are set out in precedents 6A and 6B below) provides for the agency to represent the producer (client) for an agreed period of time in certain areas of Endeavour for an agreed fee. This fee will normally be 10 per cent flat of gross compensation received by the client, but may rise to 15 per cent and 20 per cent in certain specified situations. The agent's percentage on a deal negotiated during the agency period will continue outside the duration of the agency period if monies (pursuant to that deal) continue to accrue to the client. Further, if a deal made during the agency period is renewed outside the agency period, the agent is still entitled to his percentage. Frequently the term "gross compensation", as received by the client producer, is deemed not to include any payment made to the producer for living expenses, as distinct from fee.

Problems in the agency situation may arise for a producer who has managed to sign a production - distribution agreement for a multi-film deal. If this agreement, as it generally does, provides for cross collateralization of receipts received from the group of films, so that the
financier may recoup his losses on an un­successful film in the deal from profits on a successful one, the producer will find himself with a book entry of producer's profit on one which he has not in reality received in his hands, for which he will owe an agency fee, but if it has the remotest chance of being saleable in foreign markets, he will need to engage, during the festival or after, the services of a foreign sales agent. He should be careful to distinguish between the services of a publicist and a sales agent, both of which will no doubt be acosting him for his Overseas Trade sponsored dollar. Unless he has a film which he feels has a deal of critical merit, especially the sort of critical merit that appeals to French film critics or other literati, film critics or film critics' associations, the agency may handle 20 films a year and have a lifetime of contacts in the world film market, whereas the neophyte producer will generally charge between 10 per cent and 15 per cent for such services. Of course, he will continue to share in the profits of any gross or net percentage deal made for a territory over the duration of the licence.

The neophyte producer is likely to have of the agent's services the same kind of experience as the neophyte producer himself, or indirectly, for furnishing my services. The sales agent, like all talent agents, is frequently able to intercede between the buyer and the producer and generally handle things on a non-emotional level as he does not have the same degree of personal commitment to a project. The producer may handle 20 films a year and have a lifetime of contacts in the world film market, whereas the neophyte producer will generally charge between 10 per cent and 15 per cent for such services. Of course, he will continue to share in the profits of any gross or net percentage deal made for a territory over the duration of the licence.

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Gentlemen,

I hereby engage you for a term of years commencing on the date hereof and continuing until such time as any specific creative property or package show, or any part thereof, is fully utilized or until such time as the agreement herein set forth has been fully performed by either party. The term hereof shall be automatically extended, and shall be deemed to continue for the same length of time as any subsequent agency agreement entered into by me or my agent and by you, unless either party shall have given written notice of its desire to refuse renewal at least six (6) months prior to the expiration of the period to which such notice relates.

I understand and agree to the provisions of paragraph 7(a) hereof and shall, in the event of a sale or assignment of any rights subject to the provisions of this agreement, remain obligated to pay you compensation for and in connection with such sale or assignment, in full and adequate consideration. With respect to any sale or assignment of any rights subject to the provisions of this agreement, but not to any other liability which may otherwise be subject to all of your rights hereunder and to my first obtaining and delivering to you an assumption agreement, in form acceptable to you, described and defined in paragraph 30 hereof, fully completed and underwritten, in full and adequate consideration, and setting forth the proposed terms and conditions thereof.

I hereby authorise you, my agent or my legal representative to advise, consent or otherwise deal with respect to, or relate to, any legal or business activity, including any such activity involving the world, to negotiate for, and with respect to, the disposition of any rights hereunder or the reproductions thereof made primarily or in part for my benefit, and to enter into any agreement which will conflict with the terms of this agreement, and to have, take and receive any and all moneys, properties or package shows covered by this agreement, but it shall not otherwise be so excluded.

In the event this agreement is signed by more than one person, firm or corporation, each party shall be liable under the terms of this agreement, but it shall not otherwise be so excluded.

AGREED TO AND ACCEPTED: Yours truly, 

[Signature]

[Name]

Cinca Papers, September—133
The Ethics of Being

KRZYSZTOF ZANUSSI

134—Cinema Papers, September

Top: Patterns from Structure of Crystals.
Centre above: "Let us be sure we are not unconsciously imposing a philosophy which has not been defined by ourselves." Marek, who is obsessed with a need for recognition, and Jan, who lives content within himself in the country. Structure of Crystals.
Above: "The reason Jan (Jan Myslowicz) has chosen to stay in the country is to be able to communicate with people." Structure of Crystals.
At the age of 20, Krzysztof Zanussi abandoned his course in physics at the University of Warsaw and enrolled at PWSTIF in Lodz. There, after six years training, he graduated with the diploma film “Death of a Provincial”. The next year, Zanussi joined the “Tor” film unit of Film Polski and directed the short, “Face to Face”, for television.

Zanussi’s first feature, “Structure of Crystals”, was made in 1969. This moving study of a clash between two old schoolfriends in a remote, country area firmly established Zanussi’s reputation as a director obsessed with scientists and ethics, a label that belies his deeply emotional work. In 1971, Zanussi produced his most successful film, “Family Life”, a gently satiric look at a young man’s futile attempts to disown his past and family ties. Then, in that same year, he directed the extraordinary “Behind the Wall”, a disturbing look at people clawing for response in an alienated environment.

Illumination followed in 1971 and proved a complete reversal in cinematic style. The simplicity, the precision was gone and was replaced with rapid, random cutting, a seeming irreverence for framing and lighting, and a fascination in structural fragmentation. Zanussi then went to the U.S. in 1974 to make “The Catamount Killing”, still unreleased in Australia, but found the experience traumatic. He returned to Poland, and in 1975 completed his latest film, “The Balance”, again with the brilliant actress Maja Komorowska, whom he had used in “Behind the Wall”.

Zanussi was in Melbourne as a guest of the Melbourne and Sydney Film Festivals when he was interviewed by Scott Murray.

Was there any specific reason why you stopped doing physics at university and changed to filmmaking?

At university, our studies were very competitive and there was no room for hesitation or doubt. It is very hard to get into university and very hard to finish, but when you have finished, work is guaranteed — that is the price. So, to be a student of physics I had to do everything well, which I was sufficiently talented to do. What was confusing though was that I spent four years studying physics always feeling that something was wrong.

To describe it better, you should take into consideration that I had begun my studies in 1955 when I was only 15 years old and that that was rather early to go to university. So, this was probably an important factor in my decision to leave. Physics was also a field of fair-play and I wanted something where values were somehow solid, where what is good and what is bad, where what is true and what is untrue, is clear and everything is possible. This factor was also important. It was an aristocratic approach to a subject which I thought of as pure and demanding.

On the level of anecdote, I always quote one of my professors — who is now my spectator. He later told me he had noticed that my interest was more in people than in matter, more in people looking through a microscope than in the reality shown by the microscope — that makes a nice metaphor. I have also a fond of fair-play and I wanted something where values were somehow solid, where what is good and what is bad, where what is true and what is untrue, is clear and everything is possible. This factor was also important. It was an aristocratic approach to a subject which I thought of as pure and demanding.

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My knowledge of scientists is that some of them are extremely emotional and some are not. Of course, the development of rational thinking is a means of giving us control over the expression of our emotions. I like people to control the expression of their emotions. I don't like very spontaneous people.

Spontaneity is not a value I appreciate very much. Maybe Anglo-Saxon society would change my mind, because there is a kind of reserve, or Victorian ethos, which I observe and which I find very irritating. On the other hand, I feel that there is such a confusion when we talk about what is natural and cultural, spontaneous and restricted, that I tend towards the things which are unpopular out of simple perversity, because I feel that the other side has been so widely explored that it has become banal and meaningless. Generally speaking, I don't see any difference between the emotional feelings of this particular social group and that of any other social group. Politicians are not supposed to show their emotions, but they act according to them. And you can observe many other social groups doing the same. I would say it is as irrelevant talking about emotions as it is about ethnic backgrounds. They say that Mediterranean people are more emotional than Scandinavian. That doesn't mean very much. Are characters from Bergman films not emotional? I think that in terms of human life all the things are comparable — even if the expression is different, the cultural patterns are different, ethnic patterns are different and so on.

Why then such a fascination with scientists, if you are not putting them in a special group?

You are making a wrong assumption. I didn't put them in a special group for one reason, but that doesn't mean I didn't exclude other reasons. (Laughter). No, I think there are other reasons. Let me explore two. One elementary one is that I am an author-director. I write my scripts and I consider writing very important, not from a purely professional point of view, but from the point of view of considering how I function in people's minds. In other words, and it is hard to put in words, a writer-director is something different to just a director, especially in my society where this difference counts. It has some meaning to people, and for me, if a statement is made by somebody who is ready to prove it, ready to testify with his own life experience that what he says he believes in. We are very suspicious of people who tell us facts they have learnt from other people, or from books they have read, and who advocate these ideas as if they'd lived them through. So from that point of view, being author-director means that whatever I say has to be proved by my own life experience.

Definitely my life experience is limited, to a certain extent, to this circle or social group. I feel more comfortable describing it than other groups. I would feel funny making a film about workers, because I haven't lived a worker's life and it would be an excursion, both intellectual and emotional, which would be degrading to other people, and to me. For that reason I have limited myself to those people I really know.

But there is another reason, in that there is always risk that if my knowledge is limited, then maybe it is better not to talk at all. I believe the scientists, at least in my society and I am not sure if this is true in many Western societies, though it is true in my society, and absolutely true in Russian society — are the most conscious, socially and politically, of any social group. Their knowledge and understanding, and their sense of responsibility, is much much higher than the average. They face problems and perspectives which haven't been considered or understood by the vast majority of the society. That's why I find them important, because in our thinking they are important. I know it is difficult for someone living in your society to figure this out. But in my society there is no room for a shoemaker who becomes an owner of a chain of factories producing shoes. If you totally eliminate this large field of human activity, and have no such biographies around, a scientific career is one of the most desired and desirable, along with an artistic career or sports career.

In these fields, skill and some kind of fair-play or solid grounding in values is respected. You can't make a great career as a physicist if your theories are totally wrong, even if you have very powerful friends and corrupted protectors. They won't help you, they won't make you a great artist. You must show talent and character.

These are fields where people make relatively honest careers, fields which are very much regarded as interesting and exciting. And so for that reason — a third reason — scientists play an important role in society. So, now you have three motives and I think that is enough to explain why I am so often among scientists. Of course, I have tried to liberate myself of that limitation, to a certain extent, in The Balance. I have escaped into the life of official clothes — his life — and I thought that this was an exception. In Family Life, the people are engineers and have nothing to do with science. I have proof that sometimes I have tried, but I know that whoever

Above: Maja Komorowska as the sister Bella in Family Life.

Right: "The rights of our freedom are much more limited than we think, and it is probably better to know it." Marta (Maja Komorowska) with her husband, Jan (Piotr Fronczewski), after her return. The Balance.

Above right: "If there is a need, there must be something which created it." Franciszek (Stanisław Latałło) with girlfriend. Illumination.
remembers my films, remembers them as films about scientists. I am doing my next film about scientists, so I have to defend my choice.

There is nothing in the subtitles of "The Balance" to indicate what Jan did . . .

No, there was. For some reason most people don't pick it up. In Poland, everybody knows what he is doing because his character is very unusual — he talks about the stock. Stock is something that we don't understand at all and is the most exotic of things, so people know immediately that he is working in the state-owned bank which deals with foreign exchange and foreign money. That is why it is only mentioned once: when he speaks about German currency and the bet he won.

Given the range of experience about which you consider it honest to deal, do you ever feel that you should, at some stage, extend your films outside these boundaries?

Well, it's something that is so flexible it is hard to define. Yes, of course, we have more experiences than our professional experiences and we know other people, not only those professionally connected. We are probably already equipped to place our films in different professional groups. For example, I can make a great film in costume drama — even though I haven't lived in the past. It is possible. But up to now, with the realistic language I am using, I feel more comfortable doing films that are close to my experience, rather than to my artistic experience. This is one of the dilemmas: which source of experience should we be exploring and using? Are we forming our films or are we formed by them? Are we using the experience and language of others, or are we using our life experience and creating our own language? Of course, there is no definite choice possible, but there are certain inclinations. There are certain filmmakers who are fed by films, and certain writers who are fed by the writing of preceding writers. There are some others who reject this kind of imitation and who dig through their own life experiences to find their own structures and means of expression. Both ways are legitimate, but I am more inclined to explore my life experience than my knowledge of other people's experience.

A lot of people tend to label you as a moral or moralistic director. How do you feel about that?

I am afraid this word has an entirely different meaning in my vocabulary than yours in the West, so I rather dislike it as a word. In the European vocabulary it has an unpleasant, perjorative meaning which it doesn't have for me. For us, the word "morals", or better "ethics" — "ethics" is more neutral — is a powerful word that hasn't been abused. I am very proud if my compatriots find moral issues in my films. Definitely, I am interested in values, because values are the basis of any ethic. If this is enough to call me a moralist then I am a moralist.

I am not interested in describing things, but in evaluating them, in saying and finding what I like in life and why and what I consider valuable. So, from that point of view, I am interested in how people breathe and how they realize their ideals, why this or something else is their motivation.

Somebody who supports a most progressive idea for the most disgusting of reasons, which often happens, is not a very nice and pleasant character for me. I may consider his or her activity as socially useful, but I can't be very enthusiastic about it. So when I observe people and see their attitudes towards ideas, I observe as carefully as I can their motivation. I try to read for what values they struggle; not what they say, but what they really mean. I see fanatics, people who are seeking for power, saying that they are fighting for the liberty and freedom and equality of our people, and I wonder if they really mean it. I think maybe they have joined a certain movement only because they felt a necessity of joining something that is against the actual situation. Against the given establishment. I have very little hope that these people really have these ideals in mind, even if they are not conscious of it.

Does this mean that it is very difficult for people to escape their past? In "Family Life", for example, the returning son tries the whole time to convince himself that he has nothing in common with his father, and yet he ends up with the same twitch. Do you, therefore, see a lot of people who think they are escaping, but who are really just reacting against those things they find extremely difficult to get away from?

Exactly. I believe that the rights of our freedom are much more limited than we think and it is probably better for our own sake to know it, because when we know it, or understand it, we can deal with it. But when we don't, we are victims of our illusions and people are often greatly victimized by their illusions. I am a moralist, and the balance is about illusion. It is illusion of liberty, an illusion of liberation, which is for me completely ill-conceived. The sense of social liberation that my protagonist in Family Life had is again an illusion. In a way, I made this film as my reaction to common belief and fashion that people of the younger generation could prove they were free and do what they wanted. We are telling me that they really could go away and that nothing would happen; that they were really free to do what they wanted on their, let us say, personal level. I wanted to say, "No, you are not, it doesn't make sense". You are able to do anything physically but you may destroy yourself, and self-destruction is the highest price we pay for wrong movements.

I have thought a great deal about what my next film will be, as one always does. I have just dropped a project, one which was very developed, and probably it would make a very good illustration of my next step along the same line. I postponed it because I realized that I was not yet mature enough to make it, that I should do something else instead. I wanted to make a film which would again try to ridicule the common idea of liberation. As it was supposed to be an international film, it would be a reaction to many trends that one observes among young people, mainly in the West, and which irritate me very deeply.

I will try to make a film about the contradictions between nature and culture. Most people now discovering this contradiction tend to take option for nature. I consider this attitude irresponsible and childish. My conception of human nature is not so optimistic, but my conception of human culture is quite optimistic.

Continued on P.182
Part 2 of a historical survey of

The climate of work for women in traditionally male occupations and professions following World War 2 can only be described as hostile. The post-war backlash which lasted into the 1960s is by now well documented in feminist literature. For many of those women who lived through it, the frustration of abilities and the deprivations it caused were almost irreversible.

Women had made real headway in the profession of journalism during the war, when they moved into areas such as news reporting and sub-editing formerly sacred to men, and it was ground that they never completely lost. But there seems to have been no comparable infiltration in the much smaller field of film production.

Two exceptions — women who carried on from a war-time start — were Catherine Duncan and Gwen Oakley.

Catherine Duncan, a Melbourne writer and actress, was engaged by the Netherlands East Indies Film Unit, then in war-time exile in Melbourne, to write commentaries for translation into Malay. When the famous documentary filmmaker Joris Ivens was appointed Netherlands East Indies Film Commissioner, she took the opportunity to join his training crew.

But Ivens resigned following the Dutch armed intervention against the new Indonesian Republic. Catherine Duncan resigned with him. She wrote the commentary for his film Indonesia Calling, made clandestinely in Sydney, about the refusal of Australian waterfront workers and seamen to load and man Dutch ships.

Duncan then worked as a scriptwriter for the Film Division of the Department of Information (now Film Australia), which I'll continue to call it for convenience, as it has changed its name several times. She worked with John Heyer, and his memorable Journey of a Nation (1946), about Australian railways, owes its impact, in part, to her vivid blank-verse commentary.

She next made what she now calls "an abortive attempt" at directing several films sponsored by the Department of Immigration. They were probably no better or worse than the average Film Australia product at that time, but it was obvious that her most important contribution was as a writer. She says what always interested her most about film was the relationship between word and image.

Catherine Duncan went to Europe in 1947, and worked again with Joris Ivens on his documentary The First Years, writing the commentary, and also researching and scripting the Czech sequence. But that was the end of her filmmaking career. She married a Frenchman and has since lived in Paris, although she continued her association with film for many years as executive secretary of the International Federation of Film Archives, and as secretary of the International Federation of Film Societies.

Gwen Oakley joined Supreme Sound Systems (now Supreme Films) in 1944. Supreme, begun by Mervyn Murphy in 1935, produced sponsored documentaries and supplied facilities and expertise to the industry, including processing.

Oakley had been an actress on stage and in radio, and had worked in production for the Lux Radio Theatre. At Supreme, Murphy trained her in editing, projecting, sound recording, black and white and colour processing. She also handled the office work. She says: "In those days everyone pitched in and did everything. Our work was our hobby. I didn't have a holiday for 27 years."

Since the advent of television the firm has expanded considerably, and Gwen Oakley has had to be more and more involved in administration, leaving the technical work to others. After Murphy's death in 1971 she became managing director.

Supreme has played a major role in assisting local filmmaking, especially in the 1940s and 1950s. It put equity, in the form of facilities, into some feature films, one of them Lee Robinson and Chips Rafferty's first film The Phantom Stockman (1953), which returned a profit. Unfortunately, some of Supreme's later investments in other production companies left the firm deeply in the red.

Gwen Oakley and Mervyn Murphy were well-known as benefactors to many industry personnel: if they could they would give work to...
women in Australian film production

by Joan Long

Often what they did was at a loss to themselves, and some people took advantage of their generosity and kindness. But she regrets none of it and has great respect for many of today's young filmmakers.

One of the few places to go, if you wanted to train in films in the late 1940s and 1950s, was Film Australia. It had been set up as the result of the pre-war visit and recommendations of John Grierson, although the war postponed its actual setting-up. Ralph Foster, its first Film Commissioner, was replaced in 1946 by Grierson's nominee Stanley Hawes, an Englishman who had spent the previous six years as head of production at the Canadian National Film Board.

A dichotomy existed in Film Australia's staff from the early days - a dichotomy which mirrored the fabric and ethos of Australian society at large. On the one hand, there were the technicians - the cameramen, editors, etc. A few had come from the now defunct Cinesound organization and from other feature companies; more from newsreels, always the most consistently thriving film activity in Australia. Most of these technicians were unsympathetic, if not hostile to the idea of "documentary" and often embodied the anti-intellectual strain of the Australian character. Many disapproved of higher education for film people, and were particularly hostile to women in films. They were the equivalent of the "industry hardheads", to whom, as Bill Shepherd described it, the McDonagh sisters had been "a bit of a joke".

The post-war backlash added to, and exacerbated, the deeply-rooted Depression mentality, that every woman in a job was doing a man out of work. Although most Film Australia personnel were classified as "temporary" public servants, they were invariably classified as "assistants" even if they were doing the main job. Many were also the subject of innuendo and derogatory memos from the Canberra "crockers."

There was resentment within the organization, but Hawes gamely coped with this. What he had little control over were the public servants in Canberra who were in overall charge of the unit. Their hostility to women was marked. Those women working in production were doubly underpaid. They not only received the usual Public Service lower rate of pay for women, but were invariably classified as "assistants" even if they were doing the main job. Many were also the subject of innuendo and derogatory memos from the Canberra "crockers."

Jennie Boddington was writing film reviews for a magazine after the war, and was trying to get a job in films. Her first success was with Ealing Films on Eureka Stockade, directed by Harry Watt in 1947, as a wardrobe assistant. During the production she became assistant to Jane Cunn, the continuity girl, who now runs a leading actors' agency in Sydney.

After Eureka, Boddington went to work at Film Australia as a cutting-room assistant, and became the first woman there to receive an editing credit. In 1950 she went home to Melbourne, for personal reasons, and worked for some years for the G.P.O. Film Unit. It consisted of two people - Boddington and the cameraman. She directed many instructional and public relations films and documentaries, shooting all over Australia. She also wrote the scripts and did the editing.

With the introduction of television, Boddington went to the ABC in Melbourne as an editor. At that time she was the only trained editor there, and she says it was probably for this reason that she encountered no discrimination against women - except when it came to the pay packet.

Jennie Boddington later remarried, and set up her own company, Zanthus Films, with her husband, a cameraman. Over the next nine years they made 15 sponsored films, some of them prize-winning and major documentaries of their day. She was producer, scriptwriter, director and editor. Her particular forte was dramatized documentary, and her films had a flair and sensitivity which set them apart from most examples of the sponsored films of the day.

In 1967, she decided to retire from the partnership. She felt that she wanted to spend more time with her children, who before had to be looked after by domestic help, and planned to work on a novel. But her husband died in 1970, and with three children to support she moved back to Sydney hoping to get work in films or television. She could find only temporary work, so she returned to Melbourne.

Jennie Boddington has now given up films, but for the past five years she has been curator of photography at the National Gallery of Victoria, where she has built up an impressive photographers' gallery, and has mounted many exhibitions. She selected and edited the photographs for the YWCA book, Woman 1975, published for International Women's Year.

Rhonda Small was a director at Film Australia for some years, joining as a production assistant in 1958. She had been a trained assistant in 1958. She had been a trained

She suggested that the men could carry the heavier gear, but Hawes said “no”, saying the men would not be in that. He told her to go away and finish her university degree and then come back. But she was determined. She got a job at Channel 7, measuring film, and was there for three months when Hawes offered her a job in the film library. She later became a production assistant, wrote some educational scripts, and directed some nature films.

Castle then decided to go to the Institute d’Hautes Etudes Cinematographic — the Paris film school — but found it too elementary and rigid. She wrote to Alan Resnais, whose film Hiroshima Mon Amour she greatly admired, and he put her in touch with a documentary group, Groupe de Trente, to which many of the New Wave directors belonged. At the same time, she tried to educate herself in film history and technique at the Cinematheque. She feels that her work is still very much influenced by the New Wave style. She also learnt a respect for the director-writer relationship, and points out that Alan Resnais talks constantly with his writer up to, and throughout, his productions.

Castle returned to Film Australia and made several more films. But, now married and pregnant, she left and set up Fraser-Castle films with her husband. He attended to the business side, going out and getting the jobs, while she did the research, writing, directing and editing. Their clients have included most of the biggest companies in Australia and top government boards, and for these films Castle has been to some of the remotest locations in Australia.

She freely says that without the generosity of her father in helping to finance the company, the company, she could never have done what she did. After 1970, commissions became more sparse, and she sought outside work. She did the rounds of various sections of the ABC, all headed by men, but found most doors closed to her except, significantly, that of a woman, Kay Kinane, who gave her work making film segments for young people’s programs.

She has since directed several films under contract for Film Australia, as well as an industrial documentary. She has also written a feature screenplay, a film for young people, which she plans to direct herself. Lilias Castle’s partnership with her husband has since broken up.

Like most women filmmakers, she has found that the problems with men rarely come from the people you actually deal with in the field — the engineers, company executives, public relations people, the workers. In fact, she feels that they actually seem to appreciate a woman director and that they are usually accepting, helpful and friendly. In her experience, and that of others, the prejudice also comes not from the men in the crew (there was some in the old days, but it is dying out), but from the men in the film organizations, the people in power.

Dahl Collings was an established painter before she came to filmmaking. Her husband, Geoffrey, also began as an artist, and their art training and talent was evident in the films they made together in the 1950s.

While a student at the National Art School in Sydney, she won the drawing scholarship twice. In 1935, she and Geoffrey went to London, where their work embraced painting, graphic design, photography and film. They worked with Moholy-Nagy and Gyorgy Kepes, and came into contact with now well-known workers in the British documentary movement — John Grierson, Basil Wright, Harry Watt and Robert Flaherty.

They made their first film together in Spain in 1936, and in 1938 they set off for Tahiti to make
Maureen Walsh, one of Australia's few freelance women producers, has had an all-round career in film and television dating back to the early 1950s. She first worked on the crew of Whiplash — the series made here by Americans for television — in the production office, preparing breakdowns, script editing, scheduling, contracts, doing location reports. She also had "on-the-floor experience."

After similar work on some features and documentaries, she joined the editing staff of the ABC in Sydney. She says simply: "The ABC of the early 1960s was not a place of advancement for ladies." She left to join Waratah Production for a television series, Adventure Unlimited, working in the cutting-room by day, in the production office at night.

She then went overseas to see the film scene. In Canada, she started a small company, Maureen Walsh Productions, and ran it for four years. She says: "In North America the opportunities are boundless. All you need is talent and stamina. The old Aussie phrase, 'but you're a woman', just doesn't exist." She made sponsored documentaries for big firms and government bodies, advertising films, two features, and a multiple screen presentation for the Venezuelan government for Expo '65 in Montreal.

She was offered a job in Hollywood, but the factory system didn't appeal to her, so she came home. "The return to Australia was a disappointment to me. I had been lulled into a career security in North America which doesn't exist in Australia. It was hard for me to accept that business men here were still programmed on the 'but you're a woman' bit, and the money they offered on projects was insulting.

South Australia Film Corporation. Robb was associate producer of The Fourth Wish.

She went to work for Fauna Productions and for Ron Taylor Productions. She produced the presentation films for Boney and Barrier Reef — and handled post-production for Inner Space and for Attacked By A Killer Shark, the only locally-produced program shown on commercial channels on the first night of colour. She was producer for a new television series, Daughter of Neptune, and is now working on a film about the children's author May Gibbs, which she will produce.

Joy Cavill is one of the most experienced producers in Australia, man or woman. She had always wanted to work in films, but couldn't find a job, and went into radio as writer and producer's assistant. In the post-war years she went to Britain, hoping to find film work, only to strike the industry in one of its periodic slumps. She worked on a chain of magazines doing film and music reviews, but, as it was evident she wasn't going to get the work she wanted, she came home.

Continued on P.180
Your new film deals with ‘the couple’, doesn’t it?

It’s the story of a man who is searching for his ideal woman, a person impossible to find. It depicts the life of three characters — a man, a woman and a child — in a suburb of one of these new satellite towns. The man tries to build a relationship in the only way he knows, in the way he has been taught — that is, a rather traditional one. And it doesn’t work — not through his fault, or the woman’s fault — but because it just can’t work.

Relationships between men and women don’t exist; couple relationships do, which is a different matter. The couple is an institution external to man; it’s the most repressive superstructure ever to have been imposed on man, that’s a fact. The biggest deceit is that if a man and a woman meet they immediately have to face a problem, the problem of the couple.

But surely there is an attraction . . .

Why does the attraction have to lead to the couple? Why do relationships between men and women necessarily have to end up like that?

Perhaps this corresponds with the fear of solitude . . .

Exactly, that solitude is at the bottom of it, and fear of solitude is always fear of death. By living a community life you can evade solitude in thinking of others. Solitude is the fundamental problem of man, a problem that no man has ever sought to resolve, if not by means of the couple, because the couple serves as a pawn in the economic and power games of society, games which are excessive to man. And they get us used to it, I have seen it while directing the film.

Children are already caught and enslaved in the process. Their lives are programmed for them. It’s a way of living in a function. It is not natural for a child, outside the natural function of man. Man is born for a freedom he doesn’t have. All this sacrifice, this castration and frustration of man serves a non-system — a simple, inevitable one. A system which tries to make of man an anti-social rather than a social animal, and to make of man an animal which knows only how to live in two’s. Instead of uniting, it fragments the tribe, the clan, the family. These don’t exist any longer, only these small nuclear groups. That is to say, the couple doesn’t derive from instinct; it’s a structure that has been superimposed on man. At least, that’s how I see it.

And this leads us to question the whole organizational system of the state . . .

Not only of the state, but of the world, because the couple is an institution everyone tries to defend, from the left, from the right, from the centre. This is where our society comes into it. Not even socialist countries have solved the problem. They still live basing their lives on this false assumption. Man is torn in enormous frustration. In the moments in which this frustration helps determine other things, in which it helps determine different possibilities for the development of society, it is felt less, while in the moments when this frustration forms part of a huge mechanism which falls to pieces, it is felt more strongly.

Well, your protagonist carries out a sort of conscious self-destruction . . .

He looks for a solution.

But you don’t point to a solution . . .

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Marco Bellocchio on Victory March

What aspects of militarism did you intend to highlight in "Victory March"?

The film was intended, initially, as a propaganda piece about military life in which the army itself was going to be the protagonist. Except in these last months, during this last year, the press has spoken a lot about military service and a whole series of things are being modified. It doesn't interest me at the moment to bring into the foreground those more transient aspects of military service — I mean the bad food, the danger and the harmfulness of the environment, etc. — because I think these things will change. The Italian army will become something less burlesque than the one I personally knew.

But what problems tend not to be overcome, what remains the same? The fundamental concept of discipline, the lack of recognition of the soldier's autonomy, a democratic relationship between soldiers and superiors. The words have changed — before, discipline had to be blind, now it has to be respectful, loyal — but, in fact, the principle remains the same. Following this line of thought, I abandoned the typically sensational aspects of an anti-military campaign already begun by the press, to concentrate more on military ideology.

After the three-and-half hour documentary "Nessuno o Tut-ti", about new experiences in open psychiatry, Marco Bellocchio returns to making feature films based on fiction. In "Victory March" he concerns himself with exploring Italian militarism, thereby continuing his demystification of traditional institutions which he began with his trilogy "I Pugni in Tasca", "Le Cina e Vicina" and "Nel Nome del Padre".

The story of "Victory March" is very simple. Passeri (Nichele Plácido), a young soldier from the southern provinces, hasn't succeeded in evading military service by the usual ploys. Against his will he presents himself to the army, but employs a policy of passive resistance. However, his captain, Asciutto (Franco Nero), his head full of obtuse and authoritarian military ideas, succeeds by means of "fascist-like training", as Bellocchio calls it, in making this soldier appreciate military life. A father-son relationship is born, and the captain uses the soldier to spy on his unfaithful wife (Miou-Miou). Instead, his wife falls in love with the soldier. When everything comes to light, the wife leaves both husband and soldier.

This rather conventional story is for the director nothing but a pretext for demonstrating a series of contradictions at the centre of a military institution and for carrying out a critical analysis of military ideology.

The following interview was conducted by Cinema Papers Italian correspondent, Robert Schar, and was translated by Clare del Mercato.

Almost all your previous films have presented us with a closed microcosm. Will we see this also in "Victory March"?

No, in the sense that unlike the others where everything happened inside an institution — the family, the college — here I have sought to come to terms with the military ideology through the psychological relationships between three characters, (i.e. the captain, his wife and a soldier), instead of through a whole range of characters. The film explores their private relationships, trying to represent their feelings and, above all, trying to represent changes in their feelings — which is something new in my films in the sense that in none of my previous films has there been a discovery, for example, of love. Instead, here we have the wife of a captain who falls in love with a soldier, and a relationship, something we can call constructive, is born. It's an attempt to describe feeling in a positive way, in the sense that it goes against a series of mistaken fascist principles, positive in as much as it contains within itself a liberating force in respect to its prior condition. The soldier will also discover some other positive things: i.e. his relationships with the other soldiers which he had abandoned, caught up as he was in this double relationship of filial dependence on the captain and attraction towards the captain's wife.

Therefore, there are three focal points in the film: the psychological study of the main characters, something rather new for you, the "fascist-like training" that the captain exercises over the soldier and the discovery of corporate life on the part of the soldier . . .

Continued on P.187
Over the last three years, Australia's involvement in the annual Cannes International Film Festival has grown to the extent that this year a significant number of local film directors, producers and critics would be aware of the varied and multi-faceted event.

Cannes is really a five-ring circus in which a representative sprinkling of films from most countries, commercial and non-commercial, vie for critical and box-office honours.

From the official competitive screenings generally held twice daily in the large main cinema in the festival building, to the aesthetically heavyweight Critics' Week and Directors' Fortnight, from Les Yeux Fertiles in which film verité, so neatly visualized early in the year, this was some compensation.

Miguel Littin's previous films, The Jackal of Nahuelito and The Promised Land, especially the latter, should have prepared us for the awesome, baroque splendour of Acts of Marusia. This Mexican film, which chronicles the events in Chile in 1907 when the reactionary government determined to take on and crush a well-organized worker's strike in a saltpetre mine in Marusia, manages to combine the didactic exactness of later Godard with the folkloric beauty of Glauber Rocha. The violence that lurks beneath the surface of the class structure, so neatly visualized early in the film, erupts with a Peckinpah-like fury as the film moves towards its inexorable climax.

Joseph Losey's Mr Klein marks a return to some of the concerns that manifested themselves in Assassination of Trotsky. Manhandling political issues, the relationship between art and politics, individual responsibility for collective guilt and so on. Unfortunately, this time is of Robert Klein, a rich young Paris art dealer who is confused by the authorities for a Jew of the same name. The film, set in occupied Paris in 1942, finds Losey sludging through the stylistic confections that marred his fashionable Pinter collaborations, notably Accident. Alain Delon, as Klein, excellent actor though he is, finds himself forced by Losey to skirt the real, the unreal and the abstract. There is none of the calculated drive that fired Losey's masterwork The Damned, nor even the ambiguities that as recently as The Romantic Englishwoman stunned us. Here all is subservient to the message and the heavy Kramerish significance of the Vichy government's anti-Semitic purge.

It is rare that a Losey film does not have at least one moment of extreme violence, frequently mental rather than physical — a moment that in The Concrete Jungle, Chance Meeting,Boom or Secret Ceremony, slices through the elegance of the mise en scene and reveals a universal vision — but there is none of this in Mr Klein.

Bertolucci's 1900 will certainly merit a place in cinema history. If for no other reason than the sheer audacity of its scope. This 5-hour 20-minute epic, presented in two parts at Cannes, is nothing if not an endurance test. It sets out to trace the rise of socialism in Italy from the turn of the century through to the halcyon days following World War 2. The patriarchal landowner (Burt Lancaster) is at the height of his powers in 1900 when the film opens. Two infants are born: the landowner's grandson played by Robert de Niro; the son of a peasant family played by Gerard Depardieu. Bertolucci uses the growth to manhood of these two youngsters as the backdrop of his tableau. He charts the development of the league of industrial workers; the progress of industrialization; World War 1 and the post-war rise of agrarian unrest resulting in a final confrontation.

Bertolucci's skill with narrative cannot be questioned, as the intricate web he weaves in the first part of the film, up to the outbreak of World War 2, is a masterpiece of economical construction on an epic scale. Regrettably, the second half of the film, dealing with World War 2 and its aftermath, becomes a pastiche of sub-Godardian siognating that is little more than undistilled propaganda.

There are various and contradictory reports on whether Bertolucci plans to re-edit 1900 to a more manageable length. If he does, his attentions could be fruitfully directed to this latter part.

Martin Scorsese's Taxi Driver is a return with a vengeance to the hellbent melodramas of violence that first found full fruition in Box Car Bertha. Both films drew heavily in their use of colour and bloody violence of Minnelli's 1950s melodramas, significantly Some Came Running and Home from the Hill. Paul Schrader's script for Taxi Driver again dips into this milieu. With New York as a sort of Dante's Inferno, Scorsese and Schrader chart psychopathic behaviour against a psychopathic environment and social system. The final orgy of violence is probably the most effective use of maled-fist cinema since Sam Fuller's climax in Underworld U.S.A.

There is an uneasy feel, however, about the ambiguous endorsement of vigilantism that the postscript skirts.

Edith Clever, as the Marquise, lies in a drugged sleep after being saved from near-rape by a Count. Eric Rohmer's The Marquise d'O.

Cannes 1976
Antony I. Ginnane

THE OFFICIAL FESTIVAL

Normally the films selected in the official competition by the representatives of the Festival, in conjunction with the various government film bodies, are prestige events, frequently having an American major already involved in distribution (excepting Eastern block countries). Often they premiere in Paris immediately after the Festival, and open in the U.S., Britain, Canada and Australia shortly after. This year, the official competition yielded from its non-competitive and competitive entries a better collection of films than in previous years. As general consensus was that the standard of the other competitive areas was down this year, this was some compensation.

Martin Scorsese's Taxi Driver.
Russell Boyd,
Director of
Photography
on 'Picnic at Hanging Rock'
talks about
Kodak films

"... "After three years with Cinesound Newsreel in Melbourne, I'd shot quite a few cinema newsreels and several T.V. commercials, all in black and white. Using color film was almost unheard of in those days. We used color for 16mm industrial documentaries and the occasional cinema commercial. We were all a little terrified of the medium"... "I joined H.S.V.7 News Department in 1964 and went out onto the streets to photograph life around me. At the time, we, as cinematographers, all experimented with various film emulsions and different brands and in the end came back to Eastman Plus X film for black and white and Ektachrome film for color. These two emulsions became the standard to work from and progress with"... "Later, while working at Supreme Films, I started a love affair with Eastman Color Negative." ... "Picnic at Hanging Rock was a coming of age for all of us. From the start I felt we had to capture the 'Tom Roberts' light of the Australian countryside, and I think we did. Eastman 5247 Color Negative was just coming of age and provided us with a pallette to paint with"... "Technology is closing the gap between creative expression and the means of recording it. Kodak is helping to close the gap."... "Kodak color films - the key to creative expression."..."
KODAK (Australasia) PTY, LTD.
Motion Picture & Audiovisual
Markets Division
The paradox in Private Vices Public Virtues, the new film by Miklos Jancso, is the contradiction between Jancso's search for an ever-restrictive film form and the young emperor's search for a liberated hedonistic existence. In an imaginary empire, the heir to the throne and a group of his young friends attempt to provoke a scandal within the power structure by resorting to what they call "harmonious chaos", a sort of blend of mild debauchery and Woodstock style flower power. The regime crushes them, kills them, and, via a propaganda machine, gives out a completely false story on their deaths.

Jancso's film is, of course, about the mechanics of power and repression, about the interknitting of the hegemony of church and state. The austere filmic style lends itself admirably to the total mechanics of power and repression, this tale of a group of youngsters and their relationship with a group of teaching Catholic brothers in a juniorate, manages to be disarmingly generous to the individuals it portrays while at the same time fearless in its portrayal of an often unpleasant, frequently incredible reality. Only for one brief scene does the film fail to jell; when one of the brothers visualizes, in rather 1970s fashion, an underwater sexual fantasy. The film is set in the early 1950s.

Patricio Guzman's Battle of Chile: Coup d'etat is a revealing study of the downfall of a populist government and should be required viewing for those studying Australia's own constitutional coup.

This year's scandal at the Festival was Oshima's Empire of the Senses. Shown at least a dozen times by public demand, there were still many who were unable to view it. As it is reviewed elsewhere in Cinema Papers, I will only note it here. But it will become something of a censorship cause celebre if any attempts are made, as I would hope they would be, to bring it into Australia either for festival or commercial release. It is certainly a most sexually explicit film, containing elements of everything that most filmmakers would categorize as "hardcore", yet it is a most unerotic film and shares with almost all of Oshima's other films, that I have seen, a concern for the expression of emotion through physical contact.

David Helfgott's Hollywood on Trial is a curiously fascinating account of the effect of, and background to, the House Committee on Un-American activities inquiry into the film industry. Little new material appears and no real attempt is made to give the material any historical perspective. Nonetheless, this chronicle of a celluloid witch-hunt has its fascinating moments when the sheer memorability of the historical footage overcomes the filmmaker's inertia.

THE CRITICS' WEEK AND THE DIRECTORS' FORTNIGHT

Henri Jaglom's Tracks only occasionally lapses into the pretentiousness which marred A Safe Place. Here on a train ride from the east coast to the west coast of the U.S., as the body of a Vietnam casualty is being taken home, in the company of a grizzled combat sergeant, the ethics of war and Vietnam and elements of political behaviour are dissected. Dennis Hopper's performance as the sergeant is a nice contrast to his manic role in Mad Dog.

For the second year in a row, Australia obtained an entry in the Directors' Fortnight. Fred Schepisi's The Devil's Playground can probably lay claim to being the best film yet seen here. An always implicit as always, the film's power to oppress, this tale of a group of young emperor's search for a

THE MARKET

If Orson Welles' F for Fake dominated the films screened in the Cannes market place last year, this year it was Brian de Palma's new film Obsessions. Starring Cliff Robertson and Genevieve Bujold it is a virtual remake of, and certainly blatant homage to, Hitchcock's Vertigo. Incidentally, Hitchcock's new film Family Plot was shown out of competition on the Official Festival program's closing day, to a rather downbeat reception.

Obsessions, replete with a Bernard Herrmann score that is so much more a summation of the man and his work than his Taxi Driver one, places Bujold and Robertson in a series of plot situations that ever so closely resemble those faced by Stewart and Novak. Not only in plot situation, but also in mise en scène, does it reflect the original, with many sequences duplicating Hitchcock's film, camera angle by camera angle. If Obsessions were only that, of course, it would be merely trite plagiarism. In fact, as in Sisters and to a lesser extent in Phantom of the Paradise, de Palma brings the concerns and morality of the 1970s to bear on the rigid catholicism latent in Vertigo. Obsessions is less an ethical chess game than a melange of subterfuge and prativatural goings-on blended with a touch of cynicism.
Roger Corman's New World Pictures had a number of new releases on view. A highspot was the jointly directed (Joe Dante and Allan Arkush) Hollywood Boulevard, a spoof on exploitation filmmaking which, for its plethora of in-jokes, could be the comedy of the year. The director of Death Race 2000 and Cannonball, Paul Bartel, plays a Von Stroheim look-alike trying to make the "greatest ten-day movie ever". A pile of Corman staff, protégés and graduates including George Armitage, Jack Hill and Martin Scorsese, mingle with clips of a variety of AIP and New World productions — a thoughtful prison number; a Poe styled horror quickie; and off-cuts from Death Race 2000 — as the king of the "B" films sends himself up.

A notable Canadian presentation was Nicholas Gessner's The Little Girl who Lived Down the Lane, starring the Taxi Driver nymphet, Jodi Foster, in a sort of Our Mother's House treatment of a young girl, who, assisted by her crippled friend, Martin Sheen, manages to kill and dispose of a number of adults who intrude into the world she has created for herself. There is a real and tangible sense of evil present in the film which Gessner has managed to convey without recourse to the usual cliches inherent in films of this type.

Two other productions stand out as worth watching if they surface in Australia. One was Mark Lester's Bobbi Joe and the Outlaw, with Lynda Carter and Marjoe Gortner in a Bonnie and Clyde/Suggerland Express series of situations. The film lacks the anarchic power of his earlier Truck Stop Women, but confirms his pre-eminence in the current ranks of American exploitation filmmakers. The other was Gerry O'Hara's low budget British film, The Brute Syndrome, which lurks beneath a guise of exploitation thriller, in fact emerges as a disturbing expose of marital violence and the "battered wives" problem. An unknown British cast manages to convey the terror of unprovoked and unexplained violence.

THE AUSTRALIAN REPRESENTATION

The official delegation of Australian films and filmmakers to Cannes this year was under the umbrella of the Australian Film Commission. Filmmakers were again assisted by the recognition of the Festival by the Department of Overseas Trade for the purposes of the Export Market Development Grants Act, thus enabling them to recoup certain, eligible expenditures made at, or for, the Festival. It seems that at the moment the Fraser government is giving thought to future operation of this scheme. Filmmakers and AFC members who attended, was the valuable contacts and overview of distribution and exhibition trends that it invariably presents. In a year when more than ever before producers, both reputable and otherwise, were killing future productions for feedback and pre-sales, there is a lesson for the Australian film industry to learn.

The films that achieved most commercial success at Cannes this year reflect that tone. If 1975 was the year of The Man from Hong Kong, 1976 was the year of Philippe Mora and Jeremy Thomas' Mad Dog. By early on in the Festival securing an upfront distribution advance of $350,000, from the new and upcoming distribution-production entity Cinema Shares, headed by ex-British Lion's U.S. head, David Blake, Mad Dog will become the first Australian film to have major and sustained playoff in the U.S. (a market that until now only Peteresn and Hong Kong have skirted). It was the internationalization of Mad Dog, headed by Dennis Hopper's brilliant performance, that led Blake to pick it ahead of, say, Caddie, Devil's Playground or Picnic. Only two other films secured substantial cash advances at Cannes: The Trespassers, with its non-Australian, big city charm and Fantasm, which was partly shot in the U.S. with U.S. actors.

While The Devil's Playground won high critical plaudits (and deservedly so) and both Caddie and Picnic have ended up with potentially rewarding distribution deals post-Cannes, as has Let the Balloon Go, none of these films, in my view, will penetrate the international market to Mad Dog's degree. In Picnic's case, of course, its success here tends to make the foreign market less vital.

In 1976-77, Australian filmmakers have to decide which of two paths to walk down, weigh up the respective potential rewards of each and write their budgets accordingly. A conscious decision has to be made on whether one shoots for the local or international market, for while there are some subjects that perhaps combine appeal to both sectors of the market (Mrs Fraser may prove to be an example), these are in the minority. Looking ahead to Cannes next year, the AFC may well consider some projects honed for the local market to have little or no foreign playoff potential and advise accordingly. The producer who has done his homework properly will not be unduly concerned by this, as he will have already chosen his market, rather than slipped into one by chance. Sooner or later the guessing has to stop.
Cannes Festival - Selling Australia

The newly appointed marketing manager of the Australian Film Commission, Alan Wardrope, has had his baptism of fire at the recent Cannes Film Festival, where he was engaged in selling the Australian films. The AFC was presenting to world buyers. 'Cinema Papers' contributing editor, Antony I. Ginnane, and managing editor, Scott Murray, discuss the Cannes experience.

Can you tell us anything specific about these deals?

They were mostly for theatrical rights only and most territories involved substantial sums in advance, with a percentage split after recoupment. We have had many experiences where an Australian film has been sold to foreign territories to some distributor, and though the film goes into profit, the expenses have been structured in such a way that they soak up the producer's share. At least this time the producers have started off with money in the bank; and we are hoping that the sort of deals we have done are with distributors who will look after the film and there will be further returns from the territories.

There was an attempt this year, by a couple of individuals, and perhaps by the Commission as well, to involve some of the financial sources available at Cannes in upcoming production. Are you able to tell us anything specifically about that, and, moreover, how do you see that sort of future production role melding with the sale of the completed films at Cannes next year?

What happened at Cannes was that the South Australian Film Corporation did have a couple of specific projects in which they were interested involving some overseas investment. One in particular would be in a Europe, which involved some of the financial sources available at Cannes in upcoming production. Are you able to tell us anything specifically about that, and, moreover, how do you see that sort of future production role melding with the sale of the completed films at Cannes next year?

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Laura Antonelli as Giuliana in Luchino Visconti's masterly study of a man "above judgement", L'Innocente.

When evaluating a film festival, one tends to balance out those films one likes against those one dislikes. However, as one given a festival's need to show films that would have difficulty being seen otherwise, the real test, I suspect, is in the number of extraordinary or unusual films presented. This year, for me, these films were Visconti's L'Innocente, Wender's King of the Road and Wrong Movement, Mesaros' Adoption, Dollon's Les Doigts dans La Tete, and Wajda's Land of Promise. For those films alone, both festivals should be considered successes.

Luchino Visconti's L'Innocente is a masterpiece—not only the Rhinoceros last film, but also one of his finest. Based on the novel by D'Annunzio, a counter-taken from the De Maupassant short story, The Confession, Visconti has created a superb psychological study of a man above judgement.

An aristocrat, Tullio Hermil (Giancarlo Giannini), is captivated by the lover's absence. Tullio finds his passion rekindled, especially after making love with her in their villa. When informed that Giuliana is pregnant, however, Tullio cannot reconcile his intellectual approval of her affair with his emotional disappointment. Suddenly, the child will separate them and destroy their love, he argues that Giuliana is a slut and should be aborted. She refuses and Tullio takes it upon himself to find a solution. He leaves the newly-born child on a window-sill to freeze, and the child dies (though independently of his action). Giuliana in turn pursues him and professes her love for the writer—now dead in Africa. Tullio takes the 'only' choice and shoots himself in front of his mistress, who in the last shot of the film is seen scurrying away:

Teresa runs out from the drive from the villa. In one hand, she holds up the skirt of her splendid evening gown.

"It is a shame."

In changing the original ending of the D'Annunzio novel, Visconti has revealed much about his approach to the subject. D'Annunzio's hero does not commit suicide because, as Visconti has said, "he was the embryo of his [D'Annunzio's] superman type." However, "a superman today fears neither the law of man nor God, and ends up killing himself."

The film works on two main levels: the plot level, which is exciting and satisfying in itself, and the psychological study of motivation. The second is ultimately the more interesting and important because it raises the question of why Tullio should play with a child's life as if it were a game in a grand scheme of things. It is not a question of Tullio being so crazed by jealousy that he uses the baby as a last resort, rather it is one of how calmly he intellectuallyizes an emotional situation from a 'loathed' stance. Thus, Tullio's act is proof to himself that he can do such a thing and expect no scorn — no one, after all, has the right to judge him; he is above law, above man.

Interestingly, Visconti has for the first time (in the films I have seen] completely solved the problem of a camera and an actor's accompaniment. In nearly all his major films, Visconti has used the classical works of Bresson, Verdi, Proust, or Molière, etc. Invariably this has not been successful (with the exception of the first film of L'Innocente). The only film that closely rivalled the Visconti was Wim Wender's King of the Road, but I cannot even begin to describe the magic of it.

The film opens with Bruno (Rudiger Vogler) shaving in the cabin of his projectionist truck, beside the Elbe River. Suddenly, out of silence, a Volkswagen motor wafts into the room:

1. From the final script of L'Innocente, by S. Cecchi d'Amico, E. Medioli and L. Visconti.

2. The music room sequences, with the brilliant red wallpaper and roses, look, as one critic has commented, as if Visconti was showing us how he would have made Proust.

Verdi waite in The Leopard), the music lying uneasily alongside the image, flashing into sync at odd moments, but never for long. And this often led to the situation where, as in Senso, one piece of music finishes and within the same shot a new, tonally different piece begins. (The arrival at the gates of Verona is one such example.)

In L'Innocente, however, the score by Franco Mannino (who also scored Visconti's earlier Bellissima) is marvellous, and complements the images to their fullest. As well, the score has been subtly mixed with natural sounds — for example, the way the sound of an encroaching storm is blended with discordant violins over the shot of Giuliana sitting by the fire.

The costumes, again by Piero Tosi, are positively beautiful. The excellence of his dresses could hardly go unnoticed, but his uniforms often do. In L'Innocente, they are perfect, with each line crisp and unfusted.

Similarly, Visconti's attention to decor is notable. The choice of wallpaper, curtains and furnishings, augmented by constant arrays of roses, is careful and sumptuous. The perfection of the image — its framing, its texture — creates an extremely powerful sense of the psychological state in which the characters exist. In the fullest sense, Visconti's characters are part of their environment.

Bruno and Robert re-unite and journey off to the frontier where they bunk down for the night in a shelter. Their relationship is now somewhat strained, and they lash into each other about their sexual tastes. Robert, with devastating accuracy, accuses Bruno of being "dead" because he doesn't need or depend on anyone. Bruno replies by suggesting that his companion probably sounds like a "badly dubbed skin-flic" when he makes love. Next morning Robert is gone and Bruno finds a note on the door: "Everything must change."

The scene cuts to Robert at the station awaiting a train. Once on it, there is a two-shot of Robert and the window, into the corner of which comes Bruno's truck. Both vehicles then merge at a railway crossing, and as the train passes Robert mutters to himself: "Don't think I didn't see you Kamikaze."

The greatness of the film, apart from the honesty of its vision, is that the spell invoked by the opening is unbroken right through till the end where Wenders finishes with a delightfully tongue-in-cheek joke. After having ripped up his schedule, and taken heed of Robert's advice, the camera leaves Bruno and kicks up to the neon sign on the front of a cinema. Most of the letters are broken and all that are left glowing are E N D. Around the corner, are the initials of the cinema, WW.

It is difficult to pinpoint what creates the magic of King of the Road — the music is perfect, so is the photography, and the acting, etc. But, above all else, if the term genius is to be levelled at anyone today, it surely must be Wenders.

As for Wender's Wrong Movement, it was almost as good. This time, Rudiger Vogler's journey across Germany is with the company of several strange travellers: an ex-Nazi, a dumb juggler, an actress, and a melancholy poet. In place of the silences and spare looks of King of the Road, however, Wenders has employed a wordy script from novelist Peter Handke (who also scripted his Goalkeeper's Fear of Penalty). This is not always to advantage, but when given the chance, the visuals create so powerful a mood that all minor failures are somehow irrelevant. For instance, how can one express the joy one feels when watching that incredible sequence on the train when the briefly glimpsed actress is seen disappearing on another? Then, as soon as we rest confident that the scene has ended, "our" train comes to a halt and reverses its direction.
Some of the sequences were too literary, especially those in the castle, but the number of those which were marvellous was overwhelming: the walk up the road, the tracking shots through the city, the climactic scene on the mountain when Rudiger reveals that every step we take is a wrong movement away from that goal to which we keep hoping to reach. A beautiful, poetic film and ample evidence of Wenders' talents.

Bertrand Tavernier’s The Judge and the Assassin is a brilliantly scripted, especially early on, but very poorly directed. The film tells of a battle between a very typical, bourgeois French magistrate and a tramp suspected of murdering young girls. The magistrate (Philippe Noiret) looks upon the case as a chance to prove his intellectual superiority, and hence trick the wily vagrant into a confession. Their duel is often very exciting and contains many inventive dialogues, but it comes to no climax. Instead, Tavernier opts for a political conclusion and points out that thousands of children died in the mines while the law/establishment cared only for seeking revenge on a solitary wrongdoer. This is fair enough, but it is unsatisfying dramatically.

Tavernier: “My film is an affront on two kinds of violence: a mad, destructive, uncontrollable one unconsciously provoked, and a legal, repressive, hidden one emanating from the courts, asylums, hospitals where the unfortunate are ‘treated’, medical experiments, assassinations committed in the factories.” Consequently, the title is ironic and could read “The Judge — both Judge and Assassin!”

An extremely interesting issue raised in Jean Aurencé’s script is the tramp’s fascination with Joan of Arc. This suggests a parallel with Gilles de Rais, and rather firmly places the story within the collective French consciousness — and not merely dismiss it as an odd or unusual occurrence. This link is also strengthened by the numerous references to and from Octave Mirbeau’s works, in particular Garden of Tortures. Given this richness of scripting, why is the film ultimately so barren? The blame appears to lie with Tavernier whose whole concept of direction is an attempt to put Ziomek’s maxim, “that one must live indignant”, into practice. Nearly every scene is mistimed or uneven, and effects take precedence over dramatic unity. And where Tavernier does go for style, he fails — for example, the bad period reconstructions, and his attempts at “gliding” the camera through the mountains. The idea was good, but the mountain breezes are so strong that the resultant images are very bumpy.

A much more successful film on a similar theme is Christine Lipinska’s Je Suis Pierre Riviere.

In Land of Promise, Andrzej Wajda has created the cinematic equivalent of Dicken’s Coketown. His turn of the century city of Lodz is a mass of sprawling, angry slums, and gargantuan mills controlled by a sinister collection of Jews, Germans and Poles. Never has the ugliness or corruption of a city been so powerfully portrayed, a city where being inhuman is the ticket to survival; from the smirking money-lenders to the depraved industrialists who drag innocents from the factory floors for their own perverse pleasures.

Part of Wajda’s genius in creating this cesspool is his controlled use of the wide-angle lens. For example, the tracking shot through the slums as the camera sways from side to side. The most dramatic use, however, is in the final sequence when a rock crashes through the board-room window and lies spinning in front of the camera amid a scatter of broken glass. Wajda cuts briefly away to the outraged reaction among the gathered mill owners, and then back to the rock — still spinning.

Noiret’s (Stephane Audran) is extremely moving. But it comes to no climax. Instead, Taver­nier opts for a political conclusion and points out that thousands of children died in the mines while the law/establishment cared only for seeking revenge on a solitary wrongdoer. This is fair enough, but it is unsatisfying dramatically.

Claude Sautet’s Vincent, Francois, Paul et les Autres was notable for its sympathetic portrait of the business difficulties of an engineer, Vincent (Yves Montand). Each new difficulty is met with an anguish we easily understand, and his last-bid meeting with his ex-wife (Stephane Audran) is extremely moving. There is an unspoken bond between them, that of two people who know each other too well — though Vincent tends to deceive himself about this. The resignation and sadness of Audran’s face momentarily sparks the otherwise placid film to life, and although she has only a minor part, she completely steals the show.

The other characters — and there are many, including Francois (Michel Piccoli), a doctor who is having problems with his wife, and Paul (Serge Reggiani) the disgruntled writer — all failed to in­volve me. However, Jean Boffety’s erratic pastel photography and Philippe Sarde’s nicely melodic score (as in Souvenirs d’en France) make the film at least pleasant entertainment. It is anno­ying, though, that Sautet still feels bound to over-fragment his plots, almost as if he is trying to prove that the New Wave didn’t leave him behind.

Krzysztof Zanussi’s The Balance was disappointing, both as a film and as a continuation of the style unsuccessfully adopted by him for his earlier film, Illumination. In The Balance, Zanussi has created a confusion of editing and plot development, and has integrated the worst of influences from his U.S. experience (The Catamount Killing) — a lush and sentimental music score. This stylistic frenzy is, I feel, quite at tension with Zanussi’s essentially slow-moving and subtle humanism.
The best example of this tension is the scene where Marta is trampolining at the sports centre with her lover. With her one senses that for the first time she can see the possibility of a freedom apart from her husband. Though she later rejects this, it is still a moment of great joy. Consequently, Marta trampolines higher and higher without fear, her face radiant with happiness. A static medium-shot (with tilts) could have covered this perfectly. Instead, Zanussi cuts at least 30 times, each shot lasting less than a second and having no unity with the next. A little score also plays remorselessly. Sadly, all exclamation is lost, and a moment of great audience empathy and understanding is turned into one of alienation. Similarly at the end with Marta's return to her husband. Maja Komorowska's acting is breathtaking, and the scene is potentially one of great emotion, but again all feeling is destroyed by the music score.

Zanussi is a great film director — one need only remember his Structure of Crystals, Family Life or Behind the Wall — and it is to be hoped he can resolve this stylistic contradiction in his work.

Lautaro Murua's Little Raoul, in spite of a tendency to over-stress certain issues, is a sensitive depiction of an orphan's struggle to avoid detention. Her relationship with the news vendor is very moving, particularly in the scene where he — as he inevitably had to — makes a sexual demand on her. Their arrangement turns sour, not out of anger, but out of disappointment that he could not avoid doing what he knew would hurt her.

Raoul's flight from the city ends in a desolate beach — an over-wrought, step-by-step collapse on a beach. What does work well though is her accidental discovery of the excessively grand beach houses of the rich. The contrast with the slums she lives in is obvious, but because it is left unstressed (there has been no reference to slums in the film), Raoul's flight is really only a question of how long she can move, particularly in the scene where she checks the fish bowl, while in the last it lies shattered on the floor. This is where Bjorkman's film critic is evident. The ending is also very effective — Monika dissolving into the sterile white wall behind her.

Satyajit Ray's The Middleman was for me a decided improvement on his last festival entry, Distant Thunder. Here, the story of a young man's corruption into the world of business is done with great bellicacy and humour. And even as Ray strives for the blackest of satire, the human-ness of the characters is what comes through.

The best scene, in fact, is when Somnath's friend instructs him in the art of business management. Though we are hardly asked to agree with his attitude, he is the most lovable of rogues. And that is probably Ray's greatness. Often I have felt it is the small touches, those gentle glances aside to human foibles, that make his best films work.

Where the film does pall is in the over-extended build-up to a climax everyone knows is coming. The film is also hampered by extremely poor black and white processing.

Contrary to most, I found Jean-Jacques Andrien's The Son of Amir is Dead quite rivetting. The film opens with a dazzling pick-pocket sequence on a subway train, a voice-over describing what is or should be happening, though we see nothing that matches this explanation. Is Pierre a liar or just a lover of Bresson films?

The journey to Tunisia, to look for the relatives of his 'dead' partner in crime, is both naturalistic and lyrical. The almost motionless life-style there overcomes him as much as it does us, and Pierre finds that the ready answers he was hoping for are not to be found. Only the graves of those killed in the French-Algerian war have any meaning.

Paul (Serge Reggiani), the stagnated writer, and Francois (Michel Piccoli), the doctor with marital problems, in Claude Sautet's Vincents, Francois, Paul et les Autres.

The German, Max Baum (Andrzej Seweryn), after the fire that has destroyed his mill. Andrzej Wajda's explosive Land of Promise.
The young lovers, Anna and Sandor, in Marta Meszaros' beautiful Hungarian film, Adoption.

I had been looking forward to Walerian Borowczyk's Story of Sin, but it started only 10 minutes after the Visconti and I continually found myself drifting back into it. What I did manage to assimilate, however, suggested that Borowczyk's spark of wit, or audacity, is losing its direction, and his incessant cutting to mechanical gadgets has merely become dull. The ending also failed to come together, and what could have been a moment of great emotion simply trailed off disinterestedly.

The film did contain several breathtakingly clever moments though, and the seduction of the nobleman — with the ingenious theft of the letters — is a scene of comic genius.

Nico Naldini's Fascista was a two-hour documentary record of the rise of Fascism in Italy from October 24, 1922, to June 10, 1940. Compiled from old newsreels, it naturally concentrates on Mussolini and his regime, but contains magnificant footage of, for example, the landing in 1940. On that occasion Mussolini's demonstrations of gymnastics and weaponry rival those in Riefenstahl's Olympia. Unfortunately, the film had only a brief English commentary and the newsworthiness, including all of Mussolini's speeches, was in Italian and unsubtitled. Consequently, the majority of the film was, to me, largely incomprensible. But the power of the images, especially those of the bravura performance of Mussolini, did manage to compensate for the lack of translation and at the same time hold one's interest.

Bahram Beiza'i's The Stranger and The Fog is essentially over-directed melodrama. It takes the old theme of a stranger entering a peaceful outback town and by his very presence indirectly wreaking havoc, but attempts no variations on it. Instead, Bahram Beiza'i seems intent on incorporating as many foreign influences as possible into the traditional folk-lore of Iran. The influence of Kurosawa is very evident, especially with the peasants dashing around, weapon in hand, screaming at full lung. But this energetic madness effecttively destroys the final confrontation, because all tension and drama has been well wrung dry by then. Believability is also breached by the 'model' in the lead — she is totally unconvinving as a peasant.

However, it is the interweaving of cultures that is most disturbing, as it not only dilutes and debases the indigenous legends, but also strips the film in a stylistic no-man's-land. (Another recent example is Kurosawa's unfortunate Dersu Uzala, an American-style film made in the Soviet Union by a Japanese director.)

Theodor Angelopoulos' O Thessas is mannerism gone mad, the camera inanely moving across a landscape of sporadic interest. With staggering regularity, the camera comes to a halt, tilts or pans on to an empty space and then films this emptiness while the actors scramble off-screen to regain their new positions and once again enter at funeral pace. Undoubtedly Angelopoulos' changes of period within a single shot are very clever — though his period design is often inaccurate — but all subtilely ends there.

One example of the superficial level at which Angelopoulos tends to operate is the marriage between the Greek girl and the American soldier. To suggest that the influx of American 'culture' is destroying Greek traditions, Angelopoulos has a piece of American jazz drown out the traditional Greek wedding song.

Nana Mchelidze's The First Swallow is a gently humorous tale of a Georgian soccer team's rise to local prominence and ultimate defeat at the hands of some British sailors. The matches were energetically shot, though the editing occasionally made things confusing. The touch of romance is nicely handled, as is the single-mindedness of the players and the troubles this attitude causes them.

The main problem with the film is its direction — it never gives one confidence that the direction one is travelling in is the correct one. This is particularly evident in the final shot of the film, where, after the players have stopped at the water's edge, the camera cranes upwards, tilting down uneasily to compensate the framing. Once at the top though, it cranes down again as if to prove the pointlessness of the entire shot.

Guilio Paradisi's Slum Boy was a curious hybrid of styles, and as a result didn't really quite jell. There are many good moments (particularly in the relationship of the boy and his girlfriend; and the robbery of the office-cabinet), but the pace is erratic and the ending, like in Story of Sin, lacks any kind of punch, the irony well and truly lost.

I found Peter Refn's Violets are Blue slightly disappointing. This light-hearted look at a break-up between a woman bent on liberation and a man unable to cope with it, manages to entertain, but the plot, often skates perilously thin. With Wives, however, it is almost unique in its use of humour in the face of mounting demagogy.

One scene that works particularly well is the long argument at the end, though the subsequent suicide of the lover is merely pointless. The lesbian sequences also verge on silliness, but here the miscalculation is to have not taken them seriously enough. As they are, they are too off-hand and tend to look the standard fare of the Scandanavian skin-flint, which I am sure was not Refn's intention.

Per Blom's Mother's House suffered from not exploiting the obviousness of its ending and the film merely plods along with Petter as he stumbles towards his inevitable fate.

So, when he finally seduced his mother, the audience cheered — it would have been difficult for them to have reacted differently. The long, meaningful look simply took their toll; a pity as the film starts well with the arrival in town and the girl's disappearance into the night, her taxi like a reticent glow-worm.

I disliked strongly Lina Wertmuller's Seven Beauties. It is a silly, vulgar film, over-wrought and devoid of directional strength. It is also, I suggest, time that wallowing in the atrocities of World War 2 be given a rest. After all it is 31 years and several hundreds of anti-war films ago.

Scene from Borowczyk's occasionally brilliant Story of Sin.
The Fifth International Festival of Fantastique and Science Fiction films was held last April in Paris. It took place for the second year running in the enormous and prestigious, if a mile anonymous, auditorium of the Centre International before a vast and enthusiastic audience with a mite unorthodox, if not unconstructive inclining. (Previously the festival was housed in a smaller, more anonymous venue.)

Some 30 features were shown, about 20 of these in competition with the rest spread over a mini-Japanese retrospective, a series of information screenings and a homage to the American producer/director Dan Curtis around whom a very Gallic cult is currently coagulating. The festival which has grown very much from a fan celebration, aims to present something of a panorama of recent production and see itself acting as a springboard for the further distribution of those films it champions in France.

None of the competition films had been shown in France before, and rather surprisingly to anyone who finds U.S. television series inaccessible, neither had such television episodes as The Norliss Tapes, which made up a fairly sizeable chunk of the program. In fact, given the obvious sizeable potential audience and the welcome seriousness and interest French critics tend to display towards this area of cinema, as opposed to the general disdain in which it is held by Anglo-American critics, the apparent ineptness of local distributors comes as a surprise.

In a way, the development of this festival would seem to presage what currently looks like becoming a massive rethrust of interest in the area of science fiction and fantasy cinema. Or, at least, a massive attention to the part of Hollywood to mine an area opened up by the disaster syndrome, Science fiction, for instance, a genre notorious (one or two exceptions apart) for coping on and even thriving on shoestring budgets, is becoming an eminently bankable in a way unthinkable even five years ago. And for the sixth festival, Schlockoff already has secured George Lucas' Star Wars, Guy Hamilton's Superman, Steven Spielberg's Close Encounters of the Third Kind and Donald Cammell's Demon Seed.

If this year's "panorama" was a little patchy—the festival was as heavily biased towards U.S. and British products as in previous years, though all were shown in their original, unsubtitled versions—it nevertheless afforded a welcome opportunity to reflect on current interpretation of some classic themes in fantasy cinema, as well as drawing attention to a handful of films of uncompromising brilliance, films which would also, one would have thought, have rewarded distribution. Chief among these, and a film that fairly outshone everything else shown, was Messiah of Evil directed and produced by the scriptwriting team of Gloria Katz and Willard Huyck. The film was first shown at the 1974 Cannes Film Festival under the title The Second Coming and unaccountably, casually dismissed by its Variety reviewer, thereafter sinking without trace.

Messiah of Evil reworks the classic theme of the intrusion of an innocent party into a small town that is discovered to be in the grip of a malignant infection. Here, the infection is a physical one and the intruding protagonist, a beautiful and unaccountably alluring Arletty (Marianne Hill), who arrives in Point Dune—"Daeder than hell" warns a lugubrious gas station attendant—to discover what has happened to her artist father whose letters have inexplicably ceased. She finds the town disturbingly remote, her father has mysteriously disappeared, leaving behind only a haunted, bleak, modernist mural (brilliantly integrated by the directors with the locale—sequences) and a diary of literal, physical disintegration.

Messiah of Evil does everything right. Opening with a scene in which notions of shelter and safety are shattered by a gratuitous and unexplained killing, the film then launches dramatically into an interior monologue of shocking directness which it plays off against a nightmareish, distorted shot of a corridor in a mental home (shades of Fuller's Shock Corridor) and which announces the classic concerns of the film—"They won't believe me!" a woman's voice cries—and the film's graphic deviation from them. Huyck and Katz meticulously see the woman's lifelines one by one until the horror discern in the pages of her father's diary gradually inexplicably dishomology with her own experience. The suspense is there from the beginning and heightened by the details by which the psychic corruption becomes manifest (the reddening of the moon), the character remarks of a group of people—like local residents staring fixedly at the moon with a Carrol-like sense of the disconcerting quality of language used ("Jaw's a trickle", the gradual loss of physical sensation in the body, the unquenchable bleeding from the orifices, the sight of blood) in the heroine's mind and unexplained disappearance.

The most horrific sequences—one shot, without distortion, in the almost deserted supermarket in which Arletty attempts to take refuge, the other in a cinema which gradually and sinisterly fills around our unconscious protagonist—are modeled in the mining of the ordinary and everyday to horrific effect. Wisely, the scriptwriter plays with a note of anxiety and alienation without attempting to offer any explicit explanation. While setting the film in a society turning with inescapable single-mindedness, in upon itself, Cinematically literate, the film's reference points include as well Fuller, Antonioni and Cammell-Roeg's Performance. Visually faultless, Messiah of Evil uses classic techniques of displacement to play on fear and anxiety, and at the same time manages to re-invigorate them in a startlingly inventive way. The eagerly awaits further films from Katz and Huyck.

If the already widely shown Death Race 2000, which took the prize this year, works best as an extended and effective black gag, the same director Paul Bartel's Private Parts, even in the heavily censored version shown in the festival, proved something of a revelation. The film pulls a notable coup by luring its plot on the simple, rather Hitchcockian ploy of having its protagonist slip via her personal obsession of voyeurism, an obsession which by definition the cinema audience share through a kind of looking glass into what might seem a peeper's paradise—a seedy residential hotel full of quantity weird clients—but which turns out to be a multi-layered trap in which finally the spier herself is spied on. Bartel shows he is able to handle both scenes of everyday directness, such as the introductory sequence in which Cheryl is caught secretly observing her room-mate make love with its direct, unacted feel about it, as well as those aspects of the film which impinge allusively on the world of the Frankenstein myth. The "monster" of this particular fable proves to be the hermaphroditic photographer George, a "creature" deprived of normal parenthood and childhood who makes a living selling photographs to The Prying Eye and who Bartel creates as a character of quite tragic dimensions.

Kenji Misumi's Baby Cart at the River Styx was notable for an intense single-mindedness distilled even more relentlessly away from any possibility of digression. The film is another episode in the continuing popular Japanese series devoted to the exploits of the samurai, Itto (or the Wolff), and his intant son, Diagoro (hence the "baby cart" or pram of the title). A wonderfully monolithic and uncompromising film, it carries Itto's in-
tenderness and virtual wordlessness into its structure. Exposition is kept to a bare minimum.

The film follows Itto and his son's progress through a feudal Japan torn by unexplained clan feuds, a world our characters enter and leave at the same measured pace. Itto's motivation is explained as mercenary, yet he seems almost beyond need of money. Tomisaburo Wakayama, as it seems, is the only possible incarnation of the character, in a performance that has no recourse to the personalities of a lifetime, is unerringly stark with the monolithic quality of the film as a whole. Incredibly, the film shares with King Hu's The Valiant Ones, a central motif of hidden danger.

There is an extraordinary sequence in which one mercenary rakes from the concealing sand the scalp of his still living war victim—a gunnery with a burning ship. Itto and Diagoro seating himself close to her, with the characters enter and leave at the same time.

The Valiant Ones, produced by the Hong Kong Eng-Wan company and directed by Wong Sing Loy, certainly proved to be one of the most effective films in the festival. Devil Crows is a kind of Chinese reply to The Birds. About a village terrorised by a flock of deadly crows, it is distinguished by the conviction with which it suggests the psychic terror that underlies folklore. Plans are taken to separate the unnaturalness of the flock's presence and the behaviour of normal birds; and, as attempts to ward off attacks fail, Wong Sing Loy builds a sense of apocalyptic panic which he is able to express fabulously. It separates the consciousness of the films of these two directors. Misumi's doesn't belong to Hu's at all, calculatedly dodging all notions of development or progression — it leaves the stage exactly as it came in. Misumi's characters' speeches often have a recitative-like quality asking no response. For example, a man falls dying, blood escaping in a fountain from his severed artery, yet his words describe his delight in the sound of blood—"like the wind" when a head is severed from a neck — and his only reservation is "a pity this time it had to be my own".

Misumi punctuates his tale with a number of short sequences which, by contrast, glue with a beguiling intimacy: the samurai bathing with his son, or the shot of the two of them seated silent gazing into the dying flames of a fire. Or, most strange of all, and a sequence that seems to encapsulate something of the strange distinctiveness of the film, the scene where, after escaping from a burning ship, Itto and Diagoro seek shelter in a hut only to discover a woman survivor there before them. As she cowers in terror Itto attacks her, tearing the clothes from her body. However, the scene ends, not with the expected brutal rape, but with Itto undressing and setting himself close to her, with the child, also naked, placed between them for warmth. The sequence is allowed to develop sideways, as it were, to

The film has moments of great visual power as the camera pursues the sinisterly scurrying form of the wounded bird, or quietly catches the crow's shadow falling over a room, and there is an acutely tuned performance from Shin Chik as the bird-catcher.

The screening of this Hong Kong Chinese film alongside Shaw Brothers Toho-scene The Super Infra Man (directed by Hua Shen) confirmed suspensions that the richest vein of Chinese cinema comes from those films which take some trouble to anchor themselves firmly within Chinese culture. It is surely a retrograde step to give any stamp of approval to films like this, for they, given the studio dominated production situation in Hong Kong, effectively strait-jacket directors capable of much more interesting work. Devil Crows, on the other hand, which reduced an initially hooting audience (taken aback by the Chinese ballad that introduced the film) to attentive and horrified silence and gave me, for one, a highly disturbed night, may well prove a commercially viable proposition.

To stay with the East for a moment, the Japanese The Lake of Dracula, directed by Michio Yamamoto, proved a good deal less interesting than it had sounded, although it finally did yield up a satisfyingly gothic death which more or less placated an impatient audience. The film, about a woman traumatised by an encounter with Dracula at the age of five, suffers from rather laboured psychologising. Nevertheless, the flashback to the child with her pet dog being led on by an unseen force towards the fatal house is effective enough: the dog is shown scampering up an invisible path (skyward at one point). And the explanation for the whole event and for Dracula's residence in Japan — a descendent of Dracula learning of his appalling heritage burns himself in darkest Japan only to find his son reverting to type spurred on by unrequited love for a child — has a certain poetic irony.

A retrospective screening of Goke Body Snatcher From Hell was only saved from utter dullness by the mask-like features of Hideko Ko as the killer-victim penetrated by an ectoplasm-like substance through a suggestively labial opening that appears in his forehead. The heavily emphasised references to Japan's nuclear history (newspaper footage, etc.) would have been better left at the level of suggestion, rather than being indulgently deployed in lieu, it seems, of the director being able to work up much excitement by any other means.

In this context, a fairly solid selection of British horror films, which included Freddie Francis' well nigh faultless The Creeping Flesh and Kevin Connor's From Beyond the Grave, a witty and even inspired foray into the omnibus film, impressed with the sheer confidence with which the genre circumscribing the central struggle of good and evil (which the film articulates) is drawn, and the cumulative power of their mise en scene. There was also a late night screening, by way of tribute, of Seth Holt's The Nanny, a film that grows decisively in stature through the sheer confidence with which the genre circumscribing the central struggle of good and evil (which the film articulates) is drawn, and the cumulative power of their mise en scene. There was also a late night screening, by way of tribute, of Seth Holt's The Nanny, a film that grows decisively in stature through the sheer confidence with which the genre circumscribing the central struggle of good and evil (which the film articulates) is drawn, and the cumulative power of their mise en scene.
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Restrictive Trade Practices Legislation and the Film Industry: A Postscript or a Major Reform?

by Ransom Stoddard

In a two-part series published in Cinema Papers — issues five and six — contributing editor Antony I. Ginnane examined the exhibition-distribution status quo and, in the light of the Tariff Board and the Trade Practices Act, made some tentative recommendations for reform, drawing on both the U.S. and British experience.

On June 29, 1976, a single commissioner of the Trade Practices Commission, Dr Venturini, rejected an application by the Motion Picture Distributors Association (a trade association of major American importers) for clearance under the provisions of the Act of the standard form of film hire contract between exhibitors and distributors which operate by convention in Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia. (This standard form of contract has been a continuing source of frustration and business difficulty for independent exhibitors, weighted as it is heavily in favour of the distributor.)

Dr Venturini also rejected a clearance application for certain schemes for circuiting films and checking theatres, as well as the "payment of film hire in advance scheme" which the MPDA appropriately use to suppress the incidence of bad debtors in the industry and to inappropriate-ly restrain bona fide negotiation and argument between distributor members and independent exhibitors.

In refusing clearance, the Commissioner issued a 92-page judgement which effectively undermined the foundation of the MPDA.

The trade response to the decision was as might be expected. Solicitors for the MPDA, in a series of press releases, have strenuously objected to the judgment. MPDA solicitors appeared to object to the fact that the Commissioner's examination of the clearances applications was as detailed and complete as it was. Beneath a veiled suggestion that the MPDA was conducting a witch-hunt into the film distribution industry, they claimed that irrelevant matters were taken into consideration in making the judgement, and that an undertaking given them by members of the Commission's staff, namely that no decision would be made without the MPDA being given further opportunity to place submissions before the Commission, had been breached.

At the same time, a series of press releases and letters to the editor emanated from the MPDA, attempting on the one hand to criticize Dr Venturini's decision, and on the other to suggest that the standard form of contract was in fact a desired method of trading by both exhibitors and distributors.

Predictably, the trade paper Australian Cinema, the official organ of the Exhibitors' Associations, backed the MPDA claim. Many independent exhibitors, prominent independent exhibitors, Philip Doyle and Jack Payne, both of whom had many disagreements with the MPDA, put the matter in a different perspective.

The Commission appeared to temporarily bow to the MPDA by agreeing to allow Dr Venturini's ruling to be reviewed by the Full Bench of the Commission within two to three weeks of issuing the original decision.

At the same time, a series of press releases started to operate throughout Australia as from 1 June 1976 and continued to operate throughout Australia as from 1 September 1967. The system is one whereby, if an exhibitor fails in arrears in the payment of the hiring fee from a film, he is placed on a list, according to a certain system, for the purpose of screening. The list is naturally going to see that their best pictures are shown in the best cinemas in many areas. Many other cinemas are owned by large circuits which are the most powerful customers of the producers and distributors. It is understandable that, when choices must be made regarding the showing of films, the producer-distributor groups will favour cinemas owned by large circuits, the disadvantage of which they cannot afford. Ordinary commercial prudence demands that such special interests coincide: the producer owned or circuit cinema is the obvious choice for an important first-run. But this is not always so: rarely, an independently owned cinema of first class amenity is preferred for first-run to circuit cinemas of lesser attraction.

The system is "perfected" by the provisions of Clause 44 of the Victoria and Tasmania Clause 46 of the South Australia — and New South Wales — contracts.

(i) Concluding his decision, Dr Venturini considers specific elements of the MPDA's clearance applications:

19.7. There are provisions in the standard form contracts for payment in advance: Clause 44 of the Victoria and Tasmania (Clause 46 of the South Australia — and New South Wales — contracts).

The "The Distributor may from time to time by notice require hire payable at a flat rate for a film in respect of which his claims or the claims of its agents have been satisfied or determined (as aforesaid in writing) by the Distributor to be paid in advance or at any time earlier that is set out in the next preceding clause PROVIDED THAT such notice shall not be given to the Exhibitor unless he, or shall have been, in default, under clause 43."

Payment in advance has been operating for a long time, but has been "improved" with the introduction of the "Payment in advance" system which was agreed to by the Exhibitor's meeting on June 1976 and started to operate throughout Australia as from 1 September 1967. The system is one whereby, if an exhibitor fails in arrears in the payment of the hiring fee from a film, he is placed on a list, according to a certain system, for the purpose of screening. The list is naturally going to see that their best pictures are shown in the best cinemas in many areas. Many other cinemas are owned by large circuits which are the most powerful customers of the producers and distributors. It is understandable that, when choices must be made regarding the showing of films, the producer-distributor groups will favour cinemas owned by large circuits, the disadvantage of which they cannot afford. Ordinary commercial prudence demands that such special interests coincide: the producer owned or circuit cinema is the obvious choice for an important first-run. But this is not always so: rarely, an independently owned cinema of first class amenity is preferred for first-run to circuit cinemas of lesser attraction.

11. The State of the Film Industry

Cinemas differ greatly in size, amenity, location and 'drawing power' in general. Film producers and distributors, with expensive investments to recoup, are naturally going to see that their best pictures are shown in the best cinemas in many areas. Many other cinemas are owned by large circuits which are the most powerful customers of the producers and distributors. It is understandable that, when choices must be made regarding the showing of films, the producer-distributor groups will favour cinemas owned by large circuits, the disadvantage of which they cannot afford. Ordinary commercial prudence demands that such special interests coincide: the producer owned or circuit cinema is the obvious choice for an important first-run. But this is not always so: rarely, an independently owned cinema of first class amenity is preferred for first-run to circuit cinemas of lesser attraction.
theatre checking used to be carried out openly to the extent that the delegate of the distributors would stand used and that only one roll of tickets was used at any time. This was for the purposes of the Distributor or any person authorised by the manager of the Exhibitor to have such access and right as is mentioned in paragraph (iii). The Distributor or by law. The checking of theatres.

The word itself, in the present context rings hollow, because of the claim that they have further submissions that the Trade Practices Commission is prepared to receive within three weeks from now any further submissions the applicants wish to make in this matter and as a Full Commission to reconsider in the light of the notices for clearance.

To the Trade Practices Commission.

To the Trade Practices Commission.

Yours truly,

DAWSON WALDRON

To the Trade Practices Commission.

Notice is hereby given that Cinema International Corporation Pty. Limited, Columbia Pictures Pty. Limited, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pty. Limited, Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation Australia Limited, United Artists (Australia) Pty. Limited, Warner Bros. Pictures Inc. is not prepared to proceed with a settlement of the applications for clearance of agreements and arrangements in relation to the exhibition-distribution industry may be in the air.

The Commission is now invited by the applicant to accept and conform to the decision of the Commission and the publicity which the decision has received is compromised.

We refer to your telex of the 14th July 1976 and the decision of the Commission and the publicity which the decision has received is compromised.

The hearing in the consideration of the applications. Having regard to our submissions of the 9th July 1976 this is not a reasonable procedure and the applicants could not be expected to accept it. The applicants believe that they have been left with no alternative but to terminate the agreements and withdraw the applications.

A resolution was passed on the 4th day of August 1976 terminating all of the agreements and providing for all other parties to be notified of the termination. A formal withdrawal of all applications is attached.
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**CROCODILE***

**Director**............ Terry Bourke
**Executive Producers**..... James G. Jenner
**Associate Producer**...... Walter Stackpool
**Music**........... Bob Young
**Stunt Co-ordinator**.... Grant Page
**Running Time**... 110 mins
**Budget**........ $900,000
**Synopsis:** Adventure story, set in 1930, about a crocodile hunter who is driven by a lifelong passion for hunting crocodiles.

**LASSIE'S REEF***

**Director**........... Andrew Vial
**Associate Producers**.... cliff Green, Peter Watson
**Production Manager**... Peter Welsh
**Running Time**... 97 mins
**Budget**........ $500,000
**Synopsis:** A love story set in a Victorian seaside town in 1852, it begins with the Australian Forces in Gallipoli.

**DEATHCATCHERS***

**Director**........... Brian Trenchard-Smith
**Associate Producers**.... Lee Rogers, Mark Bushby
**Running Time**... 90 mins
**Budget**........ $1,000,000
**Synopsis:** A story of developing relationships among a group of criminals who are on the run.

**THE FLAME STONE***

**Director**........... Andrew Vial
**Associate Producers**.... Tony Tegg, Peter Watson
**Running Time**... 90 mins
**Budget**........ $600,000
**Synopsis:** A dramatic adventure story set in the late 1800s.

**STORM BOY***

**Director**........... Henri Safran
**Associate Producers**.... Paul Maguire, Dana Scott
**Running Time**... 90 mins
**Budget**........ $500,000
**Synopsis:** A story of a young boy who learns to survive in the harsh Australian outback.

**THE ELECTRIC CANDLE***

**Director**........... Andrew Vial
**Associate Producers**.... Tony Tegg, Peter Watson
**Running Time**... 90 mins
**Budget**........ $600,000
**Synopsis:** A family drama set in the early 1900s.

**THE IRISHMAN***

**Director**........... Donald Crombie
**Associate Producers**.... Tony Tegg, Peter Watson
**Running Time**... 90 mins
**Budget**........ $600,000
**Synopsis:** A historical drama set in the late 1800s.

**BREAK OF DAY***

**Director**........... Ken Hannam
**Associate Producers**.... Tony Tegg, Peter Watson
**Running Time**... 90 mins
**Budget**........ $600,000
**Synopsis:** A dramatic story set in the 1800s.

**MRS ELIZA FRASER***

**Director**........... Tim Burstall
**Associate Producers**.... Lee Rogers, Mark Bushby
**Running Time**... 90 mins
**Budget**........ $1,000,000
**Synopsis:** A historical drama set in the early 1800s.

**THE PICTURE SHOW MAN***

**Director**........... Tim Burstall
**Associate Producers**.... Lee Rogers, Mark Bushby
**Running Time**... 90 mins
**Budget**........ $1,000,000
**Synopsis:** A story of a man who must confront his past.
Above Left: Robert Betties and friend in the SAFDC production, The Fourth Wish.

Above Right: A thrilling stunt involving a dive off a 13 metre waterfall. Jim Sharman's Summer of Secrets.
Above: Dennis Hopper in the title role of Morgan. Philippe Mora’s Mad Dog Morgan.
Above: Max Gillies in Soft Soap, a Horizontal Films Production.
PRODUCTION SURVEY

FILM AUSTRALIA

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN FILM CORPORATION

CHANGES IN THE OFFICE

A PERSONAL MATTER WILL YOU JOIN

Director ..........................................Keith Gow
Distributor ......................................Film Australia
Production Company .................................................. Film Australia
Producer .......................................................... Don Murray
Associate Producer .............................. Ron Hannam
Production Manager ....................... Garald Lea
Production Co-ordinator ...................... Su Doning
Script ........................................................... Keith Gow
Photography ............................................. Ross King
Camera Operator ....................................... Tony Galia
Colour Process .................................... Eastmancolor 7247
Editor ...................................................... Ian Weissen
Continuity ............................................ Lyn Galley
Sound Recorder ......... Salt Lake Station
Mixer ...................................................... Julian Ellingworth
Gaffer ............................................................. Charlie Donald
Running Time ...................................... 3x10 mins
Gauge ..................................................... 16 mm
Progress ................................................ In Release
Synopsis: The language behaviour of 12 year-olds.

MOTORCYCLE SAFETY

Directors ........................................ Peter Johnson, Tony Hansen
Distributor ...................................... Film Australia
Production Company .................................................. Film Australia
Producer .......................................................... Tom Manfield
Script ...................................................... Karl McPhee
Photography ....................................... Andrew Fraser
Colour Process .................................... Eastmancolor 7247
Editor ...................................................... Mark Waters
Sound Recorder ..................................... Carlo Tarchi
Running Time ...................................... 20 mins
Gauge ..................................................... 16 mm
Progress ................................................ In Release
Synopsis: Short films on the aspects of motorcycle safety.

ART

Director .......................................... Justin Milne
Distributor ...................................... S.A.F.C.
Production Company .................................................. S.M Productions
Executive Producer .......................... Malcolm Otten
Producer .......................................................... Malcolm Smith
Production Manager ....................... David London
Screenplay ............................................. David Tiley
Photography ............................................ Andrew Fraser
Sound Recorder .................................. Soundtrack Australia
Mixer ...................................................... George Hart
Running Time ...................................... 20 mins
Gauge ..................................................... 16 mm
Progress ................................................ In Release
Synopsis: Demonstrates the Ley dryland farming system used in South Australia, and its results.

FOOD FROM THE RELUCTANT EARTH

Director .......................................... Justin Milne
Distributor ...................................... S.A.F.C.
Production Company .................................................. S.M Productions
Executive Producer .......................... Malcolm Otten
Producer .......................................................... Malcolm Smith
Production Manager ....................... David London
Screenplay ............................................. David Tiley
Photography ............................................ Andrew Fraser
Sound Recorder .................................. Soundtrack Australia
Mixer ...................................................... George Hart
Running Time ...................................... 20 mins
Gauge ..................................................... 16 mm
Progress ................................................ In Release
Synopsis: The scars made by quarry operators on the Adelaide hills face zone are of concern to environmentalists. This film presents the viewpoint of all parties associated with the issue.

INTEGRATION

Director .......................................... Justin Milne
Distributor ...................................... S.A.F.C.
Production Company .................................................. S.M Productions
Executive Producer .......................... Malcolm Otten
Producer .......................................................... Malcolm Smith
Screenplay ............................................. David Tiley
Photography ............................................ Andrew Fraser
Sound Recorder .................................. Soundtrack Australia
Mixer ...................................................... George Hart
Running Time ...................................... 24 mins
Gauge ..................................................... 16 mm
Progress ................................................ In Release
Synopsis: Presenting the present philosophy of the Education Department, that the neighbourhood school should be as many as the children of the neighbourhood as possible.

WATERMAN

Director .......................................... Justin Milne
Distributor ...................................... S.A.F.C.
Production Company .................................................. S.M Productions
Executive Producer .......................... Malcolm Otten
Producer .......................................................... Malcolm Smith
Screenplay ............................................. David Tiley
Photography ............................................ Andrew Fraser
Sound Recorder .................................. Soundtrack Australia
Mixer ...................................................... George Hart
Running Time ...................................... 16 mins
Gauge ..................................................... 16 mm
Progress ................................................ In Release
Synopsis: Waterman, an engaging character dressed in an orange suit, uses supernatural powers to demonstrate the principles behind the management of South Australia's water resources to Doris, an Adelaide housewife.

CHANGES IN THE OFFICE

A PERSONAL MATTER WILL YOU JOIN

Director .......................................... Keith Gow
Distributor ...................................... Film Australia
Production Company .................................................. Film Australia
Producer .......................................................... Don Murray
Associate Producer .............................. Ron Hannam
Production Manager ....................... Garald Lea
Production Co-ordinator ...................... Su Doning
Script ........................................................... Keith Gow
Photography ............................................. Ross King
Camera Operator ....................................... Tony Galia
Colour Process .................................... Eastmancolor 7247
Editor ...................................................... Ian Weissen
Continuity ............................................ Lyn Galley
Sound Recorder ......... Salt Lake Station
Mixer ...................................................... Julian Ellingworth
Gaffer ............................................................. Charlie Donald
Running Time ...................................... 3x10 mins
Gauge ..................................................... 16 mm
Progress ................................................ In Release
Synopsis: A film about two artists living in Mount Gambier and their involvement and interaction within the community.

MIGRANT ENGLISH

Director .......................................... Justin Milne
Distributor ...................................... S.A.F.C.
Executive Producer .......................... Malcolm Smith
Producer .......................................................... Malcolm Smith
Screenplay ............................................. David Tiley
Photography ............................................ Andrew Fraser
Sound Recorder .................................. Soundtrack Australia
Mixer ...................................................... George Hart
Running Time ...................................... 20 mins
Gauge ..................................................... 16 mm
Progress ................................................ In Release
Synopsis: The problem of children whose first language is not English.

ORGANISATION

Director .......................................... Justin Milne
Distributor ...................................... S.A.F.C.
Executive Producer .......................... Malcolm Smith
Producer .......................................................... Malcolm Smith
Screenplay ............................................. David Tiley
Photography ............................................ Andrew Fraser
Sound Recorder .................................. Soundtrack Australia
Mixer ...................................................... George Hart
Running Time ...................................... 20 mins
Gauge ..................................................... 16 mm
Progress ................................................ In Release
Synopsis: The aim of the film is to sell the concept of participative management to headmasters and to give some idea of the necessary skills involved in implementing it.

STICKS AND STONES . . .

Director .......................................... Max Pepper
Distributor ...................................... S.A.F.C.
Executive Producer .......................... Malcolm Otten
Producer .......................................................... Malcolm Smith
Screenplay ............................................. David Tiley
Photography ............................................ Andrew Fraser
Sound Recorder .................................. Soundtrack Australia
Mixer ...................................................... George Hart
Running Time ...................................... 20 mins
Gauge ..................................................... 16 mm
Progress ................................................ In Release
Synopsis: Demonstrates the Ley dryland farming system used in South Australia, and its results.

Synopsis:

FOOD FROM THE RELUCTANT EARTH

Synopsis:

INTEGRATION

Synopsis:

WATERMAN

Synopsis:

Synopsis:

Synopsis:

Synopsis:

Synopsis:

Synopsis:
Andrew Pike

In his day, Herc McIntyre was possibly the best known and most widely respected ‘showman’ in the Australian film trade. For 40 years he served as managing director of Universal Pictures in Australia and was the constant exception to cries that the ‘yes-men’ of American companies were stifling Australian initiatives, especially in producing films.

As historical perspective on earlier decades of the Australian film industry improves, McIntyre emerges clearly as a most remarkable figure, perhaps the most consistent and effective patron of Australian film production that the industry has ever seen.

Born in 1890 in Sydney, Hercules Christian McIntyre got his first job as an office boy in a shipping company, earning five shillings a week. His two brothers, Gus and Hughie (actually Augustus and Hughlyn, though they never answered to these names), were working on the Panama Canal construction when an attempt was made to naturalize all of the workers as Americans. They resigned and went north.

Passing through New York, they witnessed the enormous popularity of the early Biograph machines and invested in one which they brought back to Australia. They toured the bush of New South Wales in a horse-drawn wagon, but failed to make a living. However, with backing from an aunt, they set up a tent in Walker St., North Sydney, and began screening films there. Here, years younger than his brothers, worked as cashier, collecting the money each night and keeping the books. Gradually the careers of the brothers developed with the young industry; Herc became a film buyer, both for McIntyre’s Pictures and for the city theatres of the famous Senora Spencer, and later he joined Paramount as a salesman; Hughie went on to form Haymarket Theatres Ltd (now part of the Greater Union Organization), and Gus set up Broadway Theatres and developed it into a small chain of cinemas. In 1920, Herc accepted an offer to become the Australian representative of Universal Pictures, and he held the position of managing director until his retirement in January 1960. He died in February 1976 at the age of 86.

From the beginning, McIntyre was never subservient to the American head office: he showed that he saw himself as an independant businessman, who happened to have the Universal franchise. He would openly disobey instructions from head office if he felt he knew better.

In 1920, soon after he took on the agency, he was instructed to curb staff and salaries and cut office expenses, but he boasted that he broke all of these commandments immediately and within months had increased the company’s weekly gross “from £700 to £4800”.

For 30 years he offered a vital distribution and publicity service to Australian producers: he was ready to take on any film, regardless of its quality, provided he felt there was a chance to make money from it. Many badly-made ‘quickies’ received far more energetic promotion than they deserved through his office, along with the more worthy and respectable productions which occasionally came his way. Frank Thring, the McDonagh sisters, Jack Percival, A. R. Harwood, Charles Chauvel, Mel Nichols, the McCreadie brothers, Lee Robinson, all had features released by McIntyre from the 1930s through to the decline of local production in the 1950s.

Short films produced by federal and state government film units also received strong promotion from McIntyre. If an exhibitor refused to screen the films, McIntyre was known to approach the local mayor to help him make the exhibitor more conscious of his civic responsibilities.

Most remarkably as the agent of an American company, McIntyre was a firm supporter of the producer-director, Charles Chauvel: in addition to distribution services, he helped substantially in the financing of Chauvel’s two most important films, 40,000 Horsemen and Sons of Matthew. McIntyre personally paid the $5000 needed by Chauvel to shoot the famous Light Horse charge across the desert; then, when the sequence had been edited, he used it as a ‘show window’ to secure guarantees of exhibition from Hoyts Theatres and to raise the remaining production finance.

In 1946, McIntyre achieved the seemingly impossible when he persuaded Norman Rydge (the conservative managing director of Greater Union Theatres who was never a willing supporter of local production) to invest in the joint production of Universal and Greater Union of Chauvel’s Sons of Matthew.

Although the film took more than two years to complete and cost an unprecedented £120,000, McIntyre’s judgement was vindicated when, like 40,000 Horsemen before it, the film became a major box-office success in Australia and did very well in Britain.

McIntyre was curiously quiet about his support for Australian films; unlike Stuart Doyle who had championed production at Cinesound in the early 1930s, he never characterized himself as a producer. He was not an artist but a businessman. He was keenly aware that sometimes there was a local film that was worth buying for local exhibition even though it was not financial successes.

As a showman, McIntyre was a vigorous and resourceful publicist, although his product seldom represented the best of Hollywood. He recalled that he first learnt to throw all his energy into publicity when a western with William S. Hart was failing in a Sydney theatre: McIntyre grabbed a hat and a gun and stormed up and down the street waving the gun and haranguing the crowd about the greatness of the film. He was a big man physically (195 cms and 108 kg), and his persuasiveness was considerable: figures for the film rose dramatically.

He had enough confidence in his own showmanship to take a mediocre film like Mother’s Millions (1931), which had failed in its
first Sydney release, organize a new publicity campaign for it and re-release it in the same city with spectacular box-office results.

Among showmen, perhaps his best remembered promotion was for James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931) with Boris Karloff. In the capital cities McIntyre and his team organized a street parade with a large float, taking coffins and an operating theatre where doctors 'created' life. In Melbourne, where inland advertising was banned by local regulations, he merged the *Frankenstein* floats with a students' parade and completed the route before questions were asked. Elsewhere, he boosted the film with first-aid stations in theatre foyers, well-publicized previews for church leaders (to give the film 'respectability') and a series of press articles by academics about the creation of life, as well as the more predictable gimmicks such as free gifts, banners on trams, 'sandwich men' and flagpole displays.

Today, this sort of 'pressure selling' has been largely replaced by television advertising, but in his day McIntyre was a pioneer showman and helped to expand the promotional resources of film publicists. In the 1930s, his style of extravagant ballyhoo was an essential part of the Hollywood glamour that fed the fantasies of the film-going public.

McIntyre's personality matched both his physical size and name, and he was a vigorous speaker, always capable of rousing enthusiasm in his sales teams and winning their long-term loyalty and affection. His closest friend and colleague at Universal was Dan Casey who worked for decades as his general sales manager in Sydney. Perhaps their proudest protege was Al Daff, who progressed from a minor position as a salesman in their Melbourne branch to become Universal's general manager in the Far East, and later president of Universal International in Hollywood.

The original contract which McIntyre made with Universal was something of an error of judgement on Universal's part, for it gave McIntyre a percentage of all sales made in Australia. In the event, the deal was never worthwhile and Universal's grosses amounted to only a few hundred pounds.

Within months, the pounds became thousands, but McIntyre was never selfish with his earnings. Although he invested heavily in a cattle property in the Inverell district of New South Wales, which his wife, Nell, had inherited, other large sums were directed back into the film trade. Some he invested in production with Chauvel, but most remarkably in the 1930s he handed over a large proportion of his earnings to establish a provident fund for his staff in Australia. He believed in financial incentives for employees, and within 10 years the fund had nearly £200,000 to dispense to retiring staff.

During World War 2, he contributed to the war effort with a customary grand gesture, by sending new films to army camps in Australia, perhaps under the auspices of 'sandwich men', usually before the films had been released in Sydney. He made no charge to the armed services for this contribution to morale, and set an example which other distributors followed only much later.

In 1950, McIntyre called him to New York where he was accorded high praise for his initiative from both the film trade and the U.S. armed services.

Showmen in the grand style of Herc McIntyre are scarce in the U.S. He may have become another great Hollywood figure of the calibre of Zukor or Laemmle. In 1929, in fact, he was offered a senior management post in the American head office of Universal, but turned it down to persevere with his business in Australia. By choosing to remain he became very much a big fish in a small pond and made a positive and exemplary contribution to film in this country. If his initiative and energy were matched by more people at the head of the film trade today there would certainly be less need for our filmmakers' energy-consuming pre-occupations with the business of distribution and exhibition, and our films would be a good deal more colourful and adventurous. ★

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**Science Fiction Cinema**

**The Creeping Flesh** is notable for the remarkable complexity of the themes Francis C. Cushing plays a conceited scientist who finds that he has managed to isolate the physical presence of pure evil and thereby in envisioning a world of service, were milked of their fearful escapability of the past and the concept of possession — a genial performance from Diana Dors as The Folks at Red Wolf Inn, a talent of alternating. ★

**Amelia** is a feature that all is less than perfect with their brother and sister relationship, but the film's frame of reference. In it, a rich and hip young New Yorker (played by Perry King) given to making forays into the Puerto Rican ghettos of New York, finds his per­sonality invaded by that of a disturbed Puerto Rican kid, and race realities and paranoia erupt into the well-ordered and urchin of a dominating mother who is finally possessed by the spirit of an African witch doctor. The tale is taken up with the horrific struggle between Amelia and the voodoo doll, a malevolent model of pure hate. **Millencourt and Therese** proved more presentable with its theme of dual per­sonality, but still maintained a sharp effectiveness. The tightness of **Trilogy of Terror** (three variations on the theme of sexual addiction and its aftermath) sequences) proved remarkably convinc­ing with tours de force performances in all three episodes from Karen Black.

In Julie she plays a supposedly tussy college professor who secretly entices young men to their doom, while allowing them the illusion that they are in fact ex­periencing a sexual education. In *The Possession of Joel Delaney*, the sharpest attempt to see into the theme of possession — here cross class and race — with political overtones. In it, a rich and hip young New Yorker (played by Perry King) given to making forays into the Puerto Rican ghettos of New York, finds his per­sonality invaded by that of a disturbed Puerto Rican kid, and race realities and paranoia erupt into the well-ordered and urchin of a dominating mother who is finally possessed by the spirit of an African witch doctor. The tale is taken up with the horrific struggle between Amelia and the voodoo doll, a malevolent model of pure hate. **Millencourt and Therese** proved more presentable with its theme of dual per­sonality, but still maintained a sharp effectiveness. The tightness of **Trilogy of Terror** (three variations on the theme of sexual addiction and its aftermath) sequences) proved remarkably convinc­ing with tours de force performances in all three episodes from Karen Black.

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proudly presents

MICHAEL KLINGER production of a PETER HUNT film

BARBARA PARKINS IAN HOLM RENE KOLLDHEHOFF

Music composed and conducted by MAURICE JARRE Screenplay by STANLEY PRICE ALASTAIR REID and WILBUR SMITH Based on the book of the same title by WILBUR SMITH

Produced by MICHAEL KLINGER Directed by PETER HUNT TECHNICOLORE PANAVISION

FOR AUSTRALIA WIDE RELEASE
Pure S
John O’Hara

Bert Deling’s film, Pure S, has been assailed by those who see it as an encouragement to drug takers, and equally attacked by those who regard it as a misplaced attack on methadone treatment.

Melbourne Herald film critic, Andrew McKay, in a notoriously rocky review, described the film as “the most evil” he had seen. But Pure S certainly doesn’t present drug taking in any attractive or reasonable light, certainly not after you have watched the practised negligence of the seventh or eighth syringe cutting into scarred arms. And the attack on methadone treatment comes at the end of the film in what appears to be an anti-climax, an attempt to stitch together different levels of significance.

The most striking aspects of the film, though, are not the rights and wrongs of its pictures of drug takers, but the extraordinary intensity of the world it images, the obsessive, frenzied bursts of excitement among its players, particularly Gary Waddell, who drives through the film like a bolt of electricity. Everything is speeded up under the desperate urge for drugs, for one more hit, as the film takes us through one night’s search for pure shit. The characters gabble at each other, rage and swear and collapse as they plot intricate and abortive schemes to get the drugs. The backgrounds change in quick succession and extravagant ways as though one shade of nightmare gives way to another.

There is no necessary connection between scenes and episodes as they tumble over each other. The night-long jaunt does follow some pattern, but it’s the changes, the disconnections between events and within conversations that remain most vividly in the mind. This impression of lunatic speed and despair is reinforced by the half-films scenes of night chases, the instant and precarious grip that all the characters seem to have on themselves and their emotions. As the group of junkies cruise around Melbourne in an FJ Holden, a car emerges from the darkness, loaded with toughs who hurl beer cans against the windows, shout abuse and snatch while the cars veer off and together again.

Tom Cowan's photography reflects exactly the splintering horror and lurid adolescent fantasy of this world of ancient cars, perpetual highs, miserable, scrounging poverty, as the group’s efforts are absorbed by the search for narcotics.

The high point, if one can call it that, of the film is the sequence of the Holden passing through a car park. This is carried out in a high speed, jerky sequence that is funny in a slapstick, timeless fashion. Two separate groups find themselves on the roof of the shop together, swearing at each other, bungling their way down into the building, scrambling with the cars, shout and gesticulate while the cars speed, jerky sequence that is funny in a slapstick, timeless fashion.

Some effects seem contrived, like the sequence of the Holden passing through a car park. This is carried out in a high speed, jerky sequence that is funny in a slapstick, timeless fashion. Two separate groups find themselves on the roof of the shop together, swearing at each other, bungling their way down into the building, scrambling with the cars, shout and gesticulate while the cars speed, jerky sequence that is funny in a slapstick, timeless fashion.

It is a difficult problem, and the film, for all the inventiveness and energy of its best moments, doesn’t come near solving it. In fact, the film opens with scenes of indifferent moments, doesn’t come near solving it. In fact, the film opens with scenes of indifferent moments, but the film itself has collapsed into the chaos it attempted to depict.
MAD DOG MORGAN

Beryl Donaldson and John Langer

The official view of Daniel Morgan's exploits is summed up in Charles White's 1903 History of Australian Bushranging. While all of the other gentlemen of the road rate praise for some notable acts of decency or bush gallantry, Morgan is singled out as "one who was a monster rather than a man — who tortured his victims because the sight of their writhings gave him pleasure — who committed murder from sheer wantonness and a tigerish lust for blood".

Taking this view of Morgan as a central motif, Mora develops a complex multi-level analysis which examines a number of interlocking themes, including the nineteenth century debate on the origin of species, twentieth century assumptions about the institutional creation of criminality and madness, and colonial class conflict, incorporating both the British-Irish tensions and the split between European decadence and the purity of the antipodean "noble savage". In the opening sequence of the film, Mora uses one of the great unmentionables of Australian history — the wholesale slaughter of the Chinese on the goldfields — to establish Morgan's position as an outsider to the community shaped by a complex urban environment, Mora lapses into a number of ideological justifications for his psychic alienation and his initiation into bushranging. Caught in a bloody Pekingsah-like massacre while in the Chinese camp, he is identified as a Chinese sympathizer, and forced to flee for his life with nothing but the clothes he is wearing. In order to secure food and blankets, he stages a number of amateur hold-ups, and is promptly caught, tried, and sentenced to 12 years in prison, two of which are to be spent in irons.

It is the prison experience that begins to psychologically mutilate and dehumanize Morgan. Branded, brutalized and buggered, he is quickly rendered powerless to defend himself against institutional degradation, and when he is finally released after six years, he stands before the prison governor, twitching, hollow-eyed and visibly fearful. In this scene Mora introduces the "origin of species" theme which recurs throughout the film — the governor's office is filled with skulls, specimens to be used in a lecture to prison officers on "the relationship between man and ape".

Mora is doing a number of things in this economical sequence, on the one hand making very comment on the intellectual fashions of the educated middle-classes and the way ideas are used as instruments of oppression, and on the other, introducing an element of foreboding as Morgan confronts his fate as a criminalistic specimen. The inevitability of this fate is underscored by the language that the authorities use to describe Morgan. It is asserted that "like most criminals" he is a "throwback to primitive man"; he is rumoured to have the physical features of a gorilla; and constant reference is made to "the animal Morgan". Ultimately, this view even enters Morgan's definition of himself, as in his reference to the bounty hunter as "Simon the Morgan Skinner".

Frank Thring's superb characterization of Superintendent Cobham, the arch-opponent of the "Darwinian thesis" concerning the origins of Morgan's criminality, provides a suitably ironic statement on the real location of inhumanity in the colony. Nothing quite equals the visual impact of the grotesque Cobham, surrounded by his pampered and over-tired bull terriers and his obsession for taxidermy, overseeing the pursuit of Morgan. In his final act of desecration, this educated Victorian gentleman, with his theories on the bestiality of the criminal classes, displays a decadent cruelty which could only be human in origin. In contrast to the corrupt and claustraphobic artificiality of the administrative class, for whom the natural world is merely a source of botanical and zoological curiosities to be collected or stuffed, Mora juxtaposes the open and harmonious relationship of man to nature embodied in Aboriginal culture. Tracked down and shot as a horse thief, the wounded Morgan escapes into the bush where he is found (not unlike Tonto's discovery of the Lone Ranger) by the half-caste Billy, who nurses him back to health and teaches him the art of bush survival.

In this natural setting, and through his reliance on Billy, Morgan partially reassembles his shattered psyche and gathers the strength and skills necessary to re-launch his bushranging career and campaign of revenge against his oppressors and enemies. Perhaps as an inevitable result of a consciousness shaped by a complex urban environment, Mora lapses into a number of time-worn visual cliches which tend to romanticize and simplify this life within nature. This weakness, however, is offset by the witty, light-hearted handling of Morgan's self-conscious transformation into a stylishly competent bushranger. We see him preening himself before a mirror, comparing his facial expression to a picture of President Lincoln, earnestly rehearsing his hold-up presentation and phraseology, and even choreographing a planned robbery with Billy's able assistance.

This preparation pays off in the public arena, and Morgan is soon a man of some repute. The press run stories about his daring daylight raids, rewards are offered for his capture, he is immortalized in the Melbourne wax works, and a photographer anxiously sets up a rendezvous to take his portrait. The more that is said and written about his exploits, the more he comes to enjoy and self-consciously act out the role of the bushranging superstar. This belief in his own "press" contributes in no small way to his ultimate downfall.

The vitriolic condemnation of Morgan, and the singleminded intensity with which he is tracked down, seems as much a response to his irreverence and lack of respect for his "betters" as to his actual crimes. After being unceremoniously knocked from his horse by a boomerang and tauntingly dined by Morgan, the magistrate of Wagga Wagga becomes one of his most ruthless pursuers, whose devotion to the hunt seems more a reaction to his wounded dignity than to his concern for public safety. Superintendent Cobham declares: "I want that bastard — it's bad for all of us when some like that mock the forces of Her Majesty."

Mora cleverly uses the soundtrack to satirize the petty pomposity of the colonial bourgeoisie, whose forays in pursuit of the hounded bushranger are accompanied by absurdly grandiose military music, as out of place in the Australian context as the suit of armour "worn at Agincourt" in which one of them poses for the photographer. The political basis for the definition of Morgan as a threat to the community is obvious: his deeds have become the stuff of hero-worship among the labouring classes, who feed, clothe and provide him with vital information about police movements. He has come to represent a powerful anarchic force which threatens the delicate balance of authority in the colony, and he must therefore be crushed and destroyed.

Morgan, of course, is doomed from the start. While the forces of law and order are the necessary agents of his destruction, it is ultimately his own haunted psyche and his longing for human contact which lead him irrevocably to this end. Like the classic outsider of the Western genre, Morgan's feelings about the orderly world of the community are ambivalent and his desire for revenge is equaled by his need for a sense of belonging and recognition. These conflicting emotions relentlessly draw him away from the security of the bush towards areas of settlement and into the ever-tightening

Scene from Philippe Mora's psychologically and politically sophisticated Mad Dog Morgan.
Frank Thring as the arch-opponent of Darwinism, Superintendent Cobham. Mad Dog Morgan

police cordon. He crosses the river into Victoria, a scene evoking both traditional Western imagery and the mythological descent into hell across the River Styx.

Once he enters this new terrain, away from familiar hideouts and escape routes, and with the police rapidly closing in, his psychological disintegration accelerates. Mora shows us the physical and social landscape through the lens of Morgan's mounting paranoia. Tormented by nightmare images of hell which allow him no rest, the wraith-like Morgan stumbles inexorably towards his death, his drive for revenge giving way to a realization of his own loss. "I've missed so much of my life, sir" he says to his last captive audience, the squatter MacPherson.

Mad Dog Morgan is a powerful film, remarkable for its complex visual statements and spare use of dialogue. It generates a sense of tension and unease, capturing both the otherworldly foreboding of the bush and the claustrophobia and oppression of human institutions. Without in any way detracting from Philippe Mora's achievement, it must be said that a large part of the film's success is due to Dennis Hopper's betrayal of Morgan which, in its edgy unpredictability, is reminiscent of the best of Brando. Between them, Mora and Hopper have transcended the cliches of the bushranger myths and created a psychologically and politically sophisticated film.

TAXI DRIVER

John O'Hara

With Martin Scorsese's Taxi Driver, violence on screen has come completely detached from any conceivable context. Violence exists for no cause, guess has become the erotic accessories of a new love affair and this film's gory conclusion savages Peckinpah's continental collection of bullets lacerating flesh.

Most of Taxi Driver is slow, even monotonous, with a stilted insistence on attempting to pin down momentary moments in the life of a frustrated and intense cab driver who hangs around New York in his Yellow cab. But it could anywhere; the acclaimed vision of New York turns out to be a superficial and clinging indulgence in clever camera tricks and angles, in abrupt and obviously unconscious use of brilliant colours that glow like tropical fish against blackness.

Much of Robert de Niro's cruising through down-town New York is at night, and the streets glow with a kind of blue-green glitter along the crowded roadway. In one shot, taken through the windshield, he is pictured in his usual tired, brooding slumber behind the wheel, and the camera lens reflects a semi-circle of contrast to most of the films which examined murders. After it is over, the camera tracks slowly back along the corridor in the hotel, down the stairs and along another corridor, retracing the sequence of corpus. That fascinates Scorsese here are the wild,图表ing patterns of blood on the walls. And it is this attempt to force meaning from photographing surfaces that betrays the empty formality of this film.

In purpose and effect, the film resembles Michael Winter's Death Wish, in which Charles Bronson systematically slaughtered people to the entertainment of all audiences. At the end of Taxi Driver, by an irony that the film cannot possibly sustain, or even reasonably account for, De Niro is hailed by press and police as a hero, because his presence and asking for rope to upright his doesn't to help understand it, but simply to replicate facile aesthetics. But do not penetrate, an apparent condition of desperate isolation.

At the end, De Niro shoots several people in a graphic, bloody and prolonged sequence of murders. After it is over, the camera tracks slowly back along the corridor in the hotel, down the stairs and along another corridor, retracing the sequence of corpus. That fascinates Scorsese here are the wild,图表ing patterns of blood on the walls. And it is this attempt to force meaning from photographing surfaces that betrays the empty formality of this film.

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Jack Warden and Robert Redford in Alan J. Pakula’s All the President's Men

Pakula’s film, equally powerful, follows the fascinating political-cum-criminal investigations of the now famous Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein. But it is as much concerned with their professional obsession as it is with the corruption they are able to expose (a point which links the film structurally with two of Pakula’s earlier films about investigation, Klute and The Parallax View). The two journalists are seen to be detached from the human implications of their investigation, and, indeed, seem incapable of relating to each other, or to anyone, other than a professional level. Their “love affairs” are conducted with their typewriters and their meetings are solely constituted by discussions of the progress of their stories. The film’s next-to-last sequence catches the point nicely — in left of frame a television screen presents film of Nixon’s inauguration ceremony, and, whatever we might think of the man from our safe positions of moral superiority, it is a moving scene, to the right of the image, in the whiteness of the Washington Post offices, Woodward and Bernstein are shown feverishly belting away at their typewriters, their exposures soon to bring the President, literally, to his knees.

Pukula’s film — has indeed been able to create, or dramatically re-create, for he has explored the implications which Woodward and Bernstein touch upon in their book, a moral dilemma. There is just no alternative means by which the two men could have infiltrated the web of secrecy and fear which bedeviled them, and what we have left with is the irreconcilable choice between the human suffering that resulted from their inquiry and the need to know the truth.

The film, significantly, ends as it had begun, with the gunfire of a typewriter’s keys, this time spelling out in staccato the sentences meted out at the Watergate trials.

Mother Kuster’s Trip to Heaven is, perhaps, the most interesting of the three films, setting press and political exploitation against public complicity in it, and placing an “innocent” between the two, but presenting that structure in a form that allows us the outlines of a plot yet constantly denies the conventions normally associated with a formal narrative structure. Mrs Kuster’s husband, a factory worker, has killed his boss and himself, and both the press and her daughter seek to make much out of the situation. The former manipulate the “human interest” angle, inveigling their way into Mrs Kuster’s trust by offering her sympathy and assistance in her grief, while the latter endeavors to further her career as a singer by exploiting her father’s name, using the journalist/photographer who has been manipulating her mother as a potential stepping-stone. When the “game” is taken a step further as Mrs Kuster is befriended by a Communist Party official and his wife (she being the only one to express doubts about using Mrs Kuster in such a fashion), who proceed to ascribe political martyrdom to Mr Kuster.

The cycle approaches completion when, disillusioned by the ineffectiveness of the communists, the widow turns to an anarchist group as her last chance to save her husband’s name. The group invade the appropriate newspaper office and, their demands for a front-page retraction refused, produce their weapons, asking as their ransom the release of all political prisoners in Germany and a plane to fly them out of France.

The film closes with a series of titles over Mrs Kuster’s astonished face, these titles reporting the group’s failure and her death in the subsequent actions.

Our sympathies throughout are firmly with Mrs Kuster, the “innocent”, though Fassbinder dictates that our involvement with the film (or with the film-makers) be quite different from that we share with “real life” drama, exemplified by the two other films I have mentioned. The difference is best made clear via the simple analogy which distinguishes Brechtian theatre from that of the traditional dramatists. And, obviously, there is much that Fassbinder owes to Brecht and his disciples, primarily in his style which sets in tension a “bourgeois aesthetic”, the depiction of a “real” world, and an “anti-bourgeois” one, constantly calling attention to its artifice, denying an audience the opportunity to be moved by identifiable characters, and an opacity which is much in line upon furthering a politicalized response. Such a tension both leads us towards “the story” and directs us away from it, highlighting the real world in which the story found its source.

One of the major problems involved in the attempt to put Brechtian theater in the 1970s is that a bourgeois culture (one essentially concerned with art) is now generally considered the only means by which we can enjoy our films. Even a film as self-consciously ugly as Wind from the East in which tension is nil and denial and insistence are all has been able to win admirers in the very circles against which its aesthetic profanities are directed.

All the President’s Men/Mother Kuster’s Trip to Heaven

In Four Nights of the Dreamer, Bresson suggests that the dream overpowers reality and that the reality becomes the dream. And that is the inexpressible sadness of it. Riviere is trapped within his own world: because things are absolute in it, and simple choices. Thus, he always chooses wisely — his logic allows no other alternative. So, of course he feels superior, with a slight touch of victim’s treasured, “My God, a moment of bliss. Why, isn’t that enough for a whole lifetime?” (White Night). Absolutely not. He who believes that it is enough is denied. Denial, the blood of the dreamer.

What beautiful but sad logic. It speaks of us, so decreases our potential or courage for choice. It is evident in the performance of Jacques Spiesser who brilliantly captures Riviere’s spirit. His face is simple, gentle; his eyes calm and clear; but within, one senses his nakedness, his despair, his helplessness, his weakness — the slightly overpaced and grating rhythms of speech that distinguish Brechtian theatre from that of the traditional dramatists.

In The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum (1975, West Germany), Alan J. Pakula’s All The President’s Men (1976, U.S.) and Volker Schlondorf and Margarethe von Trotta’s The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum (1975, West Germany), Alan J. Pakula’s All The President’s Men (1976, U.S.) and Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s Mother Kuster’s Trip To Heaven (1975, West Germany) have all coincidentally come to be seen in Australia at the same time. The nature of the coincidence is that all three take as their ostensible subject the function of the press in contemporary Western society. But that is as far as the coincidence goes, for the films reveal marked differences, both in terms of their form and the perspective they offer on their subject.

The least interesting of the three is the first mentioned, stemming to look at it as it describes the annihilation of Katharina’s spirit. His face is simple, gentle; his eyes calm and clear; but within, one senses his nakedness, his despair, his helplessness, his weakness — the slightly overpaced and grating rhythms of speech that distinguish Brechtian theatre from that of the traditional dramatists.

1. The Perth Festival will be reviewed in full next issue. It is anticipated that Je Suis Pierre Riviere will be on its way shortly.

2. From the journal written by Riviere after his trial and before his death.
Fassbinder is a long way from Godard's extremism. In Mother Kuster's Trip to Heaven, through his use of mise-en-scene, he defines our reaction to the world of the characters he creates: the preciosity that he so precisely places Mrs Kuster in her domestic environment, which looks and sounds just like a television commercial. The plain spokenness, the interruption to the program, a news flash of the factory incident, merely merges into the anonymity of the scene, until word comes that the flash had been referring to Mrs Kuster.

The contrast between this use of mise-en-scene and Pasolini's question of the degree of stylization — while that of All the President's Men is submerged in a "naturalistic" (conventionally) narrative flow, Fassbinder's consciously calls attention to itself. Such a method as Fassbinder's is one of the ways in which we are directed away from the work and into the world in which its issues are relevant, though we do not always follow directions.

The visual information offered is stripped to its essentials, denying us a "naturalistic" reading on the one hand, but nevertheless tempting us to respond to the characters as 'real' people on a stage. The unblinking stylized imagery and the absurd elements of plot do call attention to the fact that we are watching an event and not in a fantasy world, and that Mrs Kuster suffers, and the explosion that surrounds her, is the stuff from which mass media conflict with this mode of distanciation.

The melodramatic impulse is clear when Mrs Kuster defiantly proclaims to her daughter: "You're not the only kid I've had, but I'm still alive. And I swear to you, one day there's going to be a reckoning." We are at the same time touched by her passionate intention and able to recognize the limitations of her awareness about her husband (his motivation for the killing remains unexplained and, is, finally, irrelevant), about the power structures imposing on her, and about herself. There are forces at work, against which she has no useful weapon, and, for all the moral strength of her assertion of her dignity as a human being, she is irrevocably isolated.

Yet our reaction to her in such terms as those I have used has to be constantly qualified because of the form of the drama, which much closer to comedy than tragedy, tempting us to be moved by Mrs Kuster's plight, but denying us the satisfaction of such an emotive response by underlining the artificiality that constitutes the art. Fassbinder's politics are no more to be found in his depiction of the moral decadence of West German society — though he is clearly concerned with that — as they are in his denial of the "bourgeois decadence of West German society —

**OZ**

Beryl Donaldson and John Langer

The idea of basing a film on a classic like the Wizard of Oz is obviously a difficult enterprise. The original is so charged with emotional meaning and so much a part of the unconscious of generations of filmgoers that put-down comparisons could easily become a substitute for genuine evaluation. It would be unfortunate if that were to happen to Oz, for it seems self-evident that a young director's first feature is not going to measure up to one of the best-loved Hollywood fantasies of all time.

Chris Lofven's Oz is obviously not as good as the old film on which it is based; nor does it have the weight and class of recent Australian films like Devil's Playground or Caddy. However, such statements hardly constitute fair criticism, which should surely take place in the context of what Oz is — a low budget rock and roll film.

Considered in this way, Oz stands up quite well. As Easy Rider demonstrated, the right combination of rock music and well-filmed landscapes can save even the most banal of scripts, by touching on that liberating sense of exhilaration that comes from speeding along country roads to a rock beat. The road sequences in Oz are good, with Dan Burstall's naturalistic camera work and Ross Wilson's music providing that mixture of adventure and desolation needed to involve the viewer in this rock odyssey.

The fact that the film doesn't take itself too seriously provides for a journey which is mercifully comic, rather than cosmic, with Bruce Spence's engaging portrayal of the space-out surfie (Blondie/Scarecrow) Greaseball, played by Michael Carmen, whose response to other people's troubles is "bugger 'em".

His initial interest in Dorothy is solely in terms of his 'dipstick', but like his counterpart in the Wizard of Oz, he ends the journey with a heart, implicated in bonds of friendship with the other three — in spite of his best efforts to the contrary. Killer, the mis-named bike brilliantly acted by Gary Waddell, relates most successfully to the original characterization. Desperately striving for toughness, cringing and whimpering when his bluff is called, he makes a fine cowardly lion. Devotees of the Wizard of Oz will realize that this successful performance is in part assisted by direct borrowing of lines from the original script. Killer's initial confrontation with Dorothy in the service station toilet is pure Ed Wynn.

As in the original, it is Dorothy's journey to the city to see the Wizard — translated here as a rock superstar — that provides the vehicle for her action. Her quest is made credible through Joy Dunstan's nicely balanced display of naivete and resourcefulness. It is for the characterization of Dorothy, and the poignant contrast between her starstruck yearnings (however puerile) and the social wasteland of the Australian country town environment, that Oz warrants our attention as more than just a rock and roll film. However, such seems an unlikely place to find serious comment on the situation of women, but Lofven uses it effectively in the exploration of an important but neglected aspect of the Australian ethos: the experience of adolescent girls living in a world peopled by monosyllabic males for whom they are all but irrelevant, except sexually, and an older generation turned into zombies by their life-denying social world. Dorothy is the original seeks the Wizard in order to return once again to security and normality, to that place that is like no other — the experience of adolescent girls living in a world peopled by monosyllabic males for whom they are all but irrelevant, except sexually, and an older generation turned into zombies by their life-denying social world. Dorothy's rock odyssey provides an escape from the barren and stillfying forces of her environment.

It is interesting to note that the relation of Oz to a number of recent commercial Australian films — Picnic at Hanging Rock, Caddie, Sunday Too Far Away, Between Wars, The Devil's Playground — Oz stands firmly in the present. Perhaps it is no accident that Greaseball, played by Michael Carmen, is so easily an American hitwoman. They tend to take up the kinds of themes explored in Australian literature and poetry by historians, and appear to fit into the framework of discussion about the "Australian experience" that has been carried out by the literary intelligentsia. By looking at the past, it is possible to perpetuate the kinds of stereotypes and myths that go to make up the "Australian Legend". But while the Aussie battler, mateship, the tension between European gentility and emerging Australian values, and the harsh unremitting landscape.

By virtue of its derivation from one of the most renowned products of the Hollywood dream factory, and its use of rock culture, Oz acknowledges that contemporary Australia is indeed part of an urbanized mass society and that the myths and cultural symbols connected with that type of society have applicability and relevance even in the isolated country towns of the Australian bush. The Wizard of Oz fantasy placed in the Australian context may be Lofven's attempt at updating certain models of cultural analysis to include the dynamics of their Australian version. The film, of course, is not without its limitations — sequences that try to be humorous but fail; the obligatory homosexuality, stereotyped roles in which he where Lofven's motives become doubtful; the sound in the opening scenes; the unsuitable representation of the commercial truck and pair of mirror sunglasses reminiscent of Dool and Cool Hand Luke respectively.

However, given that Oz has been made with a certain element of the youth market in mind, Lofven has deliberately not aimed too high — a point definitely in his favour. He has succeeded in merging together a number of easily identifiable subcultures in order to create a fantasy with Australian relevance, and even if the moral note at the end seems slightly time worn, at least it was entertaining getting there.

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**FAMILY PLOT**

Ken Mogg

"With Hitchcock almost everybody suffers total recall."

Roger Greenspun

Edith Head was asked by Hitchcock to design "four versions of costume for Family Plot. Kidnappers Arthur Adamson and Fran (William Devane and Karen Black) are conceived as figures of fashion; kooky spinsters, and a chic, actor-criminal boyfriend George (Barbara Harris and Bruce Dern) as workaday, wealthy Julie Ribner (Catherine Deneuve) as fastidious and a figure like Blanche's client Ida Cookson as dowdy. Apparently, too, Hitchcock had intended Fran to wear her blonde wig disguise for the kidnapping of Bishop Wood from St. Assem's Cathedral, but Ms Head persuaded Hitchcock that the tone of the picture was not right."

Ernest Lehman's script offers a jaunty contrast to his earlier Hitchcock film, the
The difference roughly is that between audience, puts it in the category of by a close-up of Blanche, all this seen in a (Hitchcock's and Lehman's) rapidly replaces Grant), taking all those taxis around New high-powered spiritualist" himself he can assure us that "couples" film; by my count, Blanche and of the time. Then again, the similar composition of the shots.2 Predictably, fortune has favoured its release so far. Adamson's skullugery and good looks has been him the proprietorship of a classy jewellery store, naturally no amount of cheery professional fortitude. Poor Maloney once helped boyhood chum and Blanche, the older perhaps a mellowed sweetly than ever. In both cases, Hitchcock's way constitutes an admission of lack of profound as a plate of soup". One sym- brooding Joe Adamson incinerate the latter's foster­

FOOTNOTES
1. The innumerable couples of both genders in Frenzy constituted a whole spectrum of dis­affection. not to mention his lack of humour. Hitchcock's appearance in Family Plot is as a shadowy profile on the glass door of the Registrar's office, wagg­

George (Bruce Dern) beside the family plot. Alfred Hitchcock's Family Plot crystal ball; then the ball dissolves as if leaving Blanche to manage alone.

At one level the scene which follows is a piece of Exorcist-like hokum. Seventy-eight year old Julia Rainbird has summoned the much younger Blanche to her home, hoping by means of spiritualism to obtain a clairvoyant's version of the younger. Each resembles the whole matter to the audience. Very moment that the film audience and then skirted, the exhilarating perfor­

In Family Plot everyone has his duplicities, and climactically there's the fun­ny/pathetic moment in the cemetery when Widowed Mrs Maloney shouts "Fake" and the exhilarating perfor­

FAMILY PLOT. Directed by Alfred Hitchcock. Distributed by C.I.C. No producer credit. 

FAMILY PLOT. Directed by Alfred Hitchcock. Distributed by C.I.C. No producer credit.

You think you are — if You Think You Are — if You Think You Are not present in Hitchcock's insistent, though devious, humanism. Even a doctor during a memorable pub scene seemed intent on one-upping his lawyer acquaintance in a discussion of the "meek murder-
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BOOK REVIEWS

THE OXFORD COMPANION TO FILM
Edited by Liz-Anne Bawden
Oxford University Press.
Scott Murray.

The latest entry in the field of film encyclopedias and companions is *The Oxford Companion to Film*. Edited by Liz-Anne Bawden, it has a simple but handsome appearance and a remarkably well printed text. The few black and white stills are generally acceptable, though the colour plates less so.

Evaluating companions is a fairly personal matter, and overall I like the book. It certainly makes a pleasant change to the *Filmsgoer’s Companion of Leslie Halliwell*, and the brief but excellent Dictionary of the Cinema by Peter Graham. What is not about the Oxford Companion is that entries for directors, actors, etc are descriptive, and incorporate titles in the text. These entries are both summational and analytical, and generally endeavour to pinpoint a person’s achievements or style. The entry for Bresson includes, for example, the following passage: “Bresson’s catholic beliefs are vital to the thematic coherence of his work: a state of grace or holiness is achieved through sin and suffering. His people are defined existentially through their actions, using the minimum of verbal exposition and avoiding psychological explanations. His narrative is pared down to focus on the implicit moral ... An artist of refined vision...”

The degree to which such criticism can or should dissect a person’s work within such a format is arguable, but personally I find such descriptions (even if I totally disagree with them) preferable to, “French writer-director of austere, introspective, almost mystical films” (Halliwell).

The drawback of this prose approach, however, is that it makes a quick checking of film titles difficult as the italicization does not stand out well in the text. What is helpful though is the use of capitals for titles that are entered separately in the book. Those films of Bresson awarded such treatment are *Journal d’un Cure de Campagne* (1959), *À bout de souffle* (1960), and *Mouchette* (1960). Such luck in Halliwell, which has a very heavy bias towards American cinema which one may or may not like. (I don’t particularly).

So much for the virtues. Unfortunately there are several and consistent failings in the book. The major one is that not all of a director’s films are listed (nor any indication given whether or not the given list is complete). For example, no mention is made of Losey’s *The Damned*, and incorrectly claims that *The Criminal* was not directed by Eva*. It also refers to “three films he made under various pseudonyms”, but does not attempt to list them. Such omissions can be very annoying.

A lesser criticism, but one I still consider important, is the standard of proofing. Oxford University Press has always enjoyed — quite rightly — the reputation of the publishing house as far as standards of English and grammar go. It is therefore very disappointing to see such phrases as “main protagonist” creeping into the text. This said, however, it must be pointed out that it is still the best of the companions in terms of style and sub-editing.

Overall, I like *The Oxford Companion* greatly and suggest that it is, despite a rather high price-tag, a most valuable asset.

*WANDERING FOREVER BETWEEN THE WINDS*

The John Ford Movie Mystery
by Andrew Sarris;
Seeker and Warburg, 1976

John Ford
by Joseph McBride and Michael Wilmington;
Seeker and Warburg, 1974

Tom Ryan

“What is needed ... urgently at this moment is a bridge between the small band of surviving Ford enthusiasts on the far side of the river and the vast army of non-believers on the near side”. Thus, Andrew Sarris im­plies, is the goal of his long-promised book on John Ford, a goal which suggests more about the state of Sarris’ approach to his profession than it does about the prevailing discussion of Ford’s films.

*Why* is it necessary to construct such “bridges” between “enthusiasts” and “non-believers”? Surely it is preferable that discussions of Ford’s films, rather than of Ford, provide exchanges of insights into these phrases, than ofFord, constantly talking around the point, with asides of irrelevant paraphernalia, and never trying to come to grips with the issues. And, finally, I cannot escape the feeling that any reservations Sarris might have about the Ford oeuvre have come from an uncomfort­able viewing of the recently discovered collection of his silent and early sound films (his rightful discomfort finding an outlet in The Voice of the Past last year) rather than from any increased awareness of the unresolved tensions that make films like *The Searchers* and *The Quiet Man* so exciting.

The value of Andrew Sarris’ prose lies in its suggestive quality rather than in any coherent exploration of what is suggested. It is left to others to do the real job of criticism, which, in spite of Sarris’ resentment of “the frame by frame heretics and the stilted structuralists”, does require that the critic depend less on assertion and more on analysis. The usefulness of this suggestiveness, however, might not be forgotten in the framework of the view I have expressed here about The John Ford Movie Mystery.

Sarris’ summation of the perspective on the actions in Ford’s films is an evocative one and does indicate that, whatever broader context one ought to endeavour to locate the presence of the auteur is a strong one: “What makes Ford’s characters unique in the Western Epic is their double image, alternating between close-up of emotional intensity and long-shots of epic involve­ment, thus capturing both the twiches of life and the silhouettes of legend.” (p. 85)

Unfortunately, it is not a point that he develops in relation to particular films, whereas Joseph McBride and Michael Wilmington in their *John Ford*, quoting Sarris as their stimulus (p. 24), probe this “double image” thesis most fruitfully in relation to a number of films. They take it beyond the Western and extend it to a dis­cussion of the tension, established in many other genres, between the community and the individual, a balancing process remaining unresolved between the celebration of commu­nental ritual and the tragic dimension of those who cannot participate.

McBride and Wilmington’s book is consider­ably more satisfying than Sarris’, but it attains consistently less. It has little in­terest in the critical-cum-ideological debate and, rather than trying to trace the Ford thread through the American cinema from beginning to end, the critics are selective in the films they tackle. Especially good are the analyses of Wagon Master, My Darling Clementine, The Sun Shines Bright, The Searchers and Seven Women (some are revisions of articles written for various film journals). It is not a question of whether one agrees with their readings of the films, rather the method and tone of the writing. In it can be found a healthy willingness to argue about the films in detail and a modest con­cern that justice should be done to the sub­ject. It is no coincidence that the book is dedicated to Robin Wood. It is, still, arguably, the most powerful critic writing in the English language.

However, it is a pity that McBride chose to reprint his maudlin article, “Bringing In The Sheaves”, originally published in *Sight and Sound* (Winter, 1973/74), recording his observations at the 50th anniversary. It catches the immediate sense of loss that we all feel when someone whose work we cherish dies, but it is out of place in the context of critical analysis.

It also ought to be noted that the authors’ choice of films, which they admire to varying degrees, does deny the reader any balanced perspective on Ford’s achievement. Why, for instance, does McBride omit his largely dis­illusioned article from *Sight and Sound*, (Autumn, 1972, pp. 213-216) on the hawkish film Ford produced about the American in­volvement in Vietnam? And why does Wilmington not offer his valuable piece (*From the Velvet Light Trap*, No. 5, pp. 33-35) on *The Fugitive*? On the other hand, McBride does include an account of his painfully frustrating attempt to interview Ford in August, 1970, which, in revealing little about Ford’s films, reveals much about the ageing director.

Hopefully during the next decade, further research into “the cinema of John Ford” will provide not only critical analysis of the cult­ure produced by McBride and Wilmington, but also the fruits of responsi­ble scholarship into the context in which the director was working and thus into the far from clear ideological stance that it is prob­able to locate through the films.

*Perhaps that should read ‘John Ford’! For an in­teresting commentary, see Geoffrey Nowell-Smith’s “Six Authors in Pursuit of The Searchers”, *Screen*, Spring, 1976, pp. 26-33. I hope we don’t have to wait too long for Wood’s lengthy appraisal of Ford in the forthcoming *Encyclopedia of Film Directors*, edited by Richard Roud.*
Recent acquisitions now available for rental from the Australian Film Institute's Vincent Library

Eadweard Muybridge—Zoopraxographer
Eadweard Muybridge did not invent moving pictures—no one did—but he made the first photographic motion pictures, starting in 1878, fifteen years before Lumière's first films. Thom Andersen's fascinating documentary gradually restores the original motion to Muybridge's still photographic images, at the same time allowing us a unique insight into Muybridge's life and times.
USA 1975 Colour 16 mm 60 mins Rental: $35.00

Here's to you Mr Robinson
A documentary on the Australian film pioneer/tramways employee, Reg Robinson. Peter Tammer and Garry Patterson have produced a portrait of a man whose contribution to Australian film history has not yet been fully recognised.
Australia 1976 Colour 16 mm 50 mins Rental: $25.00

Henry Miller Asleep and Awake
"Awakening with a flurry of sleepy grunts, Mr Miller leads the camera to his bathroom, where he fingers his features to see if they're still there, and then proceeds to give us a tour of the pictures and photographs on the wall." (Nora Sayre, The New York Times). Directed by Tom Schiller.
USA Colour 16 mm 35 mins Rental: $25.00

Illuminations
A young couple live in an almost hallucinatory world. Through the death of the girl's father a sense of the infinite develops between them. Their love gives them enough self-knowledge to become highly alert and sensitive, and each confrontation with life or death becomes a fresh and unique experience.
Australia 1976 Colour 16 mm 74 mins Rental: $35.00

Jazz on a Summer's Day
Bert Stern's pioneering foray into musical documentary, is the first—and still the best—of the "festival" films, as well as a definitive cinematic legacy of America's musical heritage.
USA 1963 Colour 16 mm 85 mins Rental: $35.00

Mexico '75
A film shot in Mexico City, at the International Women's Year Conference, and the Tribune. Written and directed by Patricia Edgar, it is a basis for discussion of issues which have fundamental social significance within Australia.
Australia 1976 Colour 16 mm 50 mins Rental: $30.00

My Childhood and My Ain Folk
My Childhood, directed by Bill Douglas, is the first part of an intended autobiographical trilogy. Its subject is Jamie, a Scottish youth growing up in a mining village around the end of the Second World War. The film captures the fears and confusion of the child as he is confronted by the hardships and fragile joys of living.
UK 1972 B & W 16 mm 48 mins Rental: $25.00
My Ain Folk follows the first part, My Childhood. Both films were produced by the British Film Institute Production Board.
UK 1973 B & W 16 mm 55 mins Rental: $25.00

Pure S
Winner of a special Jury Prize in the 1976 Australian Film Awards, Bert Deling's Pure S is an exciting action movie concerning twenty-four hours in the life of four people brought together in their pursuit of dope. Lied to, cheated and robbed, they get more desperate. Seen from the inside, this situation balances the tension of need with the hard edged humour of the chase.
Australia 1975 Colour 16 mm 84 mins Rental $45.00

Queensland
No hoper Doug had always wanted to go to Queensland. The trip seems the only way out after he and his mate Aub blow all their money at the dogs. With Doug's defacto Marge, the three try to make the break to greener pastures.
Directed by John Ruane, Queensland topped the Short Fiction Category section of this year's Australian Film Awards.
Australia 1976 Colour 16 mm 52 mins Rental: $25.00

The Longford Cinema

The AFI's newest cinema, the Longford, which opened in Melbourne in August with the world premiere season of John Duigan's The Trespassers, is Australia's major outlet for Australian and international specialised cinema. The cinema has been called the Longford in honour of the pioneer Australian director Raymond Longford.

Forthcoming attractions include Walerian Borowczyk's Story of Sin, Tom Cowan's Promised Woman, Werner Herzog's The Enigma of Kasper Hauser and Louis Malle's Phantom India.

For further information, Australian Film Institute 81 Cardigan Street Carlton Victoria 3053 Telephone (03) 347 6888 Inquire about the new Associate Membership scheme.
AUSTRALIAN FILM COMMISSION

The project branch of the Australian Film Commission advises prospective applicants that contributions from clients (treatments, scripts, budget, backing papers, etc.) for consideration at the monthly commission meeting must be submitted to the project branch by the Monday nearest the first of the month. This is necessary because of the time required to have each project fully assessed, both internally and externally within the Commission, to ensure it will have the best possible chance of being approved by the full commission meeting which is held on the last Monday and Tuesday of each month.

Applicants are also reminded that with each application (regardless of whether it is for script development or production funding) a one-page story synopsis is required. To assist applicants with their submissions it is suggested that they use the following checklist when forwarding their application:

1. One page story synopsis.
2. Four copies of treatment or script.
3. Full development and/or pre-production budget or detailed production budget (McIntyre’s version) (which is applicable).
4. Copy of option (if applicable).
5. Letters from distributor or network supporting the application, if applicable.
6. Any further information in support of the application (i.e. other investors, etc.).

Following the principles that the Australian Film Development Corporation used when fixing the rate of interest (i.e. a monthly rate of 7 per cent of principal) the AFC interest was also fixed at 7 per cent, the Australian Film Commission has reviewed in the light of the current economic climate, and has resolved the following:

That as from August 1st, loans and/or bridging finance supplied by the AFC will be subject to interest at 7 per annum. This interest rate will be reviewed up or down at six monthly intervals.

THE AUSTRALIAN WRITERS’ GUILD

Our members are overjoyed at the optimistic sounds bubbling from the film industry and proud that the writers have played in this renaissance. But this joy is marred by growing concern for the plight of Australian television production.

The policy of saving the ABC climaxed recently when the Government refused to grant the Commission sufficient funds to cover the flow-on from the May national wage case. This could result in a curtailment of production, including externally generated drama production.

So concerned was the Guild that on July 3 the following telegram was sent to the Prime Minister, Mr Fraser:

THIS UNION EXPRESSES GREAT DISTRESS AND ANGER AT GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS WHICH FORCE THE ABC TO CURTAIL DRAMA PRODUCTION. THIS WILL CAUSE PROFOUND HARM and PRODUCTION. WE STRONGLY URGE RECONSIDERATION OF YOUR MEASURES AND PRACTICAL SUPPORT OF ABC PLANS FOR EXPANDING AUSTRALIAN TELEVISION PROGRAMMING. WE STRONGLY URGE RECONSIDERATION OF YOUR MEASURES AND PRACTICAL SUPPORT OF ABC PLANS FOR EXPANDING AUSTRALIAN TELEVISION PROGRAMMING.

To ensure that our complaint was not totally ignored, we sent a copy to the Acting Leader of the Opposition with a plea for action:

“This further attack on the ABC — and, for that matter, on the Australian television production industry — will increase the hardship already experienced by Australian writers, actors and technicians. Commercial networks, unable to support us, deliberately reducing their purchases of Australian drama. Now the Government is fit and the ABC to do the same.

“We beg the Opposition’s support — in fact, its leadership — in the fight to build our television production industry so that it will allow our members full expression of their talent and provide the Australian people with a proper reflection of their life, thought and culture.

“We would be glad to assist in any action the Opposition might take to rectify this most serious threat to a vital facet of Australian life.”

We don’t know whether these tactics will have any effect, but we would be much more sanguine if we knew that similar telegrams and letters were being sent by everyone interested in the future of Australian television production. And isn’t that everyone who sincerely gives a damn about Australia and its culture?

Brian Wright, president,
Australian Writers’ Guild.

MELBOURNE FILMMAKERS’ CO-OP.

In spring this year, the Melbourne Filmmakers’ Co-op roadshow team (i.e. Kombi van, projector, and multi-purpose filmaker P.R. person) will be based off on a six-week tour of country areas of Victoria.

The tour has been planned partly to take out films to isolated areas to meet a need which is not at present being catered for in some towns — i.e. as a cultural service. And, secondly, to promote the films.

We have applied for a grant to cover the cost of this venture, but, if this fails, our enthusiasm and drive (four wheel?) will turn the project steadily.

The replies we have received have been very positive.

We are very interested in a roadshow of your films. We have thought of having a film day for the local community, with perhaps a few films for the children, as there is very little opportunity to see films here.

Our group would be most interested in such a venture and I am sure it would get a lot of support here.

It would be taking a package of 10-15 films enough to allow a wide selection for a two or three hour program; a speaker will be present to answer questions on all aspects of filmmaking in Australia.

Depending on the situation — i.e. where we screen and to what size audience — we may need to charge a minimal fee to cover costs — $1 or so, negotiable.

Anyone interested in having the roadshow stop in their town, back yard, lungeroom or whatever, please ring up the Co-op on 347 2844.

Workshops are also about to happen. A submission of about $8000 has been made to the Film and TV School for a basic production workshop covering simple sound and lighting attachments that might be bought.

If there is money available from the Film and TV School, then a workshop will be underway as soon as it is made available.

The Filmakers’ Co-op is negotiating with the Video Co-op for shared space, studio space, administration, etc., and it is hoped that this and other approaches are being made.

It is to be an active centre of media communication, a place where who will be resource, production and exhibition facility.

It is hoped that so culturally and socially the centre will provide a home base for people wishing to learn all aspects of filmmaking, and the role that film and video can and does play in the community.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA

NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE

In August of this year, Ms Karen Foley, who has been working in the Film Archive for three years, left Australia to attend the F.I.A.F. Summer School in East Berlin. The school is organized by the East Berlin Archive and will cover all aspects of film archive work.

The students will live in for a week and film screenings in the morning, practical sessions in the afternoon and film screenings in the evening.

Ms Foley will also spend two weeks on a one-month tour of the National Library and the Film and Television School.

Some of the films have been put on deposit for preservation. These include the feature Number 96 (1974) from Cash Harmon, the Sebastian series and Art series from Tim Burstall, The Terrific Adventures of the Terrific Ten series and the Magic Boomerang series from Roger Miram of Pacific Productions.

These series and an experimental film Figure One, by Tan Plomtourgas and Trevor Graham, have been included in the exhibition of experimental film Miram’s, which was on display in the National Library and the Film and Television School.

Among a collection of nitrate films, we have found a number of reels of the 1910 Australian motion picture of The Drought, directed by Franklyn Barrett.

This melodrama about the privations of settlers in drought stricken Australia, contrasted with the life of socialites in Sydney, is typical of Barrett’s pre-occupation with Australia’s outback and his ability to depict the pioneering way of life with documentary realism. Together with the two reels of the film already held, it seems as though we will be able to make a complete copy.

We have 35 mm viewing prints for on-site study of the 1958 Smiley Gels a Gun, starring Keith Calvert, Chip Rafferty and Sybil Thorndike, and Nicholas RAsa in The Palm Island Reserve.

The Danish Film Archive has given four stills of European and American films, duplicates from their collection. We have also received stills and/or posters from many Australian films including Picnic at Hanging Rock (1975), Caddie (1976), Stork (1971). The Love Ebb (1975), Alvin Rides Again (1974) and End Play (1975). Two original posters of Mutiny on the Bounty (1927) have already been found among Raymond Longford’s papers.

The colours are still good and in some restoration work done to the other poster, they will be a valuable addition to our collection.

LENDING COLLECTION

The documentaries of Frederick Wiseman, whose most recent film, Welfare, was shown in this year’s Sydney and Melbourne Film Festivals, are now available for loan. In addition to Welfare there are seven other feature-length documentaries on American institutions: Esanes, about a monastery; Brave Training, on army training; Law and Order, about a mummy; Basic Training, on a Primate research; and for scientific research: Hospital, Juvenile Court and High School.

A number of outstanding films by the South American director Raymond Gleyzer are also available for loan. It Happened in Huguet, which at 98 minutes is the longest of generations of Indians in a poor area of rural Argentina.

Mexico: The Frozen Revolution uses rare archival footage of the 1910-1917 revolution to show the effect of the revolutionary movement on Mexican society. The Love Ebb (1975) has been made by Leif Sinding in the 20s; They Caught the Ferry, a short narrative film made by the late Peter Graham in 1946; Attica prison rebellion; The Passion Pass, a French-Algerian co-production about poor immigrant workers in France; and two Australian films which were finalists in this year’s Golden Camera Union competition at the Sydney Film Festival; the experimental film Figure One, by Tan Plomtourgas and Trevor Graham, and Protects, a dramatized documentary depicting the hardships of Aboriginals on the Palm Island Reserve.

Cinema Papers, September—177
On the exhibition side of things, we have The Night Cleaner — Part 1 just in from the Perth Film Festival (going on to Melbourne Co-op in late September and Adelaide and Brisbane sometime later), plus a program of films entitled "Our Bodies Ourselves" which deals with aspects of menstruation, masturbation, and self-health (including Jane Oehr’s film Seeing Red and Hearing Blue) made with members of the Melbourne Women’s Theatre Group, coming up in September.

On the administrative side of things, we have commissioned Barrett Hodson to do an in-depth study and to prepare a report on minority distribution and exhibition in Australia, following his earlier one.

Membership, new titles, rentals, and attendances are rising all the time, but inflation seems to be taking its toll. So hire or attend a good Australian film whenever possible.

We strongly deplore Mr. Richardson’s untimely death.

Yours faithfully,

Milton B. Ingerson
President, South Australian Film Producers Association
Rock Hudson, amid all this turmoil, was the very embodiment of Mr Normal, just as Doris Day was Mrs Normal. His heroic jaw, soft bovine nature and broad smooth muscles made him the sort of fellow who aptly incarnated every American Mr Normal, from Hemingway's heroes (A Farewell to Arms) to Ferber's Giant. He shocked the pants off everyone by his Californian coming out, and then went on with his image unaltered to do his television series and lay all them pretty maids in a row, a prime example of a screen image, perhaps because it was so bland and undefined, being unchanged by reality.

James Dean found his way up through the acting jungle by privately screwing a series of minor directors and producers (male). Later he was to consolidate it by publicly squiring a series of studio starlets (female). Known familiarly as "The Human Ash-Trap", by reason of his obliging SM practices with glowing cigarettes, he was an habitue of leather bars and Malibu gay parties. It was at one of these, the night before his death, that his current lover demanded that he come out completely and stop changing all over Raymond Massey in East of Eden. It was at one of these, the night before his death, that his current lover demanded that he come out completely and stop using women as a public front. Desperate, Dean preferred speed, arrogance and the crushing of all opposition to his rebellion.

Throughout his career, he behaved like a pig to most of his male co-stars, straight or gay. Dick Davolos (his brother Aron in East of Eden) and Rock Hudson (Bick in Giant) both grew to despise him. As Sal Paradise, with appropriately platonically attached friend Plato in Rebel, he managed an affectionate relationship that extended beyond the screen.

Dean's alienated gayness was used in a way typical of this type. He was the wonderful Janus-faced boy, the "rebel without a cause" whose rebellion could be seen alternately as justified or neurotic. Hollywood, always more prudish than Broadway, never spelled out the precise sexual meaning of his revolt. He had been left to his stage performance in Gide's L'Immoraliste, where his interpretation of the seductive servant-boy Bachi had first caught two live audiences.

On the screen he was the archetypal screwup straight adolescent — still a bit of a puppy, so it didn't matter if he horsed around with the boys. But fundamentally, he was to be shown struggling with his homosexual identity which was inhibited by parental turpitude ("mother's a whore") or reaction ("father's a turd"), threatened by aggressive peer-groups and allowed to find expression only in secret play (the fireworks game in Rebel). In Rebel, the love between the men almost surfaces in these games, though a woman always presides as chaperon.

In a typical scene, Plato spoofs an estate agent, Judd (Natalie Wood) and Jim (Dean), pretend to be a young couple renting a house, Jimmie parading a Mr Magoo voice for the occasion. Jim Backus, who created Magoo, was playing Dean's screen father. In such a game, there will be no more fathers.

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By the time of Giant, this adventurous youthful schizophrenic develops instead into its possible adult stereotype — a repressed, withdrawn, ruthless Howard Hughes, where Dean plays the part with chilling disintegration.

Most of the passionate same-sex feeling in his films explodes like a volcano in the scenes with fathers or father figures. This powerful expression of father-fucking (usually confined in Hollywood to younger boys and arms round the shoulders) began with his sobbing and slobbering all over Raymond Massey in East of Eden. Dean apparently pulled this one on the astonished older actor without warning or rehearsal, and Kazan printed the take of his genuine surprise and horror to make one of the best shots of the film. The electifying scene with Massey was followed by an equally torrid physical episode with Backus in Rebel, and the shambling put-outs and impotence of Giant.

The sexual story is always the same: a frustrated love which can find its only catharsis in tears and rage. Its prognosis is oblivion. Farm-kid, athlete, supemore, existentialist, but fatally blond and gay, the sensual golden boy had been fist-fucked up and down Hollywood Boulevard, metaphorically by the studios and literally by his gay brothers. Dean, like a good actor, studied his part and wiped himself out.

Tommy Kirk was one of the Disney kid-stars of the 1960s, the sort of boy you could see being adored to a marshmallow in Gunsmoke, doting on a dog in Old Yeller, or confronting sea-lions in The Swiss Family Robinson.

Needless to say, he never played a gay kid.

How could Marshall Dillon or Papa Robinson cope with such a freak? But that's what he was. Instead, when, with his voice down and cheeky, the demonstrateable time came to give some indication of his adolescent sexuality, he was, of course, used by the studio as another piece of straight propaganda for the drive-in set. In this wonderful model of reality, couples at drive-ins watched couples at beaches, and monogamy flourished. Paired off with Annette Funicello, jiving with bleached stalwarts, Kirk dragged his rebellious arse round those resolutely heterosexual beach parties of the Californian sixties.

Maybe in reality the Beach Boys were just chucking their last joint in the sea and getting into coke. Maybe covers of gay surfies were having it off in the sandhills at Monterey. But in these bromides, the constructs of summer existence for middle-class American youth, coke still comes in bottles, and sex means dating and making goo-goo eyes behind canoes.

After mugging his way cutely through The Absent Minded Professor, The Shaggy Dog, Village of the Giants, Pajama Party and Catalina Caper, Kirk finally had enough of the false and exploitative way he had been used as an actor. In spite of the helpful advice of friends in the industry ("Don't admit that!", "Are you crazy?") he told Disney he was gay, and for his pains, was moralized at and fired. Disney's son-in-law even personally and genially condoned to him about his "problems".

Proof of his satanic and un-American depravity came in 1964 when he was busted in a dope raid. Hollywood has always known how to deal with transgressors. Chaplin, Flynn, Mitchum and Brando had enough aggression to survive their sex and drug scandals. But non-conformist radicals, especially if they were women or gay, were better targets. Frances Farmer, for example, who, because of her sexual and political opposition to the studio image created for her, was quite literally and ruthlessly driven to madness and death.

So, while Shirley Temple is now an ambassador, Frances Farmer is in her grave and Tommy Kirk was dropped like a hot mauve potato. There's a moral in that somewhere.

III WAYS OUT

Actors and directors had two ways out of the conventionalizing and moralizing patterns of Hollywood. One lay in remaining in the U.S. and going underground, and the other in seeking out more sympathetic sexual atmospheres abroad, notably in France.

Thus it was, for example, that the trio of Kenneth Anger, Curtis Harrington and Gregory Markopolous found a master in Cocteau, imitating his style and imagery right down to hands and arms which paid tribute to a whole school of mythological film.

The most free of gay films, that is the highest in erotic content and existential form, were naturally those in which homosexual directors or stars take their fake professional and class situations beyond the interference of an alienating production system. And of these the most successful were at the same time the spearheads of all avant garde cinema.

Whether by analogy from heterosexual experience, which at many points suffers the same kinds of difficulties and oppressions, and enjoys similar expressions and delights, or from the strong erotic male content of films like those of Lethem and Muehl, gay cinema must play its part in the general liberation of the libido. A man and a young boy tongue-kissing in Arrabal's Viva La Muerte transects a purely heterosexual cinema and leads us into that world of the polymorphous perverse which we've all known since the moment of birth.

It is in this direction — the direction of Brakhage's Flesh in the Morning, Genet's Chant D'Amour, Bataille's Vente de Poil, D'Aubigny's The Peacock, Viva La Muerte, Warhol's My Hustler, Broughton's The Bed — that the future lies. And for that matter, two other genres, gay porn and gay political cinema, lead to the same point of celebration, awareness and change. Good porn like Warhol's Poole's Bijou and Boys in the Sand, and the movement films, usually documentary, deserve research and interpretation in themselves, not merely as sociological experiments.

Mainstream cinema will inevitably continue its boring shuffle towards sexual enlightenment. Meanwhile, gay directors, actors and crews within it, even the greatest, will continue to mistrust the professionalism and class situations for their real ones.

Murnau, for example, disgracefully collaborated in the chastifying of women, (especially if they were themselves really homosexual like Julee Cruise). Some examples of the way in which gay male artists may be impressed into the service of their straight brothers, much as cunuchs were once used to keep harems.

This sorry position, worse for the eunuch even than for the woman artist, is the point from which the cinema has maintained its gay servants, castrated and working an essentially heterosexual society, whatever position, wealth or artistry they mean.

That was the way by which homosexual directors and actors were fed and choked. When will we throw it all up? ★

Gay Cinema
Continued from P.119

Rock Hudson prepares to lay one of the pretty maids (Gretchen Burrell). Roger Vadim's Pretty Maids All In A Row.
Continued from P.141

**Australian Women Filmmakers**

Joy Cavill says her career has not been easy. She has often found it exhausting, even frightening. She says she can't help being conscious that for a woman to succeed she has to be a good deal better than a man, and, as many have discovered in organizations, there are men at the top who, if they were women, would not be there at all, because they wouldn't be considered good enough.

It is not surprising that women are beginning to by-pass the film world's traditionally male-dominated avenues and take their own initiative. In 1974, Margaret Fink, with no previous experience in films, but with a background in art and music, set up her own project, a screenplay for a feature film based on the life of swimming champion, Dawn Fraser — Dawn! It will be a personal story, conscious that for a woman to succeed she has to be a good deal better than a man, and, as many have discovered in organizations, there are men at the top who, if they were women, would not be there at all, because they wouldn't be considered good enough.

In addition, Joy Cavill is a scriptwriter, and has recently spent a year working on a new work of her own project, a screenplay for a feature film based on the life of swimming champion, Dawn Fraser — Dawn! It will be a personal story, conscious that for a woman to succeed she has to be a good deal better than a man, and, as many have discovered in organizations, there are men at the top who, if they were women, would not be there at all, because they wouldn't be considered good enough.

Pat Lovell, with no one but herself, and with a career background of almost continuous acting, television compering and producing, took an option on the book *Picnic At Hanging Rock*, commissioned the screenplay from Cliff Green, chose the director, Peter Weir, and formed a company to produce the film. She then acted as executive producer, with the McElroy brothers as producers. *Picnic At Hanging Rock* has been one of the biggest success stories in Australian production, both artistically and at the box-office. This year, she produced another feature, *Break Of Day*, shot in Victoria from a Cliff Green screenplay, co-produced by Ken Hannam. Pat supports two children.

Both Lovell and Cavill had to overcome many difficulties endemic to the feature film world, but men have to overcome them too. The interesting thing was that they didn't want to be asked to help men. Instead, they enlisted men to help them.

Jill Robb was appointed last year to the board of the new Australian Film Commission as a part-time commissioner, the only woman representative of the industry. She is, at present, marketing manager of the South Australian Film Corporation, but she has had a great deal of experience in administration as well. Originally in public relations and fashion promotion, she packaged television shows in Adelaide for her own firm, then went into film and television production, a freelancing life. She has been production secretary, casting director and continuity girl on feature films, documentaries and television series. She was assistant producer on the *Skinny* series for Fauna. In 1972, she was appointed to Film Australia, to work for the Australian Corporation, and produced a number of sponsored documentaries. She was also associate producer on the feature *The Fourth Wish*.

Other women who worked at Film Australia in the early days were Roslyn Poignant, Ann Gurr and Judith Adamson. Roslyn Poignant worked in the cutting-rooms, and cut a number of sponsored documentaries. She was also commissioned the screenplay from Cliff Green, and directed an educational film before she married and went to live abroad. She now works mainly on photographic assignments with her husband, Axel. Ann Gurr became an executive producer of the South Australian Film Corporation, and produced a number of sponsored documentaries. She was also associate producer on the feature *The Fourth Wish*.

As for myself, I applied for a trainee position at Film Australia after leaving Melbourne University, but was offered a job as a secretary, "because that's the only opening at present". A young man asked recently how he could go about getting a job in films. I said to him: "Can you type and do shorthand?" He reeled back in astonishment, but I assured him that that used to be standard questioning for a woman seeking a film job. I took the trainee position, but the difficulties seemed and, I am sure would have proved, insuperable. There was no government assistance of any kind whatever for independent filmmaking before 1970.

In 1963, I began to write scripts for Film Australia on a freelance basis, and, as I gained more confidence, I felt I wanted to go back to directing. However, there was an opportunity as a staff scriptwriter, and I accepted it. It seemed the more human and practical choice with my family obligations, as well as the more certain one. This job was the first in which I had ever earned a reasonable salary in my professional career, though it was still only 85 per cent of the male rate.

During my second six years at Film Australia I worked mainly on sponsored films. The only three scripts I wrote for unsponsored films all won Awgie Awards — *The Passionate Industry* (1972), *The Passionate Industry* (1972), both documentaries on the history of Australian cinema, and *Paddington Lace* (1972), a fictional film on the drug and anti-drug rehabilitation. I also directed *The Passionate Industry*.

I decided to leave Film Australia, because I found myself doing more and more purely administrative work, and also because my interests were turning to fictional films and the mass audiences. Film is essentially a mass communication medium. From a writing point of view, documentaries take a tremendous amount of research and manipulation of potentially sometimes intractable material, yet comparatively few people ever see them. Incidentally, the first equal pay packet I received at Film Australia was also the last before I left. Anthony Buckley, for whom I had written in my own time the commentary for his film on Frank Hurley, *Snow, Sand and Savages* (1971), then asked me to write the screenplay for a feature film he proposed to produce, based on the autobiography, *Caddie*, by Joy Cavill — Dawn! It will be a personal story, conscious that for a woman to succeed she has to be a good deal better than a man, and, as many have discovered in organizations, there are men at the top who, if they were women, would not be there at all, because they wouldn't be considered good enough.

Caddie was written in 1974 and produced in 1975. It is now on its way to becoming one of the highest grossing films in Australian film history. I have since written another feature, *The Picture Show Man*, and am also producing it, with John Power as director.

Any impression of a plenitude of women producers, directors and writers given by this listing would be false. It is possible to list the women individually only because, over the two or three years leading to the book, the women were so rare.

In reality, in numbers and status, women in Australian film production have, until recently, followed much the same pattern as women in other traditionally male occupations. For the most part, they have found they are required to run the lower-rung positions, or as assistants to men, even if some of these jobs require intensive skills, such as production secretaries, cutters, negotiators, costume designers, grips, etc. The women who have risen above these levels have needed rather special ability and determination.

The fact that at Film Australia, from the 1950s to the mid-1960s, there was usually one woman or another making films was due to the enthusiastic of Stanley Hawes. But from 1966 — when Rhonda Small left — until 1972, when I directed *The Passionate Industry*, not a single woman directed a film at Film Australia (apart from a two-minute anti-drug commercial made by Meg Stewart, in 1971). Those years coincided with the waning influence of Hawes. The producers became more powerful, and although individual producers came and went together they remained steadfastly a male enclave.

Part 3, to be written by Meg Stewart for the next issue, will deal with the impact in a few short years of the women's movement, and the effect of the expansion of opportunities for women, as well as for men, through the new concept of government assistance to filmmaking.

Acknowledgements: My thanks to the women who supplied information about themselves, and my apologies to any women whom I may have inadvertently omitted.
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The reading I get from “Illumination” is that the solution of Jan’s search for some absolute truth or knowledge lies within his relationships with people — like in the scene at the end — rather than with any ideological or cultural goal. Do you agree?

No I don’t. I think that it comes out of all these elements, but one which was very strong was the Faustian element — which is purely cultural. He was, I thought, a variation on the Faust legend. Faust strongly reacted to his personal experience, and Marguerite was part of it. But there was something more metaphysical in Jan’s belief in the necessity of determining one’s terms of existence and terms of ultimate truth. This is all very cultural. I don’t think on our animal instinct level that we really need to understand and question our sense of existence.

But for Jan there doesn’t seem to have been any absolute truth . . .

Yes, he doesn’t find it, but you know absolute truth is a term like “horizon”: you may believe in the horizon or not. Most people would rather believe in it because they can observe it, though they never can reach it. In urban life people tend to forget the existence of the horizon, but you have to believe there is something, a goal, even though one never approaches it.

Absolute truth is a myth, so it cannot be reached, it cannot even be approached. But as long as there is a longing for it, we are dynamic and we move forward. It may be absolute truth or it may be absolute justice, or absolute friendship or absolute love. If there is a need, as Plato said, then there must be a something which created this need, because if we haven’t experienced it, if we have never seen it, why do we want it? This is a beautiful and poetic conception of where “absolute” comes from, but, irrespective of where it comes from, as long as there is hope, life makes sense — if one loses hope, life loses all sense.

That is a view a lot of people would strongly disagree with, because a search for some sort of absolute can cause a great deal of misery. It can be a very disillusioning search . . .

Well, if you are disillusioned you are giving up and that is sad. But there has to be drop-outs along the way, where people conform with their state of knowledge and with the world as it is, because an absolute is not only an intellectual goal, it can be a practical goal — also impossible to achieve. Absolute justice and absolute equality are just such goals and some people get disillusioned with these as well.

But without illusions, without hope, you can’t do anything. There is illusion, or there is cynicism and complete surrender, an approval of the existing world as it is, an attitude I consider very ugly.

You seem to place a distinction between those things intellectual and one’s emotional needs or desires or reactions. For example, you were talking before about bestial, basic human urges. That suggested a distance between an animal level and the nobler preoccupations of the mind . . .

Well, this is a tradition from the nineteenth century romanticism which counterpoints mind-intellect with the emotions. I don’t think our contemporary knowledge of human beings strengthens this counterpoint greatly. I would say both are part of the same structure — all our thoughts have emotional colour, all our words have emotional colour — and if one studies semantics one concentrates on meanings and feelings at the same time. If you look at the history of language you will find that there are many words which are evolving quickly and getting colour; a purely descriptive word which was once neutral is fastly becoming colourful. “Revolution” after the French Revolution was considered synonymous with “anarchy” or “disaster”, now you sell a car by calling it a “revolutionary” model.

“Revolutionary” is now supposed to mean “good”. This is a reflection of how a word is evolving and how feelings are evolving.

I think there is nothing totally new being introduced into our lives, we always continue living as a kind. I was recently fascinated in anthropology and the biological sciences which describe the nature of our instincts or bestial nature. As you know, most of our emotions may be observed among animals. The joy of your dog which meets you after an absence is identical to the joy of your child when you come back after a long day at work. Your maternal / paternal feelings, family feelings, hurt feelings, hate, xenophobic hate, aggression — all these elements may be beautifully observed in animals. Self-intellect is probably the only element which is new to human kind. Consequently I am very interested in it.

In “The Balance”, Marta leaves her husband but returns at the end. How much was this a decision made by the character, having a life of her own, or a decision made by you as the scriptwriter? Because ultimately, the film makes a point about the possible destruction one can cause to others in a relationship and, most importantly, to oneself . . .

It is a very good question. Firstly, I had written the script for a particular actress because she was useful in expressing a regularity of
The extraordinary Maja Komorowska in her first role for Zanussi, with Daniel Olbrychski. Family Life.
Machorka-Muff (1963) 31 min. 17 mm Color X: Arri Blimp 120; 17 min. 33 sec. Cost: approx. $12,000. Based on Hauptstadtsches Journal, by Daniele Hullet" is extraordinary and worthwhile reading."

**ON THE RELATIONSHIP TO THE SOURCE MATERIAL**

The Straubs’ films usually start from an existing text; but the approach varies, between the kind of use that is made of a story by Boll, and the realization of the films, and often entails a more modest lifestyle for the Straubs than is enjoyed by the lowest member of the crew they hire. In the cinema, by being satisfied with simply opposing the system, one runs the risk of strengthening it. (In Germany, for example, Bertelsmann-Knonzern, who, along with the Americans, nearly monopolizes the distribution of so-called commercial films, is thinking of a kind of palimpsestic text, of a kind of cinema that reaches unbroken through generations; but "Nazism" is not overtly referred to in the film, just as it is not referred to in Germany. Watching the film demands great energy, and the result is an extreme simplicity and a kind of relief from all the traditional "crutches" of classical film continuity. It turns Straub’s principle that film is the condensation of time into a kind of opposite, a material principle, made concrete.

**ON THE SYSTEM OF THE INDUSTRY**

Straub remains scrupulously outside it. The film is each extraordinarily low-budget (and the story of the budgeting for each is extraordinary); there is no compromise made to financiers or distributors, even though this usually entails waiting years between the idea and the reading of the films, and often entails a more modest lifestyle for the Straubs than is enjoyed by the lowest member of the crew they hire. In the cinema, by being satisfied with simply opposing the system, one runs the risk of strengthening it. (In Germany, for example, Bertelsmann-Knonzern, who, along with the Americans, nearly monopolizes the distribution of so-called commercial films, is thinking of a kind of palimpsestic text, of a kind of cinema that reaches unbroken through generations; but "Nazism" is not overtly referred to in the film, just as it is not referred to in Germany. Watching the film demands great energy, and the result is an extreme simplicity and a kind of relief from all the traditional "crutches" of classical film continuity. It turns Straub’s principle that film is the condensation of time into a kind of opposite, a material principle, made concrete.

**AN ANNOTATED FILMOGRAPHY**

Machorka-Muff (1963) 31 min. 17 mm Color X: 4 Arri Blimp 300; 23 min. Incorporating a highly condensed version of the play Krankheit der Jugend, by Ferdinand Bruckner, and excerpts from the poetry of Juan de la Cruz.

The opening shot "opens the eyes", in Straub's terms; it is one of the most beautiful shots I have ever seen; a tracking shot from the window of a
car, moving down an ugly street, the Landsbergerstrasse in Munich, at night, past trucks, billboards, and the occasional prostitute; part of the way through, Bach's Ascension Oratorio begins. The film's next part is the 10-minute (single unbroken shot) version of the Bruckner play, arranged by Straub in a previous theatrical production. Then, a short American-gangster-film sequence, a kind of logical theatrical production. Finally, a wedding of two of the actors (the negro-Jewish bridegroom, and the former prostitute) and a Bruckner play, arranged by Straub in a previous wedding hymn.

Othon (1969)
16 mm Eastmancolor 7254; Eclair-Coutant; 83 min. Cost approx. $68,000. Based on the novel Die Geschichte des Herrn Julius Caesar by Bertolt Brecht.

"In this I tried a third way to speak about history. The film has two main levels. One is presented without narratives, repeated three times, but each time is different (a tracking over-the-shoulder shot past the driver of a small car through the streets of old Rome). The first time is morning, the second time, high noon, and the third time, evening. These are the neighbourhoods where the ancient Romans slew their slaves and the first Christians. Now it is where the artisans live. How they work is not shown, only suggested, through the noises. Cinema is an instrument, not to show things, but to suggest things. Each repetition changes the other versions of the sequence. It is also about perception. How your perception changes, over a long sustained shot. With noises, forms and colours moving. And enormous variety. The second level is analytical (the political discussions, from the novel). You see four characters — three belong to the same class, and the fourth (the banker) to the opposite class. They are ghosts who knew Caesar."

The film is extremely abstracted and static. ("We took so much away we had to leave something — the colour") There is the growing nausea that you feel for the banker's logic and rationale of history, and there is also the extreme beauty of the luminous rhododendrons in the background of the shot. The street sequences are hard to judge — are they too long? It becomes impossible to say, they could logically be any arbitrary length, such is the 'logic' of streets, and of journeys.

Introduction to Arnold Schoenberg's Accompaniment to a Cinematographic Scene (1972)
16 mm Eastmancolor 7254; Eclair-Coutant and Eclair 60; 15 min.
Commissioned for television, in a program in which three filmmakers were invited to present footage to accompany the Schoenberg piece. The soundtrack included two letters by Schoenberg, a text by Brecht, and the music; the visual track included footage of the Straubs' friends, themselves, their cat — and newsreel footage of the assembly of bombs for use in Vietnam. Editing the newsreel took three days.

"That was an ordeal; tiny bits from many thousands of metres of material. We wanted to show it precisely, the hands of the people who assemble the bombs, as few faces as possible, and reduced to precise gestures. That was an ordeal because that is what it is. It was a nightmare."

Moses and Aaron (1975)
35 mm Eastmancolor 5254; Mitchell 300 Blimp; 105 min. Based with extraordinary fidelity on the opera Moses and Aaron by Arnold Schoenberg. See the Gregory Wood/Daniele Huillet notebook mentioned above.

I Cani del Sinai (shooting planned for June, 1976)
Based on Franco Fortini's book, I cani del Sinai; to be shot in 16 mm Eastmancolor, in Italy, dealing with the issues of the Arab/Israeli conflict, as reflected in Italian society; running time, approximately 40 minutes.

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Marco Bellochio
Continued from P.143

Exactly, ideologically speaking, that's what I wanted to achieve, even while using a structure not much different from that of most of the other films. I would say that it's similar to the work of La Cina: Vicena and I Pugni in Tasca in that it has a structure which remains reasonably stable and traditional in its way of narration. On the other hand, the film del Pedro, for example, had a more open structure and a probably more original one with its intentional, expressionist elements.

Do these traditional narrative forms correspond to a precise choice, or are they simply one of your ways of recoiling things in general?

Well, until now, until this film, I don't know what will happen in the future — this type of structure has been the one that has suited the best to those that come more naturally to me. That is, to tell the story according to the plan of the novel, leaving reality only every now and then, not even trying to remain true to reality ahead. Most of the time in these films, cinema is a typically professional film, rather than one which will keep its place in the history of the cinema and be seen as a masterpiece, but not only on its artistic success.

If you could make a film without having to take these factors into account, what type of cinema would you choose?

I think I would always make films based on fiction but I think I need to make films I'd term domestic; films in which men and women make films which have to do with life today and with today's problems. Films on a grand scale, the type of film which is always more expensive and on a grander scale than any before—these are the types of film which attract me least, though they could tempt me on the level of pure adventure. For example, to make a film about the life of Norman Bethune, the Canadian doctor who went to China, and all its implications— the Spanish doctor who is the same as a doctor, the Long March, etc. You could make a very good film of it if you wanted to make it, despite the fact of the type of film which is always more expensive and on a grander scale than any before.

This is a police catchcry—point out what people are like in a very small scale, something less talked about. I am more interested in telling you what people are like inside them in looking at them in a great mass, seen against an enormous set and filmed by masses of equipment.

And then, once you become part of the mechanism of expensive and spectacular productions, it's difficult to escape—look, for example, at Bertolucci . . .

If you look a little at the history of Italian cinema you will see that many of those who contributed to a success of films, who at the beginning made social films, have now retired into an individual sphere, or made purely aesthetic films. Fellini, Visconti and De Sica are the most outstanding examples.

The young directors who in the sixties became known as innovators in the Italian cinema are today more or less part of the industry. Who are their successors? What are they doing?

But the thing that worries me is that the young directors, and I could cite dozens of them, treat the most fascist of themes, and treat them lightly at that. Films of sex, violence, films about the police, about a pornography which isn't even liberating because it's always a very contained and Catholic one. And this is the truth, there are people who are doing this. I am speaking here of a large group of those who will make the films of tomorrow.

In contrast to the 1960s, the producers today seem less disposed towards ideas which are courageous, experimental or adventurous. A certain levelling out has occurred and this perhaps derives from the conformity of these neo-directors you are speaking of . . .

Yes, certainly. The situation is tending towards a concentration and a levelling. You have to realize that we became part of a definite period around the year 1968. Now we have to consider 1968 as part of our history, and there is already someone who is thinking, and not without reason, of making a film about 1968, just as once people thought about making a film of the Resistance. It is already a historical, I won't say mythical, fact. Now, as never before, we are realizing that things are changing.
It is also said of “Mad Dog” that it is the first Australian homosexual film. Is that a fair construction?

What is a homosexual film? Daniel Morgan does not ride around the bush seducing beautiful women in every town that he rides into. But that’s not anything to do with homosexuality. The reason is quite simply that he didn’t do that.

But there are a lot of people who, by the way, believe that most of the bushrangers were homosexual. There were no women, only sheep, in the bush. But that’s not important to the theme of the film.

Look, Morgan could have been a homosexual. Equally, he might not have been. No one knows exactly. Let me put it this way: it’s certainly not a serious question in the director’s mind.

How much effect does what the critics write about your films have on you?

...there is more nothing more constructive, and nothing more helpful to any creative artist than a good review which reveals that the reviewer understood aspects of the film.

But what about adverse criticism?

It’s odd that the last thing I expected was to have Mad Dog criticized for violence. Just in the same way, the last thing I expected was to have Swastika criticized on the grounds of it being supposedly anti-Semitic. I just wasn’t expecting that.

Like all reasonable human beings, or so I thought, I assumed that everyone accepted that Hitler was a terrible thing for humanity; therefore any film that was made about Hitler was a comment on how terrible an effect on humanity Hitler was. Swastika was a comment on that.

Isn’t that somewhat naïve?

No, I don’t think so. I think I am just coming up against obsolete attitudes in society which in five or 10 years will be irrelevant. It’ll be like a quirk: “Isn’t it funny that, when Swastika was released, people thought it was anti-Semitic?” I mean that’s already the case.

When you see one of your films with a large audience, how do you respond to audience reactions?

I hate it. But on the other hand, I have already cut myself off from the film emotionally. I do that when we get to answer print stage, otherwise it would become unbearable to put yourself through all those creative tensions again and again.

I find that audience reaction is a very unsafe thing to go by. I don’t like sitting with an audience and watching one of my films. Audiences are always different. It’s very dangerous to make any decision on cutting, or anything like that, on how an audience responds, because another audience will react in an entirely different way.

But to be honest, I am the wrong person to ask because I can’t bear looking at any of my films after I have finished them. There is nothing about any of the films I have made that I am satisfied with; that’s why it’s torture for me to sit through one of my films with an audience. Because when a film is completed, that was the way I felt about it at such and such a time. And two weeks later I might feel very differently. A very important creative decision is when to stop.

But there is another factor of filmmaking that’s often overlooked, and that’s the effect of distribution on a film. Isn’t it true that, for example, Brother, Can You Spare a Dime? at the Village, Double Bay, and the sound was virtually inaudible. So, I complained to the usherette and she said to me, “The sound is low because it’s an old film”. And when I explained that I had been involved in the making of the film, she said I should speak to the manager. So I complained to the manager about the sound level, and he said, “It’s an old film”. Anyway, they eventually turned it up, but filmmakers do not have control of their films once they get into distribution. Kubrick, for example, gave one projectionist a pair of expensive binoculars to check the sound and he turned it off, and the scene was cut.

But it’s heartbreaking to work for say five or six years, or three years on a film, striving to get it perfect and pushing everybody to get it right to the extent of being a pain in the arse, and then you put it in a cinema and it’s out of focus.

Did you have much trouble finding distribution?

No.

Would that be because BEF had some success with a couple of other Australian-made films which made them more receptive?

Not just BEF, but any distributor would basically go by figures. An idealistic distributor is not going to live long in the field. And they don’t operate on the artistic merit of a film. They operate on how much the film is making, or capable of making. They are the facts of film distribution.

Until “Mad Dog”, none of your films received wide distribution in Australia outside of film festivals or limited runs. If “Mad Dog” hadn’t happened, would “Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?” have got a season? Or “Swastika”?

As far as Australia is concerned, I haven’t had good distribution for my films. Internationally, I’ve had, for the type of films that they were, very good distribution. It irks me considerably that Swastika took four years to get a release in Australia. But overseas, it’s a different story. For example, Brother, Can You Spare a Dime? has recently been shown on Yugoslavian television. Now, as far as I am concerned, Brother, Can You Spare a Dime? on Yugoslavian television is almost a pop art concept. Apparently it was a rage because of the King Kong sequences — they hadn’t seen King Kong!

What kind of shooting ratio did you get on “Mad Dog”?

I rarely went beyond three takes.

Would that be because BEF had some success with a couple of other Australian-made films which made them more receptive?

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What kind of shooting ratio did you get on “Mad Dog”?

I rarely went beyond three takes unless it was a mechanical fault, and I usually ended up using take one because I was after that spontaneous . . . that little spark of chance that you get a lot of the time in take one. Everyone is trying.

You know, some of the greatest moments in film have been the chance moments, when all the chemistries of all the elements have come together and ignited.

In the film, you didn’t have many set pieces. There seems to be an emphasis on close-ups and two-shots . . .

There were 150 people in those opening shots. But it’s true that the bulk of the film concentrates on a small number of people at once. But as far as crowds go, I must say I love crowds and I wish we could have afforded more of them in Mad Dog.

I should say it is, to me, a compliment that you got the impression that the film concentrated on individuals. But I wouldn’t have been daunted at the prospect of controlling crowd scenes, if that’s what you meant. Budgetary limitations played a strong role in that side of the filming.

The one sequence that seemed false was where Morgan went into the pub and the girl bared her breasts. How could you justify that bit of business? It appears so contrived . . .

Because of the old woman who was laughing, which I saw as the key element. And for a start, I love the idea of the hero being confronted with a woman who offers herself and who is rejected by him, which is the opposite of what you see in just about every film. I think that’s real. People just don’t go leaping on to women at every opportunity.

Nor did women in the nineteenth century bare their breasts to itinerant gunmen, surely . . .

There were groupies in the last century. And don’t forget that Morgan was very, very famous. And fame affected people in very strange ways then, just as it does now. And to be featured in newspapers would have had more effect generally than it even does now. That’s one of the reasons why there were all those stories of women being raped by Morgan; they were all later denied and all turned out to be nonsense. But the idea for that scene came from reading reports of women who claimed that they had been raped by Morgan and then later retracted it. They said things like, “In fact, he was incredibly polite, and helped me through the night and cooked me dinner”, and so forth.

That scene is a comment on fame and how embarrassed he was, because he says, “I’m just a tired stranger”, and she says, “You’re no stranger, you’re Daniel Morgan.” And he replies, “You know my name.” And as soon as he says that, he turns off, no matter what she’s doing.

What’s next?

We’re going to do For The Term Of His Natural Life, but before that I’m going to America to help organize the U.S. launch of Mad Dog. The film is scheduled to open in five of the biggest cinemas in New York’s circuit in New York City, followed by a wider launch a week later in 40 hardtops throughout New York State. Shortly thereafter, Mad Dog Morgan will go into 120 cinemas throughout the state before getting a blanket release across the country at Christmas.
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JOHN HEYER
Continued from P.122

What was the origin of your famous “Back of Beyond”?

Back of Beyond grew out of a brief from Shell’s public relations department. They wanted me to work with Shell in Australia and to do that they thought: “Let’s make a film that is very Australian, one which will demand the hard fact of making it, ‘we’re with you’.” Not something superimposed on Australia, but if it were with you and seeing your virtues and your weaknesses. Australians would rub off on to the company’s image.

What were your initial ideas for doing that? You once said you started at the coast and worked inland. . . .

I frankly can’t remember. I know it was a jolly hard thing to find. They gave me a budget of £9000 and said I could use any subject I liked and could do well for that amount. So the end of the end I chose the mail run on the Birdsville Track as the subject, and the film was an outstanding success.

I have noticed that your documentaries are very carefully structured, almost in the manner of fictional films. Can you explain your approach to documentary?

The fundamental thing is the object of making it. Are you making it to amuse people, or inform them, or to persuade them? — that is the key thing. In Back of Beyond, it was to portray and associate with, the Australian character. In Barrier Reef, I felt I was working on. At the moment, I was asked to make a film which will persuade or influence people to view the Barrier Reef as a good thing, a thing they portray and associate with, the Australianism would rub off on to the public... Then I try and relate these together.

It is a matter of just organizing your ideas in note form on paper. . . .

Of course I would change the script while shooting.

Oh yes. You must be opportune, but your basic idea is the same. I make the film in my mind, shot for shot before I start. By scripting a practicable basis, you save a lot of money and give yourself more time to be fluid. I always know that if anything goes wrong, I can shoot what I have written down and it will be all right. Also, you need something more tangible than simply it is in your mind so as to communicate with, for instance, the cameraman.

Drafts are good because they make it more and more definite. Once you have the first draft you can make the film. But in my view the film is never finished, there just comes a logical time when you stop. You know it when you get there — and you know it when you don’t.

Back of Beyond took three weeks to shoot, Barrier Reef one month and planning, one year in production and one year to finish it. Of that three years only six weeks were on locating shooting. That’s the hard, mechanical side. I don’t think we needed more time than that. What you need a lot of time for is to get to know your subject before you start.

Do you use a scriptwriter, or do you usually write the script yourself?

If I am making the film myself, such as Barrier Reef, I use what I loosely, call an associate to help with the research, which is a colossal job and more importantly, to be creative critic and creative contributor — someone to brush against. Michael Noonan worked with me on The Reef and he was first Betrier. If The Reef is any good it will owe a lot to Michael’s contribution. With a thing like the reef, where ignorance is so tremendous, it is doubly difficult for the layman. There is no one person you can ask about anything. You have to go to all kinds of people for little bits and pieces and put them together. I think there is such a thing as writing a film — it is a crazy anomaly.

It is a question of finding music to the scene, or design. The more you can see that there is such a thing as writing a film — it is a completely separate art form. You have to go to all kinds of people for little bits and pieces and put them together. I think there is such a thing as writing a film — it is a crazy anomaly.
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