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Cinema Papers #11 January 1977

Peter Beilby
Phillippe Mora
Scott Murray

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Directed by Bryan Forbes

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Walt Disney's
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Directed by Bryan Forbes

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Possibly the latest electronic Duolight cameras from the Pathe cockerell look like ugly ducklings, but look at their capabilities:

- The electronic double super 8 version takes one hundred feet of film which after processing becomes two hundred feet in the super 8 format.
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- Viewing is reflex through a ground glass screen with hairlines. It also provides an exposure indicator, battery charge level indicator and TV framing limits. Compare its compact dimensions and weight (7lbs) with what you’re carrying around.

Now which is the ugly duckling?

What's new with Lachie Shaw...

He was the Director of the Film, Radio and Television Board of the Australia Council, now he's Director of the Creative Development Branch, Australian Film Commission. He's moving his office to the Commission, but apart from that it's business as usual—Grants for Films, Alternative Cinemas, Community Radio, Video Centres, Script Development Grants. In all nothing has been changed by the move.

"When the Government changed the A.F.C.'s Act to allow it to take on the Board's role, we retained the words 'experimental' and 'creative' as part of the act so the A.F.C. is now empowered to continue the encouragement and the funding of experimental and creative film activity."

"Creative development will still be my primary concern. My job is still to see that the editor who wants to produce his own film gets that chance, or the writers get their chance to develop. Let me say here that just because these functions are now with the Commission it won't mean we will be looking at these projects for immediate commercial viability, or indeed any commercial viability. Needless to say, when something comes up which could have a commercial future then it's only down the corridor to John Daniel's Project Development Branch. I'm thinking of films like Oz and FJ Holden, they came to the Board first and then on to the A.F.C. for their commercial development. Maybe we can speed things up a bit now we're all under the same roof."

"Film and Video people are not going to be held back by the change. It's essential that we continue an investigative role of assistance to the media's development problems. The money end of the industry won't have much future if we don't continue to develop the innovative or newer talent. The Australian film industry just can't run on a closed up, tight basis."

Next in this series, John Daniel on Project Development.
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*Recommended price only.
MARKETING BREAKTHROUGH
The success of sales drives by producers at the Cannes Film Festival in May and MIPED in October 1978 has seen a breakthrough for the distribution of Australian films overseas.

More than 16 Australian features and 20 television productions were screened during the festivals, and a list of sales resulting from face-to-face screenings and individual marketing initiatives by producers. In many cases by the marketing and distribution division of the Australian Film Corporation, headed by Alan Wardrop) follows this item.

Two features in particular made considerable impact overseas distributors: Mad Dog Morgan and Picnic at Hanging Rock.

Cinema Shares International acquired U.S. distribution rights to Phillippe Moroe's Mad Dog Morgan for a guarantee of U.S. $300,000, and in a separate deal acquired world sales rights.

The film opened in New York on September 22 under its original title of Mad Dog, and was given the same release in the West End in London in October. The film was shown in four London houses including the prestigious Oxford Cinema. The first week's box-office returns were a healthy U.S.$32,000. The following week Mad Dog sold out, and the 40 theatre Flagship showcase clogged up U.S.$85,000.

Mad Dog's Los Angeles release is currently in progress and the film has played in Philadelphia, Salt Lake City, Washington DC, San Francisco and Hawaii, with the rest of the U.S. to follow. Outside the U.S., Mad Dog has recently showcased in 12 cinemas in Toronto and a London opening is expected early in the new year.

The New York critical reaction to the film was mix. But in Los Angeles, the filmmaking capital, critics acclaim the film's originality and high production standards, in particular Dennis Hopper's performances as bushranger Daniel Morgan and Mike Molloy's cinematography.

Kevin Thomas of the Los Angeles Times (October 27) described the film as "...stunning..." parallels its international success, and noted that "Australia makes few films, and almost none attracts much attention beyond its own borders. But Mad Dog may change all that." Similar rave reviews appeared in the Los Angeles Herald-Examiner (Ann Salisbury, October 28), and the December issue of Playboy.

Meanwhile in London, Laurence Myers and Bill Gavin of the newly-formed GTO Film Distributors picked up Picnic at Hanging Rock; a healthy transfer of U.S. dollars.

Once in release Picnic confirmed that its festival popularity could be turned into box-office, and in four weeks at three first run theatres — including prestigious West End ABC Shaftesbury Avenue — clocked up more than $64,000.

In spite of initial trade reviews which put Picnic into the "art film" class, the reaction from London critics was almost unanimous praise for the film. In particular, Alexander Walker in The Evening Standard and John Russell Taylor in Sight and Sound acclaimed the film's haunting qualities and visual beauty.

The film's co-production Goodbye Norma Jean has also opened in London and has chalked up more than £20,000 in four weeks in the West End.

On other fronts, Caddie picked up two awards at the San Sebastian Festival: the Special Jury Prize, and an award to Helen Morse for Best Actress. And in Beverly Hills, the newly-formed Interplanetary Pictures are reported to have paid a six-figure sum for the U.S. rights to Film Australia's Let the Balloon Go.

SALES
Territories only. No complete financial details available.

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INDEPENDENTS UNITE
More than 50 NSW filmmakers recently formed themselves into the Association of Independent Filmmakers with the aim of creating optimum conditions for the commercial distribution and exhibition of Australian short films. The AIF points out that in recent years a number of quality short films have been produced, but few have obtained theatrical or television release. In fact, ironically, they are often seen by larger audiences overseas than in Australia.

One of the first steps of the AIF was to put packages together for submission to the Australian Film Commission, a body which is directly involved in the future of independent filmmakers through its financing and marketing activities.

As one of the pre-conditions of AFC funding of cinema or television projects is some sort of prior commitment from a station or distributor, one might surmise — as do members of the AIF — that the national government is more interested in pre-production discussion with independent producers, than one ABC staff member indicated recently that it future the Features Department would like to meet independent filmmakers at some point in production. This would offer the filmmaker a better chance of having his film accepted for screening and enhance his chance of securing AFC funding.

Some of the new Hoyts gimmicks have traditionally conservative chain to jazz up its image. Some of the new Hoyts gimmicks have traditionally conservative chain to jazz up its image. Some of the new Hoyts gimmicks have traditionally conservative chain to jazz up its image. Some of the new Hoyts gimmicks have traditionally conservative chain to jazz up its image. Some of the new Hoyts gimmicks have traditionally conservative chain to jazz up its image.

INDEPENDENT PRODUCERS HIT BY 'DOWNTIME' SQUEEZE
The color TVbonanza has unexpectedly given local independent producers a new headache. The Film and Television Production Association of Australia, which has a membership of approximately 40 film producers, has announced recently that its members were being squeezed by stations that are charging extremely low rates for producing commercials.

The existence of prosperous and adventurous independent production houses is a notable catalyst in the establishment of the Filmboards of Excellence, which has traditionally been one of the most active in the industry. The Filmboards have been closely observing the attempts by this small independent company to turn foreign drama series into a successful product line. The Filmboards have been closely observing the attempts by this small independent company to turn foreign drama series into a successful product line. The Filmboards have been closely observing the attempts by this small independent company to turn foreign drama series into a successful product line.

Mr. Graham Farrar of the FTPAA said recently: "It would appear that one Sydney station is currently charging $200 for four minutes of commercial which would normally cost $500." The commercial was played on only one station, and on the $300 charged, and was able to maintain a satisfactory standard of work. The remaining $20 was for labor," Mr Farrar said.

In addition, the association claimed that stations were encouraging television program packages to use the facilities of production houses associated with stations, and hence reducing the opportunities for independent producers.

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EXHIBITORS AND DISTRIBUTORS INVEST
No doubt, flushed with the success of their financial involvement in Picnic at Hanging Rock, and the success of Caddie, the Greater Union Organization and Guio Film Distributors recently announced further participation in local production.

A recent development is Michael Thornhill's The F. J. Holden on a budget of around $290,000. Upcoming is Donald Crombie's
**GREEN AND IAC REPORTS**

Two reports have been issued that raise serious questions about the Government's intentions in relation to the promotion of the arts, broadcasting and the use of television to relay or even substitute for live performances.

The Australian Industries Commission has recommended:

1. The assistance currently given to support the operation of commercial television organizations should be phased out over the next five years.

2. The available assistance be progressively reduced until the industry is economically viable.

3. The Government, in consultation with the industry, should evaluate the use of modern technology, encouraging innovation in the performing arts, particularly those related to the distinctive characteristics of the Australian community.

4. There is a close relationship between the above and the need for a major national cultural priority to be given to the arts in broadcasting and the operation of television channels.

The Government should also re-examine its current policy of supporting a large number of small performing groups and organizations at the expense of national ones, thereby reducing the opportunity for Australia to develop a world-class national performing arts industry.

**EXPERIMENTAL FILM FUND**

Total grants 107
Total applicants 344

Grants Applications Success rate

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<th>NSW</th>
<th>30</th>
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<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>ACT</td>
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**THE QUARTER**

The Green inquiry into broadcasting is ambiguous on the question of how much the revenue from cinema admission charges should be used to control broadcasting. It does not, however, propose that the revenue should be used to fund the television industry.
The Weather Underground grew out of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), formed in the United States in the early 1960s. Several Weatherpeople were on trial in 1969 and have been sought by the FBI since for unlawful flight to avoid arrest in connection with the Days of Rage (Chicago, 1969). In 1974 the Weather Underground issued their collective political statement, a 156-page book titled *Prairie Fire*, and since then they have issued a bi-monthly magazine, *Osawatomie*.

Emile de Antonio is a producer/director whose work includes the films “Point of Order”, “In The Year Of The Pig”, and “Millhouse: A White Comedy”. After reading *Prairie Fire* he proposed to the Weather Underground that a film would reach more people than print. The Weatherpeople agreed to do a film with him, and they chose Billy Ayers, Kathy Boudin, Bernardine Dohrn, Jeff Jones and Cathy Wilkerson to represent them in the film. Emile de Antonio and filmmakers Mary Lampson and Haskell Wexler then formed a collective to produce the film titled “Underground”.

The three filmmakers and the unfinished film were subpoenaed by the government before a Los Angeles grand jury in May, 1975, but they refused to co-operate in any way. They were supported by many filmmakers and other people, and the government was subsequently forced to drop the subpoenas.

Michie Gleason, a filmmaker and member of the Los Angeles Prairie Fire Workshop, interviewed Emile de Antonio on the occasion of the Los Angeles opening of “Underground”.

In “Underground” the Weatherpeople discuss their personal histories in relation to their current politics. Could you give any key points in your own political history that brought you to being interested in a group like the Weather Underground?

I'm a generation removed from the Weather Underground people. I lived through and participated in, as an older person, a great many of the struggles that they were in. The right wing in this country and the apathetic mass of TV viewers regard the Weatherpeople as an aberration, as terrorists, which they're not. They have deep roots. People like Cathy Wilkerson and Kathy Boudin were arrested together when they were teenagers. They didn't come to violence at all once, they came to it in the best way, which is by finding out how pacifist methods failed. They were in the civil rights movement. They came out of the civil rights movement, and like others, applied the tactics of the civil rights movement to the peace movement.

I followed that line too. I was divorced from any political grouping, because living in the late 1940s and 1950s in this country there was only Communist Party, United States, which was simply not a viable party for me. So you became isolated, which is the great thing that I saw happening in this country in 1960 when SDS was formed. It reminded me of my own youth and I identified right away with these people. In my youth there was the Young Communist League and there was the American Student Union which was on the Attorney-General's list. They weren't as disciplined or as together as SDS, but it was organized for the same thing. It was to fight against Hitler, to fight fascists in this country, to fight racism.

By the time 1962 rolled around people were more sophisticated, but finally, when the Democratic Convention occurred in Chicago in 1968, you could see that this student movement and the peace movement, the legitimate pacifist movement against the war, were destroyed, because the state wasn't going to allow it to happen. Then you had a series of activities on the part of the government that were some violent and some clever. One clever one was Nixon's idea, of getting rid of the draft. This got the middle class resistance to the war out of the picture. It got the young kids who were in college uninterested.

The violence that came with the Chicago convention of 1968 was followed by Jackson State and Kent State. And you see what is lacking in American political life and, I suspect, in Australian political life as well, is passion. The Weatherpeople stand for passion. They had a passionate response to this violence, a response of outrage that nobody was doing anything, and this is why they did the Days of Rage and why I defend that action. Although at the time I thought it was partly crazy, I was still filled with admiration that a small group of people would take on the entire police apparatus of Chicago — not one day, but four days, day after day. And already there was that strong feminist position built into that. There was a separate women's action.

I think yesterday's review of *Underground* in the *Los Angeles Times* was the most extraordinary review I've ever read in the straight press, because the writer ended his paragraph by saying he was nervous about it, but maybe it was the wave of the future. And that's what I believe.

Following up on the women's issue, you bring up in the film that the Weatherpeople formerly had a tough-male posture, and they talk about how the women helped them and made them change. How important do you think that change was to their present organization as you experienced it?

I think it's the most profound change that's happened to them, frankly. Before, it was the anger of
United States District Court
FOR THE
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Subpoena to Testify Before Grand Jury

To: EMILE de ANTONIO
MARY LAMPSON
HASKELL WEXLER

You are hereby commanded to appear in the United States District Court for the Central District of California at 1300 U.S. Courthouse, 312 North Spring Street, Los Angeles on the 27th day of June 1975 at 9:30 a.m. to testify before the Grand Jury and bring with you any and all motion picture films, including, but not limited to all negatives, working prints and prints, and all sound tracks and sound recordings made in connection with the filming of such motion pictures, concerning a group known as the Weatherman or Weather Underground.

This subpoena is issued on application of the UNITED STATES.

EDWARD M. KRITZMAN
United States Attorney

Date: May 27, 1975

Subpoena served on de Antonio, Lampson and Wexler.

How did your attitudes toward the Weather Underground change or grow as you were associated with them making this film?

Well, you know, we were a collective, and if you're asking me personally, it's easy, if you're asking me about three of us, it's hard. I'll try both, briefly.

I have belonged to radical groups my whole life. I have never met a radical group that had such passion and such dedication and such tenderness for one another and such a true sense of a collective as the Weather Underground. In the short time I was with them this had and profound influence on me personally. I never could have worked on this film collectively without having experienced them collectively. Mary, who worked with me on the film, used to work for me. So I, in middle age, had to do a whole 180 degrees turn in my attitudes toward work, and toward my relationship with a woman who had worked for me in the past and was now actually equal with me. We achieved this in that Mary's vote every time was absolutely the equal of my vote, or maybe even more, because I had something to make up for. Haskell was never truly a part of this collective. He just shot the film and stayed here in L.A., but Mary and I sweated it out nine months cutting this film, with day-to-day arguments, day-to-day criticism, self-criticism.

But the experience of this film has changed my whole view. It's been made in total support of the Weather Underground. The nicest thing that happened last night at the theatre — and I'm a fairly tough guy and I don't shed tears ever — was that Jeff Jones' father came up to me and said: "I want to thank you very much for that film, because I saw my son and I haven't seen him, and I heard him." And I said to him: "The only thing I can say is that I want to be proud to be the father of Jeff Jones. I think you should be proud for his courage and his stand and his revolutionary ardor." And we shook hands in a way that we never did before when they believe what they're saying.

It's great that the families of all these people have seen them on film. Bernardine Dohrn's parents came to New York and saw it with Jennifer, her sister, who's in Prairie Fire Organizing Committee in New York. Cathy Wilkerson's mother came to the first press screening in New York. Billy Ayers' brother said it in Madison, Wisconsin, U.S., and, of course, the Boudins, who are movement lawyers, saw the film because they had to have lawyers check it out. We didn't want to have anything in the film that would hurt them from a legal point of view. The families of these people are all positive, and admire and support them.

Do you view making the film as a political act?

Absolutely. Particularly Mary and I. We regard the film as a political weapon. The first screening of Underground was at Hostos Community College in the South Bronx (New York City), a neighborhood which is 100 per cent Black and Puerto Rican. The city of New York is closing down every public facility because the inner city is a ghetto. They closed down this college and some grammar schools and a hospital. We were enraged by this, so we took the film up there. The students had taken over the college and were holding it, and we played the film as a revolutionary act. We spoke with the people and explained the Weather Underground and explained their position on violence. They don't need any violence explained to them because their heads are getting busted all the time.

We see the film as an organizing instrument. We don't even ask that people agree with the Weather Underground, we simply ask that they look and listen to the film and address themselves to the questions raised in an honest way. You won't hear one word from any of those guys running in the beauty contest for President of the United States about the major candidates talk about one goddamned thing that is substantive. We hope that this film will be shown where there are young people and working people and Third World people who know these issues exist.
What kind of distribution of the film is now necessary to be consistent with the politics of the Weather Underground?

When you are in this system, even if you are a revolutionary, you have to use some of the system, which is what revolutionaries have always done. So I'm happy that last night at the theatre in Venice, California, they had more people on a Wednesday night than they've had in years. And I'm happy that it's going to run for weeks in Boston and in New York in regular theatres where people are going to pay a lot of money. It's not the money that's interesting, it's the fact that classes of people who don't ordinarily see this kind of film are going to see it. Then, after these runs in regular theatres, it will be given away. But first you have to create the illusion in people's minds — and it's the truth — that the film is a film. That can only be done by playing it in theatres, then universities. It will never play on TV in this country. You don't expect it to play on TV. But I expect it to play on TV in other countries.

Wherever people can't pay, we want it given away, and the distributor has agreed to this. We also hope that Prairie Fire Organizing Committee — your group — can someday take the film and show it around and use it as a centre for discussion.

The film is going to be in the Sydney and Melbourne film festivals and that's going to drive the CIA crazy! Right from the beginning this film has helped the Weather Underground. When we were subpoenaed we put the Weather Underground back on the front page. And when we resisted the subpoena we were back on the front page all over the country. The Los Angeles Times features are syndicated in 300 papers, and Narda Zacchino's article on us in that paper was headlined "Weatherpeople — Folk Heroes of the Radicals." Now, for the first time in Australia and in Europe, people are going to see genuine American revolutionaries who are living underground and who express the most advanced kind of revolutionary politics. That's a step forward.

Where can people get the film?

People in Australia can get the film by writing to RBC Films, 933 N. La Brea, Hollywood, California, 90038 U.S.A. There probably will be an Australian distributor since it's being seen at the festivals. This is what has happened in the past. In the case of Millhouse a regular commercial distributor offered a lot of money to distribute Millhouse and instead I gave it to the Film-makers Co-op which is first of all a collective. It's split two ways and one part is sexual freedom stuff and the other part is political, so I gave it to them. I think that Mary and I would make the same decision here. We would like to give it for distribution in Australia to a political group.

One thing that Prairie Fire and the Weatherpeople in the film make clear is the importance that they've placed on disciplined study of ideology in relation to class struggle. With that in mind, what are the main responsibilities for above-ground people as this film is distributed?

The main responsibility of above-ground people who are sympathetic to the Weather Underground, like the PFOC (Prairie Fire Organizing Committee), is obviously to make the film available to as many people as possible, because it's a tool. And just as important as the film is Prairie Fire which is where all this began. And just as important as Prairie Fire is the periodical Osawatomie, which is the way in which the Weather Underground brings itself up to date on a bi-monthly basis. You know I love their mystery. A police question always asked is: "How do they get their money?" Osawatomie costs $6000 an issue to put out. That's extraordinary because it means there's above-ground support. These people aren't isolated. They aren't really in that dinky little room in the film. That's a set, just like a set in Hollywood; it's a prop, filled with props. They live and work and move around this whole country.

I'd like to say something about PFOC. I think the real future of the Weather Underground depends on the involvement of PFOC groups. I think this is the hardest question the Weather Underground has to face, and I'll be critical of it. I don't think it's faced it. Is PFOC going to be totally autonomous or is it going to wait for secret signals and directives from the Underground? I think that the Weather Underground as it goes through its stages of criticism/self-criticism has to lay down a general line. Then the PFOC groups have to be autonomous, free to make mistakes, because you don't learn otherwise. Bernardine quotes Ho Chi Minh that we learn more from our mistakes than from our victories and she's correct. The Weather Underground, I hope, is loose enough to work in an open way with PFOC so that your group here, for example, which I find woefully small but intensely interesting, can be free to go ahead and organize and politicize and try to change people's hearts and minds the way you do it. And you're going to make mistakes, but you can't feel that somebody's standing over your shoulder. This is like an open letter to the Weather Underground now that I'm speaking to you. Their future is really dependent to a great extent on what you people can do. You people have a tremendous historical responsibility to grow and to function as independent autonomous units.

I'd like to discuss the filmmaking process. How did you structure not only your working relationships but also your decision-making policies both before and after the film so that they, too, would be consistent with Weather politics?

We studied Prairie Fire as you have. Then once we went ahead to do the film there were long waiting periods, because dealing with people in the underground is not like you calling me up and I'm here and we're doing an interview. So I went back, and so did Mary, and we re-read the history of the Weather Underground. We went back and read all the communiques and saw all the mistakes the Weatherpeople had made, and there were a lot of mistakes.

Their recognition of those mistakes is the most impressive thing of all about them, frankly. You hear those words criticism, self-criticism so many times they don't mean anything. But the Weatherpeople really practise it and recognize mistakes, and until you recognize your mistakes you have a monolithic, frozen organization or party like, say, the present party in the Soviet Union.

Continued on P. 276
The Haunted Barn by Frank Thring Snr: refused general approval in 1931 because the censor thought the whistling wind might upset the sensitive.

Snow White also ran into trouble with the censor in the 30s because of its scary cupboard skeleton scene.

The Man Who Fell To Earth: released in an R version which is both legitimate and tolerable in the light of the influence of the cinema, contributed to presiding over the development of formal procedures in NSW in 1908, under the Theatre and Public Halls Act.

The Haunted Barn by Frank Thring Snr. was accorded similar treatment as the censor, in respect of theatrical films, can appeal with less than a full Board, or at the request of Board members who are undecided as to the problematic nature of the film. The full Board sees a film before it is rejected, and re-screens occur either when there is a marginal decision with less than a full Board, or at the request of Board members who are undecided as to what their decision should be.

The Haunted Barn by Frank Thring Snr: refused general approval in 1931 because the censor thought the whistling wind might upset the sensitive.
sent, a five member, part-time Board which meets when an appeal is lodged.

Since the establishment of the Films Board of Review in January 1971, it has met 56 times and heard appeals on 53 theatrical films. It has dismissed 63 appeals and upheld 30.

The only higher appeal is that direct to the Minister (the Attorney-General of Australia) — and he may intervene under Regulation 40 of the Customs (Cinematograph Films) Regulations.

Since January 1971, there have been four Ministerial interventions under this regulation:

(a) Percy June 16, 1971: The Minister (Mr D. L. Chipp) directs the Chief Film Censor to withdraw the certificate of registration dated May 25, 1971, adding that he would be prepared to agree to film's registration after introduction of the “R” certificate.

(b) The Devils January 4, 1972: The Minister (Mr D. L. Chipp) insists that all advertising which accompanies the film must carry in plain, bold type a suitable note warning people of what they might expect in the film.

(c) Skyjacked August 1972: The Minister (Mr D. L. Chipp) directs that registration of the film under Regulation 20 of the Customs (Cinematograph Films) Regulations be refused.

(d) Language of Love August 2, 1973: The Minister (Mr Lionel Murphy) directs that the film be registered and that all publicity material carry the words “this is a sex education film.”

CLASSIFICATION OF THEATRICAL FILMS

The basic idea behind the classification system is to inform the public on the nature of a film. Both merit and context are taken into account when deciding a classification.

We prefer not to cut films, but to classify them as presented to us. However, films are often cut, either by the importer (sometimes before submitting them to us) or by the Film Censorship Board at the request of the importer to enable him to gain a lower classification.

For General Exhibition — all ages; family entertainment. These are not necessarily children's films, but will not contain material which might distress children or upset their parents. There is an on-going argument as to whether this classification should be “white”, or family entertainment, with a broader spectrum.

N.R.C. Not Recommended for Children under 12. Plot, theme or treatment offends against concepts of “G” — may be some violence, less than pure language, “light” sex scenes — (i.e. head and shoulder shots) mostly in a fairly moral context. There are problems with this classification because of its negative orientation.

Mature Audiences — 15 years and over. A difficulty lies in the public interpretation of maturity. The film may deal with essentially adult concepts, but the treatment is more discreet (than “R”). It may explore sexual relationships (both homosexual and heterosexual); may contain crude language; may depict violence — but treatment differs essentially from that of the “R” certificate in terms of degree of explicitness and overttness. Restricted to persons 18 years and over. Adult themes are often treated in an overt and explicit way. The treatment shows a greater exploitation of sex and violence; considered to be harmful to children and offensive to some sections of the community. The “R” serves as a warning. It is the only legally enforceable classification — the others are merely advisory.

We believe that no theme or idea is in itself
unacceptable in this classification — it is the treatment of that theme or concept which determines whether it is acceptable.

5. Rejected Film — Regulation 13 of the Customs (Cinematograph Films) Regulations and/or provisions of State Acts relating to films, which in the opinion of the Censor are:
(a) indecent or obscene, blasphemous;
(b) injurious to morality, encourage or incite to crime;
(c) offensive to a friendly nation or to the people of any part of the Queen’s dominions; and
(d) undesirable in the public interest.

(Some of state Acts refer to matters of a disgusting nature.)

Most films currently rejected — and that was about 3 per cent in 1975 — are those found under 13(a) as being “indecent or obscene”. These may be applied to either sex or violence. Films have occasionally been rejected under 13(d) as being “not in the public interest” — such as those inciting to drug abuse, hijacking etc.

The difficulties in defining what is indecent or obscene is revealed in the court cases in the U.S. and Britain. In Australia, we fall back on the “current community standards” where (for example), the audiences are invited to relish, dwell upon, portrayed for its own sake — and only after 8.30 p.m. on weekends.

Our working definition of pornography is: “Verbal or pictorial material devoted overwhelmingly to the explicit depiction of sexual activities in gross detail, with neither acceptable supporting purpose or theme, nor redeeming features of a scientific, literary, or artistic merit.”

When we talk about obscene violence we think of such violence as being totally gratuitous, relished, dwelt upon, portrayed for its own sake — and only after 8.30 p.m. on weekends.

The Film Censorship Board does in a way exact a degree of both quantitative and qualitative control over films. Quantitative control in the sense that 3 per cent of films were rejected and 21 per cent were restricted (1975); qualitative control in as much as the overwhelmingly majority of those rejected were totally without redeeming social purpose or merit.

CLASSIFICATION OF TELEVISION FILMS

We classify, on behalf of the Australian Broadcasting Control Board, all imported TV films, and Australian TV films which are not made under the auspices of a TV station. The criteria and standards which we apply are those as set out in the Australian Broadcasting Control Board Television Program Standards. These can be treated very briefly since their content lies within the province of the Control Board.

The classifications are:

- May be televised at any time. Must be suitable for children of any age who are watching sets unattended;
- Not recommended for children. Cannot be televised between 6 a.m. and 8.30 a.m.; 4.30 p.m. and 7.30 p.m. on weekdays; or between 6 a.m. and 7.30 p.m. on weekends;
- Suitable only for adults. Cannot be televised between 5 a.m. and 12 noon; 3 p.m. and 8.30 p.m. on weekdays — and only after 8.30 p.m. on weekends.

There are two noticeable trends as regards TV material.

1. There is a greater awareness in the community of the possible effects on children of a constant diet of televised violence. This has led to a demand for a tightening up on the standards relating to violence in early evening programs.

2. The general acceptance of a more permissive cinema (and the introduction of the “R” certificate) has filtered down and influenced what the community considers acceptable in a later time slot — i.e. the “AO” classification.

This has resulted in the passing for TV (after 8.30 p.m.) of “Modified R” certificate films. Let me stress that “R” certificate films cannot be shown in toto on TV. “Modified R” films would possibly receive a theatrical “M” classification in their reduced form.

Our Board and the Broadcasting Control Board have agreed in principle that an extra classification — a late night time slot — would be a reasonable step to take to allow more adult material on TV, at times when children would not be viewing.

To date our efforts to implement this idea have been frustrated by the commercial TV stations, whose over-riding concern, it would appear, is only for the dollar. Obviously there are some films which are “not suitable for TV” under the provisions of the standards as they now exist.

TRENDS

To put the Australian scene into some worldwide perspective:
(a) Overseas

BRITAIN The British Board of Film Censors is an industry-appointed body. Films may be shown in Britain without a BBFC certificate, at the discretion of the local councils. The BBFC’s reports and decisions emphasize the need for the protection of children and they continually refer back to the “community standards” concept, attempting to define “indecency”. On the whole they are stricter in their classifications than we are, and order many more cuts in films in areas of sex and violence, nudity and language.

A recent report issued by the British Board of Film Censors expresses the opinion that the great advantage of the British system is its responsiveness to public opinion, which, in the absence of a Bill of Rights, is, it hopes, the best guarantee that freedom of expression will be balanced against social responsibility.

NEW ZEALAND The Board is a government body under the Department of the Interior. Information received from this Board shows that films are heavily cut in New Zealand often to meet the requirements of a lower classification. Bad language is cut from all films, regardless of classification, even from the most restricted.

U.S. There is no central censorship authority. As in Britain, the Motion Picture Association of America ratings are only given if a film is submitted to this industry body — and films can be shown without a rating. Most films that are shown without a rating are considered “X” or “hard-core pornography. These films are constantly being challenged in the courts, with very inconclusive results. Deep Threat, for example, has had about 60 prosecutions against it for obscenity in different parts of the U.S. — some of them successful.

FRANCE Censorship, per se, was abolished in 1975, but in its inimitable way, the French government has made porn almost too hot to handle by slapping a 33 per cent tax on all X-rated films.

SPAIN AND ITALY Very restrictive; full frontal nudity in Spain is taboo. In Italy, although hard-core porn magazines are flourishing underground, “licentious hedonism” in films has been banned officially.

JAPAN Appears curiously ambivalent in its attitude towards pornography. I understand they employ children to brush out offending genitals in publications. No public hair or sex organs are permitted to be shown in films, in spite of Japan’s long tradition of erotica. Japanese tourists are apparently avid pornography consumers.

SOUTH-EAST ASIA Possibly because of religious influences, pornography is heavily frowned upon, although it can be found underground.

INDIA Following the more restrictive political regime, there has been a drive towards discipline in other areas.

In May, 1976 the Censor Board told producers that scenes of violence and drinking would not be allowed in future films. (They had already rapped films which exploited sex).

SOUTH-EAST ASIA No censorship for adults in Denmark, Violence is censored in Sweden, and they have a 15 years old plus restriction on porn.

NORWAY and FINLAND Sex and violence are censored.

(a) Australia.

When looking at the Australian scene, it is interesting to first examine trends (as evidenced by a statistical analysis) from the end of 1971 and beginning of 1972 to the end of 1975.

STATISTICAL TRENDS

1. Theatrical films:

(a) Overall increase in 35mm features from 649 in 1972 to 916 in 1975, (increase of 41 per cent). At that rate of increase by 1978 the Board will be examining 1292-35mm feature films and 1750-16mm films.

(b) The major supplier of feature films has been the U.S. with a steady 27 per cent of the total films examined in each of the past four years. Most significant changes have been the steady decrease in British films from 16.3 per cent of the total examined in 1972 to 8.73 per cent in 1975.

The Hong Kong "chop-socky" films reached a peak of about 9 per cent of the market in 1973 and 1974 and dropped back to slightly over 6 per cent in 1975. The trend has been the gradual increase in the proportion of West German and French "soft core" glossies over the period (France 4 per cent to 6½ per cent and West Germany 3 per cent to 6 per cent).

The number of Australian films (18 — 35mm, 19 — 16mm) increased in 1975, whereas in 1974 there were only 10 — 35mm and 5 — 16mm films.

(c) The classification of theatrical features have remained relatively stable over the past three years.

In 1975, 16 per cent of those examined received a “G”, 21 per cent an “N.R.C.”, 25 per cent an “M”, 21 per cent an “R”, and 3 per cent were rejected. The remaining received a special condition (such as Festival films).

Continued on P. 280
Jill Robb is head of the South Australian Film Corporation's marketing division and a part-time member of the Australian Film Commission. Initially trained in public relations in London, she migrated to Australia in 1952 to become involved in retail promotion. Between 1954 and 1962 she ran her own model school and agency, as well as packing live television programs for local stations. Over the next 10 years she moved further into film and television production, working as casting director, production secretary, continuity and assistant producer on a number of documentaries and features including, "They're a Weird Mob", "Across the Top", "Contrabandits" and "Skippy". In this interview, Jill Robb talks to Terry Plane about her work at the SAFC.

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Could you briefly explain the set-up of the SAFC and your involvement there?

When the Corporation was founded, Gil Brealey employed me as film producer — in fact the first film producer at the Corporation. We worked with a very small staff for the first six months, then John Morris joined us — also as a film producer. I worked for two years as an executive producer, handling documentary work done for state government departments basically.

When Richard Smith, who was head of distribution, left to go back to Canada, Gil spoke to me about the possibility of taking over what was to be re-formed into the marketing section. Previously it had been distribution, which also handled the non-commercial side through the library. He decided, wisely I think, to split off the library as a separate entity — the State Film Library — and keep the marketing side wholly involved with the commercial area.

It was a very hard decision for me to make because I worked very happily under John Morris who had been head of production. It was a very exciting 18 months and I learned a tremendous amount about making documentaries. However, I decided to give it a go.

Quite a change from what you had been doing ...

I suppose, although a lot of things I have done previously in filmmaking have been either administratively, or on the business side.

How does the marketing division operate?

The marketing division handles all product, 16mm and 35mm, unless there is some film to which we don't have the distribution rights. We market all our films now so we are involved in selling 16mm prints theatrically (including placing them on television) both here and overseas, and non-theatrically to educational and lending library systems.

I think we have been amazingly successful in the 16mm field, when you bear in mind that all our films are sponsored. That is, they are not documentaries in the true sense of the word; they are films made for government departments for particular reasons: a police recruitment film; a film to go into technical colleges to teach people to weld; a film depicting the history of a local area.

So they are not films you would think had a wide appeal. But they have been remarkably successful — certainly here in Australia — and we are just starting to develop the overseas market.

In marketing, we work very closely with production, in the sense that production comes to me and we discuss the sort of properties and projects they are developing. I give them a sort of feedback from my contact with distributors and exhibitors — whether they be television network people or cinema people — about a project's local and international appeal, and whether the budget is going to mean that we have no chance of getting our money back in Australia.

So you begin your involvement at quite an early stage in a project's development ... Yes. I find it one of the most exciting aspects of the job. I also work closely with the head of production in actually putting the deal together — the investment deal — so we can approach potential investors for money and sell the corporation's services and high standards.

How do you choose markets, and after that, how do you exploit them?

I think it starts way back with the script. First, the market has to be isolated: will the appeal only be local, or international? Obviously if it only has appeal within Australia, then the budget has to have a low dealing. It would be nice if we could contain budgets around $250,000 — then at least we would stand a chance of getting our money back here.

If a film has much wider appeal, if it has international potential, then probably one of the safest ways to safeguard the investors' money is to go after up-front involvement. That is, involve a big distributor who has sufficient confidence in the script to give us one-third or a half of the budget in return for rights to a certain territory.

How did you approach the marketing of "Sunday Too Far Away" and "Picnic at Hanging Rock"?

Well, they are two quite different
cases, so we should probably take them separately. Sunday Too Far Away was made on a budget of $280,000, and the producer, Gil Brealey, believed that its major market was Australia. So, no attempt was made to clean up the Australian accent or do anything that would destroy the accuracy of the Australian characters.

We decided to handle it ourselves here in Adelaide, and entered into a general distribution deal for the rest of Australia with Roadshow. Both situations have worked extremely well. Roadshow have promoted it admirably. They gave us very good outlets and took it back into the centre of Sydney following an initial run in the suburbs where it had built a word of mouth reputation.

We learned a tremendous amount through distributing and exhibiting it ourselves here, which for me was an extraordinarily valuable experience. As you may know, it ran nearly seven months in Adelaide.

We then took it to the Cannes Film Festival last year and it was entered in the Directors’ Fortnight. We offered it in all markets at Cannes and achieved a number of international sales. We sold it to France and entered in the Directors’ Fortnight. We offered it in all markets at Cannes and achieved a number of international sales.

There are a number of international distributors who want to see the film. Interestingly enough people overseas know about Picnic. I am getting letters from around the world asking what’s happened about overseas distribution rights. They are not necessarily the major distributors, but the word is out about the film.

As a government agency, the SAFC must be free from pressures to guarantee returns on their investments. When you involve private investors, do you encounter any conflict of interest?

I don’t consider the job I am doing is one for a government agency. I would be distressed and rather apprehensive if I found that feature films were made here with all government funds — state government funds. This hasn’t been the case in any of the feature films we have made and I hope it won’t be in the future.

The corporation is supposed to create an industry here, and obviously to create an industry you need to attract private money. It’s not going to be funded by the state government on a loan basis forever. If you are going to make a $500,000 film and you can attract $300,000 privately — either locally or overseas — then you are only spending $200,000 and you have brought $300,000 into South Australia. I think this is absolutely essential.

If we can’t get anybody interested in investing in a particular film, I think the corporation has to look very carefully at its reasons for going into it. Otherwise it would simply mean that nobody bothered. At the moment the Corporation is pursuing a very active policy to go out and get investors interested in investing in South Australian film.

Has anything ever been scrapped because you couldn’t raise money outside?

No, nothing has been scrapped to my knowledge. Gil Brealey turned down an enormous amount of scripts that have come to us from outside, because he felt they were not right for us to make for one reason or another. The international ratio is about nine projects failing somewhere along the line, while one goes forward into production.

Would that be consistent with your experience here?

We haven’t really reached that stage yet. We have a tremendous number of properties that are in developmental stages.

I have observed that the SAFC is very much a team process — something which is not obvious from the outside . . .

I think it ought to be a team effort. It’s got to be, and I would suggest that major producers in the U.S. and Britain should work the same way.
We buy the rights to a book, we give the writer a contract to develop a script to first draft, in consultation with the producer who advises to, say, play down the sex, or build up the action — or whatever he wants. The first draft might not fulfill what the producer wants. If the communication doesn’t seem to be happening, then we would take that first draft, finish the contract with that first writer and develop it with another writer.

But that doesn’t happen very often. What happens more frequently is that a script will be developed by one writer to a fairly advanced stage, and depending on whether you agree with the principle of script editing, professional script editing — and I happen to believe that it’s absolutely vital — then the script will be edited, usually in conjunction with the writer.

Do you think this kind of multifaceted production endangers creative involvement? Many scriptwriters and filmmakers need to be more involved . . .

I agree with that, but let’s take each individual feature, Sunday Too Far Away was conceived and written from first to final draft by one writer. Then he and the director worked on the final shooting script.

But there are always disagreements between writers and directors — this scene should be in, that scene out — that’s two creative people. Picnic at Hanging Rock was written from start to finish by Cliff Green, so that’s a one-man job.

The work here appears very much geared towards commercial projects . . .

I would argue with that. If you had seen the original scripts of Sunday Too Far Away and Picnic at Hanging Rock, you would probably have agreed with a number of people — including, in the case of Sunday, the old AFDC — that they were totally non-commercial ideas. You wouldn’t have said they had any of the accepted commercial ingredients, such as sex or violence.

I think the greatest single Corporation achievement has been that we, of all people, have been able to prove that the Australian public not only wants, but accepts and will go in droves to films that have artistic integrity — films that would not be considered violent or sexy.

Are you working on any projects for television at the moment?

We have developed two ideas for television series, for which we are seeking international co-financing. One is a family half-hour program about a group of teenagers who are centred around a gym — a re-think of our original idea of Stacey’s Gym. I took a pilot episode overseas last year and was amazed at how many territories were interested in it. They said, particularly the Scandinavian countries, here at last is a program for the 12 to 18 age group that is talking about children’s problems from a children’s point of view in a realistic fashion. It’s not all cops and robbers where Skippy comes to the rescue.

Then there is an idea we are developing around the German settlers in the Barossa Valley up to and during World War I, in which we are hopeful of getting German interest. We are also selling The Fourth Wish, our latest feature film. There is also a lot of selling work still to be done on Sunday Too Far Away.

In establishing the SAFC, the South Australian government obviously hopes to establish Adelaide as a filmmaking centre. Do you see Adelaide as the future Hollywood of the Australian film industry?

Anything is possible. I believe we have many of the ingredients to do just that. We have diversity of locations, excellent filming weather . . .

Without question the Film Corporation and the whole arts scene here are attracting more and more people into the state and back to the state. A creative industry really feeds off itself and even in the three years I have been here the whole feel of Adelaide has been changing. Without the government’s vision to create the South Australian Film Corporation there would be no more activity here than there is in Perth.

If we could turn finally to your position with the AFC. What precisely is your function there? Does it conflict with your work here?

No, I don’t think so. I think the part-time commissioners were picked because they had specialist knowledge in one or other areas. Tony Buckley and I are probably the only two of all the full-time and part-time commissioners who are fully involved with filmmaking and film production on a day-to-day basis.

I think they probably picked the two of us because we had direct daily contact with a fairly wide cross section of the film industry on a working level. Frank Gardiner, who is the other part-time commissioner, is a barrister and is involved directly in exhibition; Graham Burke, the other, is managing director of a big distribution company which has links in film production.

I believe I am on the AFC because I am a working member of the film industry at a grass roots level. I don’t see the two functions conflicting. I don’t feel I would have been asked to serve on the Commission if in fact I wasn’t involved in the industry — directly involved in the industry.
The broadest aim of the Producers and Directors' Guild of Australia seminar, "Entertainment is big business"* the latest seminar dated from at least as far back as the mid-60s, when the discussion focused on the use of feature films. Writing in Quadrant, in December 1969, Sylvia Lawson said: "In other countries locally-oriented film comment is about actual films; here it is about the industry, or rather the non-industry. At the "Entertainment is big business" seminar, the discussion was not only with titles, but with such questions as national identity in film, which, it should be pointed out, was on less sure ground when thoughts turned toward commercial television. Many of the senior producers spoke persuasively in support of compelling overseas distributor/exhibitors to reveal their grosses and export earnings, while those younger and apparently more confident said that the last decade's weakening of overseas interests made their accountability far less relevant and worthwhile. Mention of the need for subsidy rose frequently, as it always had during detailed submissions on the film industry's future. And interestingly, the demand for television quota legislation ignored the quantity points system in favor of a unanimous call for investment quotas.

Most speakers on television were at a loss when the discussion focused on the use of national elements and export marketing. Realizing that current Australian television provided fewer opportunities than the feature film area for personal expression, they implied that national identity in programs for export could at best be synthetic or diluted enough to be almost non-existent.

The seminar's more specific aim then was to discover ways in which the entertainment industry could integrate more closely to attract investment from the private sector. Discussion of artistic form was limited to its worth as a commercial prospect, with increased quality being urged, particularly in the area of television. The importance of unity between film, television and theatre was also discussed with the future prospect of politicizing industry requirements and negotiating cost increases. At least one speaker, Harry M. Miller, said television and film's present fragmentation in these areas could stant the growth of both industries.

One immediate object was for the seminar to provide a direct industry proposal to the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister in the Arts, Tony Staley, who officially opened proceedings at a Friday night cocktail party. The seminar was also expected to provide the PDGA with guidelines for action. In this regard, the most significant resolution called for the running of a follow-up seminar in about six months. The second seminar, which is intended to lure Australian and overseas investment, should be able to operate quite effectively if it makes use of the greater awareness which emerged at the first.

During the recent seminar, five panels presented and sometimes found themselves debating the extent of their knowledge in the areas of film and television cost increases, investment incentive, film and television exports, Australian television quotas, and the (predicted) future of Australian theatre. Not every speaker stuck strictly to his or her allocated subject. So, for the purposes of identifying more clearly the leading issues, I have condensed and divided the content of dialogue into seven major areas. The submissions that emerged appear at the end.

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* The Report of the Senate Select Committee on the Encouragement of Australian Production for Television.
cent of the net as 50 per cent of nothing.

Harry Miller, having announced his plan to produce a $2¼ million film adaptation of Patrick White's Forst, said most of the world's businessmen were reluctant to invest in film because the industry lacked the required degree of business initiative and know-how. Paddy McGuinness, speaking as part of a later panel, said he was impressed at the business capability of Australian producers, some of whom outshine their counterparts in more conventional undertakings, He said: "To be able to perform well in business and the arts is unusual and rare."*

Robert Kirby warned Australian production interests against striving for too much too soon, while stating that the confidence of Hexagon's investors could always be engendered by the presence of the AFC as a partner. Kirby said that Hexagon, in a package sale of six of the company's features, had returned investors 150 per cent on their original money.

Many voices of concern and caution were raised on the first two topics. Members of later panels accused the early speakers of inducing too much gloom, with Paddy McGuinness in particular referring to the "old whinging approach which characterizes Australian industry from top to bottom," and Paul Riomfalvy stating that neither investors nor public could be made any more receptive by the entertainment industry's tales of domestic woe. But any mention of cost and investment in a seminar such as this would have been unrealistic without some indication of the pitfalls.

The general consensus on cost was that producers, during the past three years, have been spending ever-increasing amounts of money, with the result of decreasing nett returns. Charles Wolnizer of APA said that Australian production costs were now equal to those in other countries. John Barry gave some indication of the shape of things to come by stating that the hire of film production equipment was 15 per cent higher than it was in the U.S., and investment in a seminar such as this would be ploughed into raw stock and labor costs; this 75 per cent of the lab's annual revenue would normally be recoupment and continued production.

(ii) The role of government.

The panel generally agreed that the profit-sharing relationship between the AFC and producers was far from ideal. Tom Stacey (former head of the now defunct Australian Film Development Corporation) said subsidy rather than direct investment from the Commission would be a more effective way of attracting investment. Harry Miller said the AFC's share of a film's nett returns is infliction a "Hoover job" on independent producers. He said film producers were being "squeezed up" by the AFC's percentage demand, and that potentially even the strongest were not being given the chance they needed to survive and help develop the industry. Taking the opposite stance to Robert Kirby, when it came to the AFC and private investment, Miller said the Commission at the moment could do little to attract the private investor.

John Daniel said recent AFC investment projects had attracted an increasing number of private investors, and that while he admitted limitations to the producer from the Commission's profit split, the AFC was willing to re-negotiate the percentage if the producer could prove that other agreements were likely to leave him with less than his normal share of 25 per cent.

Speaking as part of the next panel, Paul Landa (representing the NSW Premier, Mr. Neville Wran, as government spokesman on the NSW Interim Film Commission) said the NSW government would adopt an 'angel' and investment role in the production of film. This will include their fully promoting and marketing feature films which contain state investment, and advising, where necessary, on films made without government money.

The Government hopes the proposed corporation will sidestep, as much as possible, those projects that are inadequately developed or otherwise "ill-advised," and feels that the overseas marketing of Australian films is essential for recoupment and continued production.

PAYMENT MARKETING

ENTERTAINMENT AS AN EXPORT

Chair: Tom Jeffrey
Panel: Paul Landa ...............NSW Minister for Planning and Environment

Discussion of film and television exports brought a far more optimistic outlook than that of the earlier panels. One presumes this is because the potential for overseas marketing of Australian output has, on the surface at least, seemed frequently more assured than the raising of capital. Yet, as stated earlier, feature film producers now seem more assured of the international marketing formula than those in television.

As an independent producer, predominantly for television, Roger Mirams told the seminar that the U.S. market "doesn't want to know about anything they don't produce themselves"; and was contradicted in a claim by Lee Robinson that any program of sufficient quality and produced for a pre-determined market could sell in the U.S., or in any other country with a similar demand.

Quoting the international acceptance of his company's Skippy series, Robinson said the producer aiming for success overseas should think internationally and observe international rules. Too many Australian producers, he said, were economising on time and money by making programs solely for local consumption.

Hal McElroy said local elements of greatest appeal to overseas markets were those with which audiences could identify and not experience from any other country. Both McElroy and television producer Mende Brown claimed that the future of international marketing was in the employment of "honorable agents" who negotiated the best terms within prescribed territories.

Reviving comment on national identity in film, Paddy McGuinness said, after initial indifference to Australia's early 70s sex comedies, overseas audiences were now willing to accept sophistication in national self-consciousness through films like Picnic At Hanging Rock and Caddie. Placed in its historical context, Alvin Purple is seen by McGuinness as an attempt to impose Australian overtones on top of a bid for the soft porn market; but neither had it been "good porn, nor was it Australian, in spite of the accents".

Caddie, in McGuinness' opinion, has been the first local film to give audiences an Australian accent which is both normal and universally comprehensible. The film's other appeal, he

From left: John Barry, Managing Director of the John Barry Group of Companies; Harry Miller, entrepreneur; Charles Wolnizer, managing director of APA — Leisuretime; and Hal McElroy, independent producer.
said, was in its dealing with eternal problems in an urban environment.

AUSTRALIAN CONTENT
FILM, TELEVISION AND THEATRE

(The remainder of this report now departs from the order of subject prescribed by the seminar, and has been split into headings that best serve the leading issues that emerged. Because this report takes a film and television standpoint, not all the theatre statements have been included.)

The remaining panellists were as follows:

Milton Watson, Independent television producer/director
James Malone, Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations
Paul Riomyfalvy, Television Producer — Education
Ken Horler, Producer, Nimrod Theatre

Considering that demands for an Australian film quota have on many occasions been the springboard for producers' lobbying, surprisingly little was aired on the issue.

Two speakers in favor based their suggestions on the assumption that only with the assistance of quota legislation could Australian audiences become fully accustomed to their national film output.

Discussion of television quotas was far better served. Most speakers, whether projecting reformist or establishment viewpoints, favored the setting up of an investment quota whose quality requirements would provide for the expenditure of more time and care in areas like scriptwriting, rehearsals and actual filming or taping. Those who spoke as television producers had for the most part been frustrated by the lack of courage and fresh initiative at commercial management levels.

Much of the talk on Australian theatre revolved around the need for Australian theatre to shed its 'Great White Way' illusions so often characteristic of attempts to re-create the days of mass audience appeal. The need for closer links between modern commercial and sponsored theatre was stressed, and also for commercial management to be taking a more positive approach on the staging of Australian plays.

But back to television . . .

Milton Watson, an independent producer of television variety programs, proved to be one of the seminar's more concerned and highly critical speakers. Having recently made a high-quality variety program, Watson has been told by local network executives that Australian content is of little importance in the current scheme of operations, for the stations' advertising revenue has been fully paid up to March of next year. Watson said programs made under an Australian investment quota would need to be both entertaining and educational, and this could strongly redeem the values of a public glutonously over-fed on American "fantasy."

James Malone, in favor of an investment quota when she revealed that the commercial channels' total collective revenue from television commercials in 1971 was about $151 million, and that by the end of this year the figure would have risen by a further $50 million. Comparing these figures with the AFC's $1 million investment budget for the current year, she said commercial television networks had ample scope to spend both more time and money in upgrading local content.

James Malone, spokesman for the Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations, stressed that FACTS likewise favored an investment quota, and that hopefully it would enable the film and television industry to shed its 'Great White Way' illusions so often associated with the commercial medium. Malone said the need for an increased local output of educational films was stressed by Ian Cochrane, former director of production at the Videotape Corporation and now teacher of advertising at the Sydney Technical College. Cochrane said the film and television industry — PDGA in particular — should educate the educators to think more in terms of the value of local content. He said that out of 3000 title entries in an educational film catalogue currently circulating Australia, only 9 per cent are of local origin.

Speaking for J.C. Williamson's theatrical interests, Paul Riomfalvy, said the revamped JCW were interested in Australian content, not for purely patriotic, but for significantly financial reasons. JCW have now commissioned work from playwright Ron Blair, and they hope to complement a growing commitment to local drama with the promotion of a stronger Australian 'star' tradition.

Nimrod Theatre producer Ken Horler criticized the Australian commercial theatre's neglect to date of Australian content, and implied that the unified industry could serve a greater result might be a stronger political base for the entertainment industry.

INDUSTRY UNITY

Horler's comment was not the seminar's first call for closer unity between film, television and theatrical production interests. Most comments in this direction were aimed at closer bonding with the nucleus film industry, and here it was felt that PDGA might play a significant role.

Early in the seminar, Harry Miller said that when it came to negotiating fees or politicizing broader demands, film and television production interests were fragmented in a way rarely evident in theatre. In the face of the needs of investment attraction and increasing union demands, Miller said a continuation of this aloof stance would not augur well for the industry's future.

Milton Watson, as part of his seven-point plan covering standards and production quotas, stressed that PDGA set up a sub-committee of its more senior members to advise junior members on the viability of script concepts and packaging; while Julie James-Bailey made several suggestions to provide an answer to the television industry's lack of a "long view".

Television, she said, needed much broader input from allied fields of entertainment, and the television medium itself should serve a greater amount of its own experimental and training needs, along with those of film and theatre. Once again, PDGA was encouraged to play a dominant role in the unified industry, and the ultimate result might be a stronger political base for the entertainment industry.

TAXATION

(i) Profit concessions: Most opinions were against tax concessions for the filmmaker, generally on the assumption that it was either an insignificant, or at best temporary, cure to the industry's foreseeable financial problems, or that the prospect of explaining the uniqueness of the film industry's requirements to taxation authorities was too much trouble than it was worth.

Paddy McGuinness said there were strong arguments against tax concessions, but they would have to be specially viewed by the authorities in the context of film. John Daniell of the AFC reported that a film industry submission on the tax question was being prepared for the consideration of the Myer committee in Canberra.

(ii) Cinema admissions: At least three of the speakers who advised tampering with income taxation were still in favor of a tax on cinema admissions which could subsequently be fed as subsidy to production in much the same way that Eady Money is dispensed in Britain.

Organizers of the "Entertainment is Big Business" Seminar, PDGA president Kip Porteous and treasurer Maureen Walsh.
"The Man in the Black Car"

SAMUEL Z. ARKOFF

How did it come about that someone with your background became involved in the very early days of television?

Well, in the air force, during World War 2, I met a young fellow named Hank McCuen and I helped him put on some soldier shows. He was very visionary about television even in those early days.

Anyway, when I took my Law degree in 1948 I worked for him in Los Angeles for no money: at the same time as I was working in a law office. Finally, in 1950, we managed to sell National Broadcasting Corporation the first filmed television series. Those were the days of the live shows, like Philco Playhouse: till then nothing had been on film.

We had $5500 a week to make a 30-minute film, and we did it by working non-union. The unions were in the more established fields of radio and television, and in theatrical films, but television film was still a no-man’s land. So we managed to make them, and when you have only $5500 a week to spend, you learn to be a producer.

At the same time, as a struggling lawyer I was representing probably every young, aspiring producer that was around, and I would take points in their productions in lieu of fees. In 1952, I had a client who contended that Jack Brouthers, a fellow who was handling reissues, had stolen a title. Now really, you can’t steal a title, but I went over to see Jack Brouthers anyway, knowing that I didn’t have any solid ground to stand on. Jack brought out his title-man, the fellow who did all their advertising, and it turned out to be Jim Nicholson.

Jim had been in exhibition for years. Through illness he had lost the four theatres he owned, so he was back temporarily with Jack Brouthers. Jim swore that he had thought of the title independently, but Jack wrote out a $500 settlement cheque anyway, which was pretty amazing, because Jack was a known skinflint.

After that Jim and I became very friendly and in 1954 we decided that the time was ripe to set up an independent distribution company. We called it American Releasing Corporation and a year later changed the name to American International Pictures. We had no offices, so we used states righters and so-called franchise holders. We set it up for $3000 and started with one of Roger Corman’s films.

How did you meet Corman?

I first met him in 1953. We were aware that he had made a little film called Monster from the Ocean Floor for about $20,000, and we knew he was dissatisfied with the way his distributor had handled it. So we approached him to let us distribute it. We took Roger around, got some advances from our franchise holders, and we were able to distribute his films.

Samuel Z. Arkoff is president and chairman of the board of American International Pictures, the highly successful production-distribution company founded by him and the late James H. Nicholson in 1954. Over the past 22 years he has been responsible for the introduction of a host of new crazes into the film industry — from teen musicals to horror, bikie and drug opuses. Arkoff’s Australian distributor, Roadshow, labelled October as “Sam Arkoff Month”, and initiated a big sales drive of AIP releases. To top off the celebrations, Arkoff made his first trip to Australia, where in Melbourne he spoke with Cinema Papers contributing editor Antony I. Ginnane.
The Day the World Ended

The Tomb of Ligeia,
Charles Bronson in Machine Gun Kelly.

Invasion of the Saucer-Men
Peter Fonda (centre) in The Wild Angels.

Shelley Winters in Bloody Mama

In the early sixties AIP started handling importations...

Actually, the change came in 1958. We had taken over the master lease on the old Charlie Chaplin studio.
In 1958 we made 22 films in Hollywood, which means 11 combinations, and by this time we began to think that we had found the golden formula. Except for our beginning films like Apache Woman (which was still recouping) we hadn’t lost any money on any film—which, as you know, defies the law of gravity, among other things. So by ’58 other independents had plunged in and were making the same type of films. We had made classics like I was a Teenage Frankenstein, which starred Michael Landon of Bonanza in his first film, and so on. But by the summer of 1958 the bottom dropped out: there were too many films of that particular type. So by early ’59 we managed to get rid of the studio lease, because no sooner did we move into that studio than there was a studio strike. Along came Red Skelton, who wanted to buy that lot. We didn’t own it, we only had the master lease, but he bailed us out (and damn near bailed himself in). Jim and I headed off to Italy, because Joseph E. Levine, our franchise holder in Boston, was about to sign Hercules. We had heard about these sword and sandal strongman films and we bought two, one of them finished and called The Sign of Rome, starring Anita Ekberg.

I discovered from reading some history, that in the later days of the Roman empire, when the Romans’ brains and brawn were getting a little weak from too many carnivals, they used to fete slaves who had won in the arena. So it became Sign of the Gladiator, although we didn’t have a gladiator in the whole film. In the dubbing we managed to establish this one particular man as a former gladiator who, if he lost, would find himself back in the ring. The other one that we picked up was a Steve Reeves Hercules film. But Joe was about to come out with his Steve Reeves Hercules film, so we renamed Hercules Goliath in the dubbing and the film became Goliath and the Barbarians.

Did you buy those films for the U.S. and Canada, or with other world territories in mind?

We bought them for about half the world and then we gave them to others to distribute. In Australia, I was a Teenage Frankenstein, part of AIPs horror line-up of the late 50s—before the bottom dropped out of the market and Arkoff moved on to the “Sword and Sandal Strongman” films.

we used MGM at one stage and later, Paramount.

The big problem in this general area was that most of those foreign salesmen still thought they were royalty. You have to realize that after the war Americans thought they were the kings of the beasts. Their attitude in foreign territories was sometimes very arrogant and the foreign departments of the so-called major film companies behaved in much the same way. They failed to realize that the youth rebellion had struck and that the arrival of television had changed the whole pattern of cinema attendance: except for certain films, old people were for the most part going to stay at home and now young people were going to make up the bulk of the theatre-going audience. So they kept on pushing those nice films like The Vagabond King. They didn’t understand our films; they thought they were simply cheap and didn’t push them.
Richard Brennan

Members of the Australian film industry exist in a perpetual state of tension and, until recently, a state of fierce mutual antagonism. It is not surprising really — becoming a film producer in Australia is probably somewhat easier than buying a gun in the U.S. Every other day some former used car salesman is announcing that he has just about clinched the rights to Poor Fellow My Country, and that Charles Bronson is so keen to play the lead that he is taking English lessons — along with the producer.

And so the breed proliferates — another group of people looking for a second group to pose as a third group, so that a fourth group can pretend to be held by the illusion. This fourth group of people will have many opportunities to exercise their credulity between December and February. Barney, Break of Day, Deathcheaters, Don's Party, Mrs Eliza Fraser, Promised Woman, Raw Deal, Storm Boy and Summer of Secrets will all be parading their wares at a time when audiences have decreased, but the Australian success stories — Picnic at Hanging Rock, Caddie and The Devil's Playground are going through the roof.

Of these films, Mrs Fraser, Break of Day and to a lesser extent Summer of Secrets — which Richard Brennan is a film producer. His credits include: Homesdale, The Office Picnic, Promised Woman, The Adventures of Barry McKenzie (production manager), The Great McCarthy (associate producer), The Removalists, The Trespassers, Mad Dog Morgan (associate producer), and Deathcheaters (associate producer).

has not gambled on an overseas star name — signal a shift in thinking towards considerably larger budgets than Alvin Purple, The Adventures of Barry McKenzie and Stone. And in 1977 this trend will continue with The Picture Show Man, The Last Wave, Summerfield, The Mango Tree and The Irishman.

It will be an unhappy situation if at least one of the films at the other end of the financial spectrum is not successful. The Australian industry has supported a number of 'gentleman' directors who have made one unsuccessful attempt at a feature and have disappeared back to Paddington or Carlton. Their failures have been partially compensated within the Film Commission, at least by the successes of other films. This is not going to be possible on budgets of $500,000 and upwards. Nor will it signal the death of the breed.

If a producer has the rights to a potentially attractive property and wants to gamble on a director's first try at a feature, who is to gainsay him? The result may be Caddie, Sunday Too Far Away, or The Devil's Playground.

The fact that the candidate has spent 10 years dodging writ servers in Darwin, or has an overdeveloped taste for cucumber sandwiches at Sunday luncheons, may signal a hint that he is not Martin Scorsese, but the field is small and new faces have to be gambled on.

At the time of writing, Tim Burstall, Bruce Beresford, Terry Bourke, Tom Cowan, Ken Hannam, Richard Franklin, Brian Trenchard Smith, Mike Thornhill and Peter Weir comprise the currently employed members of the industry who have directed more than one 35mm feature. Of these all but Ken Hannam, who is a former ABC director, have backgrounds in low budget filmmaking.

Since 1968 they have directed 22 features, screened in 35mm; another 17 — local in origin — have also appeared. Filmmaking is a demanding occupation which needs considerable stamina of those participating at all levels. There are curiously few crew members over 40 currently involved in production. This is due to the demanding nature of the work and also faddism.
Australia doesn't support stock companies comparable to those used by John Ford and Ingmar Bergman. At the end of a shoot it is not uncommon to hear a producer say that he hopes to have the same crew available for his next production. Should the continuity of labor be as high as one-third it would be exceptional.

At a time when Australian producers are relatively better disposed towards one another than was the case two years ago, there is a burgeoning discontent among crews and distrust of producers. This has been a by-product of producer greed. The crew member is given no genuine participation in the film and the producer seeks to compensate for this with a champagne slate at the end of the first week and a blueberry end-of-shooting party. On Deathcheaters, the producer-director Brian Trenchard Smith spread 5 per cent of the producer's profit equally among the crew. Effectively this gives them 25 per cent of the return which, while not a large sum of money, is a considerable incentive to those involved.

A particularly damaging myth about the Australian industry is that there is virtually only one feature crew in Australia. I recently returned from overseas one day before commencing work on a film. A crew of 22 had been engaged - I had previously worked with only five of them. I wasn't overjoyed at the prospect of working with 17 people almost unknown to me, but in the event it was a very rewarding experience.

Some of the most sought after crew members in Australia are also the biggest pains in the arse - complacent, sulky and paraanoidically afraid of criticism. Others who work less frequently, because they are outside the club, or have just not worked with producers or directors who are able to provide continuity of work, are considerably more energetic, imaginative and involved. The only totally baseless criticism of the current proliferation of features is that there are not enough technicians capable of fulfilling the demands put on them. There is a shortage of competent production managers and of designers, but otherwise it is a cornucopia.

The advisability of using overseas stars as an audience drawcard is moot and probably unresolvable. I have seen a criticism of the selection of Dennis Hopper to play in Mad Dog Morgan, but I don't think it could be sustained; not even the most virulently parochial critic has suggested that the power of the film does not derive substantially from his strange and brilliant performance. My first experiences with overseas performers were with Dennis Price and Peter Cook in The Adventures of Barry McKenzie. Their fees were not exorbitant, but I did not admire Cook's performance and was annoyed when many local critics preferred his work to that of Barry Crocker and Paul Bertram. On top of that I don't believe a large proportion of the audience were aware of his identity.

Australian audiences seem to respond warmly to the spectacle of local boys who have made good. I have heard them react loudly and favorably to Spike Milligan in Bazza, Bud Tingwell in Petersen and Nick Tait in Devil's Playground. For the same reasons I think the casting of Ray Barrett in Don's Party and Rod Taylor in Picture Show Man are shrewd moves. I doubt Dominic Guard's performance in Picnic at Hanging Rock increased its commercial potential; and Jimmy Wang Yu, his lack of charm in Man From Hong Kong is so relentless that I have heard audiences scream for Grant Page to kill him in their fight scene.

The real problem we face here is an unwillingness to experiment. In the past few years I think only Dalmas, Cars That Ate Paris and Devil's Playground have been really venturesome. The first two were not commercially successful, but they led the way to the critical success of Pure Shit and the double success of Picnic at Hanging Rock. The prevailing blind faith that a genre — roughly described as "period" — will hold an inexhaustible fascination to the Australian public is as misguided as Hollywood's convictions in the early 60s that what the public wanted to see were epics.

Our production, scripting and directors' techniques are largely modelled on British methods — which is fine if you want to make British-type films with the look of another era. In fact I would ascribe this to a producer failure to involve the crew in the success of the final product and his slavish desire to find successful precedents. Fred Schepisi held out against considerable opposition that Devil's Playground would need an eight-week shooting period to do the film justice. There is no doubt that the method worked for the film. But a Dillinger or a Psycho, shot over a prolonged period, would probably look rather slack.

A compressed shooting period can contribute considerable drive to a film — I suspect that a great part of the energy of Pure Shit derives from the fact that it was made in a hurry. By March or April a 1977 direction will have formed itself. Producers will be engaging cast and crews on the basis that this is "the big one" — the first Australian film to succeed on an international level (most of us have worked on at least six of these).

When that happens I hope investors will recall that the first such films from other countries were modest films like Ashes and Diamonds, Rashomon, Memories of Underdevelopment and The Cranes Are Flying. Poland's most expensive film, The Pharaoh, Britain's lavish Caesar and Cleopatra, the Arabian film, Night of Counting the Years and Cacoyannis' Day the Fish Came Out, simply illustrated that you could take the film out of the country, but you could not take the country out of the film.
BERTOLUCCI'S 1900:

Basil Gilbert

In recent years, the young Italian film director, Bernardo Bertolucci, has been one of the main targets of film censorship in Italy. In January this year, his *Last Tango in Paris* was declared obscene and the court ordered all copies of the film in Italy to be "thrown to the flames". The judgement came after a delay of four years; *Last Tango*, with its rather pungent vocabulary (which included such words as "pigsucker", a 'dirty' word actor Marlon Brando taught Bertolucci) first appeared to stunned audiences at the New York Film Festival in 1972.

The judgement was based on fascist-era laws that had originally been aimed at pornographic literature, but which were now being applied increasingly against films. However, the court did permit one copy of *Last Tango* to be stored in the national film archives in Rome, for the purposes of academic study.

The legal action did not stop with the sequestration of the film, Bertolucci and his producer, Alberto Grimaldi, as well as the principal leads in the film — Marlon Brando and Maria Schneider — were each given two-month suspended prison sentences.

Bertolucci and Grimaldi also learned that they had lost the right to vote at national elections in Italy for the next 10 years.

The news of Bertolucci's de-registration as a voter — which meant one less vote for the communists for 10 years — was preceded by even more disturbing news. The first part of his new historical epic *1900* had also been declared obscene by a Salerno magistrate and was immediately ordered off all screens throughout the country. It had been running for less than three weeks, and only the day previously the second half of the 5 hour 24 minute "colossal" (as they call such films in Italy) had begun screenings at alternative cinemas. The public flocked to see the non-censored second half, fearing that it too might be censored. To cope with the demand, cities such as Rome and Milan ran it simultaneously at three cinemas.

The first part of *1900*, which in toto had cost the massive sum of $6 million to produce, had been banned by the magistrate, after a complaint from a resident of that city. Professor Borraro, who ran the provincial library of Salerno, had seen the film in the company of his wife and 17-year-old daughter, Argentina, and they were shocked at what they saw. To them, the most distressing scene in the film was an episode which showed two men in bed with the one woman.

Professor Borraro, who won a gold medal for his contributions to "education, culture and art", was also shaken by a scene of Bof-type cunnilingus, where a young schoolmistress is seated on a basket of apples, in a barn that served as headquarters for the countryside communist "education faculty"; and finally, by a charming naïve sequence where the young squire of the property stimulates his cousin Regina by the side of an elm tree, making use of the co-efficient of friction of the barrel of his old-fashioned sporting rifle.

In Italy, the banning of a film can mean economic disaster. Italians are still the world's most enthusiastic film buffs; even television when it was introduced in Italy, did not have the same decimating effect on cinema-goers as in France and Germany.

According to British journalist Peter Nichols, the decade beginning in 1961, Italian cinemas lost some 200 million patrons — attendances falling from 741 million to 550 million — while in Germany during the same period there was a drop from 517 million to 180 million, and in France from 350 million to 190 million. So, with the banning of *1900* after such a short run, it seemed that Twentieth Century-Fox, the film's distributors in Italy, had backed a non-starter.

The day after the film was banned, the Italian press — especially the socialist papers — began a campaign of retaliation. The news of the event was front-page headlines in several papers. "An incredible repressive and censorious intervention", declared *L'Unita*, the official national daily of the Communist Party; "A Banning by Incompetents", complained *Florence's Paese Sera* in a double-column report; while the moderate *La Nazione* ran the sober headlines "1900 banned: Bertolucci Demoralised".

Many of the reports included a short personal statement by Bertolucci. It read (in part):

"Once upon a time, there was an Italian cinema with images and sounds which were brought to life in the dark ambience of the cinema through the re-creative imagination of the spectators ... but a film is only a miserable fragment of celluloid when it is forbidden to be projected and viewed."

After commenting on the "physical and psychological impossibility" of launching a second campaign of words and actions against "obscurantist magistrates who cloak political repression under the label of obscenity", Bertolucci added:

"I believe the only thing left for an Italian filmmaker is the sad alternative of emigrating and working in a free country, as long as Mussolini continues to be present in our life through the penal code."

This concluding paragraph, although it may have raised expectations in the hearts of some Americans and Australians (who could see Bertolucci setting off for Hollywood, Melbourne or Sydney), deeply touched many sensitive Italians.

"I am sad to be an Italian when this state of affairs can exist in Italy," said a medical student friend.
Many newspapers then began running lengthy features on the ban with headlines such as, "The Winter Lasts 20 Years" — an oblique reference to the "dark winter of fascism" under Mussolini.

The Italian trade unions also gave their support to Bertolucci, as did numerous leading writers, critics and intellectuals. The general feeling was that a major political and social film was being denied access to the screen, on the pretext of being sexually offensive, at a time when Italian cinemas were overflowing with third-rate soft-core pornography and sadistic violence.

This point of view was underlined by the fact that Marco Ferreri’s latest film, L’Ultima Donna, had been rated a non-obscene “work of art” by the film censor, even though it is an unabashed hymn to the male phallus and its limitations, culminating when actor Gerard Depardieu brutally mutilates himself with an electric breadknife.

Bertolucci’s emigration statement was made on September 25, just one hour after he heard of the ban, but later in a statement to the Turin daily LaStampa, he said that, although he was grateful for the overwhelming public response to the banning of the film, he had spoken in the heat of the moment and wished to correct some possible misunderstandings. He began by withdrawing the statement that he would be obliged to emigrate, and called for an end to the “mobilization of opinion” in his favor.

He added:

"I personally will not participate in any manifestations of solidarity because I emphatically believe in the uselessness of demonstrations, gatherings, assemblies, etc. I am very touched and grateful to all those who have expressed their anger in this fashion; but at the same time I am convinced that the only way is to entrust the management of this struggle for liberty of expression — decreed by the Constitution — to those, who more than anyone else, have the duty to serve and respect it; namely, the politicians seated in the parliament..."

“...I believe that the struggle must be for total freedom of expression, including freedom for pornography. The reason is simple. An Italian adult, who from 18 years of age onwards has the right to vote and the right to strike, and who is obliged to perform military duties, is then regarded as a juvenile by these acts of censorship. He is denied the right to choose the theatrical entertainment he wishes to see.”

This was a surprisingly moderate statement for a ‘revolutionary’ filmmaker. The latter part of this argument is reasonable enough, but the earlier pious hope that the “Constitution-respecting” politicians in Rome would take any effective action could hardly be taken seriously. Italian politicians as a group have been described by one political observer as “a class apart... which has nothing to do with the world at large”, and these “honorable gentlemen” (as they are called in the press) would hardly be likely to run to the aid of a radical young filmmaker who was causing unnecessary trouble. They had enough on their plates: the Italian Women’s Liberation Movement was pressing its demands for abortion on request, violence was on the increase in Rome and Milan, unemployment was rising and the lira was falling. Soon however, their help was no longer needed, for the situation of 1900 suddenly changed. On September 27 the press reported that the right of the Salerno magistrate to ban the first part of the film was under challenge.

The film had been given a small public screening in August in the mountain holiday resort of Ortisei, high in the Dolomites region of Austria. In this quiet town, another Italian citizen had lodged a complaint on the grounds of the film’s alleged immorality.

Ortisei is located in the Republic of Bolzano, and the complaint was referred to the deputy public prosecutor there, Dr. Vincenzo Anania. Judge Anania, a man reportedly under attack by local fascist supporters, said that as the film was screened in territory under his jurisdiction he was first priority in any legal proceedings against it.

During the pause, the press campaign continued unabated, and the weekly journals began to conduct in-depth interviews. The weekly magazine, Gente, interviewed Professor Borraro and his wife and he listed the reasons which led to the banning. Apart from the incidents mentioned earlier, what particularly concerned Professor Borraro was the effect of such films as 1900 on today’s youth, which he said was "fragile, possessing a delicate psycho-emotional equilibrium". He said that he had been supported in his stand by many friends and notables, including the Catholic archbishops of Amalfi and Salerno.
THE PERSISTENCE OF VISION

FILM MOVEMENT, THE PERSISTENCE OF VISION, AND THE PHI PHENOMENON.

Bruce Horsfield

There is still widespread error in the majority of film texts concerning the nature of the perceptual processes which give rise to our experiencing the illusion of movement when we watch the series of still photographs that we call a motion picture. Most film writers in the present decade appear to have inherited the popular, but incomplete, explanation of illusory film movement, which is given in terms of the perceptual phenomenon known as persistence of vision:

"Persistence of vision is simply the inability of the retina to follow and signal rapid fluctuations in brightness."

That is to say, we go on seeing something after we have ceased to see it, so to speak:

"The visual effects that arise when the eye is illuminated do not terminate immediately on cessation of stimulus but persist for a definite time interval. It is this persistence of vision that causes a moving light source to be seen as a line of light or a flashing light source to be seen as steady when the flash rate is sufficiently high. The persistent image is of high fidelity and short duration."1

This perceptual phenomenon has been studied for a long time: The ancient Greeks were aware of it. With the rise of science, and the development of optical devices and toys, it seems that persistence of vision could explain the illusions created by a range of inventions:

"... cinema owes its very existence to a sophisticated technology. Its birth depended on several inventions that were part of the increased scientific activity of the late nineteenth century: the discovery of persistence of vision, which was the basis of many toys that created the illusion of motion (Nolle's "whirling top" in 1765, Plateau's and Stamper's magic disc in 1832, which used a shutter, and Horner's Zoetrope, or wheel of life, in 1834). The principle of the shutter and persistence of vision were first combined with the projection of photographs in 1870 when Henry Kenne Hoyer projected his 18 posed pictures of a waltzing couple before an audience of 1500 people in the Academy of Music in Philadelphia."2

While the various optical toys varied in their design and operation, the one explanation of how their illusory effects were created was persistence of vision:

"All these optical toys, such as the Zoetrope, Mutoscope, Phenakistoscope etc. are dependent on a characteristic of the eye known as persistence of vision. If, while one is looking at an object, it suddenly disappears, the image of it will remain on the retina of the eye (for a brief space of time approximately one-tenth of a second) and during this time one will continue to see the object although it is no longer before the eye. This can be demonstrated by means of another simple and easily made optical toy of the nineteenth century, the Thaumatrope. . . . What happens here is that the eye sees repeated views of each picture in such rapid succession that the persistence of vision bridges the gap between them, and they appear as a continuous picture. Since two such continuous pictures are presented simultaneously in the same position, they merge into one."3

Indeed, for the Thaumatrope the persistence theory still proves adequate. The Thaumatrope is the spinning disc, which, when spun, blends the two images on its surfaces:

"If a horse is on one side and a rider on the other, if a cage is on one side and a bird on the other, we see the rider on the horse and the bird in the cage. It cannot be otherwise. It is simply the result of the positive afterimages. If at dark we twirl a glowing joss stick in a circle, we do not see one point moving from place to place, but we see a continuous circular line. It is nowhere broken because, if the movement is quick, the positive afterimage of the light in its first position is still effective in our eye when the glowing point has passed through the whole circle and has reached the first position again."

The important point about the Thaumatrope is that the combined images do not move about, but present a static scene to the eye by superimposition of the two pictures. But a great many film writers use the persistence of vision theory to explain movement effects as well, not only in motion pictures but also in television:

"But we are willing to believe in the reality of light-and-shadow patterns created by pieces of film passing across a beam of light at the rate of 24 frames a second. A physiological effect is involved, each picture lingers as an afterimage; it is not instantly extinguished in the viewer's eye; his eye fails to see the empty intervals (lasting 1/48th of a second) between the separate still images. Neither can he see the swift motion of the tiny electronic beam that scans the TV tube to create an image with film points of light. The optical persistence of the still images (or the running together of the points of light) combined with our delayed perception of the tiny changes from image to image causes us to believe that we are witnessing real movement... A chain of physiological and psychological events, therefore, identifies the viewing of motion pictures with the viewing of reality."4

So the persistence logos appears to have been around at least for 150 years, and possibly because published findings of psychological experiments and discoveries would not be read by many film writers, the inadequate account is still widespread in the present decades. Persistence of vision theory is used to explain the illusion of film movement in many works, including the 1971 UNESCO publication, The Role of Film in Development, Lee Bobker's 1974 text, Elements of Film, the 1975 book The Cinema as Art, by Ralph Stephenson and J. R. Debriz, and Marsha Kinder and Beverle Houston's Close-up: A Critical Perspective on Film, 1972. These are just a few of the many. Curiously, Kinder and Houston, having described illusory film movement in terms of persistence of vision, refer their readers to Rudolph Arnheim's "fuller discussion of the illusory aspects of cinema... Yet Arnheim is one of the few writers who refute the persistence of vision theory.

The refutation of the persistence of vision theory makes a most interesting study. Objections to the theory, on both theoretic and experimental grounds, go back to the late 1800s, so that Hugo Münsterberg's a priori criticism, implied in the irony of this 1916 account, was not wholly new:

"The routine explanation of the appearance of movement was accordingly: that every picture of a particular position left in the eye an afterimage until the next picture with the slightly changed position of the jumping animal or of the marching men was in sight, and the afterimage of this lasted until the third came. The afterimages were responsible for the fact that no interruptions were noticeable, while the movement itself resulted simply from the passing of one position into another. What else is the perception of movement but the seeing of a long series of different positions?"
The irony is in the last sentence, because Münsterberg knew very well that if the account is taken literally, the illusion of motion in motion pictures is not of many different ‘stills’ then the perceived effect should, therefore, be jerky, like dancers under a stroboscopic light. Since we do not perceive stroboscopic motion, but natural motion, in films, then there must be something wrong with the explanation. The more satisfactory account must be given in terms of other perceptual phenomenon of vision, known as the “phi phenomenon”. Münsterberg, a German lecturer in psychology andepromoter of William James in 1892, and became one of America’s foremost psychologists. Of particular concern to him was the need to popularize psychology as a science, and he wrote and spoke much on that topic.

In the Foreword to his book on Münsterberg’s The Silent Photoplay in 1916, Richard Griffith writes:

"Early in 1915 (Münsterberg) chanced to see Annette Kellerman in Neptune’s Daughter, and he spent much of the following summer in nickelodeons, studying this new thing which so astonishingly illustrated the result of his own researches. Theoretically the world has been divided into two classes — the ‘highbrows’ and the ‘lowbrows’. What the cinematograph will bring to the ‘lowbrows’ is no worse than the ‘pictograph’ which Giorgio de Chirico introduced to the ‘highbrows’, he wrote, ‘The Pictograph will bring these two brows together.’"

There might be many today who would agree with Münsterberg’s prophecy about the Photograph, or motion picture film, as we call it. Münsterberg’s “researches” were indebted to earlier researchers, as Munsterberg himself tells us in his description of the phi phenomenon:

"Both Wertheimer and Köhler worked with a delicate instrument in which two light lines on a dark ground could be exposed in very quick succession and in which it was possible to vary the position of the lines, the distance of the lines, their intensity of light, the time exposure of each, and the time between the appearance of the first line and the second. The vertical line is immediately followed by a horizontal, the two together give the impression of one vertical line. If the time between the vertical and the horizontal is long, first one then the other is seen. But at a certain length of time interval a new effect is reached. We see the vertical line falling over and lying flat like the horizontal line. If the eyes are fixed on the point in the midst of the angle we might expect that this movement comes to an end. But experiments show that under these circumstances we frequently get the strongest impression of motion. If we use two horizontal lines, the one above the other, we see, if the time interval is short, that the upper one moves downward toward the lower. But we can introduce there a very interesting variation. If we make the lower line, which appears objectively after the upper one, more intense, the total impression is one which begins with the lower. We see first the lower line moving towards the upper one which then moves down towards the lower, and then follows the second phase in which both appear to fall down to the position of the lower one. It is not necessary to go further into detail of the mechanism by which the apparent movement is in no way the mere result of an afterimage and that the impression of motion is surely not the mere perception of successive phases of movement. The movement is in these cases not seen from without but is superadded by the action of the mind, to motionless pictures."

Film movement is apparent movement, as opposed to vertical movement, which is actual displacement of objects in space and time. The cinematic illusion is caused by the senses being fooled, and more specifically, the persistence of vision is required for the deception to succeed. Two perceptual characteristics are involved, persistence of vision and the phi phenomenon of apparent movement. What is the role of each?

First of all, let’s begin with the necessary arithmetic. For a projector screening at 24 frames per second (sound speed for most projectors) then each frame of the film is exposed on the screen for 1/48th second. So every 4 x 1/48th, or half sec, is comprised of image time. The other half second is made up of total blackness, caused by the masking action of the rotating shutter in the projector, so described projection where each successive still picture is jerked into place. Without the shutter the screened image is a hopeless blur, seen sometimes when the projector mechanism is not working properly. There are 24 masks of the projector gate 1/48th second each in duration, making up the other half second. Of course none of us see these blackouts because the image of each preceding still picture on the film lingers as a strong positive afterimage, otherwise called persistence of vision. This is as far as the traditional explanation goes, and its main flaw is that it does not say why the series of clearly perceived stills is not seen as jerky motion.

So that the illusion of smooth, fluid movement can be better explained, we must include the phi phenomenon of apparent movement. The experiments and demonstrations of Exner, Wertheimer, Köhler and a host of others have been employed to clarify the illusionary effects resulting from the projection of film. Phi movement is the appearance of movement where none actually exists, and may be witnessed in a great variety of situations. The navigation lights of an aeroplane, flashing alternately, can give the illusion of motion whereby one light appears to move to the other. Advertising lighting, flashed at the appropriate rate, gives the distinct impression of movement when the time between flashes is properly chosen. What is seen is due to the slight difference (ca. 0.1 sec) between the two lights, and the time intervals between the lights, and the time intervals between their flashes is about right — is a single light moving across from the position of the first light to the second.

The intermittent images must be presented with space and time jumps that are not too large, since what is seen will vary markedly with variations to the rate of flashing and the time between the flashes, as in the following diagram:

At rapid rates of flashing, two lights are seen in place ("simultaneity" — top panel); at the proper slower rate, a single light appears to move from its first location smoothly and continuously across the screen to the second location ("optimal movement" — bottom panel); and between these two rates, a light seems to move part-way across the screen, disappear, reappear at a more distant point and continue onto the second location ("partial movement").

The relevance of the phi phenomenon (called beta motion by some writers) to the explanation of apparent movement in film is established by Wertheimer’s experiments where lines set at right angles were used. This work is the paradigm of all the visual content of all the separate frames of all films, since the two lines are an abstraction of the two dimensional content of each frame, including color, size, shape and position.

Having seen the prevalence of the persistence of vision theory, we may conjecture concerning the number of people who are aware of the more complete view, which includes both persistence of vision and the phi phenomenon. It is impossible to have been some who have not missed the fuller account:

"Films students who attended Slavko Vorkapich’s lectures at the Museum of Modern Art in 1965, and were astounded at his demonstration that the illusion of film movement does not derive from the persistence of vision but from the ‘phi phenomenon’, would have been less astonished had they been familiar with Münsterberg’s description..."

Like Münsterberg, Rudolf Arnheim, in 1971, acknowledged the implications of Wertheimer’s experiments, stating simply that “since we see motion, motion must be produced somewhere in the brain.” Another, Paul Kolers, who has recently written a most comprehensive survey4 of the whole question of illusory and veridical motion, devotes a large chapter to Wertheimer. Kolers mentions the legend that Wertheimer’s interest in apparent movement arose from his contemplation of the physiological and psychological aspects of the motion picture. More importantly, Kolers asserts that no satisfactory account of the phi phenomenon has yet been put forth. This means that we cannot as yet fully explain how the film illusion is created. Even persistence of vision and phi movement are unable to supply a full account.

Before proceeding further, some notice should be taken of the work of S. Exner, to whom Wertheimer and a host of other researchers are indebted for discovering, in 1875-6, apparent movement. Exner ascertained that the time interval of two spatially separated successive electric sparks can be correctly perceived (on the average) when the interval between them is not less than 0.045 sec. Then, putting the sparks closer to each other in space, he achieved stroboscopic motion, instead of succession. The threshold time at which the direction of the moving spark was perceived was only 0.014 sec. Movement, Exner concluded, must involve a special process of the mind and perception of motion cannot be attributed to memory of position and perception of order. Interest in apparent movement then mostly lapsed until Wertheimer’s work in 1910, which was published in 1912. His findings created excitement and interest, and have been described as the beginnings of the Gestalt movement in psychology.

Of central importance to these early experimenters was the Critical Fusion Frequency (CFF), which is the rate of flashing below which mere spatial and temporal separation is observed, and above which optimal motion i.e., the phi phenomenon, is experienced. Many studies since have shown that the CFF varies from person to person, with experimental conditions, with practice at observing the phenomenon, with volition and attitudes, with spatial separation of the flashes, and luminosity of the stimuli. For light of a given level of brilliance 30 flashes per second will result in a steady light; for a brighter light the CFF will be as high as 50 flashes per second, which may result in flicker effect. Flicker can be an irritant, as in a faulty fluorescent light when the ends
pulsate rapidly. The peripheral retina is very sensitive to such irritation. The rate of projection of film, 18 or 24 frames per second, is well below the CFF to above the threshold. A special shutter is used which shows each picture three times in rapid succession, thereby raising the 24 frames per second to 72 f.p.s. The peripheral retina may or may not detect flicker at this high rate.

Flicker can cause some interesting problems:

"Television gets over the problem of flicker rather differently. The picture is not presented as a whole, as in the cinema, but is built up in strips (known as an "interlaced raster") which minimizes flicker, though it is present and can be annoying, and even dangerous, for people with epilepsy, who can be seriously affected by flicker. It also presents a hazard in some unexpected circumstances, such as when driving by a row of trees whose shadows are cast upon the road by a low sun, or when landing a helicopter. The rotor blades of a helicopter produce a flickering light which can be most disturbing and dangerous.

"Low-frequency flicker produces very odd effects on normal observers as well as on those with a tendency to epilepsy. At flicker rates of about 5 to 10 per second brilliant colors, and moving and stationary shapes may be seen and can be extremely vivid. Their origin is obscure, and they probably arise from direct disturbance of the visual systems of the brain. Stimulation by bright flashing lights can be an unpleasant experience often leading to headache and nausea."14

(At least one acquaintance of mine cannot drive his car without severe and audible discomfort when the sun is below the trees. He cannot tolerate the flickering effect.)

Creating phi movement is not the only way of producing illusion of movement. Take for example, the following graphic, calling it a "sunburst" (it is the one-time logo of the Ilford firm) can produce an illusion of apparent movement. To try this out concentrate on the white centre of the graphic for about 20 seconds, then look immediately at a plain white surface. Movement should be seen. (Description of the illusion here might assist in its creation, which is cheating a little):

"Two properly placed and properly tuned flashes induce the illusion of a single object moving from its first location across the intervening empty space to its second location, where it may either disappear or return to its first location. If the interstimulus and intercycle intervals are equal and of proper duration, the illusory object is seen oscillating in smooth motion; if the intercycle interval is several times the duration of the interstimulus interval, the object disappears at the second location and movement recommences at the first.

"In other words, when conditions are right the visual system creates a perceptual object in the intervening space where physically there is none. The perceptual object created, moreover, resolves differences in appearance between the two physical objects, such as differences in color or shape. Hence the perceptual construction is not a mere redundant filling in of the space between the flashes with copies of the flashes themselves, it is an active resolution of their difference."15

Although a satisfactory explanation of these phenomena is not available, there are some important effects of illusory film movement that can nevertheless be explored. For example, we know that the positive afterimage that we call persistence of vision keeps each frame of the film clearly in view until the next frame takes its place, and that there is no perceptual decay in any of the images. But, we may ask, why does not the eye combine each sustained image with the image of the next frame of the film, resulting in blurring, double images and so forth? Why does not persistence of vision result in blurring in general, not only of film images, but of all that we see around us in our daily lives? The answer is that not all images are formed on the retina. Perceptual images are accepted as perceptions by the brain. Duke-Elder states that "the afterimage mechanism is a peripheral one depending on retino-neural processes and not on higher cerebral activities. That this is so can be shown by many experiments that demonstrate that an afterimage may be formed by a stimulus that never reaches consciousness."16 So that the afterimage, of say, frames 1 and 2 is preserved while the perception of frame 2, but only in the form of retinal activity. This may be illustrated by Bidwell's experiment:

"A disc half white and half black with a sector omitted is rotated in front of a background partly red and partly blue-green, so that images are presented to the eye in the order: colored background, white sector, black sector. At a certain speed of rotation it is found that the complementary colors of the background alone are seen, that is, the red appears pale blue-green and the blue-green appears pink. The mechanism is as follows: — the red stimulus causes a succeeding negative afterimage: a second red stimulus arriving at the period of the afterimage is suppressed; but a succeeding white field is tinted blue-green by it. This demonstrates that although no red impulse has reached consciousness, it has left its impression on the retina. It is also worthwhile to study the possible roles of the 1/48th sec. blackout between frames. The evidence suggests that the blackout has further valuable functions: it enhances the quality of the persisting image, preventing its decay, and it makes the retina more sensitive to the subsequent stimulation of the next frame in the film.

The evidence that both functions occur is derived from the phenomenon known as successive contrast. If we regard the series, image/blackout/image/blackout, as a succession of sudden differences in what the retina receives, then that succession is actually a more suitable presentation to the retina than, say, image/image/image/image/color/image/color, i.e. such as white, diffuse light:

"We have seen that after a stimulus of moderate intensity the presence of a positive afterimage indicates the persistence of activity of the visual apparatus. When this activity lasts, the retina is incapable of reacting normally to a second stimulus of a similar nature, but shows an increased sensitivity to processes of an opposite kind, which results in the production of a negative afterimage complimentary to the first stimulus. Stimulation has therefore an inhibitory effect on succeeding reactions of a similar kind, while excitability is increased to activity of other types."

That is, by delaying the "second stimulus of a similar nature", i.e. the next frame, the positive afterimage of the first frame is enhanced. It is important that the screen is blacked out between frames (as opposed to diffuse light filling in the 1/48th sec. gap, for example) as a like stimulus, such as white light, gives rise to a negative afterimage of complementary colors to those of the primary image. A film on a screen could fairly be described as "a stimulus of moderate intensity."

The phenomenon of successive contrast is a most important characteristic of the ages.

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In the following interview Roman Polanski talks about his latest film “The Tenant” with Cinema Papers Los Angeles correspondent David Brandes. Polanski also discusses his approach to the dual task of acting and directing, and gives his impressions of the actors he has worked with, including Jack Nicholson, Faye Dunaway and Isabelle Adjani. Polanski plays the lead role in “The Tenant”, which also features Isabelle Adjani, Shelley Winters and Melvyn Douglas.

There seems to be a theme that runs through all your work: and that is a kind of madness, a kind of paranoia. Characters find themselves in a great deal of trouble. We usually catch them on the edge, and by the time the film is over, they’re over the edge. How do you explain that?

I’ve often wondered myself. I think this is a question for one of those film critics or film scholars or psychiatrists who really observe and analyze filmmakers throughout their creative life. I am always at a loss when someone asks me to analyze my own work. I don’t know. I have obsessions, interests, beliefs . . . and whatever I do must be a function of these whether I like it or not. It’s like when you doodle — doodles bear some kind of relation to your state of mind.

Have you always been concerned with madness?

Yes I have. It preoccupies me. Not that I am so obsessed with it that I’m afraid. I don’t think that my mental health represents any hazard — I think it’s all right. But I have been acquainted early in my life with all kinds of madness — all kinds of strange coincidences. I once knew someone who was taken to a home, to an institution, and I have always been fascinated by it. Our mental health seems to be something which preoccupies today’s society so much that the subject itself seems to be something very vile.

The outlook of the characters in “The Tenant” is very European. Is this something you strove for?

Well the book itself, the novel which I have adapted, is so deeply rooted in Paris. It is so French, so typically French that I would not undertake an adaptation, changing the nationality of the piece itself. I like going places and making films in different countries and whenever I go to a new country I try to observe what is most typical, tangible about the place I intend to film in and I try to render it in my work. I have done films in New York, like Rosemary’s Baby. It doesn’t, I hope, have any particular flaws as far as the nationality of the film is concerned. It is very American, New York-ese. I made Chinatown in Los Angeles, and it was Los Angeles.

One of the strengths of your films is the strong sense of location. “Chinatown” for example really captured the mood of Los Angeles. How do you achieve this?

You have a reputation for being extremely meticulous. Everything that you make a film about vampires, it has to happen somewhere. The worst films or books or plays are those which happen nowhere. Even an imaginary place has to have some kind of research in it, some justification and motivation.

To give the actors roots in the place they come from . . .

To give them space, rather. To place them in a concrete place, even if it is an imaginary place . . . even if it is the planet Mars! You have to ask yourself what would be the way of behaving? What is the weight of a human being on a planet of a different size? How does he breathe? How does he move? As迥uric apparatus? These things give you more ideas about the behavior of the characters. They make them richer because they relate to something. They don’t walk in an idle, futile space, they walk in a concrete space.

In “The Tenant” the central character’s environment — the apartment — is very clearly drawn, yet he appears extremely uncomfortable, uneasy . . .

Well, now we are talking about two things. The man who is uncomfortable is an imaginary character, he is the hero of the film. But the space itself is concrete, made by the filmmaker. We must not mix up the fantasy with reality. Film is a fantasy . . . every film is a fantasy because it is conceived by the makers and the characters don’t really live.

You have a reputation for being extremely meticulous. Everything
has to be done in a certain way, and done ahead of time. How much do you rely on improvisation and things happening on the spot?

Well, I always conceive everything beforehand. But I don't stop there. I continue and hope that improvisation will bring new elements and give it freshness.

I like to have the maximum number of elements considered beforehand because I like conceiving it and I like working on the script. For me this is the fun of filmmaking. I come from a film school and I've been trained that way. But I also believe that by making it all happen before you find yourself on the set you save yourself a lot of trouble. You know what you have to deal with, and you are well prepared. You also have time for more work, for improvisation, for new inventions, and you're not concerned with things that you shouldn't be bothered with while you're on the set.

When you act in one of your films — as you do in “The Tenant” — do you encounter any problems directing yourself?

Well, it is easy to direct while acting, but it is quite difficult to act while directing. You see, when you make yourself an actor, first of all you have one less person to argue with. You are dealing with someone you understand better than the others. That’s the advantage of it. The technical problem of staging the scene can be very easily overcome. I start with rehearsal. I don’t even look at the camera which rests somewhere in the corner of the studio. I go through the scene with the other actors, or alone, whatever it requires. When that is settled I have an understudy or a stand-in who has been observing the rehearsal to go through all the motions. Then I line up my shot with the camera. I see exactly how it works by looking through my viewfinder.

Now comes the more difficult part — the performance, the acting itself. It requires a tremendous amount of concentration and relaxation at the same time. You have to be relaxed, focused, your face, your muscles have to be completely loose. You have to concentrate on the character, forget everything else and think of the function that you have to perform within the shot or scene. If you suddenly start thinking about lights, camera movements, other players' performances or the numerous details that the director usually has to tackle, then suddenly your performance suffers. It just falls to pieces. You have to train yourself to forget — you leave your director’s hat on the director’s chair and you put on the actor’s hat.

What about monitoring your own performance?

That is not so difficult because actors know when they play well and they know when they’re lousy. When someone plays well he feels it, there is a sense of satisfaction, of contentment when it all goes right, so if it is not right you know and you want to do another take. Lousy actors are often grouchy, but the people who have no struggle with their performance are very easy to deal with.

Let’s talk for a moment about some of the top actors you’ve worked with. Jack Nicholson, for example.

Jack Nicholson is about the finest actor I have ever worked with. He is pleasant to be with on the set because acting is easy for him. Sometimes when it does get difficult you can feel it: he becomes less pleasant to the others. Jack also works very hard. He likes to go out, stay late, dance, listen to music, talk to friends — but that doesn’t stop him going thoroughly through his lines before going to bed. And when he appears on the set you can be sure he knows every line of his dialogue . . . and those of Faye Dunaway as well, to help her, because she doesn’t.

How did you find working with Dunaway?

It was very hard. Very hard. She was struggling with the performance. She is difficult to work with . . . maybe the most difficult person I have ever worked with. To tell you the truth, a great pain in the arse.

But she gave a great performance . . .

She did, but it was blood, sweat and tears. But I don’t regret it. I don’t regret having worked with her.

What style of acting were you trained in? Stanislavsky’s method or a more traditional style?

I must tell you that first of all I come from Poland, as you know, and such things as Stanislavsky were obligatory. We were brought up on Stanislavsky. And we were sick with Stanislavsky, and we were bored with Stanislavsky. Nevertheless I must admit that there are a lot of interesting observations in his work, and some of them can help a beginner tremendously.

I think that once you are acting you don’t think of any kind of method or style. I think you just do it, and I do believe in talent. Some people have it and others don’t. I was not aware of it as much when I was beginning , but now when I think back, I realise I had talent for acting.

When I audition people, when I make tests, there are some people who immediately understand what I want — and they may never have had any acting experience. With others there is nothing, and no amount of work will make any difference.

Do you think the intense preparation of Method actors is a help to a director like you or a hindrance?

I don’t think it is a hindrance. I think it is a help because it teaches people to find something — particularly the people who don’t have it — that the others already have instinctively: the ability to switch into somebody else, another character; the ability to become someone else and do certain things, following a different pattern of behavior other than the one the person is born with.

However, this preparation can be replaced by something else. Stanislavsky says, to summarize it, that if you want to make the gesture of banging a table with your fist in anger, you have to concentrate, you have to build up this anger within you. And then comes the moment when it will spontaneously make you clench your fist and bang the table. But Vakhtangov, another Russian, observed later, if you clench your fist and bang the table it develops in you similar emotions without any build-up.

So it works both ways — a sort of psychosomatic reaction. Just try to clench your fist and hit this desk very strongly and you will see that something happens to you, to your emotions. This physical action causes it, and it is just one of the ways to create emotional build-up.

I don’t really like this technique, and I don’t like seeing an actor dancing around trying new steps on the stage. What I mean is that you need to concentrate, and you need to prepare yourself. If you watch good actors behave between takes,
But she is one of those people who really concentrates. For example, one day I saw her standing in a corner shaking, and I asked her what the matter was. She said she'd been preparing for the scene. I told her that we hadn't even started fighting yet alone rehearsing. And by the time we did start she was completely exhausted: there were no tears and no emotion left.

Isabelle also likes intense personal relationships in her work, and I have difficulty in really developing this type of atmosphere on the set. I don't like it, I like to keep it very remote. I don't like being close to actors, or to be very friendly with them. I don't even like seeing them after work. Jack Nicholson is a very close friend of mine, but when we were working together we never dined or lunched together. It makes it more difficult for me to work on the set.

Turning specifically to "The Tenant" — did it turn out as you planned?

It came more or less as I wanted. But don't forget that The Tenant is an adaptation of a novel. And if you decide to adapt a novel you take certain steps, and then you are stuck with it. You just have to accept it. I liked the novel, although there are some flaws in it; it changes too drastically in the middle. It's like two parts.

I tried to unify it a little bit more, but unless you decide to write a new script it's virtually impossible, and I don't like doing it. If I pick up a novel and make it into a film it's because I like it, and I always try to be as faithful as I can. That's the way I was with Rosemary's Baby and that's the way I was with The Tenant. These are the only two books I have made into films.

With The Tenant I liked the character I depict in the film very much. Actually I was more interested in playing the part than making the film. When it was first given to me some 10 years ago I didn't want to direct it because I had just finished making Repulsion, which had a very similar atmosphere. But I said I would love to play the part. And when Paramount acquired the rights to the book, Bob Evans thought that was a great idea.

Eventually, a project on which I was working for a long time was postponed for some 10 months and Bob Evans asked me if I would both act in The Tenant and direct it. As it seemed like a relatively easy film to do, I said yes.

I did want to ask you one specific question about "The Tenant". At the end of the film the character you portray attempts suicide, exactly the same way as the previous tenant. He isn't successful, so he goes back for a second try and falls again. Was that a tremendous horse laugh from the audience. Was this black comedy intentional?

Yes. It should get a laugh. Someone who misses the first time and tries to do it another time deserves a laugh — even applause I would say.

You don't think you go too far? The change in character at this point is very abrupt. One moment the audience is sharing your paranoia and the next they have plunged into slapstick, almost comic melodrama.

Well, that shift has its source in the novel itself. There is a shift in the novel, and, as I said, you have to change it completely or pick up something else. Since I'd decided to close the picture I had to cope with it. The change of style is conscious, it's not something that has escaped me. You either like it or not, and I do.

I found it stylistically inconsistent. You don't see that as a problem at all . . .

Yes I see it as a problem. But I accepted it at the beginning and just had to be content with it — otherwise I would have thrown it away. Either do the film in the style of the first half, or do it in the style of the second.

So you will consciously select a project knowing that it had a major flaw . . .

Yes that's right. It is a kind of major flaw. Perhaps the idea should be to make an intermission and let people have ice-cream in the middle. But then you'd have forgotten what it was like in the beginning.

So when you take a project and you realize that there are certain flaws in it, rather than break the unity of the piece, you just go with it . . .

Well no, usually I try to organize the construction of the film. But with The Tenant there was no visit to the location, the person selected to play the part, and I think that the only way would be to avoid him having any kind of visions or hallucinations in the second part, because those are sources of anguish, and they are the things that change the style of the film. Perhaps another way would be to make it completely realistic so that you don't really know whether it is happening or not — whether it is in the imagination or not.

But then I'm afraid the film would be tremendously dull. I don't think that you can sustain two hours of picture just observing a guy walking around his apartment. You would certainly attract a group of what I call stamp collectors who laugh at the film and would be acclaiming the sober approach of the director. But you wouldn't see any other people in the cinema. To make it entertaining you have to create some kind of suspense in the film, and this it is about a man's solitude and about his paranoia and hallucinations, you have to show the things he sees or believes are around him. ★

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ROMAN POLANSKI

FILMOGRAPHY

Shorts
1955-57 The Bike (Screenplay: Roman Polanski) Unfinished
1957-58 The Crime (Screenplay: Roman Polanski)
1959 Break Up the Dance (Screenplay: Roman Polanski)
1961 Two Men and a Wardrobe (Screenplay: Roman Polanski)
1962 When Angels Fall (Screenplay: Roman Polanski)
1963 The Fat and the Lean (Screenplay: Roman Polanski/Jan Pierre Rousseau)
1964 Kiss Kiss (Screenplay: Roman Polanski/A. Kondratowski)
1965 A River of Diamonds (episode for The Best Switters in the World) (Screenplay Roman Polanski/Gérard Brach)

Features
1962 Knife in the Water (Screenplay: Roman Polanski/Jerzy Skolimowski/Jakub Goldberg)
1964 Repulsion (Screenplay: Roman Polanski/Gérard Brach)
1965 Cul-de-Sac (Screenplay: Roman Polanski/Gérard Brach)
1966 The Fearless Vampire Killers or Pardon Me But Your Teeth Are in My Neck (Screenplay: Roman Polanski/Gérard Brach) (Screenplay: Roman Polanski/Gérard Brach)
1967 Rosemary's Baby (Screenplay: Roman Polanski after the novel by Ira Levin)
1972 Macbeth (Screenplay: Roman Polanski after the play by William Shakespeare)
1973 The Tenant (Screenplay: Roman Polanski/Gérard Brach)
1977 Chinatown (Screenplay: Robert Towne)
1976 The Tenant (Screenplay: Roman Polanski/Gérard Brach after the novel Le Locataire Chimérique by Roland Topor)

Other Screenplays
1964 Do You Like Women dir. Jean Léon (in collaboration with Gérard Brach)
1964 La Fille D’En Face dir. Jean Daniel (in collaboration with Gérard Brach)
1969 A Day At The Beach dir. Simon Hesser (produced by Roman Polanski)

As Actor
1953 Three Stories dir. Konrad Nalecki, Wawrzyniec and Czeslaw Petski
1954 A Generation dir. Andrej Wajda
1955 The Magic Bicycle dir. Silik Sternfeld
1956 End of Night dir. Julian Drozdowicz, Pawel Komorowski and Waliztyna Ugrycka
1957 Summer Ships dir. Ewa and Czeslaw Petski
1960 Phone My Wife dir. Jaroslaw Mach Two Men and a Wardrobe
1969 When Angels Fall
1969 Lena dir. Andrej Wajda
1969 Innocent Sufferers dir. Andrej Wajda
1970 Beware of the Yeti dir. Andrej Czupryn
1971 See You Tomorrow dir. Janos Morgenstern
1991 Bad Luck dir. Andrej Munk
1961 The Fat and the Lean
1967 The Fearless Vampire Killers or Pardon Me But Your Teeth Are in My Neck (Dance of the Vampires) (Screenplay Polanski/Gérard Brach)
1973 What?
1974 Chinatown
Blood for Dacaua dir. Paul Morrissey
1976 The Tenant

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ROMAN POLANSKI

Screenplays
1959 When Angels Fall (Screenplay: Roman Polanski)
1959 Break Up the Dance (Screenplay: Roman Polanski)
1961 Two Men and a Wardrobe (Screenplay: Roman Polanski)
1962 When Angels Fall (Screenplay: Roman Polanski)
1963 The Fat and the Lean (Screenplay: Roman Polanski/Jan Pierre Rousseau)
1964 Kiss Kiss (Screenplay: Roman Polanski/A. Kondratowski)
1965 A River of Diamonds (episode for The Best Switters in the World) (Screenplay Roman Polanski/Gérard Brach)

Features
1962 Knife in the Water (Screenplay: Roman Polanski/Jerzy Skolimowski/Jakub Goldberg)
1964 Repulsion (Screenplay: Roman Polanski/Gérard Brach)
1965 Cul-de-Sac (Screenplay: Roman Polanski/Gérard Brach)
1966 The Fearless Vampire Killers or Pardon Me But Your Teeth Are in My Neck (Screenplay: Roman Polanski/Gérard Brach) (Screenplay: Roman Polanski/Gérard Brach)
1967 Rosemary's Baby (Screenplay: Roman Polanski after the novel by Ira Levin)
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1973 The Tenant (Screenplay: Roman Polanski/Gérard Brach)
1977 Chinatown (Screenplay: Robert Towne)
1976 The Tenant (Screenplay: Roman Polanski/Gérard Brach after the novel Le Locataire Chimérique by Roland Topor)
FINANCING THE PRODUCTION – 1

The term 'angels' can encompass a wide variety of would-be investors, ranging from the family or wealthy friends of the producer to TV stations, institutional lenders etc. But what distinguishes an 'angel' investor from a distributor or exhibitor investor is that while the 'angel' is primarily interested in the end returns on his investment, the distributor investor will also want distribution rights to the completed film, for which he will receive a distribution fee. If he is vertically integrated, he may also want to make profits with the film in his cinema as an exhibitor investor (like General Cinemas of Boston, partners with Lew Grade’s ITC in Associated General Films) and also want priority runs for the completed film in his own cinemas. Similarly, a TV station which invests in return for television rights to the completed film is not an 'angel'.

In Australia, 'angels' have included motor car dealers, clothing manufacturers and retailers, a merchant bank, TV stations, industrialists, land developers, solicitors, and accountants (and their clients), and doctors. The track record of success for productions which have been largely 'angel'-financed has not been good to date, and few 'angels' have come back for a second try in another film.

The ideal 'angel', of course, is a speculative investor, well cashed up, who appreciates the high risks involved in film production, is aware of the potentially long waiting time from the day he signs his cheque to the day the film goes into release, and has some interest in or desire to associate himself (albeit to a small degree) with the so-called glamour of showbusiness.

Normally, 'angel' investment should be structured by way of unit trust. A company is incorporated to act as trustee for the unit trust and for the same time to provide production services for the filming. It becomes the contracting entity with talent, crew, laboratories etc. Each 'angel' enters into an agreement with the trustee company, a model of which is set out below in Precedent 7c.

The preamble to this agreement sets out details of the producers, the project and the investors, the amount of the budget, and those costs which the producer may deduct from funds received from either the investors or distributors and exhibitors of the finished film. The trustee company warrants that it has all the necessary licences and copyrights to the material to be used in the film. If the producer personally holds any of these licences or copyrights, he will need to assign them to the trustee company before executing the agreement with the investors.

Clause 3 of the agreement sets out the responsibility of the producer in the disbursement of funds received after release of the production. Some notes of this clause are appropriate. Firstly, though this agreement contemplates investors and the producer sharing equally in the net receipts from the first dollar received from the distributor, it is not uncommon for the investors first to be repaid their subscription to the fund and then for the producer and investors to share as per the agreed split.

Secondly, it may be necessary for one investor to receive priority of payment over other investors and the producer. (For example, he may...
have supplied end money.\textsuperscript{1} This, too, can be provided for in Australia.

Thirdly, this clause raises the vexed question of the equitable split between producer and investor, the model agreement contemplating 75 per cent of the net receipts being dispersed among the investors with the remainder going to the producer.

The practice of a 75/25 split is common in Australia, following its introduction in early agreements approved by the Australian Film Development Corporation and maintained by the Australian Film Commission. Its choice and acceptance, however, has been on an ad hoc basis and it is completely out of tune with British and American film production practice and Australian live theatre production practice. Normally the split between money elements of the film and the creative elements of production worldwide is on a 50/50 basis, and a very successful producer may be allowed to command as much as a 60/40 split in his favor.

It is easy to argue that the extreme difficulties experienced in attracting private finance for film production in Australia, forced the AFDC to accept and endorse a less favorable split for producers than might have been warranted if things had been different. But the reality is that putting a film's finance together is extremely difficult anywhere, and it is yet to be shown that it is any more difficult to attract private finance in Australia than it is in any of the main production centers of the world.

Furthermore, while giving the producer 50 per cent of the net receipts may at first glance seem generous, the heading "producer" may also include the profit participations of associate producers, writer and even director, as well as finder's fees participation. The producer, too, has to option the original material, get a screenplay and package together, run an office and incur start-up costs before he is even sure a project is going to get off the ground. He may, in fact, develop two or three projects before he gets off the ground. In the end the truth is that so few film producers in Australia (or anywhere) ever show any net receipts that the investors concerned, when such receipts are in fact made available, should be all the more eager to reward and nurture "the man with the nose."

Once the agreement is signed, the unit trust will be set up and the investor will receive his share of the investors' units in the trust in the proportion his investment bears to the total budget of the production. For example, on a $1,000,000 film with a 75/25 investor producer split of the net, a $10,000 investor will receive 750 units of a 10,000 units trust. Subject to the provisions of the trust deed, these units can be assigned on request to the trustee company. Some agreements may limit the income the unit trust receives by excluding the payment of certain foreign receipts or television sales proceeds to the funds. Further there may be a time cut-out for the investors and the fund to receive income (e.g. seven years) or a monetary cut-out (after a certain amount of profit is disbursed to the unit trust). Again these extra benefits for the producer will only be available if he has a very successful track record. When or if these cut-out points are reached ownership in the copy right of the project would revert to the producer.

**FINANCING BY A FILM DISTRIBUTION COMPANY**

It is no longer uncommon in Australia for a distribution company to invest in local production. Roadshow, GUO Film Distributors (formerly BEP) and Filmways have all been involved in the financing of several Australian productions over the past three years, and Columbia have recently become the first of the MPDA members to come into the Australian film industry's resurgence with Barney. Even so, the extent to which producers in Australia have been able to put a film's finance together is extremely difficult anywhere, and it is yet to be shown that it is any more difficult to attract private finance in Australia than it is in any of the main production centers of the world.

The major distributors in this case, will normally put up between 75 per cent and 100 per cent of the total budget of the production and will require the producer to enter into an agreement — which we will presently examine — giving the distributor world distribution rights to the photoplay in all media in perpetuity, first right of recoupment of investment and interest from net receipts, and a big distribution fee for all territories.

Given the high risk nature of multiple film financing at million-dollar-plus budgets, these demands may not at first sight seem unreasonable; but the reality appears to be that the agreement is weighted far more in the distributor's favor than ought equally to be, so that the producer rarely, if ever, sees a net return when the bottom line is drawn. Informative reading in this regard is Mario Puzo's tongue-in-cheek, yet deadly serious piece, When Hobo's Dream in, how can Israel Win? in the National Times October 25, 1976.

In Australia, the general practice appears to be that the distributor will rarely invest more than 50 per cent of the production budget, sometimes substantially less. He will, however, want to acquire for no additional consideration Australian distribution rights to the production for a set period of years, perhaps five or seven.

He will probably not require first priority for his investment from net receipts, being content rather to be treated pari passu with other investors who must charge interest on his investment. His distribution fee (25 per cent to 30 per cent) will be lower than that of the American 100 per cent investor-distributor.

In the expectation, however, that distribution companies within Australia, either Australian or American owned, may eventually involve over 100 per cent of individually funded productions, we examine in more detail the production agreement or PD as it is termed, a precedent of which will be available in the loose leaf binder service referred to above. Each of the production agreements usually have their own long form agreements, some running into hundreds of pages.

However, they all cover certain basic points. All PDS include the technical and creative requirements of the photoplay, including the name of the producer, the director, the stars, the nationality of the film, the color process and aspect ratio\textsuperscript{3}, the budget, the delivery date of first print and the delivery date of negative. The film itself, music and effects track, and preprint materials. Details on cutting, titling, dubbing, foreign versions, government subsidies (if any) will be set out. Any completion guarantee details will be annexed. The area of distribution (generally worldwide) and the period of the agreement (in perpetuity) will be set out. Distribution fees will be tabulated for different theatrical territories, and provision made for fees on outright sales, television and non-theatrical markets. A definition of distribution expenses will be provided and priorities as to recoupment of bank loans, overheads and interest established. Those to share in the profits will be set down and their shares defined.

It will be important for the aspiring producer to appreciate, at this stage, the distinction drawn in PDS between producer's gross receipts, distributor's gross receipts and distributor's net receipts.

In simple terms, a distributor's gross receipts are those sums of money which a producer receives from exhibition to cinemas, television, networks, home-users — and other users for the right to present and exploit the film in all media. A distributor's net receipts are those amounts left to the distributor after he has made deductions for that agreed distribution fee set out in the PD.

A producer's gross receipts are those sums received by a producer from a distributor of the film after certain agreed amounts are set out in the PD (e.g. distribution expenses, interest on in-

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\textsuperscript{1} End Money is the final sum of money which a producer may need to make up his production's budget.

\textsuperscript{2} PD refers to that agreement between the producer and a distributor by which the distributor agrees to finance the production of the producer project in return for certain distribution rights as well as the usual share of profits.

\textsuperscript{3} Aspect Ratio or Picture Ratio is the ratio of the width of the projected image to the height of the projected image. The aspect ratio of a cinemascope is approx. 2.35:1 and wide screen 1 85:1.

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**TABLE 2 Where the $3.50 goes under a Producer-Distributor arrangement.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gross box-office receipts:</th>
<th>$3.50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exhibitors share gross box-office receipts:</td>
<td>$3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributors' gross receipts:</td>
<td>$1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less distribution fee:</td>
<td>$0.35 (30 per cent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributor's net receipts:</td>
<td>$0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less distribution expenses:</td>
<td>$0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producer's gross receipts:</td>
<td>$0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investor's share of producer's gross:</td>
<td>$0.50 (70/30 split)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The percentage of gross box-office receipts by the exhibitor to the distributor from week to week varies according to an agreed formula, some details of which are set out in the Quater in this issue, and further details may be set out in a later article in this series.*
between

vestment, overhead) have been deducted from the distributor's net receipts. There are many advantages for working in production with a major from pre-production, including the security of the total commitment to finance all production costs, including overheads and all world-wide marketing costs. Moreover, the major generally has better access to market in the U.S., and Canada, and through territorial deals abroad can often provide immediate screen access (e.g. Gaumont in France, Toho-Toho in Japan, Rank in Britain etc.).

However, there may be a major disadvantage for a producer with a major is their practice of cross-collateralization of profit and loss from all territories. Results of films vary from territory to territory, and with an independent in a loss in territory, the major will offset them against profits elsewhere.

If the distributor is working with a producer who has a major, they should be aware of the following:

1. The producer is entitled to a share of the gross receipts in a percentage which has been predetermined in the contract. If the film is in a major territory, the producer's share will be higher. If the film is in a minor territory, the producer's share will be lower.
2. The producer is entitled to a share of the net profits in a percentage which has also been predetermined in the contract. The producer's share of the net profits will usually be higher than their share of the gross receipts.
3. The producer is entitled to a share of the distribution fees in a percentage which has also been predetermined in the contract. The producer's share of the distribution fees will usually be higher than their share of the gross receipts and net profits.
4. The producer is entitled to a share of the pre-sales and negative pick-ups in a percentage which has also been predetermined in the contract. The producer's share of the pre-sales and negative pick-ups will usually be higher than their share of the gross receipts, net profits and distribution fees.

A distributor's decision on the cost of manufacturing trailers and advertising accessories as a distribution expense and income from the pre-sales will generally depend on whether the ad sales department in a particular territory runs at a profit or loss.

The producer's final share of gross receipts has been estimated by Tom Laughlin, producer and star of the Billy Jack series, to average out at 20 per cent of the gross box-office (i.e. the money the exhibitor receives at the ticket box).

Below traces the typical $3.50 admission fee to the producer's share of the profit stage and beyond.

The PD agreement has some other important clauses. It sets out the amount of producer's compensation. It normally gives the distributor all artistic approvals, although the producer will make preliminary selections. The distributor's right to abandon the project and take it over are also defined.

While with 'angel' type agreements a producer will generally be on a contract for personal services, with the trustee company setting up his rights and obligations, in a PD many elements of the agreement are left to the distributors service and the PD.

We will discuss these clauses in more detail in a later article when we deal with producer service contracts.

Under a PD the producer will sometimes retain the right to final cut, but the distributor will be allowed to make censor and television cuts. Billing requirements are also defined.

Remedies for breach of the agreement by either party involve arbitration, and there are frequently detailed clauses in the form and method of payment of the producer's gross receipts (if any) and the provision of statements. The producer should try to obtain full audit of the distributor's books worldwide. He will probably be restricted by the distributor to head office records.

In the next issue, Financing the Production (2) will deal with other forms of financing including pre-sales, negative pick-ups, state and federal government funding, limited partnerships and tax shelters.
5th INTERNATIONAL PERTH
FILM FESTIVAL 1976
Scott Murray

If last year was a slight treading of water for the Perth International Film Festival, this year it pushed ahead again. Continuing its policy of championing new and undiscovered directors, and independent filmmakers, the festival presented films by, among others, Hans Jürgen Syberberg, Marguerite Duras, Jean-Marie Straub and Daniele Huillet, Christine Lipsinska, Eduardo de Gregorio and André Téchiné. It was, like its predecessors, a very political festival and by its very comprehensive nature covered many issues in depth. The Chilian coup d'état, for example, was examined by two probing films, La Batalla de Chile: Coup d'état and Companero.

In this review of the festival I have attempted to comment on as many films as possible and have reviewed all those I considered of major importance, with the exception of any already given critiques in previous issues, such as Loose Ends, Je Suis Pierre Riviére, and Land of Promise.

Overall it was an excellent festival, abounding with films of unique interest. Moses and Aaron, Burra Sahib, or political insight. The Confessions of Winifred Wagner, Iracema. It is to be hoped that the fears of the organizers are not realized and that the festival can continue to exist, by virtue of its daring alone. It plays a vital role in exposing important films to the Australian public.

Though World War 2 was hardly a major issue of the festival, two films did suggest a growing awareness of the war’s implications among a new generation of filmmakers, one of whom in particular has provided a lead, Hans Jürgen Syberberg’s The Chilian Coup.

The footage selected was mostly Parisian collaborators during the occupation. Similar in style to Marcel Ophüül’s La Chagrin et le Plié, Halimi’s film concentrates on entertainers, particularly those who flagrantly asserted German rule. The restaurant Maxim’s, for example, flourished, as did many other night spots. French entertainers, though, had never had such freedom to crack. India Song is certainly guilty of this at times, but where Hitler does succeed is in the hypnotic state it induces. One is lulled by its endless repetition; oft-repeated phrases, such as, “Michael Richardson, still waiting for his India Song”, ultimately attain a kind of lyricism and the detachment we feel at the beginning gradually gives way to involvement.

The most interesting aspect of India Song is probably the mirror, though it does not ultimately become the central image intended. The mirror is pivotal; in most shots it contains an object, person, and its reflection. But because Durac has turned the room along two axes, and hence has reduced herself to two basic camera positions and lenses, the angle of reflection remains constant. Consequently, the mirror never surprises us, and the knowledge of a person’s placement is enough to determine the subsequent reflection. As a result, the film is lifeless.

Probably the most appreciated effort of the festival organizers this year, was the tracking down of Jacques Rivette’s Out One Spectre. This 270-minute film is a re-edited version of his earlier, 760-minute Out One. However, Spectre is not as refined as Out One; it falls into three sections: the tracking down of Jacques Rivette’s India Song is a drone, sometimes magical, sometimes dull. Mostly set in the French Embassy in Calcutta, it falls into three sections: the pre-party life of Anne-Marie Stretter (Delphine Seyrig), the Embassy reception, and Anne-Marie’s suicide.

Marguerite Duras’ India Song is a drone, sometimes magical, sometimes dull. Mostly set in the French Embassy in Calcutta, it falls into three sections: the pre-party life of Anne-Marie Stretter (Delphine Seyrig), the Embassy reception, and Anne-Marie’s suicide.

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Most of Halimi’s footage is newsreel, and this is intercut with recent interviews of those who still recall Paris at its wartime peak. There are shots of fashion parades, of Maurice Chevalier’s controversial trip to Germany, horse-drawn Citroëns, and a retelling of Arletty’s rebuttal of the French President’s claim that she courted Nazis: “But Monsieur le Président, you don’t fuck as well as they do.”

Halimi does not encourage easy condemnation. The lack of resistance by the French has often intrigued observers, and while not answering all the questions, Chantons sous l’Occupation does suggest several possible explanations. The entertainers, though, had never had it so good.

Marguerite Duras’ India Song is a drone, sometimes magical, sometimes dull. Mostly set in the French Embassy in Calcutta, it falls into three sections: the pre-party life of Anne-Marie Stretter (Delphine Seyrig), the Embassy reception, and Anne-Marie’s suicide.

The film is very thinly populated with only Anne-Marie, her two lovers, two cooks, an actress and one or two brief glimpsed guests. The characters do not speak as much, though the soundtrack is a story of monotonous voices describing what is to happen or what has already happened. Nor are these levels of time necessarily linear or chartable: at the reception, for instance, we see Anne-Marie’s lover playing a rejected song on the piano, surrounded by burning incense.

Given the calculated pace of each of the actors’ movements, the voices and the melancholy score by Carlos d’Alessio, the film risks descending into intellectual pretension, of becoming like a highly decorated balloon so over-inflated that the design begins to crack. India Song is certainly guilty of this at times, but where Hitler really does succeed is in the hypnotic state it induces. One is lulled by its endless repetition; oft-repeated phrases, such as, “Michael Richardson, still waiting for his India Song”, ultimately attain a kind of lyricism and the detachment we feel at the beginning gradually gives way to involvement.

The most interesting aspect of India Song is probably the mirror, though it does not ultimately become the central image intended. The mirror is pivotal; in most shots it contains an object, person, and its reflection. But because Duras has turned the room along two axes, and hence has reduced herself to two basic camera positions and lenses, the angle of reflection remains constant.

Consequently, the mirror never surprises us, and the knowledge of a person’s placement is enough to determine the subsequent reflection. As a result, the film is lifeless.

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similar group of 13 in Paris, perhaps formed during the riots of May 1968. (The film is set in April and May of 1970.) He finds clues in Lewis Carroll's Hunting of the Snark and pursues his goal with passion, but to no avail: one is left with little choice but to accept that the group never existed (though Rivette and most of his admirers differ on this, Rivette stating that the group is quite fictitious). Consequently, one feels somewhat cheated, the search having been nothing but a ruse designed to link disparate elements. And in the face of Léaud's great intensity, the charm of the group is lost. The serpent has caught its tail. However, it is always a mistake to take Rivette's films too seriously, for they are mostly delicate comedies (particularly Céline et Julie). They exist as spiderwebs of illusion, occasionally glinting in the sun and only too glad to entrap any passing observer.

As if to supplement Spectre, Eduardo de Gregorio's Seral was also shown. This first feature by the screenwriter of Céline et Julie, Duelle, Noroit and Phénix (all released last year and released), and Bertolucci's The Spider's Strategy, is also a web of illusion. It is the story of a private detective, Eric Sange (Corin Redgrave), author of B-grade mystery novels, becomes involved in a murder-case between two families. He finds clues in Lewis Carroll's Hunting of the Snark, and pursues his goal with passion, but to no avail: one is left with little choice but to accept that the group never existed (though Rivette and most of his admirers differ on this, Rivette stating that the group is quite fictitious). Consequently, one feels somewhat cheated, the search having been nothing but a ruse designed to link disparate elements. And in the face of Léaud's great intensity, the charm of the group is lost. The serpent has caught its tail. However, it is always a mistake to take Rivette's films too seriously, for they are mostly delicate comedies (particularly Céline et Julie). They exist as spiderwebs of illusion, occasionally glinting in the sun and only too glad to entrap any passing observer.

Quite clearly, Rohmer's interest lies elsewhere, in the creation of painterly scenes; and they are scenes not shots, for unlike Stanley Kubrick's Barry Lyndon, the individual shots cut together well. Nestor Almendros' lighting is excellent and greatly aids Rohmer's exercise in style.

But what of the concerns of von Kleist? Here, Rohmer has misjudged. The pace is too slow allowed to flag, and the plot to lag. He has often said that he always plans to work on a tableau. As a result, the distress of the heroine concerns us little. During some local warring in Lombardy in 1799, a marquise (Edith Clever) is saved from rape by a handsome count (Bruno Ganz). However, while in a drugged sleep she is compromised by him, and several months later finds herself with the symptoms of pregnancy. Unaware of the pregnancy's origin, she is driven from her home and retreats to the country where the remorse-stricken Count finds her and declares his love. The "rapist" is asked, via a newspaper advertisement, to declare himself and to everyone's amazement, the Count appears. He has a delightfully curiously, tale, but stretched to breaking-point by Rohmer. It loses its poignance in addition, its credibility is severely strained by the over-long section on the "rape" pregnancy. However, once the Marquise is pursued by the Count, the pace quickens, and his unannounced visit is most romantic, nicely set off by Bodansky's powerful red. And in the face of Léaud's great intensity, the charm of the group is lost. The serpent has caught its tail. However, it is always a mistake to take Rivette's films too seriously, for they are mostly delicate comedies (particularly Céline et Julie). They exist as spiderwebs of illusion, occasionally glinting in the sun and only too glad to entrap any passing observer.

One extremely moving film was Martin Smith's Companero, a 60-minute British documentary on Chilean folksinger Victor Jara. Through the eyes of Jara's widow, Joan Turner, we relive Jara's support for Salvador Allende, the President and the tragic deaths of both Allende and Jara. Turner's harrowed face and hesitant voice evoke great feeling and this has made the film the centre of a wide political debate. There are those who claim it does nothing but provoke the easy response while others, who reject the many coldly polemic films made today, rejoice at Companero's humanism.

Another film on the Chilean coup is Patricio Guzman's invaluable documentary record, La Batalla de Chile: Coup d'état. This second part of his trilogy (the first part was La Revolución, the former director of the Frederik Troyes' performance as the Rev. Granville Mouton, a Somerset minister convinced that his archaeological diggings have uncovered a former capital of Roman Britain, is brilliant.

In the representation of that most sacred of monsters, the local preacher, he displays a presence and wit few actors have ever brought to such a role.

Burra Sahib, another British film, is Nick Giddiford's portrait of his three uncles, all 'tail-enders' of the British Raj in India. The uncles run one of the world's last taxidermy works and Gifford's silent observation of them as they go about their work is quite magical.

When one uncle goes duck-shooting Gifford provides us with a disturbing montage of the waiting, shooting and after-math. A beautiful, quiet and strangely sad, poetic work.

Quite a discovery of this year's festival was Jorge Bodansky's Tracema, a loaded parable about a 14-year-old girl driven to prostitution by the speed and brutality of Brazil's 'economic miracle'. While the girl Tracema stands for old Brazil, raped and decaying economic expansion, the truck driver she gets a lift from represents the "new deal" with his fortune amassed from the destruction of the country's natural resources.

Tracema's moral and economic decline is both well handled and involving, and is nicely set off by Bodansky's powerful red. And in the face of Léaud's great intensity, the charm of the group is lost. The serpent has caught its tail. However, it is always a mistake to take Rivette's films too seriously, for they are mostly delicate comedies (particularly Céline et Julie). They exist as spiderwebs of illusion, occasionally glinting in the sun and only too glad to entrap any passing observer.

The most intriguing of the political films was the Berwick Collective's Night cleaners, a documentary on the exploitation of night-shift cleaners. When making such a film it seems inevitable that a decision has to be taken on whether the film is for the exploited group or for them. Obviously it is possible to do both, but Nightcleaners does neither.

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Granted the technique dislocates us in space-time, but the step the directors wish us to take—to understand, through our exposure to monotony, the monotony of the nightcleaners' existence—can be made only mentally, not emotionally.

So, the film is little help to its subjects, (not surprisingly it was deserted by all but one of the cleaners originally involved) and at the time inadequate as a spur to social change.

Another film which appeared to leave its subjects behind was Richard Cohen's Hurry Tomorrow, an unrelenting attack on certain practices of mental "health". Better than any film I have seen, it charts the nightmare of incarceration; of the use...
of drugs without reference to the patient, of the sheer mental and physical brutality that passes as treatment. And, most importantly, it argues the inviolable rights of a mental patient.

Shot in five weeks for $15,000 at the Californian State Mental Hospital, it is, at the level of expose, an extraordinary achievement. But at the level of concern for the patient's ultimate welfare it shows disappointingly little involvement. Not one positive suggestion is made regarding alternative treatment, and in the hurry to expose the exposable, the patients have been forgotten.

Hollywood on Trial, by David Helpert jun., was a disappointing documentary on the House of Un-American Activities investigation into Hollywood in 1947. A lot of excellent old footage is used, but the editing lacks inspiration and at 101 minutes the film tended to drag insufferably. Better films have been made on the investigation and the "Hol­lywood Ten", and this one's only real drag is the lability of the patient's ultimate welfare it shows. The revelation of the well's secret is most disappointing and it is only when the writer barricades himself inside the house that one's interest rejuvenates. To keep out evil spirits he has pasted his walls with pages of Buddhist script (as with the pages of the Bible in The Omen), but as his mind has been, on occasion, less than spiritual he has not copied out enough pages. So, through the area of the ceiling he has been unable to cover, the evil dragon appears. Unfortunately, the creature amounts to no more than some infernal special effects and the climax degenerates into total farce.

Several Australian films were shown at Perth. Apart from Fred Schepisi's excellent The Devil's Playground (reviewed previously), there was Gillian Armstrong's The Singer and the Dancer, Peter Tammier and Garry Petterson's Here's to You, Mr Robinson, Phillip Bull's Hard Knocks, John Ruane's Queenslander (reviewed elsewhere in this issue), and Roger Hudson's Another Day.

Here's to You, Mr Robinson is great fun, and its interviews with a crazy old collector are nothing less than inspired. As entertainment, it was hardly challenged by any other film at Perth.

Armstrong's film is rewarding, yet disappointing. It is certainly better than any film she has made since A Hundred a Day, but it does not quite click. Ruth Cracknell's Mrs Bilson works excellently, but the intercutting which links her life with that of the young woman, Charlie, is often too forced. Elizabeth Crosby is also badly cast as Charlie and her uneasiness with the role is all too evident.

But to describe the weaknesses is to forget the film's good qualities. It has understanding and, at times, sensitivity in its description of two women out on a limb, alienated from the people they should be closest to.

The film has its humorous side, too, especially when dealing with the relationship between Mrs Bilson and her daughter, and it is stunningly shot in color by Russell Boyd. Fortunately Columbia Pictures has taken up the rights, and for once a short film of merit will get wide distribution in Australia.

Gillian Armstrong's The Singer and the Dancer, Ruth Cracknell as Mrs Bilson.

Of course, the impressionistic straining of this little film is never going to be received in the same way by an audience used to the more obvious values of the American cinema. Yet, it is the impressionistic quality which makes the film's effect so powerful. Here's to You, Mr Robinson could never be confused with a film like The Singer and the Dancer, yet it has the same kind of impact. It is, perhaps, a matter of development, of the filmmaker's growing ability to manipulate the audience's expectations. The Singer and the Dancer was a fairly forgettable piece of routine Hong Kong fantasy. Shot on the set of Touch of Zen, but without imagination, it devotes an over-long first section to a young writer's fascination with a mysterious well.

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Hard Knocks, a satiric look at a footballer's rise to political prominence in the West, starts nicely but descends awkwardly into fantasy, and the inventiveness of the concept is all but lost. Had the film been played straighter, I think it would have been more successful.

I have left my personal favorite of the festival till last; it is because Straub and Huillet's Moses and Aaron does not openly invite criticism. Their work (ex­cellently covered by Susan Dermondy in the last issue of Cinema Papers) invites response, and achieves it. But the nature of the response is in itself difficult to pin down. For instance, it is difficult to describe, or indeed explain, why the opening 20-minute shot, which does nothing but focus on the nape of someone's neck as he sings the opening of Schoenberg's opera, is so involving. Nor why the minimal cinema of Straub/Huillet as a whole can so intensify the essence of a gesture or look. Occasionally this minimizing abstraction fails, as in the too-underscored orgy, but these moments are few. Instead, one is occasionally this minimizing abstraction fails, as in the too-underscored orgy, but these moments are few. Instead, one is

Other films shown at Perth included Jose Fonseca Costa's Os Demonios D'Alcacer-Kibir; Bobby Roth's Independence Day; Edward Muybridge, Zoopraxographer, Thomas Andersen's excellent examination of the work of Muybridge which, in spite of an over-intense narration from Dean Stockwell, brings Muybridge's work to life; Thomas Koerfer's extremely disappointing Der Gehulfe, a film which nicely details the contradictions of the Swiss, but does so with such little feeling and enthusiasm that the film is very close to being dull; Herbert Biberman's 1952 film, Salt of the Earth, James Ivory's patchy but interesting Biographie d'un Prince, a film which should be seen for the genius of James Mason's performance alone, Alexander Kluge's very unfunny comedy, Der Standke Ferdinand; Grey Gardens, Oshima's The Ceremony (reviewed in last issue), Jean-Claude Labreque's Lee Vautour; and the over-intense, but well observed Verlorenes Leben, of Ottokar Runze.
THE CORPORATIONS ARE COMING

The recently-formed Victorian and NSW Film Corporations set up in the wake of South Australia’s successful innovation are still in their interim stages.

Both have, however, already made substantial investments in several feature film projects, including Joan Long’s Picture Show Man (NSW), Pat Lovell’s Break of Day (Vic.), and more recently Eben Storm’s In Search of Anna and Phillip Adams’ The Getting of Wisdom (both Vic.).

In an attempt to assess the role the new Corporations hope to play in developing the film industries of both states, Cinema Papers invited Peter Rankin, of the Victorian Film Corporation, and Paul Riomfalvy, of the NSW Interim Film Commission, to outline their policies.

In the next issue, Cinema Papers will look at the aims of the Queensland Film Corporation, which is yet to come into operation.

THE INTERIM NSW FILM COMMISSION

Before the last NSW election, the state Opposition Leader, Mr Neville Wran, made a firm commitment that if a Labor government was elected, the Australian film industry would receive a boost through NSW.

Labor was elected on May 1, and within three months the Interim Film Commission was set up to advise the Government on the establishment of a film industry until such time as this task is assumed by the Corporation.

The chairman of the Commission is Mr Paul Riomfalvy, chief general manager of J. C. Williamson; the other two interim commissioners are Mr Damien Stapleton, of The Australian Theatrical Amusements Employees Association, and Mr Michael Thornhill, film producer-director.

At the time of the appointment of the Interim Film Commission, the Premier announced a government investment of $120,000 in the Australian feature film The Picture Show Man, which is written and produced by Joan Long, directed by John Power, and starring Rod Taylor, John Meillon, John Ewart, Judy Morris and a large Australian cast. Shooting began in Tamworth on October 18, and the Premier visited the set on November 6.

The Interim Film Commission advertised in all Sydney metropolitan papers, trade journals, union publications, etc., seeking submissions on the structure, aims and administration of the proposed Corporation.

More than 100 submissions have been received by the Commission to date, and it has met with various organizations, including the Writers’ Guild, Producers’ and Directors’ Guild, and of course the Australian Film Commission. Meetings are scheduled with women’s groups, producers of special attractions, for children, individual producer, exhibitors and distributors.

The chairman of the Commission visited the South Australian Film Corporation in Adelaide, and also met with a Commissioner of the Victorian Film Corporation in Melbourne.

A progress report is likely to be made to the Premier at the end of November, and the final report at the end of January. If the report is approved by Cabinet, Parliament will debate the proposed legislation during the autumn session next year.

While it would be improper to publish details of the findings of the Commission at this stage, we can assure the industry that among many recommendations the Interim Film Commission will suggest to the Premier that:

(a) The size of the Corporation and the administrative staff and relevant expenses should be kept to a minimum, and the funds allocated by Parliament for feature filmmaking should be used to the maximum for that purpose;

(b) The Corporation should not only encourage the private sector’s involvement in filmmaking, it should also actively compile a nucleus of willing investors and advise producers seeking the NSW Corporation’s investment accordingly.

(c) Department filmmaking should be channelled through the Corporation towards independent producers where possible.

(d) Repeal and amend restrictive State legislation which is against the overall interest of the industry.

(e) Without setting up an expensive outfit, ensure that corporation-invested Australian films have maximum exploitation overseas.

(f) The Corporation will not employ permanent production staff. Freelance directors, writers, crew, etc., should be employed by independent producers.

Finally, it is the determination of the Interim Film Commission that there should be no parochial attitude or jealousy among various federal and state corporations.

The proposed legislation was very elastic because the Interim Film Commission recognized the fact that the film industry was a rapidly developing industry, and we have tried to ensure that the Act establishing the Corporation would serve the purpose for many years to come.

THE VICTORIAN FILM CORPORATION

The recently-formed Victorian Film Corporation will have a $1 million budget for the first year of its administration. The Corporation was set up by an Act of Parliament on June 18, 1976 — “An Act to constitute a Victorian Film Corporation to encourage and promote the production, exhibition and distribution of films, television programs and other entertainments and works”.

The Corporation is responsible to the Victorian Premier and Minister for the Arts, Mr R. J. Hamer. The Corporation is structured as a seven-member Board.

With the exception of the Chairman, all of the Board members are actively involved in the film industry and, therefore, have vested interests. It was believed that the Board would be more effective if it was composed of people who had such involvement in the industry. In each case, the vested interests have been declared, and any member of the Board personally involved in an issue withdraws from that discussion.

The chairman is Mr Peter Rankin, an advertising executive. Mr Rankin is a member of the Victorian Council of the Arts, chairman of the Victorian government advisory committee on films and former president of the National Gallery Society of Victoria.

Continued on P. 278.
FILM CENSORSHIP LISTINGS
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FILM CENSORSHIP, JULY 1976

FILMS REGISTERED WITHOUT ELIMINATIONS

For General Exhibition (G)

- The Blue Bird
- Roger Melodia
- Cremated (English subtitled version) (16 mm)
- Tempest (English dubbed version)
- The First Swallow
- Israel
- Passage of Noah's Ark
- Never Too Late
- The Alexandria (16 mm)
- Silence
- The Superior
- Tanrim Sanli Yarat (Flooded Tanrim)
- The Third of Bagdad (16 mm)

Not Recommended for Children (NRC)

- Battles of Midway
- Songs Long Travelling All Stars and Motor Kings
- Searcher and Lane (16 mm)
- Calebadesh (Flooded Curacao)
- Challenge to White Fang (English dubbed)
- The Dallon Barrier of Fleet Street (16 mm)
- The Dively (16 mm)
- The Story of How I Call My Name (16 mm)
- Katherine (16 mm)
- La Patagonia Radiada
- Le Cabillinen De La Casa Radona
- Usharren
- Ode Per Ode
- The Story of Adele H (L'Histoire D'Adele H)
- Swastika (16 mm)
- Taxi Driver
- Us Cadetere in Fuge

For Mature Audiences (M)

- Aces High
- Ace Up My Sleeve
- Betty Block Buster Follies
- Boxer Rebellion
- Fate of Lee Khan
- The Food of the Gods
- God (Revised version)
- The Invisible Sword
- Lelum — A Child's Tale of the Supernatural
- Mad Dog Morgan
- Mother, Juge and Speed
- Rules in the Far East
- Ober Bimba
- One Summer Love
- The Outlaw Johnny Wales
- Skyhawk
- Gaurn

For Restricted Exhibition (R)

- Adventure of a Taxi Driver
- Cherry, Harry and Raquel.
- Enamorados
- Fighting Mad
- The House of the Last Doll
- If You Don't Stop You'll Go Blind.
- Its Nothing Until We Just a Game
- JD's Revenge
- Journey Into the Beyond: The World of Supernatural.
- Little Godfather from Hong Kong
- On the Other Side
- Penelope Pull It Off
- Renton: A Town in Texas
- Street People
- Trickdown
- Beheru
- The Zebra Force.

FILMS REGISTERED WITH ELIMINATIONS

For General Exhibition (G)

- The Amazing World of Psychedelic Phenomena
- Beware We Are Mad
- Diamonds on Wheels (Revised version)
- The Hooded Terror
- Mysteries of the Gods
- Someone (16 mm)
- Ulysses (Odebrooks)

For Restricted Exhibition (R)

- Actas De Maruaklia
- Allo Demol
- El/Hijo de Princesas (16 mm)
- The California Match (16 mm)
- Der Gehilfe (The Assistant) (16 mm)
- Der Bardin (The Strongman Ferdinand)
- Devices and Devices (16 mm)
- Der Freischutz Der Freeth (16 mm)
- Hitler and the Mirror
- Grendel

For Restricted Exhibition (R)

- A Man Called Tiger
- A Man Named Joe
- The Fast Sword
- The First Swallow
- Israel
- The Superior
- Tanrim Sanli Yarat (Flooded Tanrim)
- The Third of Bagdad (16 mm)

For Mature Audiences (M)

- Naked Magic
- Naked Magic: Rejected, excessive violence.
- Savage Man, Savage Beast (Revised version)
- Rejected: Indecency and excessive violence.

FILM CENSORSHIP, AUGUST 1976

FILMS REGISTERED WITHOUT ELIMINATIONS

For General Exhibition (G)

- The Amazing World of Psychedelic Phenomena
- Beware We Are Mad
- Diamonds on Wheels (Revised version)
- The Hooded Terror
- Mysteries of the Gods
- Someone (16 mm)
- Ulysses (Odebrooks)

For Restricted Exhibition (R)

- Actas De Maruaklia
- Allo Demol
- El/Hijo de Princesas (16 mm)
- The California Match (16 mm)
- Der Gehilfe (The Assistant) (16 mm)
- Der Bardin (The Strongman Ferdinand)
- Devices and Devices (16 mm)
- Der Freischutz Der Freeth (16 mm)
- Hitler and the Mirror
- Grendel

For Mature Audiences (M)

- Naked Magic
- Naked Magic: Rejected, excessive violence.
- Savage Man, Savage Beast (Revised version)
- Rejected: Indecency and excessive violence.

FILMS REGISTERED WITH ELIMINATIONS

For General Exhibition (G)

- The Amazing World of Psychedelic Phenomena
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- Diamonds on Wheels (Revised version)
- The Hooded Terror
- Mysteries of the Gods
- Someone (16 mm)
- Ulysses (Odebrooks)

For Restricted Exhibition (R)

- Actas De Maruaklia
- Allo Demol
- El/Hijo de Princesas (16 mm)
- The California Match (16 mm)
- Der Gehilfe (The Assistant) (16 mm)
- Der Bardin (The Strongman Ferdinand)
- Devices and Devices (16 mm)
- Der Freischutz Der Freeth (16 mm)
- Hitler and the Mirror
- Grendel
Australia's first animation film festival was held in Melbourne, between September 1 and 10. The festival, which was sponsored by the Philip Morris organization's Arts Grant program, drew entries from all over the world with the offer of more than $5000 in prize money. The Grand Prix was won by the Soviet entry, "The Heron and the Stork", with first and second prizes going to "The Owl who Married the Goose" (Canada) and "Great" (Australia). To mark the occasion of the festival — which will become a regular event — Philip Morris invited American animator and designer Saul Bass to join the judging panel alongside local animators Alex Stitt and Bruce Petty.

While in Melbourne Bass spoke to Ed Rosser.

Saul Bass began as a graphic designer in New York in the early 50s, soon moving to the West Coast where a long and stormy relationship with Otto Preminger was to begin. Impressed by his symbol for the Carmen Jones promotional backup, Preminger asked Bass to design the film's credits; his success here led to "doing the credits" for Billy Wilder's The Seven Year Itch, and this was followed by a return to Preminger for The Man with the Golden Arm. From 1954 to 1972 he worked with Preminger 12 times, with Hitchcock three, once each with Anderson, Wyler, Kubrick, Wise, Kramer and Frankenheimer, and earlier this year with Gene Kelly on That's Entertainment, Part Two.

The force and uniqueness of a Bass design spring partly from his insistence on total personal control throughout a project, and partly from his own very strong feelings about the nature of his work. "I think the creation of a title has to be approached very conscientiously and with a sense of responsibility towards the film's total framework. The title has to be reflective of, responsive and related to the film entity . . . I think what is really most important to the situation is that the introduction to the film be true to its content and to its intent. Therefore, something has to be created that is expressive of that, and the relationship between the two must go deeper than just a superficial stylistic resemblance.

"The black cat sequence, for example, in Walk on the Wild Side, grew out of the nature of the film itself. The film was set in New Orleans during the Depression and had to do with the back-alley

Ed Rosser is a freelance writer for film and television.
aspects of life there and the distortions and conflicts that grew out of this. The idea consisted of a cat in a back alley patrolling his turf; the cat meets an intruder, fights him, kicks him out and then resumes his patrol. This idea symbolized, in a general way, the content of the film that was to follow. I’ve just given you a perfectly rational explanation for the concept of that title, but it wasn’t all that rational. It was really a challenge to restate, reclarify, revitalize the obvious. The more ordinary a thing is the more interesting it is as a creative point of departure.”

This involvement with his work, and his love of a challenge come through strongly in his conversation, but overlaid with a sense of humor that will not allow him to take the “working in Hollywood” idea too seriously. Asked to direct the car race scenes in Frankenheimer’s Grand Prix, he arrived at the track on the first day of shooting to find 500 extras and a dozen highly charged cars and drivers awaiting the fruits of his genius. He responded by calling an immediate coffee break and driving off down the track trying to decide what to do with everybody. Yet, out of this came one of the most exciting multi-imaged credit openings ever seen:

“The technique I used was to approach each race documentally. I studied the track and the nature of the race, and strategically placed 10 or so cameras with the proper complement of lenses around the track. After the footage was shot I assessed it, and then restaged and shot those sections needed in order to express the intent of the race.”

Credit sequences alone do not account for all his film work. Working with Hitchcock on Psycho he was called upon to “design” a part of the film that was to have enormous impact:

“In the West, the most sustained and influential effort at raising the standards of cinema graphics has been the work of Saul Bass, whose distinctive, economical style and ability precisely to define the character of a film in a simple graphic symbol makes his posters instantly recognizable and effective.”

Roger Manvell and Lewis Jacobs
The International Encyclopaedia of Film.

“Hitchcock called me in to work on certain sequences, one being the shower murder. We knew Janet Leigh was going to be stabbed to death in the bathtub; the question was how this was to be staged and how it was to be seen. The whole character of this sequence was visual, and its emotion had to be expressed through sound and image, rather than through the normal kind of story-telling information.

“When I say I designed it, I mean I drew it, laid it out, frame by frame. I made a storyboard for it, which was the exact guide for the shooting. I directed the shooting, then worked with George Tomasini, the editor, for a few days, assembling the footage, cutting it and making it work.

“My idea was to construct a bloodless murder — to create a sense of red terror without the actual knife blows being seen. So I designed the sequence accordingly, with the exception of the last scene where we see the blood being washed away down the drain.

“Hitchcock had one cut: the ‘knife-in-the-belly’, which was shot backwards. The knife was withdrawn from the point where it touched the belly and the film was then run forward to make it appear that the knife was going in. This later turned out to have anti-social implications: some people were very worried about taking showers after that.”

The problems posed by a title are in some ways greater than those of any other scene. Bass likes to have a script well before production begins so that he has the time not only to develop his ideas, but also to explore the technical means of expressing them. Often he favors a title that takes the form of a prologue, as in his work for The Big Country and West Side Story, where the title both establishes the context of the film and states the underlying theme as well.

The notion of creativity itself is something that interests him intensely and his Thoughts on Creativity, later retitled Why Man Creates, was to win many awards apart from the Oscar it gained him: “My intent was not to attempt to explain the creative process in physiological or psychological terms, but rather to express to the audience how it feels and what it looks like to work creatively and in a committed way. It’s an emotional film, not an explaining type of film.”

Bass’ latest role as travelling consultant and lecturer is one that goes against the grain somewhat. The commitment he talks about is to the work itself, and he is happiest worrying over a new title design or packaging concept: it’s the only kind of work he has ever wanted to do. ★
RESTRICTIVE TRADE PRACTICES LEGISLATION
AND THE FILM INDUSTRY:
THE MOTION PICTURE DISTRIBUTORS' ASSOCIATION REPLIES

In the last issue of Cinema Papers (Sept-Oct 76) Ransom Stoddard examined the decision by a Commissioner of the Trade Practices Commission, Dr Venturini, to reject certain clearance applications for business practices engaged in by the Motion Picture Distributors' Association (a trade association of major American importers) in their dealings with exhibitors in various states of Australia.

Following publication of the article, Cinema Papers contacted Mr Wes Loney, managing director in Australia of Cinema International Corporation, and present chairman of the MPDA, inviting him to reply to the Commission's decision and Ransom Stoddard's article, particularly requesting him to detail how the Commission's refusal of clearance might alter the trading practices of the MPDA members with exhibitors. (Mr Loney replied, on the condition that Cinema Papers publish his response in full). Cinema Papers accordingly sets out the unexpurgated text below, in spite of the fact that a substantial number of its paragraphs have already been published in the Financial Review and the Australasian Cinema. Paragraph numbers have been added to the MPDA letter for easy reference.

Following the MPDA letter is Ransom Stoddard's reply.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of October 14, inviting me to respond to the article in your September/October issue on the Trade Practices Commission's decision on clearance applications by my Association.

I am pleased to know that you are interested in presenting "as balanced a view as possible", as Mr Stoddard's article did anything but that. It reprinted sections of Dr Venturini's decision and the Motion Picture Distributors' Association's notice of withdrawal of the applications. The reproducement of the agreements concerned. It did not print any of the several other communications which passed between the Association's solicitors and the Commission, which were placed on the public register, and which clearly documented and substantiated the MPDA's objections to the decision. The Association's viewpoint was further expressed in my letter to the Financial Review (July 22) and to The Australasian Cinema (August 5).

Two of the applications involved agreements entered into by members of the Association in order to meet requests by the Queensland Exhibitors' Association for certain concessions. These agreements were entered into with the support and approval of the Theatres and Films Commission of Queensland. Two of the other agreements, for which clearance was sought, were for standard forms of film hiring contract, one covering South Australia and the other Victoria and Tasmania. In NSW there is a statutory form of film hiring contract prescribed under the Cinegraph Films Act. The South Australian form was adopted by members of the Association in response to requests by exhibitors in South Australia for a common form of contract. The standard form was settled by the Crown Solicitor for South Australia, and a copy lodged for record purposes in the office of the Premier of South Australia. The document followed very closely the NSW statutory form. The standard form for Victoria and Tasmania was adopted at the request of the Exhibitors' Association and was based on the NSW statutory form. The final application for clearance was for an agreement in relation to exhibitors who had seriously defaulted in making payments to a distributor to be placed on a "payment-in-advance" list. Authorization was also sought for that agreement.

Paragraph 4

In June 1975, the Commission requested a meeting with the MPDA to obtain information relating to the applications, and on June 25, 1975 a meeting took place. At that meeting the Commission's representatives asked questions concerning some of the clauses in the standard form of contract. No indication was given to the Association that the agenda for the meeting had been changed, and that the Commission had, in fact, begun an inquiry into the film industry. At this meeting, following a written request dated February 25, 1975 by the Association's solicitors, the Commission's representatives agreed that the applications would not be decided against the Association without reference being made back to it and the Association being given the opportunity of presenting further material. A subsequent memorandum from our solicitors to the Commission confirmed this agreement.

Because some of the questions asked at this meeting appeared to have no particular relationship to the clearance applications, on June 26, 1975 our solicitors asked the Commission whether the terms of reference were limited to dealing with the clearance applications. They were told the Commission had decided to conduct an inquiry into the industry. Our solicitors then requested that the processing of the clearance applications be kept separate and apart, as far as practicable, from any wider inquiry the Commission wished to undertake. It emerged that a request for some documents at the June 25 meeting had not been made for the purpose of dealing with the clearance applications, but for the purpose of the proposed general inquiry.

On June 29, 1976 the decision of Dr Venturini was received. No opportunity of any kind had been given to the Association to make submissions on matters on which the Commission was not satisfied, notwithstanding the express agreement by the Commission.

Paragraph 7

You state the MPDA "appeared to object to the fact that Dr Venturini's examination of the clearance applications was as detailed and complete as it was". Not so. We objected to the fact that it was not nearly detailed enough. Much of Dr Venturini's material was entirely irrelevant to the applications. It contained highly critical and erroneous conclusions concerning our agreements, business practices and dealings on which my members, in spite of an express undertaking to the contrary, had been given no opportunity of presenting submissions. It not only included many statements couched in emotional and condemnatory terms, it contained many errors of fact and of law. In denying applications which clearly favored all exhibitors and was of no benefit whatever to distributors, Dr Venturini clearly showed his ignorance of the industry and an inability to understand the meaning of certain clauses and agreements. For example:

He apparently reaches the conclusion in dealing with application C3751 that the distributors follow practices which force unwanted films on exhibitors. This bizarre conclusion is arrived at in the course of considering an agreement entered into by the distributors at the request of the Queensland Exhibitors' Association and with the approval of the Theatres and Films Commission of Queensland, under which the distributors agreed to give the exhibitors additional rights.

240 — Cinema Papers, January
KODAK (Australasia) PTY. LTD.
Motion Picture & Audiovisual
Markets Division
Kevin Wiggins, Melbourne Cameraman for 'A Current Affair' talks about Kodak Ektachrome film:

"I guess it boils down to a personal preference on my part. I like Ektachrome film because it's reliable in so many ways as far as color standards are concerned. I prefer the color that Kodak stock produces" . . . "I think it gives a truer rendition" . . . "You can stretch Ektachrome stock a fair way in forced development. I've shot with Ektachrome 7242 film under mercury-vapour street lights, pushing it three stops and getting quite amazing results. Of course, there was some color change but we did have an image on film, and when it comes to the crunch that's what's important" . . . "In this sort of work it's sometimes necessary to work in strange and very remote locations. I've ridden on camels and flown in balloons and been in many other weird vehicles and there are always a lot of problems and variables involved" . . . "So it's good to know that there's one constant that can be relied upon in these situations: Kodak color films."

Kodak Ektachrome film gives you the true picture... always.
to reject films which they had contractually agreed to take.

In dealing with application C3752 he characterized a clause which had been adopted at the request of the exhibitors (in order to confer a concession on exhibitors in modification of their normal contractual obligations), as a clause involving coercion by the distributors. He pointed out that under such circumstances he should use the decision as a forum to launch a bitter denunciation of the industry and air his own jaundiced views.

Paragraph 8

The Standard Form of Contract, which formed one of the main objects of Dr. Venturini's attack, was drawn up by both exhibitors and distributors in order to standardize procedures within the industry and to facilitate the everyday transactions between the two. It has no bearing on film hire terms, titles, release dates, playing time, prices of admission, etc., which have always been a matter for discussion and negotiation between individual distributors and exhibitors. Mr. Stoddard's assertion that it "has been a source of irritation and business difficulty for independent exhibitors, weighted as it is heavily in favor of the distributor", has no basis in fact. It simply is not true. This form of contract is law in NSW and Queensland, and its retention is being sought by the Exhibitors' Associations in those states. In Victoria and Tasmania, where it was not a statutory document, the Chief Executive Officer of the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association, Mr. Jack Graham, expressed his concern, not only at the Commission's finding, but that it should reach such a decision without inviting his Association to comment on those clauses in the Contract which the Commission found objectionable. In such circumstances, the Commission's outright rejection of the adoption of the Standard Form in Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia - in the most interminable, yet vituperative, terms - is extraordinary and quite impossible to comprehend. I refer you to Mr. Graham's letters of July 26 and August 5 to the Trade Practices Commission, which appeared in The Australasian Cinema of August 5 and 19 respectively. I quote Mr. Graham (a lawyer) as follows:

"All we have to say, therefore, is that we are disgusted at the manner in which we have been treated by your Commission in this matter. Not only has that treatment been grossly unfair, but it has been contrary to the basic principles of common justice. We have been subjected to criticism in the most extravagant language by Dr. Venturini without a proper opportunity being given to us to present the true facts relating to the Victoria/Tasmania Contract. We take the strongest exception to being treated in this way." In referring to the "payment of film hire in advance scheme", Mr. Stoddard continues, "which the MPDA appropriately use to suppress the incidence of bad debtors in the industry and to inappropriately influence the relationship between distributor members and independent exhibitors." The second contention is nonsense and again betrays a lack of understanding of the clause.

Paragraph 10

The article further states "the Commissioner issued a 92-page judgement which effectively turned the flare of the spotlight on a host of monopolistic and anti-competitive practices concerning independently owned cinemas. The most extravagant charge is typical of many which have been levelled against my Association in recent years entirely unsupported by facts."

On the state of the film industry Dr. Venturini said: "At the same time the structure of the industry is one which lends itself to exclusionary practices. The production of films - where it exists - is largely confined to a handful of major companies, each of which is fully integrated with distributing companies. These large producer-distributor groups have substantial interests in cinema ownership, controlling the best cinemas in many areas." The statement is substantially incorrect on two counts. By far the majority of films today are produced by independents, and secondly, among my members only one of the "large producer-distributor groups" has substantial interests in cinema ownership. The other six major American companies do not, and are entirely free to market their product in a way which will maximize its profit potential. To suggest that 'the producer-distributor groups cannot afford... the disfavor' of the large circuits again shows a failure to grasp the realities of the situation. The fact is that a general shortage of quality product rather puts the shoe on the other foot. Regardless of the opinion of Dr. Venturini and others, it is a free market.

In referring to The Australasian Cinema's statement that "the MPDA practices and the vertically integrated exhibition and distribution combines" are minority members) and the editor is a man of wide experience in both distribution and exhibition who is well known for his forthright and knowledgeable views on industry matters.

Paragraph 14

I can only say once again that there would be no local industry at all if it were not for the American product and the so-called 'combines' who had the faith, the know-how and the nerve to invest in high quality cinemas — equal to any in the world — in what has always essentially been a high risk business. Without them there would be few worthwhile cinemas for the Australian producer to obtain suitable outlets. Presumably the "prominent independent exhibitors' who want to give priority in release to the "vertically integrated exhibition combines" who just happen to operate the best and most efficient cinemas in the country. Again, it is solely the right and prerogative of the distributor to choose the most suitable and lucrative outlets for his films; indeed he has an obligation to his producers to do so. It is his business and his duty to place his product to the maximum advantage, and the release pattern which has evolved over the years has done so because it has proven the most profitable to the distributor.

The Australian producer of today expects precisely the same treatment for his film, and for precisely the same reason. It is a realistic and illogical to expect otherwise. Furthermore, the distributors and first-run exhibitors expend a great deal of money in publicizing those films — publicity which must rub off and assist all subsequent runs in the market. It is that relationship between distributors and exhibitors one which is "sick, unhealthy and unbelievably restrictive", as Dr. Venturini would have us believe? The phrase betrays a lack of knowledge of the industry and the essential nature of its operation.

It is certainly commendable that the local distributors, GOU, Roadshow and Filmways have been instrumental in financing local production. It might well be argued that as Australian companies they have a greater obligation to do so.

But it certainly is trite to repeat the tired old bleat about the "millions of dollars exported annually from Australia by MPDA members." In fact $20 million was remitted last year by MPDA members, or 16 per cent of the gross national box-office; hardly an excessive profit.

The balance was retained in Australia, keeping many thousands of Australians in lucrative employment, in building new cinemas, in investments, and paying considerable taxation in various forms.

I would like to see more investment by the major American companies in Australian production, and will continue to press for it. But it is alleged that American producers to demand that profits made on American films be invested in local production. It should be remembered that similar requests are being made all over the world, and American companies must not only be selective in such investments, but be convinced of some prospect of success in international markets — particularly the U.S. domestic market. So far, in spite of the local success of Picnic at Hanging Rock and Caddie, that quality has not yet been discerned on the international film market.

Most of the scripts I have read are far too parochial in content for me to be able to recommend in terms of international markets. This view is very forcefully supported by Terry Bourke in the Sydney Morning Herald of November 2, under the heading, "We're making too many home movies." It is simply unrealistic to expect American investment in films which cannot succeed internationally.

Paragraph 20

Termination of the agreements concerned simply means that it is a matter for each distributor to determine individually his own form of Film Licence Agreement. It seems likely that over a period of time differences will develop between the contracts used by different distributors. Thus in practical terms it is likely to cause more inconvenience to exhibitors, who have clearly indicated their preference for a standard form of agreement.

Finally, Mr. Stoddard suggested that "the Commission will be keeping an ever watchful eye on MPDA practices and that a full-scale inquiry into the exhibition-distribution industry may be in the air." Yet another inquiry? What possible good could it achieve? Unless one accepts the premise that any enterprise (particularly foreign) which makes a profit is evil, the exercise is useless, and a waste of the taxpayer's money. What is necessary is more understanding by industry critics of the essential nature of the business and the vital role played by the major distributors and exhibitors, all of whom are co-operating in putting any Australian film of merit on Australian screens and giving opportunity with foreign films.

"Merit" is the only criterion. Quotas cannot make poor films successful at the box-office. Restrictive legislation and handouts cannot put box-office appeal into a film; indeed I believe they retard its development. This future lies in becoming competitive in international markets, and that realization will be a positive step towards establishment of a permanent viable industry.

Yours faithfully,

W. G. Loney,
Chairman
Motion Picture Distributors' Association of Australia.

Rasem Stoddard Replies P. 278.

Cinema Papers, January — 241

THE MPDA REPLIES
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The period is the mid-1920s to the early 1930s. The locations are the wide cloud-swept plains of New South Wales, and the green and lush north-east corner of the state.

The picture show man travels the back roads, bringing to people in the little country towns the sophistication, the excitement, the glimpses of the far-off world, the human comedies and tragedies of the silver screen.

The following interviews with members of "The Picture Show Man" production team were recorded on location in Tamworth NSW by Antony I. Ginnane and Gordon Glenn.
JOAN LONG
Producer/Scriptwriter

When was the idea for “The Picture Show Man” conceived?

Well, in 1971 I was making a documentary about the Australian film industry in the twenties, called The Passionate Industry. I had sent letters to a lot of country newspapers asking for stills on filmmaking in the 1920s, because I had a feeling that a lot of material was tucked away in people’s bottom drawers.

I got quite a good result — not so much on production, but mainly on exhibiting including travelling showmen.

I later appeared on Newcastle television’s Tonight show with a clip from Pictures That Moved, and a Mr Penn sent me a manuscript he had written but never published. I enjoyed it a lot and offered him a very modest sum for a two-year option — which I think was fair in the circumstances.

I explained that it would probably be about three years before I could get around to doing anything about it, and that I wasn’t even sure if there was a film in it.

So we let it go at that.

I went abroad and then had Caddie on my plate in 1974. I eventually did the first draft of The Picture Show Man in early 1975. But by this time Caddie had been put together and production started, and I had to be available right through for re-writes, conferences... It was the best experience as a writer I ever had, because I was more-or-less treated as part of the team. Usually after you have written something you are never seen again. But I had worked with both Donald and Tony before, so we all knew each other well.

When Caddie was over I was still unsure if there was really a feature film in The Picture Show Man script that I had written. So I asked Tony Buckley to read it, and he liked it. That really set me off on the path.

At this stage did you see your role as joint writer, or also as a producer?

I thought I would probably coproduce with somebody. I wasn’t sure who. But as I became more involved in actually producing it, particularly raising the money, I began to see very clearly that a film is like a ship — you can only have one captain. Having co-producers on a film can be a very tricky proposition, because there is really only one person who is prepared to go through the anguish of raising the money.

How did you go about raising the finance for “The Picture Show Man”?

I went about it as scientifically as I could — in a logical fashion. I also used my imagination a lot. John Daniel of the Australian Film Commission said I had explored ground that no other Australian producer had gone over.

The first thing I did was the obvious: the rounds of television and film distribution companies. But they are well trodden. Next, I moved into fields of private finance and merchant banking houses. I followed up a tremendous number of leads that never came to anything.

Eventually I got a Sydney radio station — 2UW — involved, which I don’t think had been done before. I also found an independent exhibitor named Theo Goumas from Newcastle involved.

By this time Caddie was out, but it didn’t make much difference. Then TVW of Perth came in.

How did the NSW government involvement come about?

Soon after the Labor government was elected in NSW, I wrote to Mr Neville Wran, but I couldn’t get anywhere with him. I kept getting messages that he couldn’t see me or that he was too busy.

Then John Morris from the South Australian Film Corporation contacted me to find out how the project was progressing. He offered me $100,000 if I would make it in South Australia. He guaranteed that there would be no creative interference, but that it would have to be made in South Australia using South Australian crew and other personnel.

Well, I was prepared to go along with this offer, because it seemed the only way the film would get to be made.

But by this time another factor had crept in — the budget was going up. It had been written in December 1975 and, of course, by June 1976 everything was up 15 per cent. This made it very difficult, because even with South Australia’s $100,000 I didn’t have enough money, and I still needed about $40-50,000.

At that stage certain people were made aware that yet another NSW film was going to another state, and certain people high up in the NSW government made Mr Wran aware of it. He phoned me saying it was more than possible that they would invest in the film.

In the meantime, I had applied to the AFC to bring their investment up to 50 per cent of the new budget, and was successful. I informed Wran of this and he made an offer of $120,000, which I accepted.

How would you describe “The Picture Show Man”?

It’s a comedy in a genre of its own — a gentle comedy, but with quite a lot of action. I suppose it’s a comedy about showbusiness people, and in a way it’s also a road picture.

I think it’s now accepted that one of the reasons for the success of “Picnic at Hanging Rock” and “Caddie” is that they appeal not only to the ordinary cinemagoer, but also to a group of people who don’t regularly go to the cinema. Do you see “The Picture Show Man” in this mould?

I think so. I always write with a very thoughtful attitude towards the audience — an audience of all age groups.

I think John Meillon is giving the greatest performance of his life in this film and he has tremendous appeal to the older age group. At the same time there is also a youthful hero and heroin.

What overseas potential do you think “Picture Show Man” has?

Very good. In the writing I deliberately put in an overseas publicity hook in the form of roles for a British actor and an Italian actress.
Patrick Cargill's name is well-known in Europe and Britain. Then we had the good luck to interest Rod Taylor, and having someone of that calibre is the dream of every Australian producer who is looking for an entry into the U.S. market.

Does Taylor play an Australian or American in the film?

An American. I am a bit allergic to an American wandering around in Australian films for the sake of the U.S. market, but when I saw the first lot of rushes I knew that it worked, because in the film he is an American selling films in Australia. He is a travelling film salesman and somehow it seems natural.

One question back on the financial side: we seem to be locked into a situation in Australia where the production company receives only 25 per cent of property and the investors 75 per cent — which is not the situation in the U.S. or Britain, where a 50/50 split is common . . .

Well, the only reason investors are getting away with it in Australia is because it's so tough to raise private finance.

You don't think the AFC has set this split up and that it continues to be used because individual producers accept it — not fight it?

Well, I think that's probably right, but producers are starting to challenge it, and I even think the Commission is planning a new split of 70/30.

So I take it "The Picture Show Man" is on a 75/25 . . .

Yes, I am afraid so. What people don't realize is that the producer's 25 per cent split has to be divided between the whole creative team, including some of the actors, the director and the producer. It often ends up that a lead will get more for six weeks work than a producer who has worked solid for 18 months to two years.

Is Taylor on a percentage in addition to his fee?

No, just a flat fee.

Is anyone on a percentage?

Yes, the director, the writer of the original manuscript and a couple of the actors.

Do you see yourself as writer, producer and director on your next project?

Well, people seem to be more interested in pushing me into it than I am. It has crossed my mind. But I want to get the best possible result up on the screen and I don't necessarily believe I am the best person to do it. I believe that an experienced director, such as John Power, is much better equipped.
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35 AND 16 MILLIMETRE
Along with Peter Finch and Errol Flynn, Rod Taylor is one of the few Australian actors to gain recognition — and full-time employment — in the international film world. Taylor's first major role was in George Stevens' "Giant" in 1956, and throughout the sixties he appeared in a number of major productions including "The Time Machine", "The Birds", "Young Cassidy", "Hotel" and "The High Commissioner". In the seventies, Taylor has widened his scope and moved into the new fields of production and scriptwriting. As the following interview reveals, he has plans to launch a number of new projects, several to be based in Australia.

In "The Picture Show Man", Taylor makes a guest appearance as Pop's arch rival Palmer.

Joan Long indicated that you responded quickly to her invitation to appear in "The Picture Show Man". Had you been waiting for an offer to do something in Australia?

I'll tell you quite frankly, I had a script called Banjo Creek, written by Ted Willis, that had been re-written by some hack at Universal Studios for a production to be made in Australia. I thought the Universal version was a piece of shit, so I added some dialogue and made it good and Aussie and, I thought, funny. But unfortunately I got static from Willis about changing his script. . . me, not Universal!

Anyway I felt that I was flogging a dead horse, and knowing that there was a lot of production interest from hip guys like Neville Wran and Don Dunstan, I began to think that things could really open up out here. So when The Picture Show Man offer came along, I thought, well it's not the starring role, only a guest appearance, but I'll give it all the help I can. And that's why I am here. And I am proud that I am here, because I am sincere about the industry.

Before accepting "The Picture Show Man" offer I believe you had been involved in production, and to some extent, writing . . .

Yes. I had just written a script for a film called On a Dead Man's Chest, starring Stuart Whitman and Elke Sommer. It was directed by Henry Levin and will probably be released by United Artists.

My next film will be about the Bermuda Triangle, called Sargossa.

It's a horrifying phenomenon, a triangle of sea in which things just disappear. I was going to shoot it in Jamaica until I realized I could shoot for four days in Miami and simulate the rest of it in Australia using Australian technicians, Australian actors. I can do the whole thing down here. And that's what I intend to do.

Any other projects?

I have a Western that a man called Syd Donovan in Perth wants to talk to me about. I think he is tied up with a television station.

I think I can be a useful element in Australian projects. My name will certainly get U.S. distributors interested. They know that they can make at least a few bucks domestically on my name. I feel I can be a useful cog for the local industry.

Have you taken a lower percentage in this film than normal?

You can bet your arse on that!

As far as this film goes, when I saw the crack in the door I came straight down to help. Forget the money, I am here to help.

Do you think it's really necessary for Australian films to have international names if they are to crack the world market?

Yes, I am afraid that in the beginning it is. After two years, forget it.
JOHN MEILLON

John Meillon has made more than 20 major feature film appearances in British and Australian productions, including "The Cars that Ate Paris", "Inn of the Damned", "Side Car Racers", "Ride a Wild Pony", "The Fourth Wish" and "Harness Fever".

More recently Meillon has been a strong force in the revival of feature film production in Australia with appearances in "The Picture Show Man", "The Fourth Wish" and "Harness Fever".

In "The Picture Show Man", Meillon plays the lead role of Pop, the picture show man of the title.

What sort of part is Pop?

Well, as you know The Picture Show Man is set in early thirties, and Pop travels around the countryside with a picture show van, a pile of silent movies and a pianist called Lou, played by Gary McDonald.

Lou deserts me and I pick up another pianist called Freddie, played by John Ewart.

Now Pop runs up against a man who used to be his operator but who has now set up in opposition to him — that's Palmer, played by Rod Taylor.

Have you ever worked with John Power before?

Yes I have. When he was making documentaries we worked together on one called Escape from Singapore. But I have never worked with him on a feature before — it's his first. But I've worked with a lot of directors and I can say that John is one of the most unflappable around. He is also very perceptive, very intuitive — he knows what he wants.

Your last film, "The Fourth Wish", was released recently. Were you disappointed by its poor box-office performance?

I don't think its failure was just because of the film itself. I think it might have been distributed at the wrong time.

I know the Americans said it was a little too soft, but it's a film that I really loved doing.

What did the U.S. distributors mean by soft?

It didn't have a good punch up or rape scene.

Have you found a dramatic increase in the number of offers you have received to do films recently?

Well, next year I hope to involve myself again with Galaxy — a production company I am in with Don Chaffey and Michael Craig. The Fourth Wish was a Galaxy-South Australian Film Corporation co-production, and I hope we will do another film together in March next year.

You do a lot of stage and film work. Do you find any difficulty switching?

Something you just have to learn is that when a camera is about 4 ft away you are 87 ft wide and 28 ft long on a screen. So, if you flick your eyes it becomes a huge gesture on the screen. In the theatre, people are a long way from you — the gesture has to be bigger in a certain way. Also, in theatre when the curtain goes up, that's it, nobody can call cut. You just keep going till it comes down. Films are completely different, all broken up.

I like to adapt in my own personal way. I like to do nothing or as little as possible on screen. I try to eliminate all the time.
Setting up a shot at the Tamworth racetrack. Below: Assistant director Mark Egerton positions a group of extras for John Power (left). Above: A run through for sound.

Below: Art Director David Copping. Right: Gary McDonald (centre) and Director of Photography Geoff Burton (right).

Photographs by Gordon Glenn and Mike Giddens.

In the next issue of Cinema Papers, Gordon Glenn and Antony I. Ginnane interview John Power, the director of "The Picture Show Man", as part of a special feature on Australian directors.
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Jack Cardiff and Geoffrey Unsworth with the Technicolor 3 strip camera on a 22" Moy head.
Like many of Australia's leading cameramen, Geoff Burton's early years were spent at the ABC where he worked on a wide range of documentaries, shorts, series and features. His credits there include episodes of the "Chequerboard" series, episodes of "Ben Hall" and a number of documentaries with "The Picture Show Man" director John Power, including the award-winning "Escape from Singapore" and "They Don't Clap Losers". At the ABC, Burton also worked with documentary maker Tom Haydon on several projects including the BBC-ABC co-production "The Long, Long Walkabout". "Sunday Too Far Away" was Burton's first feature credit, followed by "The Fourth Wish", "Harness Fever" and "Storm Boy".

**GEOFF BURTON**

Director of Photography

What sort of look are you aiming for with "The Picture Show Man"? Anything unusual? There is nothing about the look of the film that hasn't been achieved before. But the basic visual idea is that it should be fairly gentle in terms of contrast and color. Not pretty or lyrical, but gentle.

Generally, the film is a comedy, but the guys in it have been through some pretty tough times, so we want a rugged look to it. It may seem to be a contradiction—washing out colors and still going for harshness—but it does seem to work.

How exactly are you achieving this?

Well, we are not using clear lenses at all. We are using Fogs quite a lot, and over-exposing, especially in the first part of the film. That does have the effect of making the colors soft. Mind you, we are talking about camera color; it can change once we start doing a bit of additive printing.

Was this outlook towards the look of the film worked on closely between you and John Power?

John and I have worked together a lot before, and it has been normal practice to spend quite a long time working up to a film. We look at different sorts of material, and usually by the time we start there is a pretty clear idea on exactly how we are going to shoot it.

I think one film that has influenced us is Missouri Breaks where Penn used subtle, very gentle colors.

One way to achieve that look is to use light flare across the lens to soften color. Is that the way you are doing it?

Yes, very much. The first week of rain has really helped by giving us those nice white skies which people stand into and become soft around those nice white skies which people usually by the time we start there is a pretty clear idea on exactly how we are going to shoot it.

I think one film that has influenced us is Missouri Breaks where Penn used subtle, very gentle colors.

You are shooting with Kodak 5247 stock. Do you find any trouble over-exposing it?

It does desaturate with over-exposure, as any negative does. But with 47 you can't go as far in any of these effects as you would like to at times—or as you could with the old 5254. When I talk about over-exposure I mean only a stop. With 54 you could comfortably go further if you really wanted to. Of course the whole problem with 47 seems to be the inconsistency through a curve. You have to be pretty accurate and strict about the degree of over-exposure.

Are you implying that you can't print it correctly if you are more than a stop out?

No, it's correctable if you want it to be. What I mean by inconsistency is that the colors will desaturate if you over-expose by more than a stop. The characteristic change is accelerated and you lose colors very drastically.

So once you move off a full exposure on 47 you really have to be careful.

You mentioned that the look of "The Picture Show Man" changes as the film progresses. Could you elaborate?

Well, it begins in the plains country of western NSW, and it's meant to be dry and brown—and not very pleasant to live in. Then they change areas and move to the river country around Grafton. Once we get there I intend to change the look and make the colors stronger, more saturated—which will require more 'correct' exposure.

Presumably it will be greener, lusher . . .

Yes, which helps. There are fields of sugar-cane, poplar forests and rich river banks. If the weather is kind to us and we get blue skies and sunshine, it will be a lot easier to convey the contrast between the two areas.

Has there been any attempt to re-create an historically accurate imagery of early Australia by, for example, studying early paintings?

Not with this film. I can't think of any painter's style in any of the visuals we are chasing here—or even similar actually. It's an interesting exercise to explore how to give a film a 'period' look. There are techniques like using sepia, but I have the feeling that audiences are more sophisticated than we realize. I think there are other, more subtle ways of achieving period.

Were you party to the decision to shoot in widescreen as opposed to anamorphic?

Well I was involved briefly. During most of the pre-production I was in Korea shooting another film, so I missed out on quite a lot of the early discussions.

My own feeling—which Joan and John know—is that I am not keen on anamorphic. I like the widescreen (1.85:1) format, which I find more pleasant to work with and far more pleasurable to look at.

Is that because of the framing?

Well, not composition and framing so much—I just find it more watchable. It's a personal preference. I do think anamorphic has a role—I am not totally opposed to it—but you lose some of the intimacy of wide-screen.

Although there's a lot of grandeur in this film, it is also a very intimate story. There are beautiful little interchanges in confined areas. The first projection box sequence we did the other day was shot in a 10 by 10 room with two big machines and sound projectors linked-up with all sorts of strange apparatus.

The room was full of bits and pieces, lit with one little bare light and our two heroes were right in the middle. Anamorphic in there would have been a disaster. I would have had nightmares for weeks. ★

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SUMMER OF SECRETS

SYNOPSIS: Summer of Secrets is about four people from totally different backgrounds and their afternoons with each other, and told within a framework that evokes the unusual, the mysterious and the completely unexpected.

ANIMATED FILMS

DOT AND THE KANGAROO

SYNOPSIS: Dot and the Kangaroo is a film for children and adults who dream. It is about an old man, his memories, his fantasies and the transformation that occurs. It is a story of people, stories, creatures and objects—a stowepaperman, a kangaroo, a bike that sprouts wings—all set in surreal surroundings.

CUBA: TODO BA SIEN

SYNOPSIS: Documentary on three Cuban families and their interaction with the Cuban Revolutionary Society.

DRIFT AWAY

SYNOPSIS: Drift Away is a film about children and adults who dream. It is about an old man, his memories, his fantasies and the transformation that occurs. It is a story of people, stories, creatures and objects—a stowepaperman, a kangaroo, a bike that sprouts wings—all set in surreal surroundings.

75 mm

SYNOPSIS: An optical surfing spectacular about the power of the sea, personified as a woman, to mold the minds and destines of men. A fluid fantasy about the ocean aimed at the general market, with an emphasis on music, special effects and animation.

20 mm

SYNOPSIS: The film shows the reality of daily life on an aboriginal mission; the result of changes imposed on the indigenous people by 200 years of white civilization of Australia.
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Australia in Television,
Film and Theatre.

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Every known professional Variety
Act performs this year is listed in
this directory.

SHOWCAST

contacts & facilities

Names, telephone numbers and addresses of many Australian
professionals and industry.

SHOWCAST
**PRODUCTION SURVEY**

**JEREMY AND TEAPOT**

Director ........................................... brian
Production ....................................... Dephy Stewart
Screenplay ........................................... brian
Music .................................................. Stephen Durst
Photography ....................................... Matt Flanagan, Cy Lawson
Editor .................................................. Michael Balsom
Scenario ............................................. Ned McCann
Wardrobe ............................................ Beryl Larkin, Christia Oliver
Sound Recorder .................................... Kevin Keatney
Assistant Director ............................... Jack Thompson
Camera Assistant ............................... David Brooks
Continuity .......................................... Martin Simpson
Script Assistant ............................... Bunkie McCauley
Make-up ............................................. Irene Walls
Artist ................................................... Martin Sharp
Stunt Coordinator ............................... John Darling
Singers ................................................ Kira McQuade, Jessica Douglass
Length ................................................ The Nicholson St. School
25 min

---

**LALAI — DREAMTIME**

Distribution Company ................................ Cassette Television
Australia ................................. A film aimed at the general public that takes the audience into a settled Australia to show a myth from the spiritual tradition of the people.

**THE LAST TASMANIAN**

Production Company ................................ Artis Film Productions, in association with Tasmanian Dept. of Film Production and Societe Française de Production
Director ............................................. Tom Haydon
Producer ............................................. Tom Haydon
Associate Producer ............................... Ray Barns
Photography ....................................... Gerd Burton
Production Co-ordinator ..................... Helen Banks
Production Secretary .......................... Adrienne Eliot
Sound Recorder .................................. Peter McIntyre
Camera Operator .................................. Gerti Kirchner
Camera Assistant .................................. Russell Galloway
Grip .................................................... Gary Clements
Length .............................................. 60 min
Color Process ....................................... Eastmancolor
Progress ............................................. Pre-production
Synopsis: A project in Tasmania that stimulated teacher discussion and awareness of language practice within the classroom.

**THE LEGEND OF YOWIE**

Production Company ................................ Dead-Set TV
Director ............................................. Gerry Tavonkmez
Screenplay ............................................. David Elfick
Associate Producers ............................. Colin McIlraith, Michael Donn
Photography ....................................... Geoff Burton
Lighting ............................................... Stephen Murphy
Editor ................................................... Colin McIlraith
Set Designer .......................................... Peter O'Kane
Length .............................................. 45 min
Progress ............................................. Shooting Jan. 1977
Synopsis: Yowie attacks a railroad camp in the desert in 1877.

---

**LEVI STRAUSS STORY**

Production Company ................................ Voyager Films
Director ............................................. David Ellick
Screenplay ............................................. David Ellick
Executive Producer ............................... David Ellick
Production Manager ............................. Albee Thomas
Costumes/Workshop ............................. Susan Bowden
Camera Operators ............................... Edwin Scrapp, Oscar Hole
Animator ............................................. Garry Jackson
Budget .............................................. $16,000
Color Process ....................................... Eastmancolor
Progress ............................................. In Release
Release Date ....................................... 15 December 1976
Synopsis: Yowie attacks a railroad camp in the desert in 1877.

---

**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN FILM CORPORATION**

**ADULT LITERACY**

Distribution Company ................................ S.A.F.C.
Screenplay ............................................. Peter Welch
Executive Producer ............................... Malcolm Smith
Progress ............................................. Sponsor
Synopsis: A film aimed at the general public showing how the Department of Further Education is working in this field at present.

---

**MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Production Company ................................ Newfilms Pty. Ltd.
Director ............................................. Justin Milne
Screenplay ............................................. Ron Saunders
Executive Producer ............................... Malcolm Smith
Editor ................................................... Justin Milne
Production Manager ............................. Luc Clark
Sound Recordist .................................. Stuart Blackwell
Camera Operator .................................. Geoff Simpson
Camera Assistant .................................. David Foreman
Grip .................................................... Dennis Haste
Length .............................................. 20 min

---

**PEOPLE OF EVEREST**

**SYNOPSIS**

The film is about the country boy (Jersey) who creates an imaginary friend (Teapot) and takes him to worlds like invisibility and sound.

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**CORRECTIONS**

John Heyer’s The Reef edited by Paul Maxwell.
To Shoot a Mad Dog, Produced by David Elick; Photography by P. Viskovich, Edited by N. Beaseman.
### PRODUCTION SURVEY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color Process</th>
<th>Eastmancolor</th>
<th>Progress</th>
<th>Shooting Sponsor</th>
<th>Commonwealth Insurence Committee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor</td>
<td>Anne Deveson</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Screenplay</td>
<td>Anne Deveson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synopsis</td>
<td>Aimed at teachers and parents to sell the concept of the importance of the integration of subject areas and ages (10-14) in the schools.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### PERCEPTUAL HANDICAP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distribution Company</th>
<th>S.A.F.C.</th>
<th>Screenplay</th>
<th>Anne Deveson, the Australian Army.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Producer</td>
<td>Malcolm Smith</td>
<td>Progress</td>
<td>S.A. Dept. of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor</td>
<td>S.A.F.C.</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Anne Deveson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synopsis</td>
<td>A film aimed at teachers some of the causes of learning difficulties.</td>
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</table>

### PLAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distribution Company</th>
<th>S.A.F.C.</th>
<th>Screenplay</th>
<th>David E. Barrow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Producer</td>
<td>Peter Johnson</td>
<td>Progress</td>
<td>S.A. Dept. of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor</td>
<td>S.A.F.C.</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Anne Deveson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synopsis</td>
<td>A film showing teachers some of the causes of learning difficulties.</td>
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### TREATING PEOPLE AS PEOPLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Production Company</th>
<th>Newfilm Ltd.</th>
<th>Screenplay</th>
<th>Donald Murray</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Donald Murray</td>
<td>Progress</td>
<td>S.A. Dept. of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Executive Producer</td>
<td>Donald Murray</td>
<td>Progress</td>
<td>S.A. Dept. of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor</td>
<td>S.A.F.C.</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Anne Deveson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synopsis</td>
<td>Presented the philosophy of the Education Department that the neighbourhood school should be for as many of the children of the neighbourhood as possible.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### WHO KNOWS?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Production Company</th>
<th>Bossa Productions</th>
<th>Screenplay</th>
<th>Donald Murray</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
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<td>Progress</td>
<td>S.A. Dept. of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Producer</td>
<td>Donald Murray</td>
<td>Progress</td>
<td>S.A. Dept. of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sponsor</td>
<td>S.A.F.C.</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Anne Deveson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synopsis</td>
<td>This is a training film for prison officers. It does not offer solutions or a set of rules for dealing with problems prison officers may encounter. The intention is to make prison officers aware of the possible reasons for a prisoner's action by showing examples of behavioural motivation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### SPORTING LIFE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Production Company</th>
<th>Film Australia</th>
<th>Screenplay</th>
<th>Michael Robertson</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Michael Robertson</td>
<td>Progress</td>
<td>S.A. Dept. of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Executive Producer</td>
<td>Donald Murray</td>
<td>Progress</td>
<td>S.A. Dept. of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor</td>
<td>S.A.F.C.</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Anne Deveson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synopsis</td>
<td>A film recruiting film for apprentices within the Australian Navy.</td>
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</table>

### TEA AND SUGAR TRAIN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Production Company</th>
<th>Film Australia</th>
<th>Screenplay</th>
<th>Donald Murray</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Donald Murray</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor</td>
<td>S.A.F.C.</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Anne Deveson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synopsis</td>
<td>The history and modern methods of supplying the Outback with supplies.</td>
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### AUSTRALIAN FILM COMMISSION

Projects given financial support during the period July-October 1976:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Ariki Kuyulu</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Project: The Battle of Broken Hill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Director: David Haythornthwaite</td>
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<tr>
<td>Production Manager: Donald Murray</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sound Recordist: Ross King</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixer: Julian Ellsworth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color Process: Eastmancolor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Release Date: March 1977</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Synopsis:** The history and modern methods of supplying the Outback with supplies.

### DISTRIBUTION SURVEY

**July:**

- **McBride & McBryer**
  - Project: *The Cars That Ate Paris* $430
- **Anthony Buckley Productions**
  - Project: *Goddie* $20,000
- **Timon Productions**
  - Project: *Ebenbangers of the Reef* $10,000
- **Watt**
  - Project: *GillamArmstrong* $150
- **Christopher Cordeaux**
  - Project: *Undertakers* $2,500

The Australian Film Commission also approved grants for 1976/77 to a number of film organisations which are funded by the Film, Radio and Television Board. This report will be listed in the next issue.

### FILM PRODUCTION FUND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pat Hudson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project: <em>Mr. Hawke and the Missile Assassins</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Director: Gilbert Serine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producer: David Baker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor: Motion Pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synopsis: A television drama on baby bashing.</td>
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### DECEMBER 1976

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### SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT FUND

NSW

- **Brian Aikin**
  - Project: *33 Days*
  - $2,000
- **Gordon Bick**
  - Project: *Man Bites Dog*
  - $1,600
- **Rob Ellis**
  - Project: *The Dirty Dozen*
  - $1,500
- **John Smythe**
  - Project: *The Escape*
  - $1,200
- **Lesley Tucker**
  - Project: *Cursed*
  - $1,800
- **VIC**
  - **Andrew Phillips**
    - Project: *Where Man*
    - $1,000
  - **Theo Mathews**
    - Project: *Le Plongeur*
    - $1,200
  - **Theo Van Leuwen**
    - Project: *Mortimer*
    - $34,978
  - **Joseph A. Rausin**
    - Project: *Field of Dreams*
    - $26,000

### PACKAGE DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS

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JOHN BARRY GROUP

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These high quality anamorphic 35mm lenses were designed by Dr Richard Vetter (of the TODD-AO Corporation), who received an Academy Award in 1973 for their improved anamorphic focusing system — a system which results in the lowest distortion yet achieved by any anamorphic lenses.

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BOESMAN AND LENA — apartheid in South Africa "You couldn't ask for a clearer case against apartheid" The Guardian. "This is the most eloquent and racking piece of dramatic art about intimacy since Waiting for Godot, a magnificent reflection on love and need" The New Yorker.

MINAMATA — Japanese mercury poisoning exposed in one of the most moving documentaries ever made.

THE TRAITORS—Raymundo Gleyzer, the director of this thriller about corruption in Argentina, has been kidnapped by the Argentine government.

TO THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD — The torture of Chilean political prisoners.

MIDDLEMAN — Indian corruption beautifully detailed by Satyajit Ray.

These and other 16mm and 35mm films are available for commercial and non-commercial hire from CINEACTION PTY. LTD. Phone: (03) 329 5422.
INTERNATIONAL PRODUCTION ROUND-UP

FRANCE

After the long delay since directing Doctor in the Nude, Alain Jessua is to make The Voice of Armageddon, with Alain Delon and Jean Yanne. And Marcel Carné returns to the cinema with The Bible: An Oratorio, a film based on the mosaics of the Basilica of Monreale (Sicily).

Joseph Losey is rumored to have finally set up a film of Marcel Proust's In Search of Lost Time, from a screenplay by Harold Pinter. According to Variety, it may be a two-part film with a television spinoff.

Other new films include: Just Jacquin's Playmates; Michel Delville's The Apprentice Rat; Claude Goretta's The Lace-Maker; and Yves Boisset's The Mauve Taxi, with Charlotte Rampling, Philippe Noiret and Peter Ustinov. And Constantin Costa-Gavras may make a film with Robert Redford from a Franco Solinas screenplay.

Roger Vadim is to film another Francoise Sagan play, Happiness, Odds & Evens; while Phillipe de Broca's new film will star Marlene Jobert and Jean Claude Brialy. It is still untitled.

ITALY

Tinto Brass and Penthouse-Rosellini are being very secretive about Gore Vidal's Caligula, a film based on the life of the Roman emperor. Maria Schneider has left, denouncing the sexual tastes of Brass as she went, and has been replaced by Theresa Anne Savoy from Brass' earlier Salon Kitty. The set is closed, Gore Vidal is allegedly banned from observing the shooting, and the various press handouts have come under attack for being less than descriptive.

Francesco Rosi, director of Cadaveri Eccellenti, is to shoot The Other Half of the Sky, with Monica Vitti, in Australia. The same company is also making Look Forward to Seeing You Again, a comedy to be made by the brilliant Italian director of Black Holiday, Marco Leo.

After the success of the recent "Violence" films Violent Naples, Violent Milan, and Brass' Nazi recreation, Salon Kitty, Italian producers are following up with violent Nazi films, such as The Deported Women of the SS — 17 Lieben-Comp. But the most controversial film is sure to be Mario Bavo's Baby Kong, who also wrote Midnight Cowboy and Day of the Locust.

U.S.

Nicholas Roeg has been signed up by Coppola's Cinema Seven to film Joe Gore's novel Hammitt, a fictional mystery based on the writer of the same name. Another Britisher, Peter Brook, is to direct Meetings with Remarkable Men, based on Georges Ivanovich Gurdjieff's autobiography, to be shot in Egypt, France and Afghanistan.

In an advertisement in Variety (October 20), Penthouse Films International listed their next three productions: a new film by Federico Fellini (untitled); The Dreams of Me, by Donot Roder, and That's It, by Robert Klane. Hal Ashby's first film since Shampoo will be Coming Home, with Jane Fonda and Jack Nicholson. Shooting starts on January 3 from a script by Waldo Salt, who also wrote Midnight Cowboy and Day of the Locust.

Films now in production or postproduction include Martin Ritt's Cuyey's Shadow with Walter Matthau; Tom Gries' film on Muhammad Ali called The Greatest, which stars Ali, and Ernest Borgnine as his trainer Angelo Dundee. Michael Anderson is making Moby Dick, with Richard Harris and Charlotte Rampling; and Terrence Malick, director of the acclaimed Badlands, is presently finishing Days of Heaven.

BRITAIN

After Get Carter and Pulp, an excursion to Hollywood The Terminal Man and a long period of seeming inactivity, Mike Hodges has two features planned. The first is Phily with Michael Caine in the lead role. Phily has apparently sent messages out of the Soviet Union complaining about the casting, stating they should have chosen someone from Oxford like me. The second film is for producer Michael Klinger, a black comedy to be scripted by Hodges entitled Chilian Club. Other Klinger projects include Eagle in the Sky, Green Beach and Limey.

After a notable acting career, Lionel Jeffries is enjoying a no less acclaimed career as a director, and is presently working on The Water Babies, with James Mason and Billie Whitelaw. Also working in Britain at present, is Czech director, Ivan Passer. His The Silver Bears stars Michael Caine, Cybill Shepherd, Louis Jourdan, Stéphane Audran and David Warner.
"Summer of Secrets is about people and their memories. And what people do that distorts those memories and shapes them into something they alone want to believe. It is about the interaction of four people from four totally different backgrounds and their effect on each other. And it is told within a framework that evokes the unusual, the mysterious and the completely unexpected. Behind these conflicts and the theme of memory, lurks a secret that evolves and clarifies as the story progresses. The climax is more than a startling denouement to an ever-deepening mystery — it is a revelation about anyone who has ever had a memory destroyed."

CAST

Arthur Dignam  ............. Doctor
Rufus Collins ............. Bob
Neil Campbell ............. Kym
Andrew Sharp ............. Steve
Kate Fitzpatrick ......... Rachel

CREW

Director  ............. Jim Sharman
Producer  ............. Mike Thornhill
Art Director  ............. Jane Norris
Director of Photography  ............. Russell Boyd
Wardrobe Designer  ............. Kristian Fredrikson
Composer  ............. Cameron Allen
Editor  ............. Sara Bennett

Top left: Andrew Sharp as Steve.
Top right: Arthur Dignam as the Doctor involved in complex experiments into the human memory.
Centre left: The Doctor and Kym (Nell Campbell): a strange encounter on a remote beach.
Left: Kate Fitzpatrick as Rachel.
Below: The Doctor and his assistant Bob (Rufus Collins).
A love story set in a small Victorian mining town in 1920. Tom, a partially disabled Anzac returns and attempts to settle into marriage and a job. Restless, he is unable to assume the yoke and finds himself drawn to Alice, a painter from the city who offers him a taste of the free bohemian life. Their illicit idyll is interrupted when some of her friends drive down from the city and he finds himself ill at ease in their company. This disturbing encounter leads him to evaluate the two lifestyles and finally he resigns himself to what he discovers to be his real world.
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NETWORK
Directed by SIDNEY LUMET
Produced by HOWARD GOTTFRIED

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an

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A film by BERNARDO BERTOLUCCI

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GERARD DEPARDIEU
DOMINIQUE SANDA
LAURA BETTI • WERNER BRUHNS
STEFANIA CASINI
STIRLING HAYDEN
ANNA HENKEL • HELLEN SCHWIERES
ALIDA VALLI • ROMOLO VALLI
STEFANIA SANDRELLI
DONALD SUTHERLAND

THE RETURN
OF A MAN CALLED HORSE'


RICHARD HARRIS

"THE RETURN
OF A MAN CALLED HORSE"
THE TENANT

Keith Connolly

Roman Polanski's The Tenant is a striking study in paranoia. It takes a haunted, Nykvist-eye view of an embattled psychotic seduced by complaining neighbors, an apparent case of the window. It cant because the previous tenant jumped out awkwardly in his 30s, diffidently seeks a shocking as the story whirls to surreal climax.

All this has a strongly Kafka flavor. Its protagonist, like his counterpart in The Trial, seems to be the hapless victim of omnipotent forces punishing him for unknown offences.

The simplest acts become intolerably difficult, he is persecuted and manipulated at every turn. Polanski's images become increasingly surreal as his subject's forebodings grow.

There are also important socio-political overtones. Trelkovsky is a Pole who has recently acquired French citizenship. But he is still an outsider, as almost everyone, from the landlord (Melvyn Douglas) and his frowzy concierge (Shelley Winters) to a bullying policeman (Jean Pierre Bagot) make plain.

He has only two allies — significantly, a fellow East European (Lila Kedrova) and an uninhibited girl (Isabelle Adjani).

Polanski, himself a refugee from political and artistic overlordship, is well aware that ideologically-tinged xenophobia is by no means the preserve of the eastern bloc.

There are 1984-ish connotations in Trelkovsky’s fear that he is being pressed into another identity and his terrible discovery of hieroglyphs on a lavatory wall. The message is: conform. Whether you agree or understand is irrelevant.

Filmed in Paris, with the principals speaking English and the minor actors dubbed from the French (another result of French xenophobia?), The Tenant is richly atmospheric.

An air of dread is invoked from the moment Trelkovsky inspects the apartment. Derived at first from the inanimate — furniture, fixtures, the gloomy building itself — apprehension thickens as the other occupants begin to lean on him.

Sven Nykvist's cinematography conveys this with characteristic insight, his infusions of color delineating emotional gradation as sensitively as he once revealed so many dimensions of black and white for Bergman.

He effectively contrasts Trelkovsky's dark, constriction existing and the light and color of life outside.

Nykvist is the star technical turn of a production also notable for startling use of ageing, well-known actors in key roles. What time (and makeup) has done to these familiar faces heightens the pervading sense of decrepitude and despair.

Melvyn Douglas is a gaunt godfather, Shelley Winters an aggrieved drudge, Jo Van Fleet a bitchy busybody. In sharp contrast is Isabelle Adjani (of Adèle H) as a naively-impetuous friend.

He loses control of his destiny, his identity and ultimately his will to live. Then society rejects him yet again — because he is the product of its own callous handiwork.

The sardonic suggestion, present in a good deal of Polanski’s work, is that man’s collective impulses inevitably oppress the weakest and most vulnerable.

Although Polanski has spent many years outside his native land, this outlook has nationalistic as well as individual implications. I am sometimes teased by the thought that in their most harrowing films, Polanski and compatriots like Boryczewa and Wajda are paying the world out for what has done to Poland.


Cinema Papers, January — 265
DON'S PARTY
Raymond Stanley.

After Ray Lawler's *Summer of the 17th Doll*, *Don's Party*, by David Williamson, is probably Australia's best known and most successful play, partly because of its explicit sexual dialogue and antics. It has now been filmed, scripted by Williamson who holds the unique position of having written more screenplays than any of his contemporaries (*Stork, The Family Man* segment of *Libido*, *Peterson, The Removalists*, the forthcoming *Mrs Eliza Fraser*, and another commissioned by Hexagon for next year).

*Don's Party* is set on Election Day — October 25, 1969 — when it was thought the Labor Party would be swept into power after 20 years in Opposition. But the Liberal Party was re-elected for the ninth time in succession. To coincide with televising the election result, Don — a school teacher and failed novelist — throws a party, although his wife, Kath, believes "it's just an excuse for a booze-up".

The guests are mainly Don's friends from university days, together with their women folk: Mal and Jenny, living beyond their means and borrowing from Don, although Mal has twice his income; Mack, a kinky photographer who hid in a cupboard to take pictures of other men making love to his wife who has now left him; dentist Evan and his arty wife Kerry; and lawyer Cooley, a great ladykiller who brings along his latest, Susan. They are all die-hard Labor supporters.

Kath's friends are the more conservative industrial accountants, Simon and his wife Jody. All appear maladjusted to some degree.

Grugging as they swap dirty stories, the men boast of their womanizing and make passes (sometimes more than that) at each other's women; all except Simon and Evan.

The women's roles are not in the arms of another's man sit around and discuss their children, bedroom performances of their men and sizes of their sexual organs. Simon finds the frankness of their conversation disturbing and leaves. Evan becomes jealous and breaks up a love scene between Kerry and Cooley. He leaves the party, but returns and beats up Cooley, who he thinks is still with Kerry. But Kerry had already left to join another lover.

Definitely a "musical beds" affair with echoes of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and *Barely Bows in the Band* creeping in. Behind it all Williamson is pin-pointing a staleness in interest, the film will probably be satisfying; in some cases, to the final shot of Damien turning to his parents' graveside, The Omen plays the game straight down the line.

Yet, as so often happens with strongly generic films, this predictability of content, and occasionally of form, gives the viewer breathing space to observe and admire the sheer competence with which the exercise is conducted. And competent The Omen is; an almost self-conscious display of professionalism. This shows through in a number of ways.

While David Selznick's screenplay is perhaps more open to pragmatic objections than other films in the same "children-possessed-by-something-diabolical" family (*Thorn*, for instance, seems singularly unable to muster the assistance you would imagine a senior diplomat and confidant of the U.S. President could whistle up), the writing of the set-piece horrors is very well controlled. They fit together as neatly as the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. However, with the Omen specifically, the horror is merely indulgence in the most base type of sadistic pleasure.

Two in particular turn in strong performances: Pat Bishop, who was Kath in the initial production, lends conviction this time around to Jenny; and Graeme Blundell, who directed the original Pram Factory production, gets away from his Alvin Purple image to give an outstanding performance as pipe-smoking, straightforward and generally unsympathetic Simon.

The biggest disappointment is Harold Hopkins as Cooley. As interpreted by John Ewart on stage, Cooley was an inexpressible, bragging, somewhat rough ex-trovert, simply bursting at the seams with randiness, yet somehow always likeable. In comparison, Hopkins' fornicator is too young and spruce looking.

Neither is Graham Kennedy able to eclipse the memorable stage performance by the late James H. Bowles as Mack. Kennedy is merely "putting on" his usual television performance, and it is hard to disassociate his television personality from his 'acted' role.

Fortunately Kennedy's style mostly suits the part, but if he is to fulfill his potential as a film actor, he needs scripts specially tailored to his personality.

Once accustomed to his youthful appearance, John Hargreaves (a last minute substitute for a sick Barry Crocker) is thoroughly convincing as Don. And although too mature looking, Ray Barrett turns in a very satisfactory performance as Mail (elevated in the film to Don's psychology lecturer instead of fellow student). Kit Taylor, however, seems unable to make very much of Evan.

The men's roles are easier than the women's, which is just as well since, apart from Pat Bishop, their performances are below par. One can only regard them as adequate, competent, and sometimes even amateur.

DON'S PARTY

THE Omen
John C. Murray

The Omen is one of those films where conventions are followed as rigidly as wheels on a railway track. Its shape and development are held so firmly within generic rules that, inevitably, questions about what is going to happen take a bad second place to an interest in how things will be shown to happen.

Indeed, seen in the least possible light, *The Omen* is a perfect candidate for those *Mad* magazine "Guess Who's Going to be Killed" parodies.

The obsessive Father Brennan (Patrick Troughton) emerges from the woodwork to warn Robert Thorn (Gregory Peck) about the satanic power invested in his six-year-old son, Damien (Harvey Stephens). From his first appearance, we know that Brennan's life expectancy is shortening with every passing minute. An oddly well-informed and omnipresent reporter, Jennings (David Warner), becomes interested in the circumstances surrounding Damien's birth, and is sickened in his search for the truth.

We faithfully accept that Jennings is not going to be around when the final credits roll. From the grimly suggestive opening titles, to the final shot of Damien turning to smile significantly at us as he stands at his parents' graveside, The Omen plays the game straight down the line.

Yet, as so often happens with strongly generic films, this predictability of content, and occasionally of form, gives the viewer breathing space to observe and admire the sheer competence with which the exercise is conducted. And competent The Omen is; an almost self-conscious display of professionalism. This shows through in a number of ways.

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The Omen: The omnipresent reporter, Jennings (David Warner), attempts to convince Thorn that his life is in danger.

The largely unscripted documentary carries a lot of inbuilt hazards. This is especially true of those films relying heavily on unrehearsed discussion by non-actors — with the decline of the notion of self-expression as an acquired art, most people are not notably lucid or articulate.

The presence of camera and crew is an inhibiting factor, a constant reminder that this apparently spontaneous chatter is all being indulged in for a purpose. The ulterior motive is the message: no amount of clever talk and accidental self-revelation will be much good unless something structured comes out of it.

The participants must pay for the privilege of being filmed by preserving the goods. We don't want cinema verite for its own often tedious sake: we want life and rhythm and specific insights into the human condition.

But this kind of film still has the unique advantage of hindsight. The longer pauses and the less interesting repetitions could be edited out, much omitted, and in the right hands, a camera focused on a face at a crucial moment could do something that no amount of scripted reaction would ever achieve. For an audience the rewards of this type of venture may be immense, in the feeling of actuality and urgency, in the experience of exploration and participation, and the occasional flash of transcendent excitement (the one thing that can never be planned, even in the director's rosiest pipe-dreams) when one is aware that a very special phenomenon has occurred. This could be an explosion of unexpected personal drama, or it could be the sensation of being a spectator at a moment of supreme significance in someone's life.
BUFFALO BILL AND THE INDIANS

Robert Altman's Buffalo Bill and The Indians was "suggested" by Arthur Kopit's play Indians. But Altman's sentiments are not with Kopit; his jaundiced eye gives us something quite different in feeling.

Kopit's play shows William F. Cody as a man consumed by the myth entrepreneur Ned Buntline created, realizing all too late he is a dupe who has destroyed something he once had a very real stake in: the old West.

Altman's Cody is a buffoon who has succumbed completely to the fantasies of his publicists. Whatever dim-minded doubts Cody has are swept aside by his enthusiasm for the fast buck and his longing for a tarnished quasi-historical immortality. He can perceive nothing that will not serve his interest. He is a true product of "The Show Business" referred to throughout the film.

Kopit shows a degree of compassion for the second-rate frontiersman, who allowed himself to be defiled for the titillation of the Eastern middle-class, in a series of dime novels and later in his own Wild West Show. He shows a pioneering innocence corrupted in the process, and a parasitic existence published simultaneously, and the dilemma it produces in the man.

Altman is content to set Cody up and knock him down. "The Star" — as he is called — is a vain, ageing matinee idol debauching and discarding culture in the form of operatic sopranos. He is a rambunctious adolescent vulgarian. His star is infatuated and puzzled by Sitting Bull's unwillingness to join him and be part of "The Show Business".

Altman sets up his epic allegory at the expense of his characters. They are merely instruments of his myth-debunking virtuosity.

---

BUFFALO BILL AND THE INDIANS

Marcus Cole

The film debates a central theme: the existence of negative feelings among women as related to menstrual taboos, their historical persistence into the open with frankness and courage, it raises a awareness of the myths born of ignorance, fear and disgust — make up a formidable social indomitable.

In an attempt to humanize the subject there is much humor, some of it decidedly heavy-handed, but the pathos is never far behind. The film's format is fragmented and not always harmonious: a song about menstruation, a scene in a hospital, and a sequence like shaving for men, of being made to look female (this attitude has been the prevailing one to date) or with a more enlightened and creative approach.

The film has helped to clarify the problem; wit, flair and energy are now needed to grapple with it.

To make Stirring, 10 hours of film were edited down to 60 brisk minutes. It is an absorbing and roughly stylish film, with pace, point and a genuine sense of excitement. Overly a documentary record of an experimental project undertaken by one teacher in a Sydney boys' high school, the film's implications extend far beyond these limits.

It becomes an implicit comment on the dilemma of modern education, undermining the central problems with a clarity and power that was, evidently, too much for the NSW Education Department to stomach.

The teacher, a likeable enthusiast who is experiencing himself as a man of the moment, is committed to establishing a genuinely productive dialogue with his class of rowdy fourth formers. The means to this end will be an investigation into the history and philosophy of corporal punishment with, naturally, special emphasis on its contemporary applications.

Two cameramen, Michael Edols and Jon Rhodes filmed the progress of this project in the classroom and outside, with a singularly unobtrusive technique. The result is a film of quite remarkable authenticity and realism. The class situation is presented warts and all. The boys seem quite oblivious of the many sources of dissatisfaction that the boys feel about their school. In the course of their work they have questioned students from a nearby mixed high school, and have come to the conclusion that most of their grievances might be eliminated if they too were to turn co-ed.

The unfolding project has uncovered many sources of dissatisfaction that the boys feel about their school. In the course of their work they have questioned students from a nearby mixed high school, and have come to the conclusion that most of their grievances might be eliminated if they too were to turn co-ed.

One of the film's great virtues is that it lays bare some of the iniquities of our creaking education system. But in providing an audience with a first-hand glimpse of the powerful consequences of a minor experiment, it is a sometimes exhilarating experience.

BUFFALO BILL AND THE INDIANS

Marcus Cole

Robert Altman's Buffalo Bill and The Indians was "suggested" by Arthur Kopit's play Indians. But Altman's sentiments are not with Kopit; his jaundiced eye gives us something quite different in feeling.

Kopit's play shows William F. Cody as a man consumed by the myth entrepreneur Ned Buntline created, realizing all too late he is a dupe who has destroyed something he once had a very real stake in: the old West.

Altman's Cody is a buffoon who has succumbed completely to the fantasies of his publicists. Whatever dim-minded doubts Cody has are swept aside by his enthusiasm for the fast buck and his longing for a tarnished quasi-historical immortality. He can perceive nothing that will not serve his interest. He is a true product of "The Show Business" referred to throughout the film.

Kopit shows a degree of compassion for the second-rate frontiersman, who allowed himself to be defiled for the titillation of the Eastern middle-class, in a series of dime novels and later in his own Wild West Show. He shows a pioneering innocence corrupted in the process, and a parasitic existence published simultaneously, and the dilemma it produces in the man.

Altman is content to set Cody up and knock him down. "The Star" — as he is called — is a vain, ageing matinee idol debauching and discarding culture in the form of operatic sopranos. He is a rambunctious adolescent vulgarian. His star is infatuated and puzzled by Sitting Bull's unwillingness to join him and be part of "The Show Business".

Altman sets up his epic allegory at the expense of his characters. They are merely instruments of his myth-debunking virtuosity.

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Queensland is a nicely confident, sensitively drawn image of working class existence in one of Melbourne's industrial suburbs. It is directed by John Ruane who was a third year student film at Swinburne, on a budget of $12,000. It runs for 50 minutes, and in spite of the title, it is neither a travelogue, nor a satire on the Sunshine State.

Queensland is an ideal in the minds of a ragged collection of characters: it represents a vague and uncertain chance of escape from depressing and unsatisfying relationships, from the monotony of work and drab pub life. The film's continuity depends on establishing a mood, suggesting the essentially reactive quality of Doug and Aub's existence.

John Flaus plays the main role, a bumbling factory worker called Doug who has broken up with his woman, Marge, and is roaming with an invalid friend, Aub, played by Bob Karl, a seedy remnant, docked out in a run-down overcast, squeezing a little nourishment from a tomato sauce sandwich. He is a thin and liquid accommodation to John Flaus' performance: largely inarticulate, moth eyebrow withdrawn, loafing but still capable of unexpected enthusiasm. His acting suggests momentarily the kind of physical strength and brooding quality of Gene Hackman, although Flaus appears to have resigned himself to the role rather than worked it out.

The narrative proceeds in fits and starts; the scripting is understated although there is a limit to how much you can say about people through repeated shots of bums eating onto pub chairs. And it is a little confusing earlier on to see Marge running across a busy street and getting off with her new boyfriend. We all have to identify her as a fragment of voice-over conversation at the beginning of the film.

But the city is used effectively to create a mood of vaguely insistent anxiety that depends on the greyness and dreariness of the street and subway corridors — particularly on the contrast of colors, streets, the red of weathered bricks and the smoke-blue light inside the factory. The opening sequence sets up the factory interior in three shots, cuts to Aub standing miserably beside stacks of packing material, making points about characters who have made him a star since he gave up acting. Everyone is roped in, except the Indians. The allegory is so 'up front' there is room for little else.

The audience is given no choice in the matter, no room to assess or doubt. The film assumes we are at once sympathetic to its cliche theme of Corporate America, its stupid, brutal dream and its unthinking, souciance and featherweight charm that has made the city's attention. Its own style; its own detached and sympathetic attitude to represent these individuals within their grimy and depressive living conditions. It is too difficult to change the focus suddenly and make it appear as though we are interpreting events from Doug's point of view. Ruane has completely re-established the distance between the camera and the feelings of the main characters. We look down on Doug, stuttering off in an old beaten-up Holden, that won't make it to the end of the street much less Queensland. The camera rises above the city, looking down on the slow pan around the city suburb, to leave the audience with a final image of indifference and futility. But the shot doesn't seem to be added on or abstracted at all, because of the small and absurd drama that has just preceded it of getting the old car to go.

Perhaps one of the most impressive things about the film is this relation of detailed sequences to simple, single shots that seem to summarize the condition of hopelessness and frustration of the two main characters.
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LIPSTICK
Meaghan Morris.

One of the most hideous characteristics of contemporary commercial cinema is the increasingly violent and callous banality of its portrayal of rape. It is not simply that the old cliches continue, which they do, for many filmmakers rape remains a simple and ritualized phenomenon. Either a shockung, but liberating experience, or a deed which is really rather nasty and brutish, but short.

In either utterly monstrous view, the brevity of the business is the essential element: a chase, a few jerks and groans, a bit of a bash, and it's all over. Not, finally, all that serious. At least for healthy, normal women.

Such attitudes have quite a history; but what makes the current cinematic rape so sickening is the way graphic close-ups of the violence are combined with photographic techniques manifestly borrowed from the pornographic film. We get tantalizing flickers of beauty and flawless flesh, open mouths and ambiguous cries and moans - all in all, a general invitation to share a little in the violence.

This kind of rape sequence has become a fairly predictable element in most frontier sorts of films. So effective is its calculated absence, as from The Wind and the Lien for example, amounts to a kind of aesthetic assertion, of mild political resonance, that romance is still possible alongside with classic and heroic manly valor.

In general, and particularly in westerns, rape is appearing with increasing frequency as either an indispensable narrative element, or as a sign of the times in films derivative of Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid.

In fact, this seems symptomatic of some new venegfulness towards women, but of a certain instability verging on ex¬

The rape sequence is very nasty — lovely and detailed. And we have, as a soothing bonus, a very satisfying murder of the rapists. The film's real problem, though, is the character played by James Coburn (author, but not the actor of the rape), who should, by rights, be the traditionally killingly sexy villain, but who becomes such a silly parody of machismo evil that one passes through the girl's body being photographed as skinny and flawless flesh, flickers of beautiful thigh and flawless flesh, sometimes more serious seems to come in the characterization (of which there is really very little) and in the whole context. Chris McCormick (Margaux Hemingway, right) playing the hottest model in the country, and her real sister Mariel playing Kathy in Lipstick.

One significant exception is the rape scene in Dead Wish. It is horrifying without being the slightest bit titillating — the girl's body is violated little sisters amounts definitely, if somewhat belated, in that the images come from horror in real life, but artistically this is pure and self-defeating melodrama. And it's not that the film stops short at a message which says 'get all', the most important, but the real voluntary and the utterly involuntary. When Stewart says with a fatal and key voice, "You fuck priests, too?" this concentration on photography supports very well the particular scene in the courtroom that shows how, even when there are laws to the contrary, a woman's sexual history can be a decisive if superbly irrele-

In the jury's mind, two distinctions are obliterated in seconds: not only the distance between fantasy and the real, but most im-

In this respect, it is dramatically effective to have the model, society's ideal woman, judged perverse and degraded; a hypocritical moral disbeliever in the and lighting, and some effective sliding between the frame of the film and the borders of a fashion poster. In this works very well with the narrative theme of the gap between the person and the model's role; the photography being a kind of frozen and enlarged to a permanency which can be danging once the moment is misunderstood. This is obviously the case with the photos of Chris brought into court; but more subtly, with the problem of the meaning of Kathy's glimpse of the couple on the bed, which we too have seen, and, yes, it might very well have been mistaken for a N frame from The Story of O.

In any sequence involving rape, the other character — a chase, a few jerks and groans, a bit of a bash, and it's all over. Not, finally, all that serious. At least for healthy, normal women.

Chris McCormick (Margaux Hemingway, right) playing the hottest model in the country, and her real sister Mariel playing Kathy in Lipstick.

has a crush on her music teacher from her and rapes him. She wants Chris to hear her music, perhaps to help him with her contacts, and so she brings Mr Stewart (Chris Sarandon) to a film session where Chris, as there are a lot of posing nearby the bed. The time is not right for music, but Chris, being a sweet and simple girl, invites him in and brings it round somehow. He does, she gets very restless, since his music is experimental caphony. When a call comes from her lover Steve, she takes it through to the bedroom.

This "rejection" tips Mr Stewart over the edge; he follows her in and rapes her violently, after tying her to the bed. The moment after he finishes, and they are both lying with, is a psychopath — here the film draws the disconcerting stare of one with little sister, amounts definitely, if somewhat belated, in that the images come from horror in real life, but artistically this is pure and self-defeating melodrama. And it's not that the film stops short at a message which says 'get all', the most important, but the real voluntary and the utterly involuntary. When Stewart says with a fatal and key voice, "You fuck priests, too?" this concentration on photography supports very well the particular scene in the courtroom that shows how, even when there are laws to the contrary, a woman's sexual history can be a decisive if superbly irrele-

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STORM BOY
Noel Purdon

Storm Boy is being launched by the South Australian Film Corporation simultaneously with the release of the special Rigby Film edition of Colin Thiele's novel and a Film Study Centre kit. In other words, South Australian story, production, locations and distribution would be the equivalent of kicking a pelican in the teeth — which is the exact opposite of what the film is about.

The story is simple: boy meets pelican, boy loves pelican, boy finds new pelican. Pelicans turn out to be endearing creatures who will guarantee the film's success, although a plan to have them strolling elegantly in the foyer at the preview had to be dropped when the birds' wild ways asserted themselves. They are not disappointing in the film, however: clean, odd, beautiful, they perform with an ungainly grace that is a credit to their trainer Gordon Nobel, while as their friend Mike (Greg Rowe) avoids the rampant cuteness of Disney animal kids and lends Storm Boy a sensitive and intelligent young face.

Storm Boy lives with his father Hideaway Tom (Peter Cummins); in a humpy between the ocean and the flat, shallow waters of the Coorong. In his efforts to raise a trio of orphaned baby pelicans, the boy is aided by an Aboriginal, Fingerbone (Gulpilil), who also joins him in expeditions designed to protect the birdlife of the Coorong against hunters and dune buggy drivers.

The boy's father, initially opposed to the pelican-raising exercise, is finally won over and trains one of the birds to carry fishing lines out to sea, with the result that when a fishing boat founders off the beach, the pelican is able to take a life line out to the occupants. Not long after, however, the bird is killed by hunters on the Coorong and the boy has to come to terms both with his first experience of death and the possibility of leaving home to begin his education.

Like its baby pelicans, the film has all sorts of fresh and promising qualities. Geoff Burton's photography, full of air and light, makes considerable use of low and wide angle in the exteriors, giving the winter land and seascapes an almost surreal space and presence. Some fine dissolving pans over time-layered cliffs are beautifully complemented by glowing shots of opal skies, pearlescent, iridescent rainbows in a thundery sky; and a tellingly ominous gloom is suggested by any inner understanding. In point of leaves, the film manages to convey, and even the shipwreck and rescue look too easy, and the sort of thing a boy might get mixed up in if it were raining and he'd finished his homework.

The film relies too much on the right gesture, the good intention; all the signs are there but, except in the performance of Gulpilil, they are not given any depth, not illuminated by any inner understanding. Individual shots are superbly composed and the editing is sharp, but the direction everywhere betrays the touch of a man who is a good employee but no poet. The corporation needs the vision of someone who is adventurous, but rather are tailored to a commercial, anti-car scenes, and implicit in the disapproving shots of beer cans casually thrown away. Animals and birds are seen as both autonomous and deserving of protection.

Particularly impressive is the non-patronization of the Aboriginal character Fingerbone. He emerges, indeed, as the presiding intelligence within the wild landscape, and Gulpilil, in his most mature and realistic performance so far, brings real insight and subtlety to the part. Storm Boy should go far towards establishing his international reputation as a genuine actor rather than merely an available black face to be presented either as a cipher or as a focus for liberal reverence.

Released as it is in time for the school holidays, and aimed at the family market, Storm Boy is a well-made illustration of the extent to which SAFC thinking is a reflection of current Adelaide culture. The vision and skills brought to bear in the film are not adventurous, but rather are tailored to a conventionalized notion of product packaging. The pleasant score by Michael Carlos ties it all neatly together, ready for the Christmas stocking.

It is precisely this lack of adventurousness that gives point to the cynical protest that, for a children's film, Storm Boy has far too little sex and violence. The style is too tame, too clean, too neat: the Coorong is a thousand times more strange and full of moods than the film manages to convey, and even the shipwreck and rescue look too easy, and the sort of thing a boy might get mixed up in if it were raining and he'd finished his homework.

The study-kit, too, warrants attention. It contains videotape interviews with the crew, portions of the script, stills and production plots, and is soon to be supplemented by a Film School documentary on the actual shooting. In contrast with the worthless promotion bumph foisted on us by American companies, it provides a genuine and much-needed insight into the process of filmmaking.

STORM BOY
Directed by Henri Safran.

STORM BOY Directed by Henri Safran.

Storm Boy (Greg Rowe) and Fingerbone (Gulpilil) in Storm Boy.
THE STORY OF ADELE H

Tom Ryan

It is tempting to see Francois Truffaut's most recent film released in Australia as a distant relative of Max Ophuls' 1945 film, Letter From An Unknown Woman. Indeed, the features of the films have much in common. If one were to abstract a subject from both, it would be "the romantic imagination" and the problem of perceiving oneself in relation to the rest of the world. The narrative in the Ophuls film, adapted from a novel of the same name by Stefan Zweig and set in nineteenth century Vienna, is drawn largely from the letter written by the dangerously ill Lisa (Joan Fontaine) to Stefan (Louis Jourdan), a concert pianist. She had fallen in love with Stefan when she was a young girl, and her brief encounter had led to a life-long infatuation.

The Story of Adele H (L'Histoire D'Adele H) is adapted from the writings of Victor Hugo's estranged daughter, Adele (Isabelle Adjani), and, beginning in 1863, records her efforts to rejuvenate her faded relationship with a British soldier, Lt. Pinson (Bruce Robinson), now stationed in Halifax, Nova Scotia, where she goes to discover "the new world". The two films are primarily concerned with their females in terms of their

A WOMAN UNDER THE INFLUENCE

John Tinnisford

Like One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest, to which it bears no other resemblance whatsoever, John Cassavetes' A Woman Under the Influence is a well-intentioned half-truth about mental illness. This is not to say that it is dishonest or evasive in relation to the issues implicit in its material, but rather that it never quite succeeds in grasping what those issues are, or in crystallizing them in a way that will convey their full force to an audience.

It is a regrettable truth that mental illness has evolved, over the past 20 years or so, into a thoroughly fashionable preoccupation. In the process it has been laid open to all kinds of exploitation and vulgarization. The crack-up, typically of an emotionally maltreated woman or a hypersensitive male intellectual, has become a staple both of modern fiction and of the mythology of certain excessively self-regarding social groups.

Translated into cinematic terms the syndrome provides a gamut of experience ranging from the shattering power of Malle's Le Cercle de Dante's Le Feu Follet, to the mauling narcissism of The Red Desert. Neither of those films, of course, was "commercial" in the manner of Cuckoo's Nest. What Forman gave us was in reality two films in one: the first with some telling points to make, albeit in a somewhat simplistic way, about contemporary society as it reveals itself in its treatment of an outcast minority; the second little better than a black hats versus white hats flick designed (successfully) to get the audience standing on their seats.

The Academy Awards Cuckoo's Nest received were, as much as anything, an acknowledgement of its success in developing this highly saleable form of doublespeak. The uncharitable might argue that it's difficult to appear completely sane once you have acquired an Actor's Studio set of mannerisms, but Mabel's twitching, gesturing and grimacing do create the immediate impression that she is well set on her downward course. And this, given the generally Laingian line of the film's thinking, is a major error of judgement: a crack-up is part of a continuum and cannot simply be dumped holo-bolus in the audience's lap, to be clarified by the sketching in of, as it were, posthumous clichés.

One problem in looking at the wreckage that is Mabel is that we have no idea of what we have lost, or of what she might yet regain.

These basic shortcomings are in no way compensated for in the 'natural', i.e. highly schematic way: one scene to illustrate the husband's thoughtlessness, another to point up the well-meaning obtuseness of the medical profession, another to lay bare the uncomprehending and destructive stupidity of Nick and Mabel's combined families.

One result of this compartmental approach is a lack of continuity and of true coherence, so that too often Mabel's behaviour seems no more than an arbitrary response to an arbitrarily constructed situation.

This specific failing can be traced back to the very beginning of the film, for not even then do we see Mabel looking anything like any kind of balanced person.

In the morning her bizarre behavior - she stays out working overtime. She prowls the house making the stifled, feebly aggressive noises of a long-caged animal, then goes out to a bar, has a single giant drink, at once becomes very drunk and picks up a nice, very stupid man to spend the night with.

In the morning her bizarre behavior - she keeps addressing him by her husband's name — quickly drives her lover from the house. Soon after, Nick arrives with his workmates, cheerfully expecting that she will feed and entertain them all: which she does, or attempts to do, her behavior becoming progressively odder until finally they leave in embarrassment.

The rest of the film chronicles a decline culminating in her committal to, and ultimate release from an asylum.

This opening sequence is all very well as it stands, which is to say that it is an effective tableau of a suburban housewife exhibiting signs of fairly acute instability. The problem, however, is that one is clearly intended to draw all sorts of conclusions about Mabel and the source of her neuroses from this initial sequence, when the basis for such conclusions simply is not provided.

There is no adequate context in which to assess the validity of her responses. Nor does the remainder of the film establish such a context, except, once again, in a highly schematic way: one scene to illustrate the husband's thoughtlessness, another to point up the well-meaning obtuseness of the medical profession, another to lay bare the uncomprehending and destructive stupidity of Nick and Mabel's combined families.

Such moments, regrettably, are not many. Taken as a whole A Woman Under the Influence is clumsy, tedious and lacking in real insight, providing an object lesson on the inability of unaided good intentions to create a work of art.

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IVAN SOUTHALL
Now a major film from Film Australia starring Robert Bettles.
An exciting and completely convincing account of one special day in the life of a handicapped boy, and how he uses his now-or-never freedom. A first-class story in its own right, it contains a real message of hope for hundreds of similarly handicapped children, and their parents.

$1.25 Recommended Retail Price

Published by Penguin Books Australia Ltd
Available from all leading booksellers & newsagents
Adèle assumes a disguise in a futile attempt to speak to Lieutenant Pinson.

obsessions, their inability to recognize that their quests for liberation through love have provided the bars for their common prison. Besieged by the fact of the absence of the object of their desire, both women reconstruct their experiences in written form, pouring out their frustrated passions into the private safety of the pages that accept their words.

In the two films, the men who deny these women are presented without condemnation. Stefan and Pinson are frequenters of various boudoirs as they move from place to place, their journeys serving to suggest symptomatically the instability of their lives, as well as their evasion of obligation — though Stefan is finally shown as recognizing his limitations as he completes the letter Lisa had written to him, and Pinson is married when we last see him in Barbados. But in neither case are we invited to pass easy moral judgements, their irresponsibility being set against their personal irrelevance to the romantic fantasies of the two women.

In fact, in The Story of Adèle H, we scarcely see enough of Pinson to establish any firm view.

His appearances are generally limited to those scenes in which he is faced by a pathetic, pleading Adèle, with whom he is remarkably tolerant, or in which he is faced with the consequences of her pursuits.

Both Ophuls and Truffaut make use of different visual styles to distance their audiences from their heroines and from the dramas in which they exist. In Letter From An Unknown Woman the complex patterns of tracking and panning movements and the cycles of repetition work to evoke the familiar tension between mankind's creation of its own destiny (the track or pan following Lisa to where she chooses to go) and the sense that Fate has it already planned (the track or pan 'following' Lisa, at the activity at the party to which a disguised Adele goes to find Pinson; the fragmented tracking movements which follow Adèle's passage around a sunlit Barbados in the film's closing moments. But these simply provide an alternative commentary on the boundaries which have been laid to the liberation of the oppressed, and an ironic observation on the symbolic light in the darkness to which she has been oblivious throughout. So irrelevant to her now is the person of Pinson, that even fails to recognize him when he approaches her in the street.

So, rather than engaging in Adèle's romantic quest, the viewer is thrust outside it, forced to see the irony that her attempt to escape the sense of enclosure she has experienced as the daughter of Victor Hugo has simply led her to another form of entrapment. His disillusionment, articulated in his paradoxical, "I see a dark light", on his death-bed, has found its human embodiment in his daughter's distress.

Against the perceptions of characters in the film about Adèle — for the lame bookseller, she provides a romantic ideal; to her kindly landlady, she is "refined and well-educated, and so pretty"; for the doctor who tends her and discovers her identity, she is a sympathetic vixen in order to sway Pinson, but finally her inability to confront her reality leads her into what could be described as a catatonic schizophrenia.

Truffaut's depiction of her behavior has at least as much in common with fable as it does with melodrama, and perhaps a comparison with Faubert (especially with Madame Bovary), would be appropriate.

Finally, it is necessary to see The Story of Adèle H in the context of Truffaut's responses to the Hollywood cinema, which has played such an important part in his formation as a filmmaker, as it did for so many of the so-called 'nouvelle vague'. Beyond the more obvious connections in his films — his free references to genre and the, often awkward, homages to filmmakers he has admired — there is the attempt to break free from the chains that Hollywood tradition and to find his own forms. In fact in 1962 Truffaut remarked: "...as long as one considers the cinema as a popular art — and we all do as we were brought up on the American cinema — then we can go off on another tack; we can discipline our work so that it becomes complex and has more than one layer of meaning..."

Such a goal was apparent as early as his second feature, Tirez Sur La Pianiste (1960) with its idiosyncratic treatment of the gangster/underworld conventions, and is readily located in his anti-melodramatic treatment of the melodramatic material of Jules et Jim (1961) and Une Belle Fille Comme Moi (1974) — films which have much in common with The Story of Adèle H, taking as their centre the study of or arguably the, female consciousness and its reception of male-oriented identities.

It is here, in Truffaut's critical explorations of form, that the key to the direction his films are taking can be found. And there is considerable irony in this fact, that one now has to look to Europe to find the heritage which Hollywood has left to the world of cinema.
A left wing historian once said that a political party isn’t really alive until it starts to split, which is really what criticism is about. The Weather Underground has achieved a kind of unity because it has been able to take critical stands about its positions. It saw what happened in the days of the townhouse. Not that the townhouse was wrong. That was sad, that wasn’t wrong. But they’ve seen how those attitudes were wrong. Also the Days of Rage — the Days of Rage were correct, but the attitudes were wrong. All of their mistakes, though, are mistakes that they have made politically and even dramatically interesting, because they’re mistakes of rage and passion instead of self-serving or mistaken.

One thing that makes me happy about the film is that people come up after it and say, “Wow, you made them seem so human and sane.” “Don’t make them ridiculous, you can’t make anybody seem human and sane. They are human and sane.” And the fact that they’ve preserved their humanity while being fugitives in the belly of this great imperial beast is a great tribute to them.

The Weatherpeople talked about their act of putting their political statement, Prairie Fire, together, and how they totally controlled means of production from beginning to end. In the film we’ve done that and they mention that once it was filmed, it was in your hands. How did you as a collective, including them, feel about that?

Well, we probably made some errors about which we’ll have an opportunity to be self-critical. I know that when I watch the film in Otsawataneka. I also know that part of what is in the film that may be incorrect is neither their fault nor our fault, because whenever you make a film or write a book you freeze something in history. Meanwhile a year has gone by and their attitudes and positions have changed as the world changes. So what they said in 1975 when we filmed them, they may view differently today. They may take a critical view of the film, which is fine. We don’t get against being criticized, we’re open for it. We tried to make a film, though, that would reflect what they felt, and yet we had absolute freedom. Neither Mary nor I was doing anything we didn’t want to do. We were autonomous, in the same position I said PFOC groups ought to be in. We had to do it in the spirit of what we had. I couldn’t make a film and show it to somebody everyday and say is this what you want? Neither could Mary, and I don’t think they wanted that.

Earlier you mentioned that your cameraperson was never truly a part of the collective. In the often-used mirror shot, it seemed to me that the dominant image in the frame was the cameraman and the camera of Hollywood, and that the Weatherpeople were huddled together at the bottom of the shot, so that we appear to be looking down on them. This seemed a contradiction in form and content and I wonder whether you did that consciously. If you did, so, does it reflect the imperfect nature of your collective?

That particular imperfection is probably my own, it’s not even Haskell’s. When Haskell and I first met on this, we talked about how we could do this without putting masks over them, which we both regarded as ridiculous and hostile images: it looks like somebody who robbed your local grocery store. So we tried the scrim, which is the mirror shot. The first note I had to myself was that we would have a pan across a mirror in which we would be reflected and then come upon them. And we got hung up on that mirror because there were only a certain number of devices we could use. It’s also very hard to communicate with the Weather Underground, so when they said to us, “What shall we put in that safe house? What props?” I only got one shot at it, I said, “Make it look something like a place you would live in, and the one thing we would like is a mirror of such and such dimensions.”

What have been the responses of audiences so far?

The audience response has been overwhelmingly positive. A lot of the negative criticism we’ve had has come from sectarian left groups. Some of this is understandable because they fear they’ll be seen as working on a film that’s being played in theatres.” What’s not understandable is criticism by another group that’s into armed propaganda which says: “Ah, the Weather Underground, they’re too laid back. We’ve done more bombing in the past six months than they’ve done in the past six and a half years.” It makes it sound like a contest in bombing which is a very dangerous and boring idea at the same time. The one thing that staggers Mary and me is that ordinary audiences are questioning. They want to know more. They want to find out, and we’re exactly what we were hoping for. We’re also getting a lot of people who were in the peace movement and some who were in radical fringes of the peace movement, and some who were in school or school law school, or were into drugs or something else. They see the film and it makes them unhappy, and guilty, but also happy, but happy, horrible. The government is scared of Warren Beatty. It sounds mad, but it’s true. And if you get 45 Warren Beattys, plus some radical radicals to support that on, the government’s going to have to let up.

What is the relationship of progress in media people like yourself to the political activists whose primary work is centered in communities or unions, for instance?

The relationship is to keep in touch and express what they do. As you know, one of the problems with the media — and I hate that word — I’ll say one of the problems with film, is that if you’re in the world, making a film about the world and people in it, you yourself get drawn out of the world. And what I’m going to do next, for instance, is write a book, which is almost totally isolating. It’s a hard position, but it’s the most effective thing I can do. It’s a book which is trying to trace my own history, through the CIA and the FBI, and I think it will mean more to more people than my not doing it and doing something else that seems to be more personal. I think the political leader and I’m not. Maybe I’m an unnatural filmmaker, but that’s what I do, and that’s why I’m writing this book — so I can make a film and keep up,

But at the same time I keep up, and Mary particularly keeps up strong organizational connections with groups like Prairie Fire, with certain labor groups, with Mary’s groups, and with groups that spring from time to time around specific issues. I would do anything for any film made in the world, not only because that’s my work, but also because it’s part of the revolutionary struggle in this country to show people how brilliantly the Cubans, for example, can make films today, which they could never make when we were running the country.

But rate benchmen like Batista and Machado were presidents of Cuba all they could produce were whores and gambling. Now you have a first rate film industry, where the revolutionary world dealing with the arts. The FBI, and CIA of this country don’t want people to see what the revolution has won in a great many places. That’s why they’re going after TriContinental. They don’t want us to see that we are part of an international majority. We’re not a minority. Those of us who are Marxists-Leninists belong to the majority of the world population today. We’re a minority here, and I think we can only say that you and I both hope that what will change. We hope that we will belong to that world majority that seeks to bring justice and openness and economic equity and we true testing of women and men together in fighting for social change.

EMILE DE ANTONIO

FILMOGRAPHY

1963 Point of Order
1966 Rush to Judgement
1969 In the Year of the Pig
1972 Painters Painting
1975 Underground

* TriContinental Film Centre distributes Third World Films, and the U.S. government is currently trying to force them to register as a "foreign agent", which the centre claims would destroy their business.
JERRY GOLDSMITH
Ivan Hutchinson

Los Angeles-born Jerry Goldsmith, whose score is currently contributing to the box-office success of The Omen, at present ranks as one of the most hardworking and prolific composers on the international film scene. Goldsmith majored in music at the University of California, studied with pianist Jakop Gimpel, and learned the basic techniques of film scoring with Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco and Miklos Rozsa. In 1950, he joined the music department of CBS' West Coast division, and did his first work as a composer-conductor for radio programs.

By the end of the 1950s he had written scores for many series, among them The Twilight Zone and Gunsmoke. But his name first really came to the fore with his work on Thriller, the hour-long horror-fantasy series hosted by Boris Karloff. The music, with its stress on dissonance and complexity, non-melodic rhythmic passages was often more genuinely disturbing than the scripts of that only moderately successful series.

By the age of 38 he was a name to be reckoned with. And in a country where music is recognized as a major part of successful dramatic programming, his inventiveness and imagination, combined with an ability to work quickly, inevitably brought him to the attention of the film studios. However, it was not until 1962 that he first gained real notice as a writer of film scores. In that year he scored three films for Universal: an off-beat western, a Rock Hudson melodrama and John Huston's flawed but interesting Freud.

The wide-sounding nature of the subjects may have been indicative of the studio's confidence in him, but it also provided Goldsmith with the opportunity to demonstrate his eclecticism and versatility to the rest of the industry. In taking advantage of this opportunity he revealed both a responsiveness to the needs of film drama and a high level of technical sophistication.

His lush score for The Spiral Road, with its Eastern touches, was a long way from the melancholy, haunting and gentle music for Lonely Are the Brave, which, in turn differed radically from the atonal approach used in Freud. This last was a fully atonal score, the first of at least four written by Goldsmith, and proves, in spite of the expressions of musical purists, that atonality can be used to considerable effect in certain types of film.

Commercial success had so far eluded his film work, but in 1963 the breakthrough came with Lilies of the Field, one of six films he scored in that year. Utilizing banjo, strings and negro spiritual, he created an attractive, melodic and ingeniously scored soundtrack that was a joyful adjunct to a quiet and overly sentimental film.

He has since arranged four films a year, covering the broadest imaginable range of subjects from westerns through thrillers and comedies to spectaculars. Not all have been good films, but all have benefited from Goldsmith's participation.

A check of the scores available in this country reveals a division of his music into three main types: his "Western" music, which is not restricted solely to westerns; his large scale melodic work, combining complex rhythms and often exotic and plaintive-sounding string themes; and his atonal writing. In the first category are Lonely Are the Brave (1962), Lilies of the Field (1963), A Patch of Blue (1965), Stagecoach (1966), The Trouble with Angels (1966), The Film Flam Man (1967), Hour of the Gun (1967) and Wild Rovers (1971).

The second group would comprise In Harm's Way (1965), The Blue Max (1966) — the score far surpassing the film in interest, Justine (1969), and possibly his best score of this type, Patton (1970), a brilliantly imaginative and exciting score for Planet of the Apes (1968) and The Illustrated Man (1969).

As is evident, Goldsmith has worked on some undistinguished films, but without ever writing down to his material. In the case of the inept thriller, The Satan Bug, for example, he avoided the predictable jazz-pop cliches and, using a synthesizer to produce a five-note motif in 5/4 time, created a stunning score that made the film infinitely better to listen to than to watch.

Already this year he has scored The Omen and Logan's Run, with no sign of any deterioration in quality or originality. In The Omen, a brilliantly-edited film whose primary aim is a frontal attack on the audience's nervous system, Orff-like Latin chants in praise of Satan are used as a leit-motif, together with chimes, tympani, piano and strings in abundance the voices of the chorus chanting, shouting and swooping to chilling effect. By contrast the more reflective moments of the score have a melancholy quality reminiscent of Elmer Bernstein in quieter mood.

In Planet of the Apes, Goldsmith eschewed the use of electronic devices, preferring to utilize unusual timbres from conventional instruments, exotic percussion and serial composition for a symphony orchestra. For Logan's Run, his latest venture into science-fiction, he has used all the electronic devices at his disposal at the disposal of a modern recording studio to produce what is — at least on record, the film not having been released yet — a soundtrack that is a unique aural experience.

His other scores are well represented on disc: Lilies of the Field (Epic LN24094), A Patch of Blue (Mainstream 56088), and The Trouble with Angels (Mainstream 56073) present music that is the best single feature of each of the films in question.

For those who want Goldsmith at his best Planet of the Apes (Project 55023), Patton (Fox 4208) and The Blue Max (Mainstream 56081) are essential. At the time of writing The Omen (Tattoo BJL1-1888) and Logan's Run (MGM MG-1-5302) are available only on import.

The only dull Goldsmith is to be found in his "jazz" scores for In Like Flint or To Trap a Spy, where he attempts the idiom of today's pop writers. Here he is competent, but no more so than many others with only a fraction of his ability.

Nonetheless, at his best he is enormously talented, and in a recent series of interviews with well-known film composers, Jerry Goldsmith, who believes that too many American films have too much music written for them, was constantly rated by his contemporaries as among the best — no mean recommendation in a highly competitive field.

Jerry Goldsmith: "Too many American films have too much music."

Conducting the score for Planet of the Apes.

STILLS IN THIS ISSUE
Special thanks to:
1900 — Jack Gilbert.
Persistence of Vision — Gall Pascoc.
Roman Polanski — Peter Murphy, CIC and Antony I. Ginnane.
Emile de Antonio — David Roe, AFI and The Sydney Film Festival.
Jerry Goldsmith — John Reid.

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THE MPDA REPLIES

The Corporations
Continued from P. 236

The other members are:
Mr. Graham Burke, managing director of Roadshow Distributors and Village Theatres and a director of Mr. Tim Burstall’s Melbourne-based company, Hexagon Productions;
Mr. Nigel Dick, the managing director of the Victorian Broadcasting Network Ltd., and a director of Crawford Productions;
Mr. Clifford Green, who has written scripts for television and feature films, including Picnic at Hanging Rock and the ABC series Power Without Glory.

Mrs. Natalie Miller, who has been associated with the Melbourne Film Festival since its early days. She is an independent film distributor and promoter of overseas and Australian films;
Mr. John Loney, the executive, administrator, three project officers and secretarial staff.

Mr. Frederick Schepisi, writer, producer and director of prize-winning television commercials. He directed the film Devil’s Playground which received the Australian Film Institute’s awards for best Australian film 1976, best script and best director.

At the present time, the Corporation is drawing on the staff facilities of the Victorian Ministry for the Arts. However, in the near future the Corporation will have its own staff and separate office facilities. It is envisaged that the permanent staff will comprise a chief executive, administrator, three project officers and secretarial staff.

The objectives of the Corporation as determined by the Act are:
1. To energetically pursue the policy of encouraging the production in this state of films with high standards of quality. The Corporation will support as many projects as possible. Economic viability and aesthetic significance will be considered jointly and in isolation so that projects supported will fall, from time to time, into three categories: (a) Those that have apparent economic viability as well as aesthetic significance; (b) Those that have apparent economic viability but not necessarily, in the opinion of the Corporation, aesthetic significance; and, (c) Those that, in the opinion of the Corporation, have little or no apparent economic viability, but do have undoubted aesthetic significance.

2. Facilities
To encourage the provision of adequate and up-to-date equipment and facilities for filmmakers in this state. The aim should be to encourage the permanent staff to provide such requirements, but the Corporation itself should be prepared to meet the needs as a last resort.

3. Production Assistance
To assist filmmakers in a variety of ways, including financialaid ranging from grant to investment, and facilitation aid including technical resources and community facilities.

4. Production Co-ordination for Government Departments
To provide services, advice and funds to government departments proposing to use the film medium for promotional or educational purposes.

The Board first met on August 11, 1976, and plans to have meetings every three weeks. It hopes to be as flexible as possible in all areas of its activities.

In the field of script assessing the Corporation has decided not to use outside script assessors, but for the time being make all assessment by members of the Board.

RANSOM STODDARD REPLIES

Paragraphs 4 and 5

Mr. Loney well knows — or his solicitors ought to be able to advise him — that under the Act of Parliament which set it up, it is the continuing responsibility of the Trade Practices Commission to oversee, inquire, report on and, where appropriate, initiate action against the inducements of the companies in those restrictive trade practices set out in the Act.

The fact that the MPDA had applied for clearance of certain practices does not alter the duty of the Commission to look continually into the practice of the laws of self-aggrandizement of the general practices of the film industry and all other industries. Any request of the Commission to separate the clearance applications from the general overview of the Commission under the Act is out of line.

Further, although it appears that the Commission’s investigating officer did, without any authority from the Commission, give some undertaking to Mr. Loney, the MPDA ought to have realized that the officer in question had no authority to bind the Commission, and indeed Commissioner Coad points this out in his telex to Dawson Waldron (the MPDA’s solicitors) dated July 7, 1976.

Paragraph 7

The MPDA refers to application C3751. Whether the Queensland Exhibitors’ Association requested additional rejection rights the agreement in question purported to grant is immaterial to the issue of whether Dr. Venturini could endorse any block booking practice, however diluted. (Block booking is the coupling of high grossing and fair grossing films together in the one film hire contract, which is arguably in breach of Section 45 and Section 47 of the Act). It is easy to understand why the Queensland Association would want further rejection rights. What Dr. Venturini did was to imply they did not go far enough.

Similarly, clearance for application C3752 was refused.

Paragraph 8

Mr. Loney cannot be serious here. Looking, for example, at the Victorian/Tasmanian standard form of contract, Clause 10 provides for the place of exhibition. Clause 11 for the date of exhibition, and Clauses 23 and 42 set out film hire terms. The Schedule also frequently sets out assessment clauses. It is a sine qua non of the enterprise by the Commission that the arrangement is in breach of Section 45 and Section 47 of the Act.

As for the restrictive nature of the agreement, Clause 34, for example, requires the exhibitor to ensure the film in his possession with an insurer nominated by the distributor. This is the sort of clause intentionally included by the Commission in Finance agreements and the like.

As for Mr. Jack Graham’s comments, it is hard to believe he is serious if he states he is representing exhibitors. Those words of Dr. Venturini’s cited above in Paragraph 6, criticize exhibitors, except to sympathize with them for their plight.

Paragraph 10

Mr Loney claims that only one large producer-distributor group has substantial interests in cinema ownership. I take it he means 20th Century-Fox-Hoyts. That, of course, depends on what you mean by ‘interests’. Mr. Loney’s own company CIC, through an affiliate, has substantial interests in City Theatres and Line Drive Ins in WA, the Ascot Theatre in Sydney, and the Bryson in Melbourne. And, of course, Warner Brothers, through their association with Village, have interests in the Village group.

Mr. Loney’s nowhere in the franchise agreements which everyone knows exist between MPDA members and exhibitor groups (refer Cinema Papers, issues 5 and 6, “Restrictive Trade Practices Legislation and the Film Industry”). As Dr. Venturini says, the film industry, at an exhibition-distribution level, is not a free market in any sense of the word.

Paragraphs 14 and 15

Mr. Loney’s views on the development of the local production industry are pure supposition. How the exhibition-distribution-production scene would have developed without Rank and Fox buying up a monopoly is anybody’s guess. Nor does the argument suggest that standards of exhibition vary between cinemas owned by independent exhibitors do not rate with those of the combines. How did he rate the Capitol Theatre in Melbourne — formerly an independently booked house for 70mm MGM product, for almost to the wall after the MGM-BEF merger — before it was saved by entering into an agreement with Village?

It is certainly true the release patterns established over the years have proved most profitable for MPDA members. It is most unlikely whether it has proved as profitable for producers. In fact until the aggressive Village and Dendy groups moved in the national scene in the 60s, the profits of exhibitors, distributors and producers were flagging due to an absence of competition.

Paragraphs 20-23

In spite of our request, Mr. Loney gives only the most general comments on how the business practices of MPDA members will change following the refusal of clearance of their applications. The question: Have any real changes occurred at all?
These volumes are the second set in a project that will eventually trace the complete history of the American film industry (and of other films released in the U.S.) from 1893 to the present — and onward. As planned, the series will, when complete, consist of a two-volume set for each decade, beginning with the years 1893-1910, then 1911-20, 1921-30, 1931-40, 1941-50, 1951-60, 1961-70 together with volumes for each period covering Short Films and Newsreels.

Richard P. Krafsur

Executive editor, Richard P. Krafsur

Company, 1976

Recommended price: $95

Keith Scott

The unbelievable detailed casts, credits and statistician that will eventually trace the complete history of the American film industry (and of other films released in the U.S.) from 1893 to the present — and onward. As planned, the series will, when complete, consist of a two-volume set for each decade, beginning with the years 1893-1910, then 1911-20, 1921-30, 1931-40, 1941-50, 1951-60, 1961-70 together with volumes for each period covering Short Films and Newsreels.

The first volume covering the years 1921-30 appeared in 1973. 'It was a joint venture of Kenneth W. Munden executive editor. The present holder of that post writes in the introduction: "We hope this volume will serve us to our efforts to maintain the high quality of scholarship that characterized his work." It does — admirably.

Serial to Cereal: A Star Is Born, Rebecca, Scarlett, Rhett, and a Cast of Thousands

by Gene D. Phillips

Popular Library, 1976

Recommended price: $6.95

J. Reid

Now that Leonard Maltin has taken over editing of the Big Apple film series, there is much more to offer than lavish photo spreads. At first glance, a Jesus priest might seem the wrong kind of person to provide a book on film criticism. But Father Gene D. Phillips is more than that. He has an uncanny ability to pinpoint the key scenes and most significant moments in Kubrick’s features, from The Killing to A Clockwork Orange.

Stanley Kubrick, A Film Odyssey

by Gene D. Phillips

Scarlett, Rhett, and a Cast of Thousands

by Roland Flanini

Macmillan, 1976

Recommended price: $14.85

Roland Flanini

The Selznick Players

by Ronald Bowers

A.S. Barnes and Company, 1976

Recommended price: $15.95

Barry Lowe

In today’s torrent of film books it was only natural that authors should get round to the real film moguls of early Hollywood, those larger-than-life producers who ran the industry through a number of viewings and by over-extending his resources, and incidentally makes quite a convincing case for the role of a Jack Gable’s arriving on the set his first day with the master of the ‘masterpiece’ Gone With The Wind he has to his credit as a producer a string of more memorable films — A Star Is Born (1937), Rebecca (1937), and Spellbound (1945).

David O. Selznick was one such man. Although his name now seems irrevocably linked with his sprawling ‘masterpiece’ Gone With The Wind and to any serious film student, buff, critic, historian and statistician. An excellent investment.

Barry Lowe

Selznick Directs, 1976

A Star Is Born (1937), Rebecca (1937), and Spellbound (1945).

The first book in the Big Apple series, Kubrick’s films, many times now, is a study of their youth, he and brother Myron preferred to work in their father’s film company. Mitchell’s novel, through its three years of production, hopping from studio to studio. Lewis conned his way to the top of the Hollywood pile only to be defeated by his numerous enemies and by over-extending his company. Myron, who had been producing up to 50 films a year for his father’s company, went into business as an agent; he proceeded to vent his spleen on the industry — some say in retribution for what he anticipated the need for early pre-screening treatment of the screenplay.

Unfortuitously, Phillips’ book merely touches on Barry Lyndon which was still unfinished at press time.

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Censorship Practice

Australian Film Censorship

Continued from P. 208

In 1972, however, there were much fewer "R" rated films (10.4 per cent compared to 17 per cent in 1975) and more rejects (7.40 per cent compared to 3.38 per cent).

(d) A comparison of reasons for cuts, between 1972 and 1975, shows that indecency was the reason for 94 per cent of these decisions in 1975 and violence only 3 per cent, while in 1974 the proportions were 76 per cent and 20 per cent.

2. Television

(a) There has been an overall increase in film plus videocase — from 6196 in 1972 to 10,996 in 1975 (increase of 78 per cent). At that rate of increase by 1978 the Board will be handling 19,573 films and videotapes per annum.

(b) The two major suppliers of television fare are U.S. and Britain. The proportion of British contribution has decreased by 14 per cent (videotape) and 5 per cent (film) in the last year. The U.S. has increased proportionately. The most interesting technological trend has been the rapid increase in the proportion of videotapes compared to film over the four-year period.

In 1972 the proportion of videotape compared to film was 12 per cent. By 1975 this proportion had increased by 23 per cent. At this projected rate of increase by 1978 it would be expected that more tape than film would be imported for television purposes.

Other trends and predictions worthy of consideration emerge as a result of technological advance — (The "Wired City") concept. An Australian domestic communications satellite system is, in fact, being suggested. How this will affect, and it must affect, the degree of control exercised by individual countries, is a subject of infinite conjecture — maybe a convention along lines of Postal Union.

Problems Trends

1. Drive-ins — The greatest single cause of complaints is the showing of "R" certificate films in drive-ins. Only two states have provision within their Acts to move against the showings by the drive-in and in both these states it is South Australia, which amended its legislation in 1973 to give the Minister power to prohibit the showing of certain "R" films in particular drive-ins; the other is Queensland, which is empowered to act against the showing of films under the provisions of the 1974 Films Review Act.

State officials are often asking us in particular to use the available legislation in order to stop showing in drive-in, which is our contention that no drive-in would be suitable for showing an "R" certificate film being unsuitable.

2. Warnings: The idea of warnings has been widely canvassed for some time. It is thought, by some, that warnings should be attached to films which are particularly violent, sexually graphic, linguistically crude etc. However, our Board and many state officials involved in censorship decisions and policy believe that all films which are unsuitable would be difficult, unless new legislation were to be introduced prohibiting the use of these warnings in a sensationalistic and exploitive way.

If warnings were exploited, the point of the exercise of the censor's powers and responsibilities would be reversed, attention would be drawn to these films and warnings could be used as an advertising gimmick.

3. Queensland Board of Review: By an Act of Parliament, the Queensland Board of Review was set up in 1974. This enabled it to override the decisions of the Film Censorship Board, in that state, in relation to the exhibition of a film in Queensland. They cannot alter the classification of a film, but they may prohibit its showing.

This has resulted in a number of films which we have passed "R", being prohibited in Queensland. This fragmentation is not a matter we treat lightly.

Trends in Attitude

Since the introduction of the "R" certificate in November 1971, the debate on censorship has not abated, but it would appear to be less polarising. This is a case of the drive-ins being unsuitable rather than an "R" certificate film being unsuitable.

I believe most people in Australia today believe in the concept of limited censorship, and they see it as merely another ingredient of a well-ordered society. Even the most liberal, it would appear, would like to see some aspects of expression controlled, in order to afford protection from real or imagined harm or infringements of "basic rights". If it is not sex, then it is violence, or drugs, or political incitement to drug abuse, racial prejudice, release of official secrets; or they want to protect something, such as historic buildings, reputations or the innocence of children, or to ban such things as advertising in children's viewing time or poor quality television.

In all this, there must be a balancing of individual freedom with the interests of society as a whole. The balance is not always easy, and control is based on the premise that society has a right to protect itself from itself — limited censorship is merely an extension of that right.

But it is the responsibility of both the individuals and society as a whole to determine where these limits should be set. This can be done through discussion and debate, and an increased "open government" policy.

In conclusion I think it would be fair to say that, at least for today, we have one of the most liberal, orderly and uniform systems of censorship in the world.

AUSTRALIAN FILM CENSORSHIP: A CAPSULE HISTORY

1. 1896: Cinematograph introduced into Australia via Sydney and Melbourne.

2. Commonwealth's jurisdiction attributed to influence of cinema contribute to pressure which results in the establishment of formal censorship procedures in NSW and Queensland in 1910, in Victoria in 1912, and in South Australia in 1914.

3. In World War I, censorship boards are briefly set up in NSW and Queensland.

4. 1917: Creation of Commonwealth Film Censorship Board under the Customs Act (now Film Act) effectively pre-empts copyright on the foundation of "artistic value". All films entering Australia are classified. Classification of films in Australia is not voluntary and film importers are not allowed to import films until they are classified by the Board.


6. 1925: In their first report, Commonwealth Chief Censor, Professor Wallace, and the Censor (Sydney) Mr W. S. Crewe-O’Reilly, recommend introduction of a classification system. These recommendations were passed unsuccessfully (322), after eliminations (331), or rejected (68).

7. 1925: Section 5(g) of Customs Act provides the Commonwealth with authority for the prohibition of the importation of goods. Under this section proclamations have been issued prohibiting the importation of films and advertising matter under certain conditions; the latter are contained in regulations under the Act. In its inception in 1917 the Board consists of three people, soon replaced by a part-time Chief Censor resident in Melbourne, assisted by a full-time deputy censor resident in Sydney. Appeals were made to the Chief Censor in Sydney.

8. 1926: Consultations between state and federal governments result in a Commonwealth Film Act, providing for a Victorian censorship of all films entering the state and an appeal to the Chief Censor to order the cutting or banning of a film, or to conditionally approve films for exhibition. These recommendations are included in the Act.

9. 1927: Section 5(g) of Customs Act provides the Commonwealth with authority for the prohibition of the importation of goods. Under this section proclamations have been issued prohibiting the importation of films and advertising matter under certain conditions; the latter are contained in regulations under the Act. In its inception in 1917 the Board consists of three people, soon replaced by a part-time Chief Censor resident in Melbourne, assisted by a full-time deputy censor resident in Sydney. Appeals were made to the Chief Censor in Sydney.

10. 1928: As a result of the adoption by Federal Cabinet of 12 of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Motion Picture Industry:

(i) Censorship offices are moved to Sydney;
(ii) A three-member Censorship Board is appointed.
(iii) New Censorship Regulations under Customs Act providing for a Commonwealth film censor is concentrated in Sydney.


12. 1929: Chief Censor Cresswell O’Reilly’s stated credo (1930): “There will always be an element in the community which delights in the violent, the sex-suggestive, the lawless and the brutal side of life, and there are some people who will seek to exploit this to section. Censorship is trying under great difficulties to ensure that a better side shall be presented.”

13. 1932: Three-member appeal board replaced by one appeal board.

14. 1933: “Censorship, rightly regarded, should like the protection of children, be intended to work towards its own elimination.” (Chief Censor O’Reilly).

15. 1934: Tasmanian state censorship abolished.


17. 1947: Western Australia, Queensland and Tasmania pass legislation making their film censorship powers and functions — including classification — to the Commonwealth; the new legislation to commence on January 1, 1949. This is later followed by similar delegations from NSW, Victoria, South Australia and the ACT.

18. However, there is still no Australia-wide uniformity regarding responsibility for policing classification requirements, although in 1956 Australia makes an advance towards its elimination policy. All but one state has eliminated all film classification by regulation, following on Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania in 1947, and NSW follows suit in 1956.

19. 1956: The Commonwealth government decides the Film Censorship Board should examine and classify all films imported for television, applying the program standards of the Federal Broadcasting Act. The result is a delegation from the Broadcasting Control Board to the Film Censorship Board increased from seven to nine members.

20. 1957: Mr C. J. Campbell, a former secretary to the Minister of Customs, succeeds Mr J. O. Alexander as Chief Censor in 1957.

21. 1959: Film Censorship Board increased from five to seven members.

22. 1964: Mr R. J. Browne succeeds Mr C. J. Campbell as Chief Censor, Mr Campbell appointed Appeal Censor, to be succeeded by Mr T. Maher and Mr T. Gadwalder.

23. 1970: Establishment of Films Board of Review to operate from January 4, 1971, under chairmanship of Mr Stanley Harvey, former producer-in-chief of the Australian National Film Board.

24. 1971: All states, at instigation of Customs Minister Don Chipp, revise film censorship legislation to provide for introduction of the “R” certificate and for compulsory classification of all films for home viewing by Federal Cabinet. Cabinet decision on December 12 of the Royal Commission on the Motion Picture Industry.

25. 1973: Meeting of state ministers clarifies advisory classifications as follows to provide a greater guide for parents:

(i) “N.R.C.” (Not Recommended for Children) will be intended to mean "recommended for children under 12".

(ii) “M” (Suitable for Adults) will be intended to mean “recommended as suitable for persons 15 years and over”.

(iii) Lower legal age limit for admittance of persons to the exhibition of certain films will be reduced from six years to two years in all states and territories where that does not now apply.

26. 1973: Film Censorship Board increased to nine members.

27. 1973: South Australia amended legislation to give minister power to prohibit certain “R” films from showing in drive-ins which are visible from nearby.

28. 1974: Queensland creates a Films Board of Review empowered to prohibit the distribution in the State films regulated by a Film Censorship Board, which are determined to be objectionable.

Distributors agree that films suitable for children would be marked “N.R.C.” (Not Recommended for Children) or “M” (Suitable for Adults) under a “gentleman’s agreement” with all states, except Victoria, which prevails until 1976. But it is the responsibility of both the individual states and the Commonwealth to determine where these limits should be set. This can be done through discussion and debate, and an increased “open government” policy.

In conclusion I think it would be fair to say that, at least for today, we have one of the most liberal, orderly and uniform systems of censorship in the world.
FILM REVIEW
INFORMATION SERVICE

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

The George Lugg Library
P.O. Box 357
Carlton South
Vic. 3053

The Library is operated with assistance from the Film, Radio and Television Board of the Australia Council.

TRACKS
there's more
to life
than
riding waves ...
1900

Continued from P. 222

But not everyone agreed with Professor Borraro. The press reported that the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Salerno, Prof. Nicola Cienf, had written a formal complaint to the librarian. Professor Borraro’s action, he said, was an insult to the city of Salerno, which was in the cultural avant-garde of Italy.

Judge Anania viewed 1900 in its entirety and his argument, impeccable in its logic, was that a work of art could not be judged properly after inspecting only a portion of the whole work.

He claimed the film was not obscene in any way, and it was re-released throughout the country. But a small biographical item in Il Messaggero sheds an interesting light on the whole episode. Bertolucci’s film, it declared, was not the first to be morally evaluated by Dr. Anania. In the past, producers with films of high artistic merit, but of questionable taste, had been wont to premiere their films at remote Ortesi, so that if complaints were made Judge Anania would handle them. Francesco Rosi’s Cadaveri eccellenti (The 400 Blows) was one such film. Bertolucci had been cleared for public exhibition by Judge Anania, who, the paper declared, was earning the title “justice of the cinema”.

By the time of the re-release of part one, the second part was breaking box-office records. Marco Ferreri’s L’Ultima Donna was in second place, closely followed by Visconti’s L’Innocente. Obviously, the American trio of Paramount, United Artists, and Twentieth Century-Fox had not backed a loser after all.

But apart from highlighting the problem of film censorship and reflecting on the morals and manoeuvres of film producers, was the whole uproar justified by the quality of the product? I think not. Bertolucci’s 1900 is perhaps the most important films to come out of Italy in recent years.

The film skilfully blends a lesson in political history with one in cinematographic art to produce genuine theatrical entertainment. For some, however, the polemics will be rather strong meat. The reviewer for Vogue headed her article “The man who sex-shook us with Last Tango in Paris has now set the world on fire with Bertolucci’s massive, star-jammed epic may make you see red!” But she summarized her attitude and response to the film in this way:

“On the day of the interview” (she is referring to an interview with Bertolucci at the Cannes film festival this year) “a right-wing delegate shot and killed two young communists who were disrupting his rally. 1900 is an immensely important film, and the shiver it produces comes from the fact that it is more relevant today than we care to think.”

The story itself begins in the year 1900. A private buffoon dressed as Rigoletto announces the death of Verdi, and his death symbolizes an end to Italy of the Risorgimento and the birth of the modern era. After a few other preliminaries we witness the birth of two boys on the same day to the families of opposing clans, one an heir to the Berlinghieri property and fortune, the other a bastard son of a peasant woman. These ‘twins’ provide the major thread of the story, comparing their muscular skills (and their endowments of nature) as adolescents, and as grown men becoming enmeshed in the politics of the fascist era and embroiled in the domestic problems of marriage. The first half of the film is lyrical and gentle, the second half violent and introspective.

The idea of making a long historical film with a social message came to Bertolucci shortly after he had completed The Conformist back in 1970. The Conformist had been based on Alberto Moravia’s novel of the same name; Bertolucci set about writing his own story with the assistance of his brother Giuseppe and his film editor, Franco Arcalli.

Bertolucci’s own background gave him much of the material he needed for the film. He was born in Emilia, whose beautiful countryside forms the setting for the story. He knew the peasants had been hiding away during the years of the war. As soon as the coalition government brought in dividends, why not make it?

1900

"It is a Hollywoodiana-Sovietico film, with passages of ethnic documentaries on the Emilian countryside. It is a personal film, yet one which has developed and achieved its form through a personal and collective process... It is a film d’auteur, even though it has been obliged to make concessions to popular tastes by the pre requisites of sex, violence, sadism, perversion... It has been somewhat over-studied at the writing stage, and yet is realised with a maximum of improvisation, in direct proportion to its immense cost.”

The “Hollywood-Soviet” label is apt one, for echoes from the past (The Good Earth, Grapes of Wrath; The Cranes are Flying) give the film a rich texture of reminiscence and add to its audience appeal.

The underlying play of polarities in the film will also appeal to semioticians and semioticians, for as Bertolucci told the correspondent for Vogue:

“I am a Marxist, in that when I make a film I try to analyse; to use a dialectic method; to unite the despair for this dying bourgeois class with love for the class that will win in the whole world, the working class. Dialectic is what is missing in the new American cinema, even in the best films.”

What is not missing in Bertolucci’s film is a star-studded cast. The setting of the film may be regional, but the cast is international. Burt Lancaster and Sterling Hayden give good performances as the two opposing patriarchs, Alfredo Berlinghieri and Attila. His father Attila and his film producer gives a moving and sympathetic portrait of Alfredo, the heir to the Berlinghieri fortune; Laura Betti, as Regina the wife of Attila, stuns the screen with her own story with the assistance of his brother Giuseppe and his film editor, Franco Arcalli.

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1900
AUSTRALIAN FILM COMMISSION

Over the past few months the Commission has continued its policy of wide consultation with the industry. In Adelaide it met with the South Australian exhibitors and had policy discussions with the South Australian Film Corporation, and in Melbourne it met with the Victorian Film Corporation. Ken Watts, John Daniell and Leslee Shaw were active in discussion with the Australian Motion Picture Industry Association - Actors' Equity, Musical Union of Australia, Australian Theatrical and Amusement Employees Association - are working closely on matters of common interest in this field.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA

The recent discovery of a print of The Breaking of the Drought, Frank Barre's feature film of 1920, received considerable attention from the media. Currently it is being studied for nitrate print being duped for preservation, following which it will be made into complete sections of the film previously held by the archive so that necessary editorial restoration can be made. When this process is complete, views print will be made so the film can once again be seen as a complete entity.

Publicity resulting from the find had produced other dividends — many people have been interested in questions and information about Australia's film past, and, yes, some have even sent in more old film material. One lady from a remote South Australian town has donated a collection of Australian documentaries of the 1920s: one an invaluable collection, an alert man has located some old films in a Sydney suburban department store.

From Doug Hardy have come the original negatives of films made by Southern Cross Pictures in the late 1940s. If they include Nor'easter, a documentary on sailing a whale-boat in the Northern Pacific, a piece of post-war social history, and a record of the 1947 Sydney to Melbourne men's race. From Twentieth Century-Fox came new preservation of the film Smiley, 1955, and Lewis Milestone's Kangaroo, 1959.

In 1951 it is undoubtedly the archive's largest acquisition. Sydney television station ATN7 has passed over some 7000 cans of film — yet to be sorted and listed. The collection contains drama series, documentaries and commercials — dating from the beginning of television in Australia (from 1956) and even earlier (1930s) and 1940s.

One of the greatest impediments to the use of these background products is their subsequent re-use and/or a system of paying for this re-use. It is not practicable to expect a total payment each time there is a performance. On the other hand, it is neither fair nor reasonable for a musician to make a single recording, which is then used ad infinitum with no additional pay.

We have been unsuccessful in our attempts to have performers' copyright legislation enacted in this country, but we are pressing on to have such an Act implemented, so that performers are protected in the same way.

MUSICIANS' UNION

For the first time private producers of television series have used Australian background and theme music for their productions.

This has come about due to continuing submissions by our organization to bodies such as the Australian Film Commission, which has made money available for a number of pilot series.

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Just how far-reaching the effects of the Industry Assistance Commission's recommendations will be is difficult to state, but it would be a tragedy if this report placed a brake on the Australian film industry in any way.

The three major trade unions involved in the entertainment industry — Actors' Equity, Musicians Union of Australia and Australian Theatrical and Amusement Employees Association — are working closely on matters of common interest in this field.

ASSOCIATION FOR A NATIONAL FILM AND TELEVISION ARCHIVE

It is gratifying to see that 18 months after the formation of this new body, the Australian Film Commission has set up a working party to look into the possibility of creating a National Film and Television Archive for the current state of film archives within Australia. The Association doesn't actually occupy a position on the working party, whose composition is limited to government bodies, but we have maintained contact with the AFC to follow its findings and recommendations. We expect to make a submission in due course.

The Association recommends that other inter-governmental bodies likewise make submissions to the archives working party, which must be ready for consideration by higher Federal government authorities in early 1977.

At least six Association members form part of a new steering committee which has succeeded AFC to a grant of $12,250 to enable a trial one-year project to begin. The interviews, to be recorded for archival preservation on film and audio tape, will be made with six on-camera representatives of the film industry, in the form of group interviews with the co-operation of the State Film and Television School.

The trial grouping of 35 interviewees has been chosen from an original list of around 100 film producers, writers, directors, actors, technicians, distributors and exhibitors, and cover a wide range of activities over the film industry's 60-year existence. A number of film pioneers have already been well documented, so that further decisions may have to be made in favor of the important ones. The Association has been highly successful in the film-teaching community.

One of the first fundraising campaigns has been established to set up a publishing unit to provide teachers with more resources.

We organized a couple of special screening with the co-operation of the State Film Centre, and the committee felt that it would be a basic requirement to supplement Melbourne's ample supply of film screenings, with regular film nights for film educators.

We are currently organizing a series of special films showing with film makers and media workers. We feel this personal contact would be useful for the whole of the industry.

The ATVAF organized two exhibitions: an exhibition of film posters which will be displayed around the state over the next 12 months, and the ATVAF Video Festival, which provides schools with an outlet for video documentaries, dramatizations, and studio shows currently made in our schools.

The ATVAF continued to provide film teachers with a voice in the public debate on government media policy, in the current climate generated by the Green Inquiry and the emasculation of the ABC. We will attempt to make our voice heard as demands for an independent, creative ABC, and for a viable Australian film and television industry.

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TRUGANINI — THE LAST OF THE TASMANIANS

TRUGANINI — THE LAST OF THE TASMANIANS

CUT-BACKS

Dear Sir,

This week, the Melbourne Film-makers Co-operative applied to the Australian Film Commission for funding of $91,000 to produce a film on the history and evolution of Australian independent film. At the final meeting of the Co-op — before its functions were taken over by the AFC — the application was turned down. A recommendation was made to allocate to the Melbourne Film-makers Co-operative an amount not less than that which will make it difficult for the Melbourne film-makers to continue their work, although we by no means intend to stop trying.

Marek Zayler

Dear Sir,

I am disappointed to find that the AFC has turned down the submission of the Melbourne Film-makers Co-operative. I am writing to draw your attention to the fact that the AFC has not been able to provide the necessary funds for the production of this film.

Marek Zayler

DISAPPOINTED

Dear Sir,

I was disappointed to find that the AFC has rejected our submission. I am writing to express my concern and to urge you to reconsider.

Marek Zayler

Knock Back

Dear Sir,

I am writing to express my disappointment at the decision of the AFC to reject our submission. I am writing to express my concern and to urge you to reconsider.

Marek Zayler

PDGA SEMINAR

Dear Sir,

I have received a letter from the AFC expressing its disappointment at the decision to allocate funds to our submission. I am writing to express my concern and to urge you to reconsider.

Marek Zayler

Continued from P. 214

POOLING, PACKING AND PUBLICITY

Pooling and packaging considerations are based around a ‘safety-in-numbers’ principle, whereby firstly (as encouraged by the AFC), investors pool their monies in the production of five films and receive a return (an investment in film distribution) as well as the personal security that at least an effective proportion of the five will make money; secondly, that a film package properly marketed in the pre-production sense can lure a producer to pool their money in the production of five films; thirdly, that a package selling option taken by a company like the Vincent Library as the sole legitimate distributor of Australian independent films in recent years than the Vincent Library. If the Co-op is supported by the AFC, a pool of support from the AFC will make it possible to market the concept that educational films and videotape produced by the film industry have

John Heyer

Editor’s Note

The edited manuscript of the interview referred to above was forwarded to Mr. Heyer for his perusal. It appears this submission has been amended, and was published without further action.

John Heyer

Sydney

Garry Patterson

Editor’s Note

Garry Patterson’s films Include

POULING, PACKING AND PUBLICITY

Pooling and packaging concepts are based around a ‘safety-in-numbers’ principle, whereby firstly (as encouraged by the AFC), investors pool their monies in the production of five films and receive a return (an investment in film distribution) as well as the personal security that at least an effective proportion of the five will make money; secondly, that a film package properly marketed in the pre-production sense can lure a producer to pool their money in the production of five films; thirdly, that a package selling option taken by a company like the Vincent Library as the sole legitimate distributor of Australian independent films in recent years than the Vincent Library. If the Co-op is supported by the AFC, a pool of support from the AFC will make it possible to market the concept that educational films and videotape produced by the film industry have

John Heyer

Editor’s Note

The edited manuscript of the interview referred to above was forwarded to Mr. Heyer for his perusal. It appears this submission has been amended, and was published without further action.

John Heyer

Sydney

Garry Patterson

Editor’s Note

Garry Patterson’s films Include

Continued from P. 214
The Persistence of Vision

Continued from P. 223

"The physiological significance of a mechanism which tends to diminish the sensitivity of the retina for a similar stimulus and increase it for a dissimilar one is very considerable. The fact that both facilitation and inhibition are involved is well brought out . . . in fact, in its essentials this function is akin to the reciprocal innervation of muscles whereby the contraction of one is associated with the relaxation of its antagonist: for this reason McDougall (1903) ascribes the phenomenon to changes in the conducting paths of visual impressions. The tendency to rhythmic variations also finds a replica in the physical activity of these paths."

"Looked at biologically, the process is one which favors change, that effaces only old impressions and welcomes new ones, and allows the eye to register a maximum number of sensations in a given time. How important this is in everyday life is seen, for example, in reading, when the images of between 40 and 80 letters may be presented to the brain in each second, if this feat is to be accomplished with any success, the very rapid preparation of the retina for each new image becomes absolutely essential."

The phenomenon of successive contrast pertains to the persistence of vision part of the theory of illusory film movement. We can say that our persisting vision sustains an image not quite or irrespective of the intervening blackout, but because of that blackout. The emphasis is obviously different.

Another probable effect of the blackout that we can examine is increased sensitivity of the retina to subsequent stimulation. We have seen that the retina welcomes new images and stimuli. There is evidence to suggest that during the blackout between images, there is an instant increase in the sensitivity of the retina, which is called scotopic, or dark-adapted, vision. The increase in sensitivity to light can be calculated, but only up to a point, for it has been found that the sensitivity of the fovea increases so rapidly during the first few seconds of dark adaptation that it cannot be measured. The curve of the following graph, showing dark adaptation at the fovea, provides us with some evidence that even a time interval as brief as 1/48th second is adequate for scotopic vision to occur.

Since the retina becomes more sensitive to light in the darkness, then the lamp in the projector need not burn as brightly. This means much more than a small saving on the electricity bill for the phi phenomena is more easily experienced using illuminations of a lower intensity than a higher. Although the projector bulb is a source of brilliant light, too bright for the naked eye, much of this light is absorbed by the cinema screen and the distance over which it is projected.

Some mention should be made of projection of film at speeds other than at 24 frames per second. Other speeds used are 25, 18 and 16 f.p.s. and 24 and 18 are the most common in use, being for 16mm and 8mm stock respectively. In each of the four speeds the rate of f.p.s. quite obviously satisfies the conditions for CFF to occur.

Although little is known about the velocity of objects in apparent motion, including the lower limiting value of speed of an illusory motion, the following simple test can help us to understand how we can see not only film movement at natural, or veridical, speed, but also slow motion, accelerated motion (as in Charlie Chaplin films) and other variations:

Alternating the set of lines A with any of the sets B, B' or B' at a fixed stimulus interval generates perceived movements at different speeds.

The diagram is used as follows: "Let the lines of A be the first flash and any of the sets in the remaining rows be the second. A very great range of speeds can be seen at a single inter-stimulus interval when the different sets are displayed. Slow speeds are seen when the distances separating the lines are small, and faster when they are larger."28 That is, A flashed, then B' flashed might represent the speed of movement of a character in a Keystone Kops film; A then B2 slow motion. Although interstimulus interval, or projection speed, does range from 16 to 25 frames per second, the above diagram is very useful for explaining how the different movements are experienced.

From the above discussion it can be seen that the inadequacy of the persistence of vision theory of film movement should have been generally known to the film world a long time ago, in view of the work of Exner, Wertheimer, Müllnerberg and many others. While Koler notes that a truly comprehensive account of illusory movement is not yet available, exploration of some of the retinal and perceptual processes results in at least a better understanding of the phenomenon.

Why has the persistence of vision theory persisted, with its dignity intact, for so long? Perhaps one reason is that Exner's discovery in 1875 attracted little interest until Wertheimer's experiments in 1910. Between these two dates the motion picture projector and the motion picture camera were invented. The Thaumatrope and other optical toys had for a very long time been understood in terms of persistence of vision, so presumably the film illusion was included in the general collection of optical gadgets being used at the time. It is a plausible theory, because it can explain why we see no darkness where there is darkness, and somehow it has been handed down from generation to generation. The prevalence of the phenomenon might also indicate some sort of separation, or dissociation, within the Humanities, keeping film study, physiology and psychology apart. For example, neither the University of Sydney nor the Australian National University have film study courses, but have departments of psychology. The helpful suggestions, and Miss Gail Pascoe, of Goulburn College of Advanced Education, for the graphic material.

REFERENCES

12. Müllnerberg (Foreword)

Other Works Consulted:
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Samuel Z. Arkoff
Continued from P. 217

Roger had moved back and forth all the time. He had gone to do some films with Columbia and then got fired from one of them because he wouldn’t do it the way they wanted it done. He also made a few for U.A. He had set up his own distribution company, Film Group, and then decided he didn’t want it, so he thrust it on to us.

Even after he started New World Pictures he still made films for us, when he got himself into a budget bracket he thought was over his limit. For example, Box Car Bertha, which was Scorsese’s first film, and Bloody Mama, with Robert de Niro.

Do you think the direction Corman’s taking at the moment with New World resembles the line you were following in the fifties?

Well, Roger claims that he is the largest independent and that we are a major now. I take issue with him on that and say that I always was and still am an independent, and he will have to be content with second place.

Jim Nicholson left the company just before he died and set up Academy Productions . . .

Well, none of us knew it at the time but I think that what really happened with Jim was that he was ill and it all just became too much for him. I think he wanted to get away from us so as not to cause us any grief.

What effect do you think the acquisition by Roadshow of Warner’s franchise has had on your relationship?

I don’t think it has had any effect.

And yet it would have been true to say that up until that time every AIP film that went out in Australia went through Roadshow. Now AIP have films in release through Seven Keys and Filmways as well . . .

There have been various reasons for that, but Roadshow is our distributor and we are really happy with them. They are by far the best people to handle AIP product here. We even discussed with them the possibility of co-productions. I think I could work with Tim Burstall he is a horror film here for example.

Is the elimination of tax shelters in the U.S. going to create a product shortage? And if so, would that mean you might be more interested in doing co-productions?

We have always been involved in co-productions. We have a British company, and we have co-produced with almost every film company in the world. The tax shelter knockout will have some effect, but I don’t think this will be as disastrous as some people have said.

Even though almost the entire package of new AIP films going out at the moment are tax sheltered or have tax shelter money in them . . .

Look, as long as it was available, we used it. As a result of tax shelter financing I didn’t have to use any of my bank financing, which has remained virtually untouched over the past couple of years. So I am not really concerned. In the film business things are never as good as they seem and never as bad as they seem.

What sort of ground rules do you think should apply as far as material for co-productions with Australian producers is concerned?

I think the Australian film industry is making substantial progress, but that doesn’t mean to say you would go from swaddling clothes into a Gucci outfit overnight. It took us 22 years.

I would caution you: make your films for the home market and avoid the esoteric and the arty-farty.

Would you put a film like “Picnic at Hanging Rock” in that category?

I consider it a well-produced film that moves at a pace I would not consider commercial enough throughout the world. I kept expecting something to happen, but it never did. But I know that Picnic at Hanging Rock did well here and I am delighted.

You’ve never made a practice, as Roger Corman has lately, of handling some foreign releases like “Amarcord” and “Cries and Whispers”, along with the bread and butter films . . .

Well, one guy got Roger into that. Roger denies that it’s really interesting for him, but deep down I think he likes the prestige and the “reputation”. But then in this business, of course, everyone’s a rogue — except myself, naturally.

Mind you, I love rogues. ★

**Book Review**

Continued from P. 279

But the big plus for Bowers’ book is the pages it devotes to the Selznick stock company — a stable of actors and actresses he had under personal contract in the forties. Here for the first time are detailed appreciations of such neglected actors as Dorothy McGuire, Gregory Peck, Joseph Cotten and Joan Fontaine, as well as extensive filmographies. In addition there are the business affairs: Ingrid Bergman, Shirley Temple and Vivien Leigh.

In a number of appendices Bowers sketches briefly the careers of some of the Selznick also-rans like Rory Calhoun, Guy Madison and Hildegard Knef, as well as listing awards to the Selznick company and players and listing their top grossing films.

Selznick died in 1965, and in tribute to his powers of organization Joseph Cotten said in eulogy: “I cannot help but think that our world will never be the same — nor will heaven. And if we are lucky enough to get there too, David will see that all the arrangements are made.” ★
Bert Deling

Beryl Donaldson and John Langer interview Bert Deling, director of Dalmas and Pure Shit, as part of a feature on Australian directors.

George Lucas

Cinema Papers Los Angeles correspondent James Wagner writes on the films of George Lucas, including his new Sci-fi spectacular Star Wars.

Donal Sutherland

On the set of Fellini's Casanova with Cinema Papers Rome correspondent Robert Schar interviewing Donald Sutherland who plays the title role.

Australian Women Filmmakers:

Part 3

The conclusion of a three-part historical survey of women in Australian film production.

Tax and the Film Industry

A group of film accountants and tax experts are compiling this special feature on Australian taxation law and the film industry.

Kids' Films

Or children's films as adults call them. But what do the kids think of them? And are they really made with kids in mind — or are they aimed at parents and what they think their kids should watch?

plus

John Dankworth
Bob Evans
John Scott
John Power
Piero Tosi
Films on TV
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