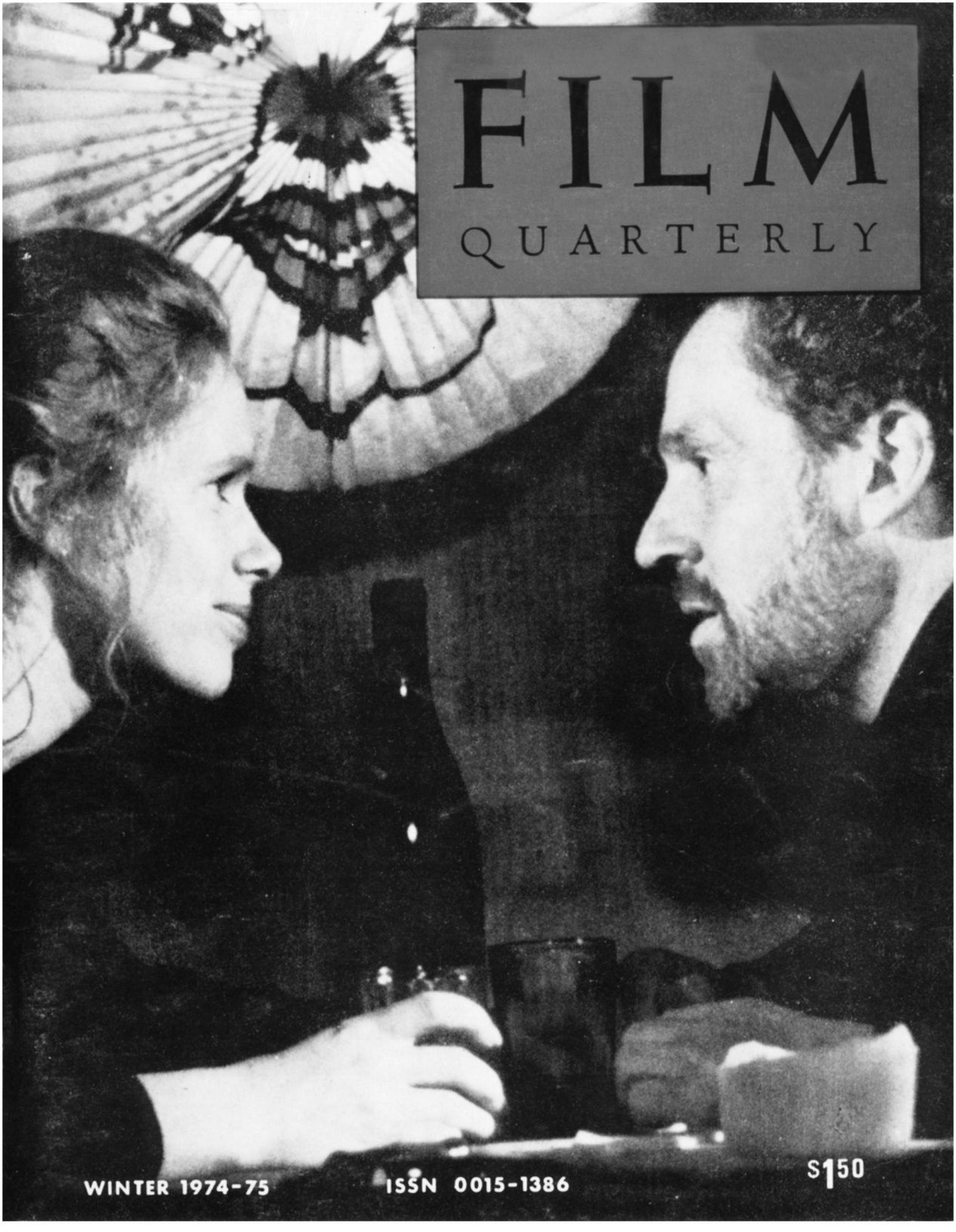

FILM QUARTERLY

WINTER 1974-75 ISSN 0015-1386 $1.50

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Editor's Notebook

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It may be only a consequence of our growing sophistication about intellectual methodologies that this happy universe of shared discourse now seems on the verge of shattering. If you attend a gathering of film scholars, as I did recently, you sense abysses of intellectual stance which are far deeper than the cleavages of opinion and feeling that help make any professional field exciting and worth participating in. This may be a sign of theoretical and political growth. But it may also be a sign that a momentary diversion or heresy, useful in part, is in danger of isolating itself from some more broadly defined intellectual conversation.

Let me outline, sketchily and polemically, three admittedly extreme models of how film thought is currently being carried on. I should preface these models with a notice that what I am saying here flows from a specifically liberal view of social process: that many schools of thought should contend, and that it behooves each of them to appeal to as wide a spectrum of support as possible—lest elitism, scholasticism, sectarianism, and pedantry set in. (Tendencies which are endemic among intellectuals from middle-class backgrounds, including myself, and which both vitiate the intellectual power of thought and isolate it from social need and social effect.)

In one widely practiced type of literary criticism, and in a body of film criticism more or less parallel

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to it, it has been taken for granted that we let the words or images "speak." We trust the tale, not the teller; indeed, except for anecdotal amusement, we try to ignore the teller. Though we bring various sociopolitical assumptions to our "reading," we draw evidence about what the work is strictly from within it. (We may then —this is an operation like Aristotle's in the *Poetics*— attempt to derive from a body of such observations definable genres such as tragedy or the Western.) What seems crucial about this tradition is that it assigns to the work a role of free-standing object, an independent entity. And the writer's task is to help readers gain a workable understanding of the work's nature. If we conceive of films in this way we can love them. It seems natural and easy to feel they have become, like friends or lovers, important parts of our emotional lives. We speak of them enthusiastically (or later vindictively) to those who don't know them. They enter our heads as part of our experience, and join there with the other things we fancy we know about "life." Our structural dissections of such works are done, at their best, in a spirit of loving curiosity, a desire to share their beauties with the reader.

The kind of analysis generally called *auteurist* is a second model. It continues to treat individual films as worthy of attention in themselves. But it insists that the critic carry out this task in a context of the director's other work (as, of course, much literary criticism has also done, if less systematically). However, the individual film in a fully *auteurist* analysis takes a less central position. What is *really* of concern is the director's personal vision, an entity which at least inheres in actual films, but whose essence is a more general and abstract phenomenon emanating from the director's mind. An individual film may still be lovable, partly because it is a manifestation of the director's vision—as we may love the child of someone we love. But the analytical operation to which the film is subjected tends to resemble a Platonic detective process: having certain ideas about the themes, structures, and strategies the director customarily uses, we search the film to see how they are manifested. Only if that search fails would we have to deal with the film purely in itself, and we would tend to call it an aberration in the director's canon. A necessary refinement, of course, covers the vagaries of Hollywood, where directors customarily worked from scripts by diverse hands and under powerful and erratic producers, and the striking changes of style which occur with European directors—so that we can hope to explain how the same man made *Smiles of a Summer Night* and *Hour of the Wolf*, for instance.

In the third model of film thought, which often goes under the label semiotic or structuralist, individual films may either totally or partially disappear from the discourse. We may read lengthy tracts in *Screen* and *Cahiers* (and we occasionally indulge this tendency in *FQ*) in which no films are mentioned or referred to at all, directly or indirectly. Even in the writings of Umberto Eco, who seems to me the most acute and sensitive of the semiological writers, references to actual films are replaced by token verbal references to clearly imaginary "images," like "a white horse in profile," which seem to me so impoverished compared to real film images that discussing them can profit us little.

This tendency must seem like a heresy for anyone used to scientific work with its close linkage of theory and practice (even in linguistics, where examples or cases can be presented in the same language as the over-all discourse). Its causes, no doubt, are complex. There is an overriding urge to join film with other communications media, so that what serves for one is often assumed to serve for all (after all, is it not widely repeated that film is some kind of language?). There is the overriding concern to get clear ideologically, to escape the unacknowledged biases of older criticism; this task can so occupy a writer's attention that entire articles become essays in throat-clearing, but nothing except methodology is actually addressed. There is a tendency, perhaps because of general French intellectual habits, to compress the range of discourse upward toward great abstraction, where the real topic being discussed is no longer actual films and their relations with actual films and actual ideological patterns, but the process of communication quite generally. This process may, for some writers, hardly require the existence of films in order to take place; they might just as well be novels or paintings, since their individual nature is of no particular interest. They are mere fodder for the analytical machine, and one will do as well as another; what matters about them is whether they offer a handle for analysis. If you ask a practitioner of such thought whether he or she *likes* a given film, or *feels* anything about it, you may get an icy stare. The films themselves have faded away, wraithlike, leaving only the rack of methodology behind.

Luckily, there is another active strand in the semiological/structuralist model—though it is as yet represented only by a few published English examples, chiefly *Cahiers' "Young Mr. Lincoln" (Screen)* and Charles Eckert's *"Marked Women" (FQ)*. In such work we find that the actual film stages a comeback—though not on grounds of personal appeal or artistic quality. Films can be, in fact, chosen utterly at random for this kind of analysis, or (as Will Wright does in *Sixguns and Society*, his forthcoming structuralist study of Westerns —UC Press) purely on popularity, since what is of basic concern is their social role. In this approach the film's

primacy as an aesthetic object has been abolished, but its importance as a "case" for study remains. It is assumed—I think reasonably—that a well done study of this type will illuminate many films besides its immediate subject. But the real topic of such work is, again, a *process:* this time, processes of displacement or implication or "informing absences" or myth-formation. Such processes, however, are taken to inhere in actual films, and their presence is generally demonstrated with refreshingly concrete evidence. It seems to me that this kind of work, along with James Roy MacBean's detailed Marxist analyses, shows the greatest promise of lasting intellectual achievement, because it offers a way of continually linking theory and practice, and of continually demonstrating, throughout an analysis, that theoretical ideas produce useful understandings.

Political and methodological problems crisscross in any consideration of film thought. Because of the importance of May 1968 to subsequent French thinking, it is sometimes assumed that the fundamental divisions are political; and, despite the fact that most film people have always been leftists, it is probably true that the refinements of Marxist thought in recent years, enabling it to cope with ideology somewhat self-reflexively, constitute an important break. We also confront, however, what I can only call an escape into metaphysics, even if it is supposedly a materialist metaphysics. This is not a bad thing to have happen occasionally. The kind of semantic concern displayed by Kristeva and other imperialist semioticians is in some ways a startling replay of "general semantics"—an earlier system of making sure we know what levels of abstraction we are operating on, of reminding us that "the word [image] is not the thing," of noticing the assumptions, political-social-epistemological, that lurk in apparently simple discourse. But when such work becomes purely abstract, its theoretical vigor is compromised. Like a plant that grows spindly and finally topples over, it lacks the sustenance that can only be provided by contact with the real world of actual films. Moreover, its social role and impact are constricted, for it is miserably unpleasant to read; the constant shifting of abstract terms has all the human charm of a freight yard. And it is a scholastic illusion to imagine that unreadibility necessarily implies novelty or theoretical force; reading original works by Freud or Einstein reminds us that thinkers of the greatest originality are also often brilliant expositors.

New ideas not only can be made enticing, they *must* be, one way or another, or they will die. We thus urge that writers attempting to develop new theory make it a matter of priority that (to maul Marianne Moore's metaphor) they populate their theoretical gardens with real films and real viewers. —E. C.

INFLATION

Rising costs of paper and printing have forced the University of California Press to raise prices on all its journals. Single copies of *FQ* will henceforth cost $1.50. Individual subscription rates will be $6.00 domestic and $7.00 foreign. (Institutional subscription rates and back-issue prices are somewhat higher.) If you are a bookstore or newsstand purchaser and have found the magazine of interest, we urge you to subscribe; you will thus be sure of getting each issue, and you receive the yearly index.

CONTRIBUTORS

J.-L. BAUDRY is a Parisian novelist. PETER BISKIND is a New York film-maker. CLAUDIA GORBMAN is an American studying in Paris. WILLIAM JOHNSON is our New York Editor. MARSHA KINDER has been doing radio programs on film for KPFK in Los Angeles. HARRY LAWTON teaches at UC Santa Barbara. MICHAEL SHEDLIN is a long-term denizen of Berkeley. GARRETT STEWART teaches at Boston University. ANNE-MARIE TAYLOR teaches Latin-American literature at the University of Chicago. BERNARD WEINER writes on film and drama for the SF *Chronicle.*

MARSHA KINDER

Life and Death in the Cinema of Outrage, or, The Bouffe & the Barf

On the weekend of September 7th, two films that have outraged the audiences at Cannes were exhibited in California's underground capitols —Berkeley and Venice. Dusan Makavejev's *Sweet Movie* made its American debut at Berkeley's Wheeler Auditorium. Resisting pressures from American distributors who are determined to prune the film, Makavejev apparently wanted to test it with an unconventional audience. Although response was wildly varied, it was uniformly passionate: *Sweet Movie* was attacked as an homage to Hitler, ridiculed as a 40-year-old's wet dream, and celebrated as a brilliant work of revolutionary anarchy. Meanwhile, in Southern California, Marco Ferreri's *The Grande Bouffe* was presented, not on Hollywood Boulevard or in Westwood, but at the Fox Venice, a low-budget neighborhood theater that offers a different pair of third-run movies or old classics, creatively matched, every night of the week. Ferreri's film ran for three nights, enabling audiences to choose another eating classic *(Tom Jones, The Loved One,* or *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie)* as a second course. The enthusiastic sell-out crowds included not only Venice regulars, but film buffs from all over L.A. The response to these two showings paralleled the reaction at Cannes: while *The Grande Bouffe* was awarded the International Prize, *Sweet Movie* was mainly abused.

On the surface, the films have many similarities. Both painfully funny, they are stuffed with graphic scenes of vomiting, shitting, slurping, and screwing. They both play with the polarities of filth and purity, chaos and order, eroticism and death. In the tradition of Rabelais, Swift, Burroughs, and Buñuel, they use eating as a central metaphor, rendering literal the ideal of the consumer society where one culture, class, race, or sex devours another. The basic biological processes focus attention on survival. Both films raise the question of whether an artful death can be more vital than a sterile life. Both self-consciously allude to other films and other forms of art, trying to revitalize old recipes with new combinations and lots of spice. What results in both cases is a surrealistic hash.

Despite the surface similarities, the films have very different implications, which may account for the contrasting responses they evoke. *Sweet Movie* with its chaotic collage structure is truly anarchistic, whereas *The Grande Bouffe,* beneath its extravagant grossness, has an almost neoclassical rigor. As in his earlier films (especially *WR: The Mysteries of the Organism*), Makavejev bombards his audience with intensely disturbing images, mixing sweetness and terror, hilarity and the macabre, pure ideology with sickening violence. In the opening scene a woman croons, "I see something black, is it my beloved, or is it cowshit?" Confidently, we giggle at the incongruity. But later we get rather edgy when we see inmates of a radical therapy commune prancing around with their shit on a platter while the silly victimized heroine moons in a corner before writhing sensuously in a vat of chocolate. The values have been reversed: showing your shit seems preferable to being sugarcoated. But, on the gut level, we are still revolted by the shit and turned on by the sugar. We feel terribly uneasy because we are not sure how we are supposed to respond—to *anything.*

SWEET MOVIE: *Miss Universe as erotic bonbon.*

We cannot revert to neat formulas or political rhetoric because they, too, seem to be under attack. Like Swift, Sterne, Buñuel, and Godard, Makavejev forces us to explore our own judgments and instinctive responses to the images he presents; it's impossible to have a passive response. Because of the disturbing nature of the material and the ambiguous way it is presented, at moments we may feel stupid, ridiculous, perverted, or counter-revolutionary—which is terribly threatening. So some viewers in the Berkeley audience wanted to reject the film completely by vomiting in disgust or seeing it simply as a pile of shit, yet no one could deny that it served up weighty matters that were hard to digest.

In contrast, after two hours of steady gorging in *The Grande Bouffe* we are left with very little of substance. The film turns out to be as light as a Suckling lyric. Like the dogs (frequently an image for critics) in the final scene, we are presented with a lot of meat but are reluctant to sink in our teeth. Instead, we are more likely to identify with the characters who have O.D.'d on purée, paté, and froth. Yet we can feel smug for we have survived the orgy with our values and manners intact. The weekend banquet, in which four men eat themselves to death, is a work of decadent art—a highly civilized suicide. Fantasy is indulged, but within the lines of decorum. All of the screwing, sucking, farting, and shitting are, to our relief, only comic simulations. Cannibalism is carefully eschewed, and so is violence (e.g., at the last moment we are spared the right of a turkey being decapitated); even the dogs show restraint. Paradoxically, the grossest acts are performed with good taste. Like the chef who prepares the food, Ferreri in mak-

ing his film carefully shapes the external form and rigorously follows old recipes for he, too, is serving his fare to a gourmet audience that has consumed a surfeit of imagery and is not really hungry.

The Grand Bouffe is a well-made five-act comedy. Act I introduces the four banquet guests in brief parallel scenes, which reveal their profession, the aspect of society they represent, and the manner in which they relate to women. Ugo Tognazzi is a Jewish pastry chef, whose father has given him a set of the finest German knives. The only one who could in any way be identified with the working class, his artistic genius enables him to be accepted by the others as their social equal. Since the kitchen is his domain, he is the one who most actively controls the deaths, making it ambiguous whether he is victim or killer. In the opening scene he is with an unidentified woman (perhaps a cooking assistant or helpmate wife), who seems to have little power over him. He is much more focused on his work and on his father's tools. Michel Piccoli is a "creative person" working in TV. Effeminate and fastidious, he enthusiastically discusses cleaning products and relishes his rubber gloves, yet later he will be responsible for many scatological explosions. His pure white daughter tries to con him into helping her black stud get a job. As queen of the media, Michel embodies the fusion of gentility and filth, sentiment and hustle, that dominates the airwaves. Marcello Mastroianni is an airline pilot who is master of the cockpit. A Don Juan who is basically hostile to women, he orders the stewardess to tote his bags, revealing his favorite power game. Although his profession gives him the greatest power, Judge Philippe Noiret is tyrannized by his wetnurse, who keeps him infantilized in a state of perverted innocence, safe from the whores and hooked on his Mother Surrogate.

Act II presents the basic situation—the four men riding in a car on their way to a weekend in the country. As the meat arrives in trucks, the animals are carefully counted and catalogued (two soft-eyed deer, ten semi-wild guinea hens, three dozen young roosters, etc.) as if they are headed for Noah's ark, but the goal is suicide rather than survival. Act III covers the arrival of a different kind of meat: one Madonna and three whores. The men indulge their favorite sexual fantasies. Always the hard-driving man, Marcello screws a whore with the manifold from his Bugatti; he rips a g-string off another whore and dons it as an eye-patch, disguising himself as a dashing pirate. Philippe plays helpless baby with Andrea, the maternal teacher who sews up his fly and his future; he vows to legitimize their union with a legal marriage. Ugo agrees to play with a whore who feeds him before choosing his own paternal role as Brando in *The Godfather*. Draped in a flowing robe, Michel declaims his antipathy toward the Sex in pithy aphorisms: WOMAN'S BODY IS VANITY. Suffering from severe gas pains, his stomach puffs up and he is told to "pretend you're a little Indian boy in Bombay and you're hungry." But he'd rather pretend he's pregnant, for his big belly improves his drag. After a night of stuffing and retching, the practical whores desert the banquet (like rats fleeing a sinking ship or like the servants leaving the dinner party in *The Exterminating Angel*) because they realize the men are stupid, crazy, and suicidal. As one observes: "It's disgusting to eat when you're not hungry." Only Andrea, with her gargantuan appetites, stays for the Godardian weekend.

The living arrangement among the one woman and four men is the focus of Act IV. Lying on Marcello's communal bed, Andrea, with her luscious white flesh, looks like a Rubens or a Renior. The perfect embodiment of sensuality and sentiment, she is always the willing guide to men. Stolen away from her schoolboys, she is adopted by the childish banqueteers as Mama Muse. Amply endowed, Andrea easily serves all of their needs: she submissively surrenders her ass to Marcello; as Mama, she provides Philippe with a titular head; she plays midwife to Michel, pouncing on his stomach to make him fart; and she cooperatively works as Ugo's assistant in the kitchen, always willing to give him a hand. This communal harmony is disturbed when

Marcello eats himself into impotence and tries to blame his failure on Andrea's fat. Before fleeing in his Bugatti, he punctures the dramatic illusion and exposes the bare bones of the plot: "There's no fantasy in this story . . . it's impossible to eat yourself to death." As if to underscore that this is the climactic (or anticlimactic) moment of the drama, Michel's bowel suddenly explodes, creating a tidal wave of shit.

Act V covers the four deaths, structurally following *And Then There Were None.* Marcello is discovered dead in the Bugatti—frozen in flight. After playing his own swan song on the piano (accompanying himself on his own unique wind instrument), Michel farts to death and dies in a puddle of shit. Having made Andrea into a tart (using her ass as a cookie cutter) and a paté monument adorned with eggs (a Jewish symbol of death), Ugo dies eating his own masterpiece. Lying passively on his pantry table, he has Philippe stuff morsels in his mouth while Andrea gives him a hand job till he reaches his fatal orgasm. Philippe's death is slightly more saccharine: after ordering the delivery men to put the meat in the garden, he adores the picture of his nursing mother and dies eating a jello tit, falling on Andrea's breast; meanwhile, a hungry puppy frolics beside him. Andrea is the only survivor. She retreats into the house, abandoning the other leftover meat to the dogs. As the final image of the film freezes, the working men laugh, the chickens cackle, the dogs howl, just as we guffawed while the corpses were frozen in turn.

The classicism of the film's structure is reinforced by many allusions to elitist Western art. One dish is named "Crayfish à la Mozart" while the incongruous combination of kidneys bordelaise with chocolate and cream is labeled "surrealistic." When the men are still alone, they slurp up clams on the half shell while watching art slides of the female form in erotic poses, getting off vicariously in two media. Andrea enters their territory while searching for the linden tree where Boileau, the French poet-critic of neoclassicism, composed his verse. After a discussion of Boileau, the conversation turns to a consideration of Bugatti as an artist. In our contemporary decadent culture, since art has been almost totally cut off from its social and moral context, anything, no matter how trivial or heinous, can be considered an art form—the design of soup cans and automobiles, happenings and self-mutilations, so why not banquets and suicides? Before the banquet begins, Philippe (the lawmaker who has inherited the estate) refuses a gift (a character from *The Red Lantern*) offered to him by a Chinese visitor. Suspicious of the alien Eastern Communist culture, he turns instead to the Western epic tradition, quipping: "Beware of Greeks bearing gifts." If that is not enough to evoke the *Aeneid,* the decrepit servant hobbling in the background is named Hector. For a long time the epic had top position in the Western literary hierarchy, as a genre that celebrated the values of the aristocracy and glorified frivolous wars. Its main competition was tragedy, another genre (as Robbe-Grillet insists) based on self-destructiveness. After the refusal of the Chinese gift, one of the men grabs a cow's head and recites Hamlet's suicidal soliloquy, "To be or not to be . . . " Perhaps Ferreri is suggesting that most creative products of Western civilization lead to a dead end and that this overdeveloped imperialist culture is bent on self-destruction. Ironically, he chooses comedy to express this theme—a genre that traditionally glorifies adaptability and survival.

Sweet Movie presents a darker vision of experience, yet it joyously celebrates life and survival. The refrain of the theme song (written by Makavejev) asks the paradoxical question: is there life after birth? The film answers affirmatively with a collage of farcical plots and newsreels, presenting sugarcoated violence with wit and terror. The structure intercuts between two plots, which follow the episodic adventures of two contrasting women: the antiseptically pure Miss Canada, who wins the title of Miss World 1984 but is really the prize loser; and the vivacious Captain Anna Planeta, soulful veteran of the Revolution, who turns out to be a killer.

Our bourgeois heroine is first displayed in

pure white fur at a beauty contest, managed by a carnivorous mother determined to buy her millionaire son (Mr. Kapital) the best wife on the market. After careful inspection, Miss Canada is judged to have the world's purest hymen and to be the vessel-virgin worthy of receiving Kapital's golden cock. Nevertheless, on the wedding night her groom rubs her down with alcohol, determined to kill all germs and desire. Once besmirched, she is subjected to a series of colorful violations (which would befit Terry Southern's *Candy*). After nearly being drowned by her mother-in-law in the family pool, she is abducted by a black body-builder, who stashes her in a giant white milk bottle. For travelling purposes, he transfers her to a red plastic suitcase, from which she manages to wiggle free, right into the clutches of El Macho, a brown glitter rock star. Immediately transformed into a groupie, our plastic heroine begins to come alive, but unfortunately she and her lover get stuck together like dogs and have to be parted (in the Eiffel Tower restaurant kitchen). Next she turns up as a guest at Otto Muehl's radical therapy commune where inmates help each other get their shit together. We watch them joyfully eating, vomiting, and shitting. One grown man lies on his back, kicking his legs in the air as he regresses to infancy, cooing and pissing while his helpmates caress him and sprinkle his body with baby powder. In the original script Miss World was to be liberated and cured by this commune, but the actress was so threatened by the encounter with these real-life crazies that Makavejev changed the plot and recorded her actual tears. She ends up as an erotic bonbon, voluptuously bobbing in a vat of chocolate, no longer white and pure but still the sweet victim.

Our heroic Comrade Planeta is a proletarian Cleopatra, riding on a barge called Survival; the head of Karl Marx, her own Mr. Kapital, dominates the prow. Along the shore, she is pursued by a sailor from the *Potemkin*. The excitement of the pursuit is heightened by the montage editing, which playfully parodies Eisenstein. The frantic coupling of Anna and her red sailor is lustful and comic; it is gleefully witnessed by people massing on the shore. Thus far, we like Anna Planeta much better than Miss Canada, admiring her earthy vitality and sympathizing with her struggle (she laments that most of her old comrades are dead). But then we begin to get hints that she is dangerous. While she and a friend bathe the sailor, erotically soaping his body, he suddenly lies back and plays dead. Makavejev cuts abruptly to documentary footage of the corpses of ten thousand Polish officers allegedly murdered by the Soviets during World War II. Other newsreels show infants being given rigorous physical training. When the film

The barge Survival in SWEET MOVIE

cuts back to the sailor in the bath, he comes to life. But the fusion of eroticism and death and the danger of the Revolution being betrayed have been established as themes that will dominate the rest of the story. Then Anna, dressed in a virginal white bridal dress, performs a seductive striptease, enticing little boys into her bed of white sugar with colorful lollipops dangling overhead and bins of bright jellybeans lined up nearby. Although we do not actually see the children being harmed in this scene, we feel vaguely uneasy and suspect they may be in danger (as in the documentary footage of the infant exercises). We are unsure how to react. We don't want to be prudish, yet if the sexes were reversed (if the adult were male and the children female) we would probably condemn it as child-molesting and might even object to child actors being exposed to such eroticism. But under Makavejev's direction the scene is undeniably a turn-on, and the little boys seem to be enjoying themselves. The Survival barge may turn out to be the Good Ship Lollipop, yet we all have been taught that children should not take candy from strangers, and this lady (sweet as she may be) is certainly acting very strange. Later, our worst fears are confirmed when she and her sailor make love in their bed of sugar (evoking memories of the sandy eroticism in *El Topo* and *Woman in the Dunes*). Licking the sweetness off his body, she suddenly plunges a dagger into his gut. The camera dwells lovingly on the sensuous pool of thick red blood bubbling up through the sugar as the sailor moans in ectasy, "I was jealous when Vakulinchuk died." (Film buffs will recall that Vakulinchuk was the martyred sailor in Eisenstein's *Potemkin.*) Makavejev claims that Pierre Clementi, the actor playing the sailor, took the masochism much farther than was originally intended. Having just been released from prison after a dope bust in Italy, Clementi brought to the film the aura of the victim. Yet the final line Makavejev gives him links his reaction to an important theme in the film—whether death can be more vital than the sterile life portrayed in the other plot. Anna's story ends with her arrest, as the corpses of the

sailor and the little boys, carefully wrapped in plastic, are laid out on the shore. Ironically, all of the political and sexual vitality of Anna's world leads to death whereas the sterility and death of Miss Canada's world end in eroticism.

Such a turn of events leads some Marxists to accuse Makavejev of being counter-revolutionary, but I think he is insisting that everyone, despite his or her political context, is forced to experience life as a paradoxical mixture of joy and pain, control and anarchy, sugar and shit. We are trained by our culture to like sugarcoating, which makes us more susceptible to political manipulation. Sugar is biologically related to both energy and anxiety. Its whiteness may lead us to interpret it as a symbol of goodness, yet we have the counter example of Moby Dick. Like Melville, Makavejev insists on the ambiguities. Anything sweet is bound to be dangerous —even this funny anarchistic movie. Shit, on the other hand, is revolutionary. Makavejev, the Reichian, insists that the sphincter is a political muscle; once it is controlled, the whole organism is prepared for fascist domination. We learn discipline one muscle at a time, starting in infancy with toilet training (which again evokes

the newsreels of infant exercises). Like Blake, too, Makavejev sees children as the victim of society and the potential agent of revolution. Thus, the psychotic's regression to infancy is an act of political liberation. The final image of *Sweet Movie* shows the children's corpses coming back to life, breaking the dramatic illusion and reaffirming survival, in contrast to *The Grande Bouffe* where the breakdown of dramatic illusion brings death.

Despite its grim vision, *Sweet Movie* has an overwhelming vitality whereas *The Grande Bouffe,* hilarious as it may be, is essentially sterile. Ferreri's film succumbs to the form of decadent art it attacks. In order to overcome cultural boredom and lack of hunger, it force feeds a consumer audience huge quantities of meat, extravagantly prepared. We leave the theater feeling bloated and stuffed, with a strong desire to fast or fart. In contrast, Makavejev gives us a huge dose of energizing sugar. We leave the theater feeling confused and threatened, wanting to strike out at Makavejev because he engages us in a radical therapy and forces us to confront our own shit. Courageously he follows his material and players wherever they lead him, even if it is beyond his original intention or control. Like Bergman, he willingly goes to the edge of psychic peril, risking his own sanity and freedom and total rejection by his audience, which he met in person at the Berkeley showing with a comic resilience—smiling, shrugging, joking, trying to implicate even the shrillest objectors into his predicament.

PETER BISKIND

LINA WERTMULLER: The Politics of Private Life

The Seduction of Mimi and *Love and Anarchy,* two recent films by Italian director Lina Wertmüller, have just been released in the United States. They reveal a mature and major talent, one which shows that Fellini's influence on the films of his own country has not been wholly malign but, in the hands of a disciplined disciple (she assisted on *8½*), can be made to serve large and significant purposes.

Fellini's later films, like Antonioni's, are an expression of the felt alienation of modern life, the bifurcation of experience into fact and fancy, public and private or, in terms of the history of film, the classic opposition between Lumière and Méliès. The withdrawal or exile of consciousness from the world leaves consciousness imprisoned in its own subjectivity, and the world a menacing collection of lifeless objects. Wertmüller moves beyond bourgeois Italian modernism to demystify the experience of alienation by rendering transparent the clouded consciousness of private life. She picks up the pieces of Fellini's world, draws together the fragments of dream and memory on the one hand, and inert spectacle on the other, and shows that they are part of a whole. She reveals the peculiar historical circumstances which gave rise to the cleavage between private life and production, and thereby lays the basis for overcoming it. Unhappily, this vision of wholeness is unavailable to her characters, who perceive it, if at all, by its absence. They are destroyed, for the most part, by their own blindness or the incomprehension of others.

All the important first- and second-generation Italian directors, Rossellini, De Sica, Antonioni,

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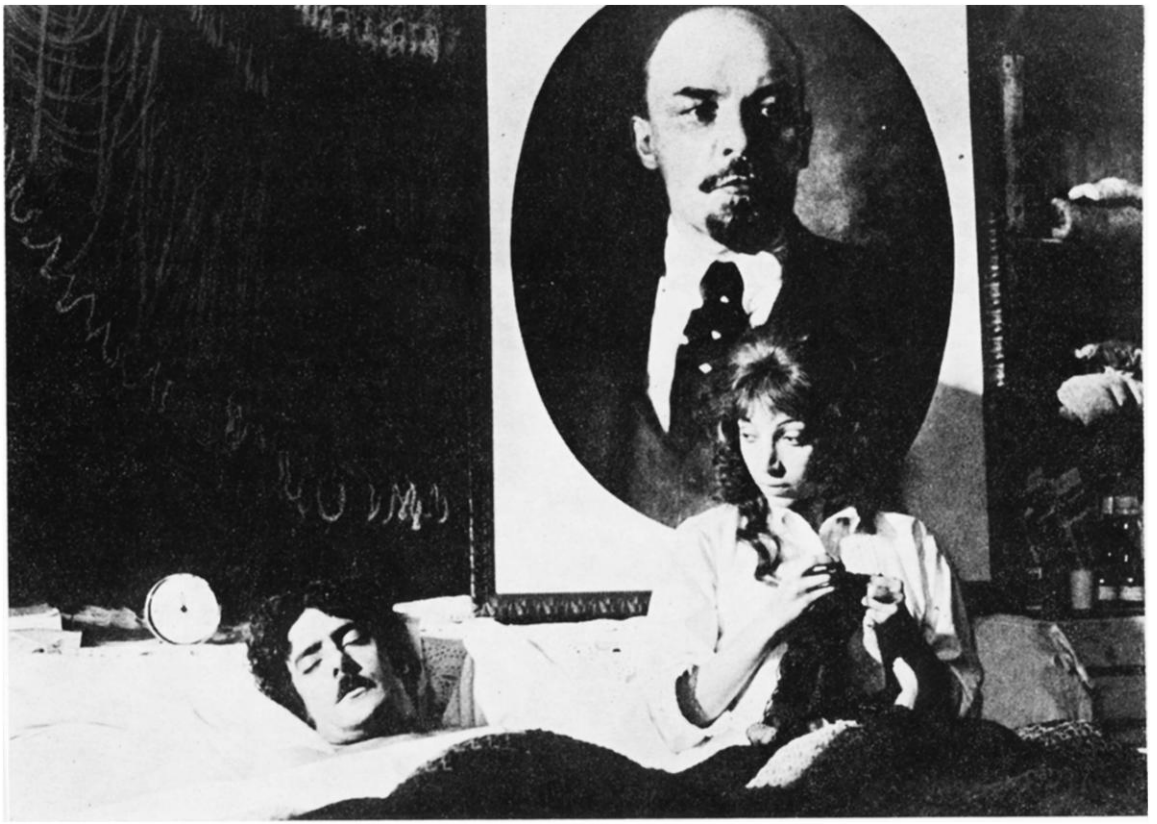


Giancarlo Gianini and Mariangela Melato: THE SEDUCTION OF MIMI

Visconti, and Pasolini, participated to one degree or another in the transformation which overtook neorealism during the Christian Democrat or NATO phase of Italian film when the pressing problems of postwar reconstruction had been overcome and the bourgeoisie has reestablished its prewar control. A director like Pietro Germi, originally a Communist like the others, began his career with films on urban unrest, and moved on to commercially successful but politically innocuous farces like *Divorce Italian Style* and *Seduced and Abandoned*. In *The Seduction of Mimi,* Wertmüller appropriates this tradition, and returns it to an essentially serious purpose. The abrasive comedy that lends to her films an extraordinary vitality at the same time becomes an expression of class. As Wertmüller says in a recent interview, "Cheerful vulgarity is the wit of the poor, their last and extreme defense." *The Seduction of Mimi* is a comic examination of the disintegration of a traditional society under the impact of industrial development and, at the same time, a demonstration of the superficiality of ideological change in the face of deeply ingrained culture patterns of behavior.

The film opens in Sicily. A group of laborers are working in a rock quarry. A soundtruck appears, delivers a brief, largely unintelligible but impassioned harangue on behalf of a Mafia-backed candidate in the local election, showers the men with leaflets, and drives off. One of the laborers is Mimi (Giancarlo Gianini) who runs afoul of the Mafia hierarchy by naively casting a "secret" ballot for the opposition (Communist) candidate. Fired from his job the next day, he leaves his sexually reticent wife and traditional extended family to look for work in Turin where he finds a job as a metal worker. He becomes radicalized, joins the Communist Party, and falls madly in love with Fiore (Mariangela Melato) with whom he sets up housekeeping and has a child.

Transferred to a refinery in his own home town, he proceeds to lead a double life—with Fiore and their child, on the one hand, and his wife Rosalia (Agostina Belli) on the other. Mimi remains faithful to Fiore (he pleads "exhaustion" to Rosalia), but his inattention to his wife drives her into the arms of another. She becomes pregnant. In a marvellously comic, if predictable, encounter with Rosalia, Mimi throws his principles to the wind and reveals his adherence to the old double standard: sexual freedom for himself and sexual fidelity for his wife. He devises a bizarre revenge. He seduces his rival's wife Amalia (Elena Fiore) and, in a grand confrontation before the whole town, suggests they exchange babies. In the ensuing turmoil, Mimi's rival is shot by a Mafia gunman. Mimi goes to jail for the murder; at the moment of his release, he is set upon by mobs of children from the various families for which he is now responsible: Fiore and her child, Rosalia and her child, and Amalia and her six children. In order to support them, he is forced into the employ of the Mafia. The penultimate shot reveals a scene the reverse of the opening one: Mimi is distributing leaflets to the workers of the rock quarry from the same soundtruck we saw at the beginning. He has come full circle. Fiore, coming upon him in this humiliating scene, repudiates him. She drives off in a little red truck marked with a hammer and sickle, leaving Mimi a broken, isolated figure alone in a featureless landscape.

Early in the film, one of Mimi's comrades tells him that "politics isn't something you can keep in a watertight compartment—if you buy a pair of pants, politics is right there." Fiore recognizes this as well. She is introduced selling sweaters on the street next to a table displaying posters of Mao and Marx; a large portrait of Lenin graces her loft; Marx and Engels gaze paternally upon the lyrically photographed love scene between Mimi and Fiore from their portraits behind her bed. Even as she swells with child, Fiore has politics constantly in mind. "How goes the struggle?" she asks Mimi, but he has thoughts only for his heir-to-be: "My son must lack for nothing . . . My son must be a king." This marks the beginning of Mimi's drift to the right as his absorption in traditional family values gradually separates him from the class struggle of his comrades ("I'm trying to get on —I must think of my son"), places him in an implicit alliance with management ("The gang's not striking. What we need is order"), and leads, finally, to his open employment by the ruling class, symbolized in the film by the Mafia.

In the last section of the film, Mimi becomes obsessed with cleansing his family name and preserving his reputation. Fiore, with her modern, brightly colored sweaters (Mimi's family is clad in Sicilian black) and disregard for conventional family ties ("No sacrament is going to stop me") fades into the background, while the foreground is increasingly occupied by Mimi's baroque plot to humiliate his rival. The ironic turning point, where Mimi-the-victimizer is disclosed as Mimi-the-victim, trapped by his own designs, is a grotesque sequence in which the overweight Amalia, whom he is about to seduce, casts coquettish glances over her shoulder while undraping her obese and doughy body. This is a puzzling sequence, one for which Wertmüller has been and should be criticized. She plays it for laughs, cutting back and forth between Amalia's body and Mimi's face, even intervening to exaggerate his impotent terror with wide-angled distortions that transform Amalia into an animate mountain of flesh, heaving and undulating into the foreground while Mimi huddles at the other end of the bed.

It is tempting to regard this sequence as an explicit commentary on Fellini. It is introduced by a Saraghina-like figure *(8½)* who welcomes Mimi and lends her services to his designs; she functions, in short, as a kind of resident deity in the same way that Marx and Lenin preside

over Fiore's home. More central, however, is the transformation of Amalia from person (albeit slightly ridiculous) to spectacle, that is, to an object with which we, as irresponsible spectators, are morally uninvolved. She has stepped out of *Satyricon* or *Roma,* a bloated and deformed freak. For Fellini, reality as spectacle is never classically proportioned, but is chaotic and incoherent, peopled with monstrosities, deprived of symmetry by the absence of consciousness or a principle of meaning. Unlike Fellini, however, and it is a crucial difference, Wertmüller shows us how Amalia came to be seen this way. Her transformation from subject to object is the end product of a voluntary act situated in a moral universe. Mimi has manipulated her for his own purposes; her presentation as spectacle, transformed into a thing, is the result and external manifestation of larger cultural attitudes expressing themselves through individual behavior. Alienation, in other words, the bifurcation of the world into the seer and the seen, is not an immutable fact of life, not an aesthetic and metaphysical condition, but a moral and historical one.

Wertmüller's interrogation of Fellini is extended in her treatment of the relationship between subjective fantasy and reality. As Mimi's blindness to the political implications of his personal choices betrays him into the hands of the Mafia who manipulate private values like family honor for their own ends, in his imagination he attributes his misfortunes to the persecution of a ubiquitous and omnipotent Mafia chieftain whom he sees lurking behind every tree. This man, distinguished by a triangle of moles on his face, appears to Mimi under three different guises in the course of the film, and comes to signify for him an external fate which he is powerless to elude. Although the ontological status of this figure is unclear (there *is* an exploiting class in the film for which he seems to stand), it is evident that Mimi's delusions of persecution are an externalization of his own voluntary but unexamined choices.

The connection between the Mafia, moral choice, and Mimi's social and economic position as family head is underscored in a scene which has been cut from the version of the film released here. According to a plot summary supplied by the distributor, Mimi witnesses the murder of four men by a Mafia gunman in a cafe where he and Fiore are celebrating the christening of their child. Mimi fails to report the murders to the police, presumably because he does not wish to place his son's future in jeopardy. This crucial moral failure sets in motion the chain of events which ultimately thrusts Mimi into the arms of the Mafia. The mystification of reality, the perception of the Mafia not as a social and political force, but as the fantasy representation of ineluctable fate, is self-created, rooted in the collapse of moral and political consciousness. At the same time, Mimi's objective economic position (sole supporter of three families), makes it possible for the Mafia to make him an offer he cannot refuse—class collaboration.

The problem of the appropriation of myth by the ruling class, in this case the Mafia (in comparison, the Communists are flat, even comic figures), will be taken up again in Wertmüller's portrayal of the Fascists in *Love and Anarchy.* In *The Seduction of Mimi,* Mimi's limitations, his inability to see round the corner of his own masculine obsessions, is the source of mechanical, exaggerated, and finally, comic behavior. We are granted a larger knowledge, in terms of which Mimi's limitations are essentially ridiculous. In *Love and Anarchy,* we are deprived of this high ground. Behavior quite similar to Mimi's is seen as tragic rather than comic, because Wertmüller sets herself a more difficult task. She reopens the question of the relationship between politics and private life by posing a contradiction not between the conservative male character and progressive politics, but between love and politics.

Like *The Conformist* and *The Investigation of a Citizen Beyond Suspicion, Love and Anarchy* deals with the fascist period, but Wertmüller avoids exotic studies of the psychosexual roots of the authoritarian personality which

themselves perpetuate the alienation of personality from production, in favor of an examination of the motives of a common man, a "nobody." The film ends with the words of the Italian anarchist Errico Malatesta which provide a good indication of Wertmüller's intentions towards her subject.

> I would like to stress again the horror I feel towards assassinations. Aside from being evil acts in themselves, they are foolish acts, for they harm the very cause they were to serve.
>
> However, these assassins could truly be regarded as saints as well as heroes, but only when their brutal action and the passion that misled them are forgotten and the things remembered will be their martyrdom and the ideal that inspired them.

Love and Anarchy is not so much an analysis of anarchism as a political doctrine, moral or immoral, practical or utopian, as a meditation on the sources of political action. It portrays the anarchist as saint, as the Dostoevskian Holy Fool, Prince Kropotkin as Prince Myshkin.

The film is set in the early thirties, and concerns a peasant, Tunin (Giancarlo Gianini), who resolves to assassinate Mussolini after witnessing the death of an admired friend at the hands of the Fascists. He arrives at a brothel in Rome where he meets his contact Salome (Mariangela Melato), one of the whores, who is to arrange the details of the assassination and escape. In the course of his visits to Salome, Tunin falls in love with Tripolina (Lina Polito), another of the whores. After two idyllic days with her, Tunin is to be awakened on the morning of the assassination attempt at six o'clock. When morning comes, Tripolina bars the door, telling Salome that if she awakens Tunin, Tripolina will turn them in to the police. To awaken Tunin is to send him to his death just as surely as if Salome had pulled the trigger. The women argue, fight, and finally, Salome gives in. Tunin is allowed to oversleep. When he awakens, long after six, he goes berserk, charges downstairs and shoots several soldiers who have entered the brothel on a tour of inspection. He rushes outside, careening madly from one side of the street to the other, upsetting vegetable carts and proclaiming his defiance of Mussolini, until he is finally caught and executed by having his head brutally smashed against a stone prison wall.

In accord with its dualistic title, *Love and Anarchy* divides its world neatly in two. Public is set against private, politics against love, fascism against anarchism, men against women. The film begins with a montage of portraits of Il Duce—staring eyes, jutting jaw—a perfect example of monumental, larger-than-life fascist iconography. Spatoletti (Eros Pagni), head of Mussolini's security police and one of Salome's customers, appropriates the heroic mythology of Rome's imperial past (he admires the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius; he poses familiarly before the stone god Tiber) and yokes this tradition to metaphors of rampant male sexuality: Mussolini "has a pair of balls big enough to screw the whole world." Spatoletti is harsh, blustering, and overbearing. His world is a public one—an outdoor world of bright sunshine and open, geometric spaces and forms evident in the modern, hard-edged square where Mussolini is to be assassinated during a rally. In contrast to the bombastic Spatoletti who stands confidently astride the world, Tunin is soft, passive, and "feminine." Staring tentatively through nearsighted, watery eyes, he shrinks from the world, taking refuge in the recesses of his oversized clothes. He is a peasant underground man, out of place in the city, awkward with women. Despite his homicidal mission that will take him into the glare of notoriety, his natural space is the enclosed space of the bedroom, lit in warm colors by light filtering through loosely drawn curtains or partly closed shades. When he does venture outside, as he does on one occasion with Tripolina, he blinks unhappily like a newt thrust suddenly into the sunshine, and is quickly banished by Spatoletti, lord of light, monarch of public space.

The interior of the brothel, dark and soft, is the compliment to the fascist world without. Here, the larger contradiction between politics and love is reproduced in the contrast between Salome and Tripolina. Salome is blonde, bawdy, and loud, a perfect match for Spatoletti whom

she manipulates for her own political purposes as he uses her for his sexual ones. The antithesis of Salome is Tripolina, who gives voice to the demands of private life. She is, like her surroundings, soft, dark, and sensual. While Salome is a determined anti-Fascist, Tripolina cares for nothing but love. Politics to her is at best irrelevant ("What the hell is politics to us?"), at worst, dangerous ("Justice my ass—the dead are buried, that's justice"). Tunin further reproduces these contradictions within his own person. He is torn between Salome and Tripolina, between his mission which will take him into the brightly lit square and probable death, and the safety of Tripolina's warm embrace.

The brothel mirrors the regimentation of the fascist state. Female sexuality has been assimilated to the system of capitalist commodity exchange. For these women, family and private life have almost ceased to exist, thereby rendering their longing for love and personal satisfaction more pathetic and desperate. Under these circumstances, this aspiration becomes utopian and destructive, an end in itself and therefore an impossible illusion. As the film shows, there can be no love under Fascism. The women live in an enforced community without privacy (they are constantly intruding on one another), while their leisure time is poisoned by mutual recriminations and bickering which reflect their competitive position within the "community." They are no more than wage slaves who neither expect personal satisfaction from their work nor are able to take refuge in family.

The scene in which the women are competing with one another for the favors of their male customers, preening and prancing, striking grotesque poses, is a replica of a scene in *Roma*. Again we have, for a moment, Fellini's world of spectacle—bizarre and gross. Wertmüller has already shown, economically and unsentimentally, these women as people, unattractive perhaps, but human nevertheless. We never forget that these frozen postures are merely the distorted surfaces of mutilated aspirations. Fellini's spectacular world is thus reclaimed, grounded in human situation and historical circumstance. At least in Salome's case, fascism is directly linked to the devastation of her private ambitions. It was the murder of her lover by the Fascists which drove her to prostitution. The fascist negation of private life is no different from the bourgeois deification of the family. In both cases, people are rendered incapable of political action.

Both Tripolina and Salome reflect, in opposite ways, the alienation of privacy from production.

Lina Polito and Mariangela in LOVE AND ANARCHY

Both Tripolina and Salome divorce love from anarchy, life from politics, and consequently entertain a partial view of Tunin who becomes a sentimentalized reflection of their own needs. To Salome, Tunin is heroic political man: "I thought you were a saint, because you were ready to die for an ideal." To Tripolina, he is exclusively a lover, and a reminder of her own lost innocence. These dualities, gradually developed and elaborated as the story progresses, achieve their most schematic expression in the scene in which Tripolina and Salome, Love and Anarchy personified, wrestle on the bathroom floor for control of Tunin's fate. The triumph of Tripolina and the consequent conspiracy to allow Tunin to oversleep set off an explosion which brings this carefully constructed house of cards abruptly to the ground. The casual manner which has characterized the film's treatment of its themes is suddenly shattered by an entirely unexpected outburst of emotion. Tunin is revealed in all his contradictory fullness—humiliated and terrified to the point of imbecility, and at the same time exhibiting the capacity for a surprising and alarming amount of violence. He viciously turns on Tripolina, showering her with blows and curses, and then rushes from the room to confront the soldiers below. There follows a series of a painful, hallucinatory scenes in which Tunin veers wildly from the ridiculous to the sublime, until he is finally killed by the Fascists who easily match his violence with their own.

What can we make of all this? On the level of the alienated culture of capitalism, which dictates the roles and perceptions of the principals, it seems indeed that love and anarchy don't mix. Like the mothers who hover at the fringes of the drama—Tunin's mother (at the beginning, baby Tunin's question: "What's an anarchist?" is answered by his mother with wry irony: "Someone who kills a prince or a king and is hanged for it") or the maternal figure nursing a baby outside the room (like his mother's room, Tunin remarks) where Tunin and Tripolina first make love—Tripolina plays a traditional conservative role. But she finds that to protect the males of the oppressed class from the oppressor, from prison or certain death, the mother must not only come between him and the oppressor, but between him and his own aspirations for self-respect, between him and history and life itself. For in reality, love and anarchy are not antagonistic, but indissolubly bound together. It is Tripolina's and Salome's failure to see Tunin as a whole person, at once anarchist and lover, that leads to their fatal miscalculation. It is their inability to see that the intended assassination neither stems from an abstract ideal nor is an inexplicable act of desperate whimsy, but is the fruit of his own deepest desires to live with dignity ("Even the chickens laughed at me —the time comes when a man has to say 'enough' ") that prepares the ground for the ultimate tragedy.

And what of Tunin? In a sense, the film offers an alternative to the flippant answer provided by his mother to the question which begins the film. Tunin, naked with fear, stripped of dignity, nauseated at the sight of the death inflicted with his own hand, humiliated by the failure even of his attempt to commit suicide, yet attains the unheroic but not immodest dignity of resistance—the refusal to talk under torture, the refusal to capitulate to overwhelming power. It is the heroism, in short, of the forgotten ones. "Who are you?" Spatoletti demands, sure that an anarchist assassin must *be* somebody. "Nobody," Tunin answers.

CLAUDIA GORBMAN

Music As Salvation: Notes on Fellini and Rota

"The best film music is not heard." Why, then, does even the least musically oriented spectator remark on the musical aura pervading the films of Federico Fellini? Unlike films that accord a pre-eminence to music with respect to the image,[1] Fellini's works focus only rarely on musical performance as the center of the filmic interest. What lingers in the spectator's mind is the presence of the "background" music in composer Nino Rota's characteristic style: lyrical, festive, contemporary, reminiscent of the fairground.

Speaking about the filmic image, Noel Burch makes the distinction between looking—an intellectual activity—and seeing—a nonselective, physiological activity. Similarly, we do not *hear* the sound track in its entirety unless we selectively *listen* to it. Further, as the human ear has proven a "lazier" receptor in the cinema than the eye, the spectator's relationship to the sound track is even more complex, and to deal with theoretical and practical problems this poses becomes all the more difficult. Of the sound track's three components, music, owing to its abstract quality in contrast to dialogue and sound effects, has most successfully eluded systematic analysis. To begin with, what are the pertinent musical factors for a given film, and how should we go about describing them?

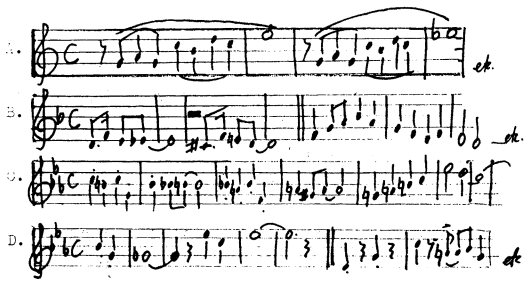
Examining a specific narrative film—in this case, *Le Notti di Cabiria*—can elucidate some of the possible narrative roles that film music may assume. We must of course study not only the music, but the music in its narrative context, and in its direct relation to the image. We will also consider thematic music: when, how, and why it may recur. The musical score can act to promote continuity or to punctuate, as well as to comment on emotional states in the dramatic action, as will be shown. By virtue of its own inherent structures—repetition and variations of melody, harmony, and rhythm, for example—it can play an essential part in creating and/or reinforcing broad structural patterns in the filmic text. Being a relatively abstract and subliminal entity, it has power to emphasize or render ambiguous the distinctions among various levels of narrativity.

Fellini's films are constantly preoccupied with mixing real life with a fictional universe. Most have frankly autobiographical scenarios, for example (whether as autobiographical fantasies or realities is irrelevant), and many take actors and only slightly fictionalize them (repeatedly with Giulietta Masina and Marcello Mastroianni). This tendency grows to such proportions by the post-*Satyricon* films that the cohesive strength of the plot gives way to a quasi-documentary effect, bigger-than-life and similarly disorganized. Fellini's use of music throughout his career is singular for it regularly participates in the ambiguities actor/character, narrator/narrated, subject/object, and reality/fiction. Not only does it participate: it often helps to create these ambiguities—by means of synchronic and diachronic variations in its placement in the fictional world and by the level of musical consciousness attributed to the fictional characters.

In *Le Notti di Cabiria* this idea is particularly at issue; we shall follow its development to appreciate fully that music is, in fact, *the* subject of the film. The complexity of its interaction with the film's other materials of expression ultimately resolves in a transcendental simplicity—a nonverbal moral statement. First we shall examine the role of recurrent music principally in *Cabiria,* and secondly, the opposition of diegetic and extra-diegetic music. (I use "diegetic" to refer, in the semiotic sense, to all that occurs within the apparent world of the narrative.)

THEMES

Cabiria has four themes, that is, recurring melodies, all of which are heard as the credits appear at the film's beginning. Here are the melodies in skeletal form:



In addition there are a few pieces of music occurring only once, such as on two occasions over a radio, two songs played by a nightclub orchestra, music performed at a variety show, and Beethoven's fifth symphony (which I will treat elsewhere at greater length).

A theme is not necessarily a leitmotif in the Wagnerian sense, namely, a readily distinguishable musical line that becomes associated with a specific character, locale, or idea in the global text. In *La Strada* Fellini and Rota demonstrate the poetic power of the leitmotif in film, in its full role not only as a static or redundant identifying tag, but as a true signifier that accumulates and communicates meaning not explicit in the images or dialogue. *La Strada* has three leitmotifs: the theme of the road itself ("la strada"); that of Zampano, Gelsomina's brutish keeper and spouse; and that of the Fool, Gelsomina's saving angel. Let us briefly, and necessarily schematically, examine the fate of this third leitmotif. Once the Fool has shown Gelsomina that she has an essential place in the universe, that her life has meaning and value, she somehow acquires his song; from time to time she plays it, and the extra-diegetic sound track also assigns it to her. Even after her angel is gone, she has interiorized his lesson. We know this solely from the musical line which has now been transferred to her. Originally played by the Fool on a small trumpet, the theme is destined to undergo several permutations in instrumentation and accompanying orchestration, but always remains easily identifiable through the basic clarity of the melody, just as the idea it represents retains its simplicity despite its continual reapplication to new situations. Its final transmutation is perhaps the most moving: what started as the Fool's theme, then Gelsomina's, ultimately becomes the broken and remorseful Zampano's, years after he has abandoned Gelsomina to her death. Hearing the leitmotif, this time sung unaccompanied by an anonymous woman, is enough to stir in him, and in us, the memory of Gelsomina and what she came to represent in the moral realm of *La Strada.* The Wagnerian leitmotif, then, forms an essential part of the action as a nonredundant signifier which undergoes changes in meaning as the story develops.

But a search for a strict system in *Le Notti di Cabiria,* grouping scenes or persons according to musical themes, proves relatively uninteresting. There does seem to be a principal theme for prostitution ("D"), and Fellini capitalizes on our increasing awareness of its association with the prostitutes and their street. On the first occasion it comes to us *via* a car radio in the scene. Another night, on the same street and with the same characters, we hear it on the sound track, harking back to our original acquaintance with it and Cabiria's companions. Finally, after Cabiria has met her prospective husband, we see her alone on the habitual street at night; theme "D" plays in the background, as if to remind us that the ever-innocent protagonist is still really a prostitute. A car passes to pick her up but in her reverie she does not respond. The music comments quasi-ironically on the action, or rather the lack of it. Cabiria should be seeking clients, but is not keeping her mind on the job. She is not listening to the music.

In general, however, the four themes are used rather loosely, not applied to specific characters, places, or ideas. Theme "A," for example, occurs several times throughout *Cabiria,* but

twice particularly effectively on an emotional level. When the actor Lazzari reconciles with his girlfriend, it swells romantically in reinforcement; likewise when Cabiria runs to tell her friend Wanda of her engagement, the same orchestral theme warmly accompanies her happy cries. It is a melody line which, largely depending on the instrumentation in each instance, is appropriate for the reinforcement of a certain range of emotions elicited by the dramatic action. It could be argued that the very presence of theme "A" in these two seemingly disparate situations sets up a connection, a comparison, nonredundant albeit nonexplicit in meaning. However, the use of "A" differs so dramatically from the treatment even of "D," its significance so "floating" in contrast, that it eludes any conscientious inquiry as to its meaning other than a generalized emotional one. Fellini exploits each of the themes primarily in this second manner—as mood setters, and not leitmotifs.

The fifth theme is silence. Music prevails so much in *Cabiria* that its absence is quite noticeable. Take for example the film's beginning and end, each of whose musical silence reinforces the other structurally. The very first shot, a long pan, shows Giorgio and Cabiria running toward the river; he grabs her purse and pushes her into the water. This and the rest of the segment depicting Cabiria's rescue has no musical accompaniment. In the final segment, equally devoid of music, Oscar walks with Cabiria toward the river, about to take all her money and push her to her death. The stakes are much higher now; so is the distance from the cliff down to the river; and the protagonist has in the meantime become a fully developed character with whom the spectator identifies. The silence, then, is all the more terrible. The ever-present music is not there to comfort Cabiria; a part of her reality is threatened or missing. But again we cannot attribute a specific meaning to the silence "theme" except in each particular context, because music is also absent on other occasions in the film, and without the least reference to these two segments.

DIEGETIC AND EXTRA-DIEGETIC MUSIC

The interplay of diegetic and extra-diegetic music emerges as an important dialectic in the text. Kracauer in his *Theory of Film* requires that the source be explicit in the image,[2] though the music "may be alternately synchronized with images of its source and other images." His definition is erroneous, or at least becomes problematic, in numerous obvious instances. If a character in a film exits from an opera performance we need not see the performance inside, though it is certainly reasonable for us to hear a few strains of music before the door closes behind him. Likewise, in *Cabiria,* a guitarist plays somewhere at an outdoor restaurant though his presence is never visually rendered explicit.

Opposed to this is music that is outside the diegesis. We hear it on the sound track, but like a commentary or an internal voice, it could not conceivably be heard by the characters. This kind of music has traditionally had as its function to reinforce the emotional content of the images, whether it conveys a certain eerie tension like Bernard Herrmann's score for *Vertigo,* or a galloping pace as for countless chases in westerns, or the peace and tranquillity of a Mozart woodwind quintet in Varda's *Le Bonheur.* Note that music as reinforcement can work in either "positive" or "negative" terms; it can suggest emotional states parallel or in counterpoint to the action. A shot of a sleeping baby accompanied by ominous rumbling music will produce quite a different effect than the same shot accompanied by a music box playing a lullaby.[3]

We will get a clearer idea of the importance of the dialectical parameters of the diegetic vs. extra-diegetic in film music by going through instances of each in *Cabiria* to determine how each is treated, whether intended for the sake of realism, ambiguity, dramatic irony, etc.

(1) Music appears diegetically for the first time on the radio in Cabiria's one-room house. This is, in fact, the first appearance of any music whatsoever after the credits (the river segment being voice/noise only)—a point worth remem-

Diegetic music (source visible) in CABIRIA.
Macmillan Audio Brandon Films

bering, for the last occurrence of music in the film will also be diegetic, and also associated directly with Cabiria as the listener. The importance of diegetic music in both the first and last segments is emphasized by the ominous musical silences before each, as I have already mentioned.

Cabiria seeks consolation in the radio music —something she certainly needs, just having not only been nearly drowned by her boyfriend, robbed of her purse, and locked out of her own house, but consequently having been proven naive in her trust for him. Wanda comes to comfort her but has a less soothing effect than the radio. The radio plays a role of convenience in supplying the scene's background music; but further, it already helps to establish the inseparability of Cabiria and music, a certain type of music—unsophisticated, rhythmic, jazzy. The segment ends with a shot of Cabiria outside the house; Wanda has walked off angrily. A new melody (theme "A") is heard on the sound track. Should we assume it to be another tune on the radio, or external to the characters' universe? The film provides no clear answer: it has set up the diegetic/extra-diegetic ambiguity with the first music.

(2) We hear music ("C") along with our introduction to the prostitutes' place of work, a street in the outskirts of Rome. It becomes evident that it issues from the radio of a car belonging to a pimp. When the mambo ("D") starts, everyone joins in a dance out on the street. Strictly speaking the theme on the sound track sounds too loud and too clear to be coming from the car's meager radio speaker, but we will nevertheless call it diegetic with qualifications.

The same theme plays later on the Via Veneto where the pimp and his girlfriend have dropped Cabiria. It accompanies the image of the small, awkward heroine visually imprisoned between two threateningly looming hookers whose rightful territory it is. Can the music be issuing from the nearby café? There is no reason to assume so, but on the other hand the text has already made an issue of weak or ambiguous diegetization of music, suggesting its pervasiveness in Cabiria's world.

(3) Theme "C" is heard again on a darkened street later the same night, as Cabiria still attempts to find a client. We have no basis for believing the music to be diegetic this time either, until Cabiria looks into a ground-level window, apparently that of a nightclub, and starts moving her hips in rhythm. Her response, then, indicates her awareness of the music as well as ours. Its source—probably a band or a record player—does not need to appear in the image. We note also how this retrospectively places into further doubt the "non-diegeticity" of the Via Veneto music.

(4) The next possible case of diegetic music arises shortly thereafter, with the appearance of the aging movie star Alberto Lazzari (played by an aging movie star named Amedeo Nazzari —a fact that contributes to Fellini's characteristic clouding of distinctions between the real and the fictional). After a tiff with his mistress outside the nightclub, he motions Cabiria to get into his car. Theme "C" plays once more; its source, though not indicated, could easily be his car radio.

(5) The diegesis provides the music for the entire sequence in the nightclub with Lazzari. Cabiria enters to the sound of a clarinet which plays an exotic melody to accompany two long-legged Negresses in their dance. Cabiria listens and looks on in a sort of tentative and unsophisticated approval. The show finished, the band switches to sedate mood music to which all including Cabiria and Lazzari dance. The following song, a fast-paced number, inspires Cabiria.

She dances uninhibitedly (as she and her companions dance to a similar kind of music at their regular night location), to the abashed amusement of those present—a reversal of all musical stimuli and responses at the sequence's beginning. Her identification with rhythmic, contemporary popular music is once again reinforced, this time by means of a contrast with the society of the rich, pretentious, and decadent. Finally, as she and Lazzari leave, theme "C" is in the air. Is the orchestra "inside" the sound track, outside the characters' earshot?

(6) One of the most striking scenes involving diegetic music—in which music virtually "orchestrates" for a while the dramatic action—occurs at Lazzari's residence. In his bedroom, Alberto sits down on the bed next to the record player (which indicates the immanent possibility of a diegetic music source). The second movement of Beethoven's fifth symphony is heard; a shot of Lazzari and the phonograph comes shortly after the music starts. When asked about Beethoven, Cabiria admits that it is not her type of music but that she enjoys it (as the first nightclub music, and indeed, Lazzari himself, are not her types). And for the rest of the duration of the piece, or until Lazzari removes it from the turntable, Fellini paces the action to match exactly the movement of the symphony. At the point of a great crescendo and modulation,[4] as the music swells on the sound track to improbable volume, a servant brings in a majestic tray loaded with food in silver serving dishes. The synchronization of music and action does not stop there; for a full two or three minutes they continue to indulge in spectacular interplay. During a quiet, pensive moment in the Beethoven, Lazzari, having inspected the champagne and its vintage, repeats the year 1949 nostalgically, *as if directed by the music* to do so at that time and no other.

Note 1: Can we by this time consider a third category lying somewhere between the diegetic and extra-diegetic? Is the music we hear exactly the same as that which the characters hear? And if not, may we justifiably speak of music heard by the "narrator,"[5] a sort of music which, though one single signifier, has more than one signification?

There is a degree of stylization achieved by manipulating the characters' action so that they submit to *musical* division of time rather than dramatic or realistic time. The characters in the narrative film, whom we *conventionally* accept as subjects, unquestionably become objects when their movements and speech coincide strictly with the music: for we can consider musical rhythm—an abstract, mathematical, highly organized disposition of time—to be the opposite of spontaneous, "real" time. We sense that the characters have been *created,* and they do not inspire us to identify with them. The resulting stylization, then, necessarily constitutes a definite departure from concern for psychological realism within the diegesis. Consequently the music employed acts ironically as a much stronger narrative intrusion, even though "diegetic," than extra-diegetic music.

Note 2: Fellini enthusiastically uses the idea of the "orchestrated" scene in other films. Near the beginning of *Otto e mezzo (8½)* occurs a magnificent descriptive panorama of the health resort where Guido (Marcello Mastroianni) is staying. As Wagner's "Ride of the Walkyries" plays, the camera obeys its rhythm; the shots we see seem to (ironically) fit the music, and not vice versa. Fellini weakly renders the music diegetic, providing visual indices of an open-air orchestra at the spa. Again the diegetization of the music lies somewhere in between the two parameters, simply because an on-location orchestra would not be performing the piece with such perfection, and with such clarity and volume exclusive of any background noise.

(7) Music plays a central role in the picnic sequence following the pilgrimage. We have witnessed Cabiria's naive expectation of some message of salvation, and the subsequent crushing of that expectation achieved filmically by showing the failure of the cripple to walk, and by expressive close-ups of Cabiria herself. Now

Cabiria, drunk, has reached her lowest point of despair and bitterly shouts her hopelessness to those near her, to herself, and to us. In more exact terms, her speech is directed to the rest of the set of diegetic characters, to herself as the protagonist and as voice of a point of view partially shared by the narrator, and to (from) that same metafilmic level that participates in the paradoxically diegetic music (see above, Note 1) which makes Fellini such a non-"realist." Three distinct witnesses to her despair, hence three levels of interpretation. Wanda and the other prostitutes attribute Cabiria's outbreak to her drunkenness and do not listen to the content of her ravings. Cabiria herself, tough character who believes she has learned to handle life's misfortunes, is angry at the world, in the most concrete of terms (shouting, staggering, violently throwing a soccer ball), in physical actions and in verbal content as well. The metafilmic level, the narrator's point of view, allows us to perceive the spiritual implications of the scene. The filmic text presents Cabiria's life as an almost unbearable series of vulnerable/hurt, hope/despair progressions; and we see the picnic as a demonstration of her deepest psycho-spiritual pain.

At the beginning of the picnic the music appears extra-diegetic, until the introduction of the group playing instruments (accordion, guitar, drum) in a shot with Wanda in the foreground gently chastising Cabiria for her drunken behavior. They play all the film's major themes as Cabiria shouts. A musical crisis, and outpouring, accompanies and contributes to her crisis. Diegesis and that which is external to it lose their meaning as separate entities.[6] The music acts as a recapitulation and compression of what has come before—and what will follow —and as a background continum, both aural and visual, against which Cabiria's release of agony, correspondingly verbal and physical, acquires remarkable force. The culmination of the scene is achieved when, having staggered over toward some parked cars, Cabiria leans against the side of a bus. The accordion music dissolves magically into the monodic melody of a line of choirboys making their way across Cabiria's field of vision beyond a stream. Framed by pure, fresh water, the stream and the arc of a water sprinkler, they sing an *ora pro nobis* that brings a simple purity to image as well as sound track. Cabiria's expression changes with this dissolve from anger into serenity (her head lies under the bus gas cap which looks unmistakably halo-like). The scene thus executes a transformation: it progresses from considerable movement/society of prostitutes and boyfriends/polyphonic, rhythmic music, theme after theme/Cabiria's physical and verbal violence — to relative stillness / children in religious dress/monophonic, arhythmic, "pure" music/Cabiria's silence and truer perception of her surrounding universe. Movement also from verbal violence to a complete, if brief, peace independent of verbal communication.

(8) A live orchestra plays in the "Lux" theater: first as plain vaudeville entertainment, as in Fellini's first feature film, *Luci del Varietà*, but then much more artfully and subtly as Cabiria, hypnotized to believe in "Oscar," a pure and simple love, dances gracefully on the stage. Many of the musical examples already cited can cause us to doubt the care or sincerity with which Fellini diegetizes them. The quiet, hypnotic melody heard during Cabiria's romantic trance at the Lux does not really suit the somewhat seedy instrumentalists shown in the orchestra pit. The handy presence elsewhere of portable and car radios suggests this same syndrome. It might be tempting to take to heart the rather uncharitable view of Hanns Eisler and Theodor Adorno in *Music in the Film*, that diegetic music is a cheap excuse for realism at points where the director wants to fill in gaps of silence on the sound track.

But the music in *Cabiria* does more than fill in spaces in the dramatic action. It is a force that works to erase distinctions between the diegetic framework, narrative framework, and spectator's framework. Maurice Jaubert, whose understanding of the possibilities of music in cinema as early as the first sound films (his scores for Jean Vigo's *Zéro de Conduite* and *L'Atalante*

have yet to be equalled) deserves the utmost attention, had this to say:

> Into the raw materials of cinema—which acquire artistic meaning only from their relations to one another —music brings an *unreal* element which is bound to break the rules of objective realism. Is there no place for it in the film?
>
> Certainly there is. For just as the novelist sometimes interrupts the telling of a story with an expression of his feelings, argumentative or lyrical, or with the subjective reactions of his characters, so does the director sometimes move away from the strict representation of reality in order to add to his work those touches of comment or of poetry which give a film its indivdual quality, descriptions, movements from one point to another in space or time, recalling of earlier scenes, dreams, imaging of the thoughts of some character, etc. Here the music has something to say: its presence will warn the spectator that the style of the film is changing temporarily for dramatic reasons. All its power of suggestion will serve to intensify and prolong that impression of strangeness, of departure from photographic truth, which the director is seeking.[7]

Though Jaubert does not specifically discuss diegetic music in this passage, we have already seen in Fellini how the diegetic–extradiegetic dialectic, with all its possible ambiguities, surprises, and stylization, is rich territory for narrative intrusion or dramatic irony, for the director's "departure from photographic truth."

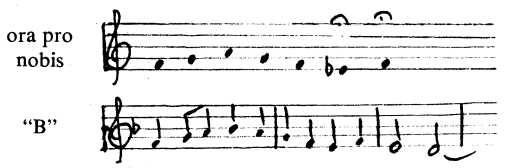
(9) Cabiria, thinking happily about the "real" Oscar—the man who introduces himself to her after her hypnosis/disillusionment and who will capitalize on her trust and vulnerability in order to take all her money—lies on her bed as some soothing music plays. Her radio is nearby. If we assume the music comes from the radio, we set up a parallel between this scene and the end of sequence 1, that is, when Cabiria comforts herself with radio music following Giorgio's betrayal. The correspondences between the two scenes in terms of their diegetic music situation, the visual elements of decor and the radio itself, and similarities of plot (Giorgio's betrayal foreshadowing Oscar's) touch off a series of structural resonances that reverberate consistently throughout the film.[8]

(10) At the outdoor restaurant where Cabiria and Oscar embark on their honeymoon, a guitarist sings and plays (theme "B"). Though he does not appear on the screen at all, I consider this music diegetic in the context. The deliberate ambiguity already set up between diegetic reality and narrative musical comment, combined with the fact that this music is sufficiently localizable and appropriate to the action, support this view.

(11) The final segment finds the resolution of conflicts, pro-filmic and meta-filmic, in music. It begins as Cabiria walks despondently through the forest after Oscar's ultimate betrayal; strains of an accordion are heard on the sound track. Until she reaches the musicians on the road, the film gives no indication that (a) she has been walking toward a destination, the road, and that (b) once again, the music is diegetic. Thus this scene participates in the situation already established on numerous occasions, the situation of retrospectively indicating music's presence in Cabiria's world. Why? Unlike the attractive mysteries of religion or magic, and more realistically (in the film's pessimistic point of view) than the possibility of a prostitute marrying a "good" man, music as a source of peace has been there all the time, in all its simplicity and availability.

The very fact of the protagonist's deep despondency, accompanied by seemingly extradiegetic music, recalls the beginning of the pivotal picnic scene. Indeed, the parallels multiply to such an extent as to confirm the structural and thematic pre-eminence of the two scenes in the global text. First, the diegetic source of the background music turns out to be a group of young people playing the same assortment of instruments: accordion, guitar, and various rhythm instruments. Theme "B" had appeared briefly in the picnic scene (and at the restaurant) as if in anticipation of its full expression at this point, for the walking musicians now adopt the song. Two different types of music played during the picnic, though, and the film's final scene acts as sort of a *combinatoire* at the same time as a simplification (reducing the number of songs to theme "B" exclusively). The musicians play the same genre of music, but it is harmonically simpler, and in contrast to the

other themes, flowingly melodic, with no interval jumps between notes in the theme itself. In fact, we notice an uncanny resemblance between the choirboys' *ora pro nobis* and the stepwise rise and fall of theme "B":



Having suggested the idea of a musical *combinatoire*—the picnic musicians' rhythmic accordion style and the flow and direction of the choirboys' melody—we note the same principle operating in the depiction of the groups of performers themselves. Though the musicians in the final scene appear at first to share most of the visual characteristics of the instrumentalists at the picnic, they participate also—markedly so—in the choirboys' *youth* (they are teenagers at best) and in their *movement*. The picnic musicians were static, standing or sitting on the lawn as they played. The choirboys in contrast moved across the visual field as they sang. The musicians now move forward on the road, not in the choirboys' orderly lines, but in circles, at angles, and with pauses—with spontaneity. (One of the group rides a motorcycle—a detail to be classed with the men at the picnic, who associate themselves with cars, motorcycles, and the spatial realm of the parking lot.) In general the idea of the procesion takes on a quasimythical dimension in the work of Fellini. It appears often: a patriotic marching band in *Lo Sceicco bianco,* a pilgrimage and a trio of musicians in *La Strada,* an orgiastic line dance in *La Dolce vita,* the grand finale of *Otto e mezzo*. And the road itself is a strong theme with Fellini, obviously central in *La Strada,* for example, with its own musical leitmotif.[9] At the end of *Il Bidone* the dying protagonist sees a small procession of children and their mothers, singing and walking up the road in the mountainous countryside where he has been abandoned. An even more pessimistic film than *Cabiria, Il Bidone* does not allow Augusto to reach the road and his possible salvation from death.

Salvation: the text of *Cabiria* has demonstrated a search for it in every way—through plot, imagery, thematic structures, character configuration, Fellini's own symbolic structures, and the disposition of music. The text has presented the agonized faces of the pilgrims, on their knees before relics of the Virgin Mary, calling out for her grace and for salvation from their spiritual drowning. It has shown the hypnotized subjects in the Lux theater fall to their knees also, praying and begging to be saved from the physical drowning they think is their fate. Twice, at the film's opening and just before the final segment, Cabiria has almost been pushed to her death by drowning. As the priest and the hypnotist guide the illusions of their subjects, Cabiria tries repeatedly to believe in Giorgio, in Lazzari to a lesser extent, and finally in Oscar.

The quest, then, may terminate filmically in the final musical procession. Music *is* salvation: unmotivated, gratuitous, ubiquitous. It is everywhere in the text spatially, temporally, and on all narrative levels as I have demonstrated. Its effect in the final segment owes to the fact that it provides answers to the film's conflicts in "form" and in "content," in the pro-filmic and meta-filmic contexts. Let us note once more the transformation achieved in the picnic sequence via the oppositions it had articulated (see 7 above): Cabiria's violent movement vs. her peaceful immobilization, stillness of first set of performers vs. movement of the second, social rank of prostitutes vs. church choirboys, adulthood vs. childhood, harmonic rhythmic music vs. monodic arhythmic music, anguish vs. peace. The final scene arrives at a resolution of these oppositions. Cabiria, neither violent nor immobilized, walks on the road *along with the musicians;* they move, though not in a strict linear fashion; the choirboys have been secularized and/or the picnic musicians have been purified; and the music has undergone an equally complete reconciliation of differences. Attained entirely by means other than verbal, Cabiria's salvation does not leave

her as it did halfway through the film. This time the music acts as the agent of *communications* between her and the youths. She joins the procession with a mixture of grief and joy, aware of herself, of those around her, and of the renewed possibility of life. The text closes not only with a close-up of Cabiria's face filling the screen, but also with a transfer to extra-diegetic instrumentation of theme "A" as an ultimate statement of the narrator's presence. The two presences, the protagonist's and the narrator's, are thus reconciled on an absolute and final plane.

NOTES

1. E.g., the *musical* proper, or more experimental forms such as in Jean Mitry's *Pacific 231,* Walt Disney's *Fantasia,* and Jean-Marie Straub's *Chronicles of Anna Magdalena Bach.*
2. His rudimentary distinction of "actual" vs. "commentative" corresponds to diegetic and extra-diegetic.
3. An elaborated discussion of any music's emotive effect *a priori* is too complex to be included within the aims of this study.
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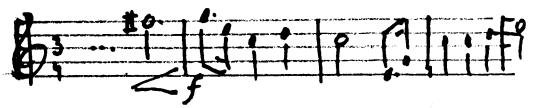
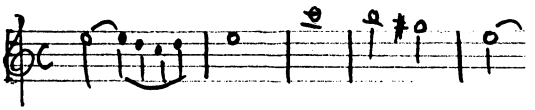


5. *narrator:* the force through whom/which the story is viewed and recounted. The intermediary, explicit or not, between the characters in the diegesis and the spectator.
6. In the context of the diegesis, why should they play those four particular tunes in such well-organized succession? Perhaps the "prostitute theme" and theme "C" have been in the diegetic air long enough to justify the musicians' familiarity with them. But especially in playing theme "B" they are acting as a musical oracle for the narrator.
7. As quoted in E. Lindgren, *The Art of the Film,* (London, 1948, pp. 192–3. Jaubert's original article in French is "Petite école du spectateur," *Esprit,* 1/4/36.
8. For instance, I find music's relationships to two pervasive thematic structures of prime importance. The first is the set of Cabiria's relationships with men: primarily the trio Giorgio, Lazzari, and Oscar, and secondarily the friar and the hypnotist. The other set of interrelationships has to do with three hopes of salvation: marriage, religion, and music itself.
9.



GARRETT STEWART

"The Long Goodbye" from "Chinatown"

An article last summer in *The New York Times* on the surprising number of "follow-up" films now in preparation, successors to such lucrative ventures as *The Godfather, The French Connection,* and *Funny Girl,* has christened this "the year of the sequel." The phenomenon seems to be oddly and indirectly borne out by the acclaimed advent of Roman Polanski's showy, taut, engaging film *Chinatown* in the undeservedly minor and placid wake of Robert Altman's *The Long Goodbye* (1973), in many ways the masterwork of America's most interesting working director.

The more recent, more popular film has reminded several critics of Altman's disturbing predecessor, but has inspired few searching parallels. Yet in watching *Chinatown* one can feel *The Long Goodbye* lurking behind it with the latent force of a foregone conclusion. Altman and his screenwriter took a 1953 Raymond Chandler novel, with its famous Philip Marlowe hero, and updated it twenty years into the glare

her as it did halfway through the film. This time the music acts as the agent of *communications* between her and the youths. She joins the procession with a mixture of grief and joy, aware of herself, of those around her, and of the renewed possibility of life. The text closes not only with a close-up of Cabiria's face filling the screen, but also with a transfer to extra-diegetic instrumentation of theme "A" as an ultimate statement of the narrator's presence. The two presences, the protagonist's and the narrator's, are thus reconciled on an absolute and final plane.

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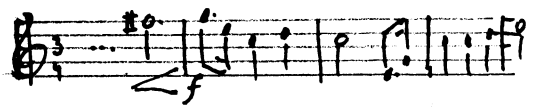
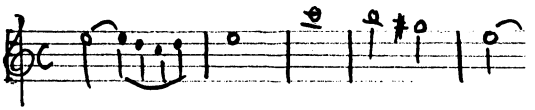


5. *narrator:* the force through whom/which the story is viewed and recounted. The intermediary, explicit or not, between the characters in the diegesis and the spectator.
6. In the context of the diegesis, why should they play those four particular tunes in such well-organized succession? Perhaps the "prostitute theme" and theme "C" have been in the diegetic air long enough to justify the musicians' familiarity with them. But especially in playing theme "B" they are acting as a musical oracle for the narrator.
7. As quoted in E. Lindgren, *The Art of the Film,* (London, 1948, pp. 192–3. Jaubert's original article in French is "Petite école du spectateur," *Esprit,* 1/4/36.
8. For instance, I find music's relationships to two pervasive thematic structures of prime importance. The first is the set of Cabiria's relationships with men: primarily the trio Giorgio, Lazzari, and Oscar, and secondarily the friar and the hypnotist. The other set of interrelationships has to do with three hopes of salvation: marriage, religion, and music itself.
9.



GARRETT STEWART

"The Long Goodbye" from "Chinatown"

An article last summer in *The New York Times* on the surprising number of "follow-up" films now in preparation, successors to such lucrative ventures as *The Godfather, The French Connection,* and *Funny Girl,* has christened this "the year of the sequel." The phenomenon seems to be oddly and indirectly borne out by the acclaimed advent of Roman Polanski's showy, taut, engaging film *Chinatown* in the undeservedly minor and placid wake of Robert Altman's *The Long Goodbye* (1973), in many ways the masterwork of America's most interesting working director.

The more recent, more popular film has reminded several critics of Altman's disturbing predecessor, but has inspired few searching parallels. Yet in watching *Chinatown* one can feel *The Long Goodbye* lurking behind it with the latent force of a foregone conclusion. Altman and his screenwriter took a 1953 Raymond Chandler novel, with its famous Philip Marlowe hero, and updated it twenty years into the glare

and barbarity of the contemporary L.A. wasteland, while Robert Towne's script for Polanski casts its variant detective figure, J. J. Gittes, three decades back into the complacent luxury of prewar L.A., a leisurely decadent culture primed for destruction.

The full satiric thrust of *Chinatown,* with its evasive and symbolic plot, is clear only if we see it pointing forward in time (and a short step backward in film history) to the metropolitan blight of *The Long Goodbye,* that deep cultural malaise which *Chinatown* serves accurately and eerily to prognosticate. *Chinatown* becomes, and is hardly diminished by being, an exploratory flashback for *The Long Goodbye,* a premise and a prevision. Polanski's film emerges as what we might term an "antecedent sequel," and this is a paradox worth braving in order to get closer to the heart of Polanski's black parable, and of Altman's before him.

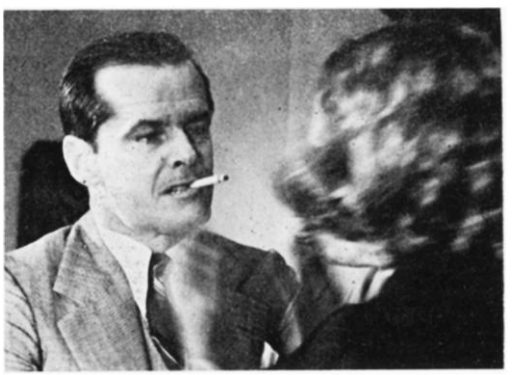
Chinatown is a morbidly gorgeous picture, not so much haunting as haunted, with a beauty of artifice like Faye Dunaway's in her role as the neurotic Mrs. Mulwray, a loveliness suspect and ripe for decay. Just as the droning repetitions of the title blues song in *The Long Goodbye* were geared to the recurring facets of Altman's complex satire, so Jerry Goldsmith's mellow, seductive score for *Chinatown* matches perfectly the film's burnished visual surface in a sickly richness just short of funereal. The almost monochromatic wash of its muted beige and grey tones, further drenched by the amber, shadowed lighting of scene after scene, becomes a beautiful yet bloodless suffusion. (By an opposite device of negative saturation Altman gets a similar satiric effect in *The Long Goodbye;* wishing like Polanski to drain his atmosphere of a certain vitality, Altman decided, for his vision of a later L.A., to accentuate the smog-blanched haze of his landscape by slightly overexposing, or "fogging," the entire print.) Unlike the nervous roving of Vilmos Zsigmond's camerawork in *The Long Goodbye,* there is a sinister preoccupation in the relentless close-ups of *Chinatown* that seems at times almost monomaniacal, always ominously subjective, with Jack Nicholson's inquisitive profile repeatedly framing the picture to the left or right of the screen. The overwrought, meticulously compositional style of cinematographer John Alonzo comes to look like a series of deceptive "frame-ups," with evil inhering in the smallest details of scenes—and violence lurking just beyond the peripheral vision we so often share with the hero. The macabre conclusion, despite plot loopholes, is tonally dead right; in retrospect, the movie's lush serenity is meant to feel obscene.

Polanski's film has none of the freewheeling ironic distance that the flamboyance and restless experimentation of Altman's camera lend to his, yet the largest themes of the two directors, if not entirely similar, are at least parallel. *The Long Goodbye* diagnoses a society suffering from ter-

Keeping murder in the family: CHINATOWN

minal modernity, a bleary polaroid nightmare compared to the sepia tones of languor and anguish in Polanski's historic as much as psychic precursor. The Los Angeles drought in *Chinatown,* the occasion of the plot, is of course a spiritual dessication as well, and the film predicts for us the withered, disintegrated soul of latter-day L.A. as exposed in Altman's conception, glossing and grounding for us the earlier film, extending and clarifying its context.

Both *The Long Goodbye* and *Chinatown* are highly centripetal films, taking their focus and emotional center from the mentality of their heroes, who appear in nearly every scene. Their quirky psychology is in each case a fundamental revision of the detective stereotype: the suave, sarcastic wise-guy, the incorruptible loner. Polanski works his way around the corners of this mask, Altman flays it away entirely. The difference is seen by comparing the self-conscious swagger of Jack Nicholson as Gittes with the cynical slouch of Elliott Gould's new Marlowe.



With his slick suits, Florsheim shoes, and fastidious show-off's gait, J. J. Gittes, played by Nicholson at full cocksure tilt, is the stereotype upheld by pride, bolstered by financial success—yet all the while precarious and defensive, wary, waiting to be toppled. His antithesis in Gould's portrayal is a scruffy down-and-out Marlowe, with nowhere to go but up, a baggy-suited nobody who is made fun of at one point for his sad J. C. Penney tie. Nothing, however, aligns Polanski's hero more fully with the ironic isolation of Altman's Marlowe than Gittes's rejoinder, on the telephone, to the question "Are you alone?" Without even his usual facetious grin the unflinchingly private eye answers, "Isn't everyone?" Gittes tries snidely to outface and so beat the system; Marlowe has merely beaten an early retreat from it.

Elliott Gould's lack of drive and machismo in *The Long Goodbye* revises the "private dick" screen stereotype, from Bogart's Sam Spade through Steve McQueen's Bullitt to the John Shaft series (even the surnames are phallic brags, as noted long before the *Shaft* films by Altman's parody of Frank Bullitt in *Brewster McCloud* as the artificially blue-eyed "Frank Shaft"). But his indifference also reverses his own Hollywood typecasting as sexual teddy bear. As Marlowe, Gould is all frustration and self-effacement where Gittes is aggressive, cool, sexually confident. Professionally at least, Gittes thrives on sex. "Marriage is my métier," he tells the black widow Mulwray, mispronouncing the dandified French word. In Marlowe's first conversation with the similarly mysterious temptress Mrs. Wade, he informs her, on the other hand, of his chief ethical rule as detective: "I never handle divorce work." It is as if he has learned from Gittes's fatal mistake, and he seems to avoid sex in private life as well as in his trade,

emerging as the least libidinous anti-hero in recent films; his defiance simply has no sexual face. Gittes and Mrs. Mulwray do go to bed, and Polanski's camera lingers painfully over each nuzzling kiss as it threatens to open the awful wound on Gittes's nose. Altman's Marlowe, however, appears to know by instinct that sex is violent, bloody, futile, and his indifference is a mixture of contempt and defensiveness. Gittes is warned that if he fails to mind his own business, he will have his nose completely hacked off. For Marlowe the worst threat is castration by one of Marty Augustine's hired louts; it is narrowly escaped, and would hardly have mattered.

Leigh Brackett, who did the script for *The Long Goodbye* and collaborated years before with Faulkner and Jules Furthman on the earlier Marlowe story, *The Big Sleep,* said in a recent article that when Altman was signed on as director, rather late in the project, he insisted on emptying the detective stereotype of its vestigial glamor and fake heroics, thus updating Marlowe by downgrading him from "tough-guy" to "patsy," converting him to a "real loser." Gittes, on the other hand, seems in Towne's script to take upon himself the supercilious role of "fake winner," as Altman has characterized Chandler's original Marlowe. But Gittes is not altogether easy behind this assured front, and his unrestrained outrage at the man in the barber shop who accuses him of a cheap publicity stunt is an early sign of his nervous, unsteady self-image. The mask of bravado doesn't quite fit, and at times fails to serve him. The exaggerated braggart's ease, for instance, with which he is forever spilling his secrets into the all-too-willing ears of his known antagonists, especially in the final confrontation with Noah Cross, is tragically miscalculated.

The genre itself is endangered. Gittes's misplaced and annoying self-confidence in revealing his unearthed clues is part of the full-scale displacement of audience expectation that does such repeated and widespread violence to the mystery form within which *Chinatown* purports to be operating. Ordinary narrative suspense, the train of multiplying clues and partial discoveries, is to a large extent replaced by a sense of atmospheric foreboding divorced from plot, and more importantly by a suspension in symbolic details themselves, a consistently withheld relevance that defines the true plotline of the film. In *Chinatown* the standard ingredients of mystery fiction, though not as nebulous and anarchic as in *The Long Goodbye,* still fail to hold our interest for long. It becomes our job, rather than Gittes's, to "detect" something beneath them, for which they are merely the excuse—an underside of allegory. Robert Towne's script for the movie owes much to the kind of freedom with dialogue and detail that mark Altman's work. Educated by Altman's prolific output in how to listen to an improvisatory but always economical screen idiom, we wait alertly for links to be forged between scenes, puns to detonate into consequence, premonitions to be fulfilled. What does it mean that Noah Cross eats whole fish? Or that he is named Noah for that matter? That Mrs. Mulwray has a black flaw in her left green eye? What have her Chinese servants to do with the film's title? What, in fact, has the title to do with the film?

The unspoken shame and trauma Gittes once suffered in Chinatown are behind him, safely he thinks, at the movie's opening. Yet throughout the film the specter of Chinatown is vigorously signalled as the plot's inexorable destination, a fixed point and a doom. Its signposts are many and blatant, from an inane dirty joke to a portentous address on Alameda Street, but the actual place, when we end up there, is in no way persuasively visualized. It has the remoteness of a half-hearted neon hallucination, and the stagey ending, for all its grotesque melodrama and blood, is one of the most calculated and remorseless anticlimaxes in film. Chinatown is a subjective locale, a ghetto in the mind, and like Gittes we know we have been there before. The way out is the way back in.

We are not responding to the script on its own premonitory terms if we write off the dramatic ironies, prefigurations, and oblique echoes of the title as if they were facile narrative tricks. They become metaphysical, taking on gradually

the reverberations of a fate. Gittes, for example, is laughing absurdly at a dumb sexual joke about Chinamen just before meeting Mrs. Mulwray for the first time, as she glowers haughtily and unnoticed behind him. Her servants and her gardener turn out to be Chinese. Just before making love to her, Gittes notices the flaw in her iris, in the same eye that will be a bloody cavern in the Chinatown scene, erupting from the cop's stupid bullet. After their sex, while lying in bed, Gittes answers her question about what he used to do in Chinatown with "As little as possible," adding cryptically: "I tried to keep someone from being hurt. I ended up making sure she got hurt." When this tragic fate recurs at the end, so does the earlier line, now his last in the film: "As little as possible," he mutters blankly, in a state of shock, as his henchmen lead him away from the scene of butchery.

The most effectively dramatized of such resonating details is climaxed with that unnerving economy of cinematic means which Polanski summons for the death scene of Mrs. Mulwray. Before telling Gittes earlier the half truth about her sister, Mrs. Mulwray allowed her head to fall forward onto the steering wheel of her car, the horn blast at once jolting her upright. This noise has become a motif by the film's last scene, horribly orchestrating that prolonged deep-focus shot of her fleeing car. The vain dream of escape has turned to nightmare, and though we hope she has made it, we somehow know better. The film's last brilliant visualization reads for a brief unsure moment as if it were in transition between a foreshortened and retarding telephoto shot and a freeze frame. But the receding convertible has been stopped dead by the plot, not the camera, and we are sure of this when we hear the car's horn again, groaning without letup this time from the far end of the scene. We know we will find Mrs. Mulwray slumped once more over her steering wheel, and the delayed screams of her daughter merely punctuate the hornwail of fate. Mrs. Mulwray's car had been fired at from behind once before in the film, when helping Gittes escape from gunmen, and in speeding away she nervously brushed at her left eye, as if to clear her vision. It is another foreboding gruesomely borne out in the last scene by the death wound in that same flawed and fated eye. No closing scene could be farther in mood from the breezy exhilaration of that deep hazy perspective caught by Vilmos Zsigmond's gifted camera at the end of Marlowe's story. The long goodbye has been said, and Marlowe can skip gaily away from his fate, to the sounds of his own harmonica, bringing the whole landscape alive with dance and action. The momentary visual illusion of escape in *Chinatown,* however, is just that, all chance for exit a deception—indeed, to spell out the visual pun, a last hopeless long-shot.

There are arresting verbal puns, too, in the scripts for both *The Long Goodbye* and *Chinatown,* slips of the tongue that become prophetic. Both movies have curiously lodged an ethnic mispronunciation at the secret center of their plots. Penelope Gilliatt was, I think, quite right to suggest in her *New Yorker* review that the Chinese gardener's "glass" for "grass" is a verbal clue that becomes concrete evidence when Noah Cross's bifocals are fished from the salt water pool that has been "bad for 'glass' " all along. This is comic malapropism as pun and predestination—and resembles the usual grain of an Altman film more than it does anything we remember from Polanski's earlier work. Marlowe makes fun of the bungling, corrupt Mexican coroner in *The Long Goodbye* who pronounces "the deceased," speaking of the film's as yet unexposed villain Terry Lennox, as "the diseased," but the plot revelations soon force us to accede to this uncanny slip as it takes us straight to the core of the film's corruption and spiritual disease. This is the investigative farce of which Altman is the reigning American master, and Robert Towne's script here registers yet another debt to the techniques of its predecessor.

There is also in *The Long Goodbye* the fated bracketing of plot which Polanski carries to such drastic lengths in *Chinatown.* In his first scene with Terry Lennox, an early sketch for *California Split,* Marlowe asks him if he wants "to lose a couple bucks," and, playing a dollar

bill serial-number game, Marlowe himself does just that in a matter of seconds. When the implicit charge of "loser" is at last voiced by Terry in their final scene together, Marlowe holds his own for once, struggling out from under the "real loser" mentality Altman has yoked him with. He calls the bluff and wins. Marlowe's repeated verbal shrug, "It's O.K. with me," is the logical extension of Gittes's "as little as possible," not just a cop-out but a real defensive posture in a world where the only other response would be paranoia. Yet the private execution of Terry becomes at last an authentic victory for this existential holdout—and a liberation.

It is, however, a self-confessed Hollywood ending, and, like *M*A*S*H* and *Brewster McCloud* before it, *The Long Goodbye* turns inside out in the last scene and unabashedly admits to being no more than a film, a fiction. Polanski works it the other way around. The wonderfully tremulous credits for *Chinatown* do not merely use Art Deco lettering the way Bertolucci, say, did for *The Conformist,* to augment his period flavor. In stark, almost giddy black-and-white, Polanski's hypnotic titles are a disconcerting imitation of a thirties movie opening. Announcing itself first as only a film, *Chinatown* slowly convinces us that it is in fact a nightmare vision of outside reality. Conversely, Altman begins *The Long Goodbye* with ironic naturalism, lets the allusions to other films accumulate along with his frightening vision of the modern urban psyche in disease, and then pulls it all together with the "I am only a movie" confession at the end.

Marlowe knows that he is a movie anachronism, that his true sphere would indeed be the kind of period film that Polanski has recreated, and he drives a elegantly lumbering old convertible straight out of the heyday of the detective pictures. When a dog crosses the path of his car at one point, he even calls to it by the name of the Thin Man's dog, "Asta." In the superb interrogation scene, when asked by the brutish police lieutenant, "Where are you from?" Marlowe answers coyly, "From a long time ago." He indulges himself by pretending to be Al Jolson in blackface, hero of the first Hollywood talkie, and also mocks his interrogators by claiming to be Donald Duck. (The joke comes true in the closing strains of "Hooray for Hollywood," with their promise that anyone "can be Donald Duck" in the never-never-land of movies.) After exterminating Terry Lennox, Marlowe saunters jauntily down a tree-lined avenue that is a pastoral setting borrowed directly from the conclusion of *The Third Man,* as a gramophone record blares out the raucous good spirits of this tinny hymn to the film capital. Altman's corrosive parody of Los Angeles has funneled down to a comic tribute to the Hollywood movie, the only world in which heroic endings and personal victors are still possible. The whimsical foreshortening of the final shot, accompanied by the mock-nostalgic score, suspends Marlowe's ebullient clowning figure in time and space, a loving delay over his long exit which slowly causes the whole lively vista to take on the artificial, two-dimensional quality of a painted backdrop, or even of a Donald Duck cartoon—at last, after much numbness, fancifully yet genuinely animated.

There is a different brand of self-referential cinematic allusion in Polanski's film. When the director himself steps inside his own narrative as a knife-wielding thug, it is more than just

Hitchcockian caprice, especially when he is under the direct influence there, and in the hire of, an arch villain played monumentally by John

Huston, and named Noah Cross. Huston is well known not only for his actor's role as a more legendary Noah in *The Bible* but also for his role of director (one of Altman's favorites, incidentally) of perhaps the most revered film in the detective genre, *The Maltese Falcon*. This has to be a symbolic dead end for the formula, when the past master of the form is now the evil genius of the plot, with the new director under his command.

Finally, it is the monstrous paternalism of this modern American Noah that gives us the surest clue to the social bearings of Polanski's satire. This modern psychopath and water-prophet, who once owned the city's water supply, is now proprietor of the Albacore Club and eats whole fish for lunch, drowns his upright son-in-law in a miniature backyard tidepool ("Hollis was always fascinated with tidepools," he reminisces. "You know what he used to say? That's where life begins."), and, in a demonic parody of the original Noah's role in repopulating the earth after the Flood, has even begotten on his daughter a second anemic daughter. Mrs. Mulwray's personal stationery, as Gittes notes with strange interest, bears the letterhead "E. C. M." and this middle initial stands for no mere maiden name: in effect, her father has been her first husband, and has thus given her his name a second time —an incestuous "double Cross." Even her fatal flaw, that spot in her iris, is a symbolic inheritance, "a sort of birthmark," as she calls it.

Only its context in social satire seems to have urged a period setting upon *Chinatown's* otherwise undated script. The movie takes place at a turning point in the urban life of Los Angeles, as it is about to incorporate the enormous San Fernando Valley. Noah Cross is the criminal parent of this scheme too, and hopes to profit from a new dam which will irrigate Valley lands he has bought up for next to nothing under a series of assumed names. When Gittes confronts Cross with his knowledge of the conspiracy, the mad incestuous patriarch explains that he is doing it, not for the money, but "for the future" he sees himself as so nobly fathering. Earlier, in their first luncheon conversation over the gawking dead fish, Towne's script indulges in the kind of throwaway verbal clue that lends such texture to *The Long Goodbye*. Cross asks Gittes if the cop on the case is honest, and he replies with unwitting irony, "As far as it goes, but he has to swim in the same water we all do." Yet Noah, of course, controls the waters, and, unlike his namesake, kills rather than saves with them. Part of his plan involves emptying water secretly from the existing dam into the ocean and even into the dry L.A. River bed, where the water happens to drown an itinerant drunk who has been bedding down there at night. (With all of this oblique water symbolism, we may even recall the drunken novelist in *The Long Goodbye* whose pen name is Wade and who deliberately wades to his death in the Malibu surf soon after sharing aguavit—from aqua vitae, water of life—with Marlowe.)

In the prophetic view of Noah Cross, L.A. should not complain about the diversion of water to the Valley because L.A. itself, after the incorporation, will take nourishment from it. This false god of generation will increase the land upon itself, and here we have the full satiric point of his familial perversion: capitalist lust as incest, a self-feeding and a self-destruction. Los Angles must go dry so that a new City of the Angels will flourish, a new Eden (the word "Albacore" in the title of his club is twice misheard as "apple core") in the western Valley. Noah Cross destroys his first child in order to clasp his second daughter (simultaneously his granddaughter) to him in his declining years, another incestuous hope "for the future." But he has bought up all his Valley land in the names of the dead or dying, buried by or housed in the rest home he also owns (predictably named Mar Vista, or Sea View), and his true future is an end. Death, that is, and of course the legacy of the new L.A., so devastatingly portrayed in Altman's "sequel" that his film, long in advance of the New York raves, opened in Westwood to a negative, even hostile reception.

If the title *The Long Goodbye* implies a valediction to the whole detective film genre, a protracted farewell and an epitaph, then the pre-

dated *Chinatown* is an obituary reprise. Suddenly, in the hands of Robert Altman and then Roman Polanski, the essential narrative fabric of physical action and concrete mystery in these fictions has been partly discarded, partly rewoven, and the genre turns introspective and allegorical, tacitly renaming itself in the process as the metaphysical "private I" film: a study in the lost and homeless modern soul, pitted against a corruption it can barely fend off, let alone cure. The title *Chinatown,* like *The Long Goodbye* and *The Big Sleep* before it, is also a metaphor and a euphemism for death—physical, spiritual, even cultural — and despite Noah Cross's apocalyptic scheme, there are no green pastures in the Valley of its shadow.

WILLIAM JOHNSON

Recent Rivette—An Inter-Re-view

And when I found the door was shut,
I tried to turn the handle, but—

—Lewis Carroll, ALICE IN WONDERLAND

Paris Belongs to Us: nameless menace. *Mad Love:* a 4½-hour decline into schizophrenia. Rumors of the original *Out One:* a 13- hour reprise of nameless menace. By now I expect any new film by Jacques Rivette to be slow and somber, reflecting gloom and taciturnity in its maker.

I'm wrong.

Céline and Julie Go Boating (1973) is an exhilarating film; Rivette turns out to be cheerful, animated, articulate.

JR: *I try to make the kind of films I enjoy as a spectator. When you've seen a lot of films, as you and I have, nine times out of ten you know what's going to happen. I like films where you don't know. . . . I like endless stories, on the lines of an Arabian Nights—or soap opera.*

Céline and Julie is an endless story, hard to summarize. Céline (Juliet Berto) does a magician act in a Montmartre nightclub; Julie (Dominique Labourier) works in a library. They may know each other before the story begins, but seem to meet by accident. Julie is sitting in a park when Céline dashes past, dropping a scarf, and Julie runs after her. Céline tells her an obviously made-up tale about stumbling into a sinister plot and being held prisoner in a house. But the house she describes is real, and the two of them take turns going there. At first they stagger out of the house with only brief visions of what they've seen inside. Later, under the stimulus of candies which they find in their mouths after each visit, they're able to summon up progressively longer visions. There is a young widower, his small daughter, two women who are rivals for the widower's affections, and a nurse (a double of whichever of Céline and Julie is having the vision). The scenes in which these characters take part, disconnected at first, gradually piece themselves together: the sequence culminates in the unexplained death of the small daughter.

Céline and Julie decide to rescue the girl. Protected with magic charms, they both dress up as the nurse and insert themselves into the sequence of events, which now takes on the appearance of a theatrical performance. In a hilarious climax, Céline and Julie flounder about and flub their lines while the other "actors" continue unperturbed; but the heroines manage to

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From one of the "house" scenes in CELINE AND JULIE: *Camille watches as Sophie makes overtures to Olivier.*

detect one of the women preparing poison, and they carry the girl out of the house in time.

Now, after the film has been running for just over three of its 3¼ hours, Céline and Julie go boating. As they drift down the river with Madlyn, the rescued girl, they pass a boat which carriers the widower and the two women in a frozen, livid tableau. The film then ends as it began, in the park, except that this time it is Julie who dashes past Céline.

Although *Céline and Julie* is Rivette's first film which goes in for sustained comedy its parentage with his earlier work remains clear. (The one film that stands apart is *La Religieuse:*

JR: *This was guite different. I didn't write the script—it was an exercise in pure mise en scène.*)

Three recurring elements account for most of the family likeness in Rivette's films:

One: the action revolves around some kind of theatrical enterprise—rehearsals of Shakespeare's *Pericles* in *Paris Belongs to Us,* of Racine's *Andromaque* in *Mad Love,* of Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound* and *Seven Against Thebes* in *Out One.* In *Céline and Julie,* the events inside the house take on this theatrical dimension.

JR: *At first we planned to present these events as a film-within-a-film, with Céline and Julie as editors doing their own montage of the different scenes. But a film-within-a-film has been done before. . . . So we kept the basic idea but cut out all the specifics of film viewing and editing.*

Instead, there are specifics of the theater—*trois coups,* applause, etc.

In contrast with this recurrent stylized element,—

Two: Rivette makes extensive use of improvisation.

JR: *We had a two-page script of Céline and Julie, but that was just something to show the producer. We started shooting only two months after I first discussed the idea of the film.*

Several members of the cast share in the screenplay credits for *Céline and Julie;* all of the cast do so for *Out One.* Improvisation, for Rivette, isn't limited to the dialogue and action within each scene; it may determine the nature of the scene or change the course of the whole film.

JR: Mad Love *became longer and more "difficult," more serious, as the filming went on.* Out One, *on the other hand, seemed more serious in its early stages and gradually became more dreamlike. We started shooting it with no idea of the final shape of the film or even how the action would end.*

Three: An atmosphere of mystery and ambiguity pervades Rivette's films. This is true even of the apparently more straightforward *Mad Love,* since the viewer cannot say for certain how much of the two protagonists' aberrant behavior is feigned rather than genuine. The atmosphere is dominant in the other films, reaching an extreme of complexity in *Out One* (1970).

This is a pivotal film, combining the somber anxiety of *Paris Belongs to Us* (of which it could be considered an elaborate reworking) with the lighter approach of *Céline and Julie.* It is also the film in which Rivette has so far invested the most effort: after completing the 13-hour original, he returned to the editing table to produce a 4½-hour version—

(JR: *The most difficult editing job I've ever done) — under the title Out One/Spectre*[1] (1974). *It is this "short" version which was shown at the New York Film Festival along with* Céline and Julie *and on which my critique is based.*

Spectre raises all kinds of oblique hints about the existence of a secret society of 13 friends, inspired by Balzac's *Histoire des Treize.*[2] Apparently (a word one wants to keep using when describing a Rivette film) the group was started partly as a joke and is now—as the action begins—dormant; but when two outsiders become involved it (apparently) revives. One outsider is Frédérique (Juliet Berto), a professional sponger who gets her hands on some correspondence between members of the 13 and sees it as an opportunity to try some half-hearted blackmail. The other is Colin (Jean-Pierre Léaud), a layabout with a far more curious (in all senses of the word) mind; after stumbling on various cryptic messages with references to the *Histoire des Treize* (and also to *The Hunting of the Snark*) he sets out to investigate the group and becomes obsessed to the point of insanity with the enigma. But neither he nor the viewer discovers any solid facts about the group's activities.

OUT ONE/SPECTRE: *Frédérique (right) meets with lawyer Lucie to try and blackmail her.*

Faced with such tangles of unexplained mysteries as *Spectre* and *Céline and Julie,* the viewer may first try to puzzle out what's *really* happening. This is a mistake. Rivette's films contain two levels of mystery, one superficial and the other central, and anyone who becomes enmeshed in the first may never reach the second.

The first level glitters with enticing clues and allusions. A scholarly critic could fill page after page analyzing all the references to Balzac and Lewis Carroll in *Spectre*—and say absolutely nothing of importance about the film. *Céline and Julie* is even more insidious. It contains one overt quotation from *Alice in Wonderland,* when Madlyn is reading the book, and thus tempts the viewer to find countless examples of what may be indirect references: in the opening scene, Céline functions as the White Rabbit, drawing Julie into an adventure; there is the same difficulty that Alice had in gaining entry into a house; the heroines are affected magically by something they eat; a boating scene also occurs as an appendage in Carroll, in verses evoking the river trip where he first conceived Alice's adventures; the film introduces enigmatic cats which might belong to Cheshire. . . . And already this line of investigation has strayed from the probable to the possible and is slipping into the pointless.

JR: *I like inserting traps for the critics.*

But the biggest traps are the ones that Rivette *doesn't* insert—the fortuitous clues that a critic starts to see when he stares to long at the first level of mystery. For example—

WJ: Céline and Julie keep emerging from the house with a candy which enables them to see further visions. Later Madlyn offers them the

same kind of candy. I wonder whether you picked the girl's name because you were referring to another kind of confection which induced visions—the *madeleine* in Proust?

JR *(laughing): No, I didn't think of it! But if that's what you see, then it's there for you—that's your film.*

WJ: Well, leaving Proust out of it, I still feel that the scenes inside the house represent the past. At the end, when Céline and Julie take part in those scenes, the faces of the other characters become livid and death-like—as if the past turns to ashes when the two women try to relive it.

JR: *We made the characters look that way partly because Céline and Julie, being in the action with them instead of looking at them from the outside, start to see them more critically. Also, the action now becomes like a theatrical performance, and the camera sees it as if from the wings, where the lighting looks harsh and the make-up unrealistic.*

WJ: I see. But there are also hints that Camille [Bulle Ogier: one of the women in the house] is Julie's mother when young. Julie mentions that her mother travels a lot and has sent her a postcard from Borneo. Camille says *she* wants to travel a lot and visit places like Borneo. . . .

JR: *Well, it wasn't planned that way. Eduardo di Gregorio* [who collaborated on the script] *added that line at the last moment, when we were filming Camille's monologue.*

WJ (after a pause): Let's turn to another question. . . .

Obviously, anyone who tries to make sense of a Rivette film by collating all of the first-level details is asking for trouble—the same kind of trouble that Colin plunges into when he tries too hard to solve the mystery of the 13. That way madness lies.

A much safer response is to dismiss Rivette's films as elaborate games without any second level of meaning worth bothering about. Then one risks only boredom—the fate of the rigorously pragmatic Frédérique.[3]

In making these comparisons with Colin and Frédérique I am already, of course, adducing a second level of meaning in *Spectre*. What's important in this film is not the "truth" about the 13 and their activities but the attitudes of the two outsiders. Colin and Frédérique represent extreme reactions to the mysterious epiphenomena of the 13: Colin sets out indefatigably to fit them into a neat structure; Frédérique behaves as if no structure exists.

Which leads to a fairly straightforward interpretation of *Spectre* on its second level: in real life we're faced with phenomena that have much the same mystery and ambiguity as the first-level details of a Rivette film; it's a mistake to try to look for a system that will account for everything; but it's also a mistake to look for no structure at all.

JR: *I like my films to have at least two or three interpretations—not fixed, but shifting.* (He spreads his fingers and moves his hands to and fro across each other.)

The weakness of *Spectre*—for me—is that this one interpretation exhausts the second level of meaning. Colin and Frédérique have no resonance, practically no existence, outside their reactions to the presumed 13. Some of these latter characters do have more potential, but they remain trapped within the first level of mystery: their behavior *must* keep the viewer guessing about the "truth" or else Colin and Frédérique will lose their wider significance. Rivette and his collaborators work hard to overcome this problem: many scenes convincingly suggest that the 13 themselves have distinct,

Juliet Berto, near the end of the film.

partial and inconsistent notions of what the "truth" is. But this cannot alter the impression that mystification is essential above all to prevent the film from collapsing; that the characters are chained—loosely, but still chained—to a plot device.

Although *Céline and Julie* too can be described as a film about outsiders (Céline and Julie) reacting to mysterious insiders (the characters in the house) it avoids the central weakness of *Spectre*. Since the insiders appear only in a small number of basic scenes—repeated in various lengths and combinations—the mystery about them does not have to be sustained primarily by their words and actions. It is not they but the two heroines' peculiar view of them which obscures or filters the "truth."

Of course, having so little to do, the insiders appear much less complex and interesting than the 13 in *Spectre*. But this doesn't matter. What's important is that the outsiders are *more* complex than Colin and Frédérique. In fact, there is as much mystery about Céline and Julie as there is about what's going on inside the house. And since the two mysteries are linked, it's easy to permute them into "at least two or three interpretations."

Céline and Julie could be old friends, or new friends, or two aspects of the same person (on several occasions they exchange roles). The events in the house could be a dream or hallucination; they could spring from real-life memories of Julie, or Céline, or Céline/Julie; they could be a hypnotic story made up by C. J or C/J to account for the visit of a kid sister or niece; or they could represent another dimension of real life—like events seen on television —which draw C, J or C/J into a broader involvement with the world.

All this and more is possible, but none of it is necessary. While watching *Céline and Julie* I did not feel irritated by its first-level mysteries (as I did from time to time with *Spectre*); nor at the end did I feel any urgent need to work out an interpretation. (This isn't a copout: I did work one out which I'll come to later.) *Céline and Julie* is a film that can satisfy before it makes sense.

It can do this largely because Rivette and his collaborators have steeped it in elements of immediate appeal. There's comedy, broad humor, even slapstick. There's suspense: the viewer wants to find out how the fragmentary scenes in the house will fit together and which of the characters will be killed—first-level mysteries which for once do *not* lead to frustration. There's warmth and liveliness (as well as whimsy) in the relationship between Céline and Julie. Visually, the film glows with summery colors.[4]

JR: *As to influences on the film, I like to think of it as "Grandson of Hitchcock and Renoir."*

The sheer enjoyability of *Céline and Julie* brings out a feature of Rivette's film-making which may escape notice in his earlier work:

JR: *I try to make my films in the most simple way possible.*

STEPHANE TCHALGADJIEFF, producer of *Out One (raising his eyebrows):* Simple??

JR: *Yes—within the given framework, of course.*

In *Céline and Julie,* as in all of Rivette's films, the first-level mystification arises from content and editing, not from showy camerawork or effects. Nor does he attempt to score obvious points in profundity—to juggle pretentiously, for example, with illusion and reality. On the contrary, his straightforward approach minimizes the breaks between what in most other films would be different levels of reality, so that when Céline and Julie suddenly and inexplicably find themselves looking at the events inside the house, the transition becomes as acceptable as a straight cut to a subjective view or a flashback.[5]

In its formal development, *Céline and Julie* is the most compelling of Rivette's films. After a relaxed start the action gradually accelerates, building up step by step to the hilarious climax before the brief and unexpectedly quiet ending.

This formal shape is all the more remarkable because of the importance that Rivette attaches to improvisation:

JR: *I'm interested not just in telling a story but in seeing what happens during the filming—the atmospheric touches that arise. . . . Some time ago I saw the first assemblage of Jean Rouch's* Petit à Petit *based on improvised scenes with Africans. It ran for nine hours; nothing happened; but it was fascinating. It lost a lot when Rouch cut it to 90 minutes or so. . . . Cinema is designed to capture the unexpected.*

Not surprisingly, Rivette's devotion to the unexpected makes his own films swell to unusual size:

JR: *I realize that some viewers object to the length of my films and find the temps morts painful.*

While I'm not enthusiastic about the length of *Mad Love* or *Spectre,* even these do not give me the floundering sensation I get from most other directors who rely heavily on improvisation. Looking back at the two films, I become aware of the unobtrusive but acute control that must lie behind them—a control which can be deduced from some of the economical camera setups and, above all, from the editing.

With *Céline and Julie,* Rivette takes this control even further:

JR: *In editing* Céline and Julie *I tried to cut to the bone.*

Well, bone isn't conspicuous, and two sequences could still benefit from trimming (Julie's pursuit of Céline at the beginning, and the two women's giggly reactions to the candy-induced visions) —but in general Rivette's editing carries the film through its 3¼ hours with verve and assurance. There is, for the first time in his work, an equal and dynamic balance between freedom and organization.

This balance reflects what I take to be the theme of the film. While *Céline and Julie* covers much of the same ground as in Rivette's other work, notably *Spectre,* his new approach helps it to explore even further.

At the beginning of the film Céline and Julie are free, in the sense of being uncommitted to any course of thought or action. Julie, at least, is free to the point of boredom—rather like Frédérique in *Spectre.* Then, following up a few casual remarks by Céline, they become involved in a mystery—they shift to a role rather like Colin's. But their involvement develops more quickly and dramatically. We see the events in the house start as a single idea, grow into a set of ideas, become organized into a pattern and solidify into a blueprint for action. The ambiguous status of the events—subjective or objective?—matches that of any system of ideas which the human mind develops to explain reality. From one point of view we *discover* a pattern which seems to exist in the outside world, but from another point of view we *create* it in our own mind. Rivette accordingly depicts Céline and Julie as neither discovering nor creating the pattern in the house but as "discrating" it—a filmic portmanteau which may represent another allusion to *Alice.*

Whatever its status, the pattern seems so real to Céline and Julie that they decide to act on it: they set out to rescue Madlyn. By giving their intervention the trappings of a stage performance, Rivette introduces a parallel with his earlier films which also underlines an important difference. For the theatrical enterprises in *Paris Belongs to Us, Mad Love* and *Spectre* go through interminable rehearsals but never reach a performance.

JR: *My protagonists are directors who don't want to succeed.*

Going into performance would foreclose on the directors' options, ending their freedom to modify and perfect their ideas. They hesitate to commit themselves to any one system of thought. But Céline and Julie do commit themselves. They act; they are successful.

Or are they?

JR: *I can only film losers. It's true, Céline and Julie are different. But you could say that, at the end, when they encounter the other boat, the sinister figures in it take them over.*

You could also say there are other interpretations. In committing themselves to their system of belief, Céline and Julie obtain a specific success (they rescue Madlyn). At the same time they expose the general weakness of the system, which loses touch with life and turns rigid (the deathly tableau in the boat). So they try to embark on another adventure of discovery/creation (the final scene in the park).

This adventure begins in the same place and in the same way as the first—which suggests that the pattern may indeed have "taken them over" and they can only repeat it. But their roles are now reversed—which suggests that they may be able to vary the pattern and give it new vitality. The ending remains open.

Not having formulated this interpretation when I interviewed Rivette, I couldn't ask for his comments. No doubt he would have said: If that's what you see, that's your film.

I hope other viewers find their *Céline and Julie* as enjoyable and provocative as I do mine. In any case, if the achievement of the two heroines remains in doubt, Rivette's does not: he has indeed varied the pattern of his previous films and infused it with new vitality.

NOTES

1. While noncommittal about the mysteries *in* his films, Rivette readily explained this title. "I chose 'Out' as the opposite of the vogue word 'in,' which had caught on in France and which I thought was silly. The action of the film is rather like a serial which could continue through several episodes, so I gave it the number 'One.' The reduced version make me think of a refraction of the original through a prism, hence 'Spectre' [French for 'spectrum']."

2. As a "Balzac expert" (Eric Rohmer) briefiy explains in the film, the *Histoire des Treize* consists of three novels, *Ferragus, The Duchess of Langeais* and *The Girl with the Golden Eyes.* The 13—men of high position in Paris society—remain for the most part behind the scenes, intervening only at one crucial moment in each novel. While these interventions all concern personal crises, Balzac suggests that the general aims of the 13 might be idealistic, political, or even criminal.

3. At the end of *Spectre,* Frédérique is seen rolling to and fro on her bed in a frenzy of boredom. Rivette tells

me that at the end of the original *Out One* she is killed —which may or may not suggest that her condition was terminal.

4. A notable technical achievement, since the film was shot in 16mm and blown up to 35.

5. Or, to put it another way, a straight cut in a "normal" film may imply as wild a transition as anything in Rivette. In Jacques Tourneur's *Experiment Perilous,* a typical romantic melodrama of the forties which I happened to see shortly after *Céline and Julie,* there is a sequence of flashbacks to accompany George Brent's reading of a diary. Then the phone rings, and he returns to his surroundings with a start. "I was living in that diary," he says. Filmically, this is exactly the same process by which Céline and Julie find themselves living in the house.

JEAN-LOUIS BAUDRY

Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus[1]

The debate over cinema and ideology let loose by the spectacular political events in France of May 1968 has transformed* Cahiers du Cinéma *and much of French film thought. Baudry's article, which appeared in 1970 in* Cinéthique *(No. 7-8; translated by permission) is characteristic of the attempts that have been made to criticize the ideological underpinnings of previous film thought, and to ground new work in a more self-conscious and self-critical set of assumptions. This questioning mode of thought turns from what it considers outmoded idealist of phenomenological doctrines toward the type of radical psychoanalytic thinking done by Lacan and toward an explicit sociopolitical analysis of the film-making and film-viewing process. Baudry's article covers a broad range, and at times his points are made in an allusive or even elusive way. Certain key terms and usages have been glossed in the notes. A few irreducible obscurities remain, which the French postal strike has prevented us from clarifying. The article is presented here as a central document in the recent evolution of French film thought.

At the end of *The Interpretation of Dreams,* when he seeks to integrate dream elaboration and its particular "economy" with the psyche as a whole, Freud assigns to the latter an optical model: "Let us simply imagine the instrument which serves in psychic productions as a sort of complicated microscope or camera." But Freud does not seem to hold strongly to this optical model, which, as Derrida has pointed out,[2] brings out the shortcoming in graphic representation in the area earlier covered by his work on dreams. Moreover, he will later abandon the optical model in favor of a writing instrument, the "mystic writing pad." Nonetheless this op-

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tical choice seems to prolong the tradition of Western science, whose birth coincides exactly with the development of the optical apparatus which will have as a consequence the decentering of the human universe, the end of geocentrism (Galileo).

But also, and paradoxically, the optical apparatus *camera obscura* will serve in the same period to elaborate in pictorial work a new mode of representation, *perspectiva artificalis.* This system, a recentering or at least a displacement of the center (which settles itself in the eye), will assure the setting up of the "subject"* as the active center and origin of meaning. One could doubtless question the privileged position which optical instruments seem to occupy on the line of intersection of science and ideological products. Does the technical nature of optical instruments, directly attached to scientific practice, serve to conceal not only their use in ideological products but also the ideological effects which they may provoke themselves? Their scientific base assures them a sort of neutrality and avoids their being questioned.

But already a question: if we are to take account of the imperfections of these instruments, their limitations, by what criteria may these be defined? If, for example, one can speak of a restricted depth of field as a limitation, doesn't this term itself depend upon a particular conception of reality for which such a limitation would not exist? Signifying productions are particularly relevant here, to the etxent that instrumentation plays a more and more important role in them and that their distribution is more and more extensive. It is strange (but is it so strange?) that emphasis has been placed almost exclusively on their influence, on the effects they have as finished products, their content, the field of what is signified, if you like; the technical bases on which these effects depend and the specific characteristics of these bases have been ignored, however. They have been protected by the inviolability that science is supposed to provide. We would like to establish for the cinema a few guidelines which will need to be completed, verified, improved.

We must first establish the place of the instrumental base in the set of operations which combine in the production of a film (we omit consideration of economic implications). Between "objective reality" and the camera, site of the inscription, and between the inscription and projection are situated certain operations, a *work*[3] which has as its result a finished product. To the extent that it is cut off from the raw material ("objective reality") this product does not allow us to see the transformation which has taken place. Equally distant from "objective reality" and the finished product, the camera occupies an intermediate position in the work process which leads from raw material to finished product. Though mutually dependent from other points of view, *découpage* [shot breakdown before shooting] and *montage* [editing, or final assembly] must be distinguished because of the essential difference in the signifying raw material on which each operates: language (scenario) or image. Between the two complementary stages of production a mutation of the signifying material takes place (neither translation nor transcription, obviously, for the image is not reducible to language) precisely where the camera is. Finally, between the finished product (possessing exchange value, a commodity) and its consumption (use value) is introduced another operation effected by a set of instruments. Projector and screen restore the light lost in the shooting process, and transform a succession of separate images into an unrolling which also restores, but according to another scansion, the movement seized from "objective reality."

Cinematographic specificity (what distinguishes cinema from other systems of signification) thus refers to a *work,* that is, to a process of transformation. The question becomes, is the work made evident, does consumption of the product bring about a "knowledge effect"

*The term "subject" is used by Baudry and others not to mean the topic of discourse, but rather the perceiving and ordering self, as in our term "subjective."—Ed.

[Althusser], or is the work concealed? If the latter, consumption of the product will obviously be accompanied by ideological surplus value.* On the practical level, this poses the question of by what procedures the work can in fact be made "readable" in its inscription. These procedures must of necessity call cinematographic technique into play. But, on the other hand, going back to the first question, one may ask, do the instruments (the technical base) produce specific ideological effects, and are these effects themselves determined by the dominant ideology? In which case, concealment of the technical base will also bring about a specific ideological effect. Its inscription, its manifestation as such, on the other hand, would produce a knowledge effect, as actualization of the work process, as denunciation of ideology, and as critique of idealism.

THE EYE OF THE SUBJECT

Central in the process of production[4] of the film, the camera—an assembly of optical and mechanical instrumentation—carries out a certain mode of inscription characterized by marking, by the recording of differences of light intensity (and of wavelength for color) and of differences between the frames. Fabricated on the model of the *camera obscura,* it permits the construction of an image analogous to the perspective projections developed during the Italian Renaissance. Of course the use of lenses of different focal lengths can alter the perspective of an image. But this much, at least, is clear in the history of cinema: it is the perspective construction of the Renaissance which originally served as model. The use of different lenses, when not dictated by technical considerations aimed at restoring the habitual perspective (such as shooting in limited or extended spaces which one wishes to expand or contract) does not destroy [traditional] perspective but rather makes it play a normative role. Departure from the norm, by means of a wide-angle or telephoto lens, is clearly marked in comparison with so-called "normal" perspective. We will see in any case that the resulting ideological effect is still defined in relation to the ideology inherent in perspective. The dimensions of the image itself, the ratio between height and width, seem clearly taken from an average drawn from Western easel painting.

The conception of space which conditions the construction of perspective in the Renaissance differs from that of the Greeks. For the latter, space is discontinuous and heterogeneous (for Aristotle, but also for Democritus, for whom space is the location of an infinity of indivisible atoms), whereas with Nicholas of Cusa will be born a conception of space formed by the relation between elements which are equally near and distant from the "source of all life." In addition, the pictorial construction of the Greeks corresponded to the organization of their stage, based on a multiplicity of points of view, whereas the painting of the Renaissance will elaborate a centered space. ("Painting is nothing but the intersection of the visual pyramid following a given distance, a fixed center, and a certain lighting."—Alberti.) The center of this space coincides with the eye which Jean Pellerin Viator will so justly call the "subject." ("The principal point in perspective should be placed at eye level: this point is called fixed or subject."[5]) Monocular vision, which as Pleynet points out, is what the camera has, calls forth a sort of play of "reflection." Based on the principle of a fixed point by reference to which the visualized objects are organized, it specifies in return the position of the "subject,"[6] the very spot it must necessarily occupy.

In focusing it, the optical construct appears to be truly the projection-reflection of a "virtual image" whose hallucinatory reality it creates. It lays out the space of an ideal vision and in this way assures the necessity of a transcendence—metaphorically (by the unknown to which it appeals—here we must recall the structural place occupied by the vanishing point) and metonymically (by the displacement that it

*Althusser opposes ideology to knowledge or science. Ideology operates by obfuscating the means by which it is produced. Thus an increase in ideological value is an increase in mystification.—Ed.

seems to carry out: a subject is both "in place of" and "a part for the whole"). Contrary to Chinese and Japanese painting, Western easel painting, presenting as it does a motionless and continuous whole, elaborates a total vision which corresponds to the idealist conception of the fullness and homogeneity of "being,"[7] and is, so to speak, representative of this conception. In this sense it contributes in a singularly emphatic way to the ideological function of art, which is to provide the tangible representation of metaphysics. The principle of transcendence which conditions and is conditioned by the perspective construction represented in painting and in the photographic image which copies from it seems to inspire all the idealist paeans to which the cinema has given rise [such as we find in Cohen-Séat or Bazin].[8]

PROJECTION: THE DIFFERENCE NEGATED

Nevertheless, whatever the effects proper to optics generally, the movie camera differs from still photography by registering through its mechanical instrumentation a series of images. It might thus seem to counter the unifying and "substantializing" character of the single-perspective image, taking what would seem like instants of time or slices from "reality" (but always a reality already worked upon, elaborated, selected). This might permit the supposition, especially because the camera moves, of a multiplicity of points of view which would neutralize the fixed position of the eye-subject and even nullify it. But here we must turn to the relation between the succession of images inscribed by the camera and their projection, bypassing momentarily the place occupied by montage, which plays a decisive role in the strategy of the ideology produced.

The projection operation (projector and screen) restore continuity of movement and the temporal dimension to the sequence of static images. The relation between the individual frames and the projection would resemble the relation between points and a curve in geometry. But it is precisely this relation and the restoration of continuity to discontinuous elements which poses a problem. The meaning effect produced does not depend only on the content of the images but also on the material procedures by which an illusion of continuity, dependent on the persistence of vision, is restored from discontinuous elements. These separate frames have between them differences that are indispensible for the creation of an illusion of continuity, of a continuous passage (movement, time). But only on one condition can these differences create this illusion: they must be effaced as differences.[9]

Thus on the technical level the question becomes one of the adoption of a very small difference between images, such that each image, in consequence of an organic factor [presumably persistence of vision] is rendered incapable of being seen as such. In this sense we could say that film—and perhaps in this respect it is exemplary—lives on the denial of difference: the difference is necessary for it to live, but it lives on its negation. This is indeed the paradox that emerges if we look directly at a strip of processed film: adjacent images are almost exactly repeated, their divergence being verifiable only by comparison of images at a sufficient distance from each other. We should remember, moreover, the disturbing effects which result during a projection from breakdowns in the recreation of movement, when the spectator is brought abruptly back to discontinuity—that is, to the body, to the technical apparatus which he had *forgotten.*

We might not be far from seeing what is in play on this material basis, if we recall that the "language" of the unconscious, as it is found in dreams, slips of the tongue, or hysterical symptoms, manifests itself as continuity destroyed, broken, and as the unexpected surging forth of a marked difference. Couldn't we thus say that cinema reconstructs and forms the mechanical model (with the simplifications that this can entail) of a system of writing[10] constituted by a material base and a counter-system (ideology, idealism) which uses this system while also concealing it? On the one hand, the optical apparatus and the film permit the marking of dif-

ference (but the marking is already negated, we have seen, in the constitution of the perspective image with its mirror effect).[11] On the other hand, the mechanical apparatus both selects the minimal difference and represses it in projection, so that meaning can be constituted: it is at once direction, continuity, movement. The projection mechanism allows the differential elements (the discontinuity inscribed by the camera) to be suppressed, bringing only the relation into play. The individual images as such disappear so that movement and continuity can appear. But the movement and continuity are the visible expression (one might even say the projection) of their relations, derived from the tiny discontinuities between the images. Thus one may assume that what was already at work as the originating basis of the perspective image, namely the eye, the "subject," is put forth, liberated (in the sense that a chemical reaction liberates a substance) by the operation which transforms successive, discrete images (as isolated images they have, strictly speaking, no meaning, or at least no unity of meaning) into continuity, movement, meaning; with continuity restored both meaning and consciousness are restored.[12]

THE TRANSCENDENTAL SUBJECT

Meaning and consciousness, to be sure: at this point we must return to the camera. Its mechanical nature not only permits the shooting of differential images as rapidly as desired but also destines it to change position, to move. Film history shows that as a result of the combined inertia of painting, theater, and photography, it took a certain time to notice the inherent mobility of the cinematic mechanism. The ability to reconstitute movement is after all only a partial, elementary aspect of a more general capability. To seize movement is to become movement, to follow a trajectory is to become trajectory, to choose a direction is to have the possibility of choosing one, to determine a meaning is to give oneself a meaning. In this way the eye-subject, the invisible base of artificial perspective (which in fact only represents a larger effort to produce an ordering, regulated transcendence) becomes absorbed in, "elevated" to a vaster function, proportional to the movement which it can perform.

And if the eye which moves is no longer fettered by a body, by the laws of matter and time, if there are no more assignable limits to its displacement—conditions fulfilled by the possibilities of shooting and of film—the world will not only be constituted by this eye but for it.[13] The movability of the camera seems to fulfill the most favorable conditions for the manifestation of the "transcendental subject." There is both fantasmatization of an objective reality (images, sounds, colors) and of an objective reality which, limiting its powers of constraint, seems equally to augment the possibilities or the power of the subject.[14] As it is said of consciousness—and in point of fact we are concerned with nothing less—the image will always be image *of* something; it must result from a deliberate act of consciousness [*visée intentionelle*]. "The word intentionality signifies nothing other than this peculiarity that consciousness has of being consciousness *of* something, of carrying in its quality of *ego* its *cogitatum* within itself."[15] In such a definition could perhaps be found the status of the cinematographic image, or rather of its operation, the mode of working which it carries out. For it to be an image of something, it has to constitute this something as meaning. The image seems to reflect the world but solely in the naive inversion of a founding hierarchy: "The domain of natural existence thus has only an authority of the second order, and always presupposes the domain of the transcendental."[16]

The world is no longer only an "open and unbounded horizon." Limited by the framing, lined up, put at the proper distance, the world offers up an object endowed with meaning, an intentional object, implied by and implying the action of the "subject" which sights it. At the same time that the world's transfer as image seems to accomplish this phenomenological reduction, this putting into parentheses of its real existence (a suspension necessary, we will see, to the formation of the impression of reality)

provides a basis for the apodicity[17] of the ego. The multiplicity of aspects of the object in view refers to a synthesizing operation, to the unity of this constituting subject: Husserl speaks of " 'aspects,' sometimes of 'proximity,' sometimes of 'distance,' in variable modes of 'here' and 'there,' opposed to an absolute 'here' (which is located—for me—in 'my own body' which appears to me at the same time), the consciousness of which, though it remains *unperceived,* always accompanies them. [We will see moreover what happens with the body in the *mise-en-scène* of projection.—J. L. B.] Each 'aspect' which the mind grasps is revealed in turn as a unity synthesized from a multiplicity of corresponding modes of presentation. The nearby object may present itself as the same, but under one or another 'aspect.' There may be variation of visual perspective, but also of 'tactile,' 'acoustic' phenomena, or of other 'modes of presentation'[18] as we can observe in directing our attention in the proper direction."[19]

For Husserl, "the original operation [of intentional analysis] is to *unmask the potentialities implied* in present states of consciousness. And it is by this that will be carried out, from the noematic point of view, the eventual *explication, definition,* and *elucidation* of what is meant by consciousness, that is, its *objective meaning.*"[20] And again in the *Cartesian Meditations:* "A second type of polarization now presents itself to us, another type of synthesis which embraces the particular multiplicities of *cogitationes,* which embraces them all and in a special manner, namely as *cogitationes* of an identical self which, *active* or *passive,* lives in all the lived states of consciousness and which, through them, relates to all objects."[21]

Thus is articulated the relation between the continuity necessary to the constitution of meaning and the "subject" which constitutes this meaning: continuity is an attribute of the subject. It supposes the subject and it circumscribes his place. It appears in the cinema in the two complementary aspects of a "formal" continuity established through a system of negated differences and narrative continuity in the filmic space. The latter, in any case, could not have been conquered without exercising violence against the instrumental base, as can be discovered from most of the texts by film-makers and critics: the discontinuity that had been effaced at the level of the image could have reappeared on the narrative level, giving rise to effects of rupture disturbing to the spectator (to a *place* which ideology must both conquer and, in the degree that it already dominates it, must also satisfy: fill). "What is important in a film is the feeling of continuity which joins shots and sequences while maintaining unity and cohesion of movements. This continuity was one of the most difficult things to obtain."[22] Pudovkin defined montage as "the art of assembling pieces of film, shot separately, in such a way as to give the spectator the impression of continuous movement." The search for such narrative continuity, so difficult to obtain from the material base, can only be explained by an essential ideological stake projected in this point: it is a question of preserving at any cost the synthetic unity of the locus where meaning originates [the subject]—the constituting transcendental function to which narrative continuity points back as its natural secretion.[23]

THE SCREEN-MIRROR: SPECULARIZATION AND DOUBLE IDENTIFICATION

But another supplementary operation (made possible by a special technical arrangement) must be added in order that the mechanism thus described can play its role effectively as an ideological machine, so that not only the reworked "objective reality" but also the specific type of identification we have described can be represented.

No doubt the darkened room and the screen bordered with black like a letter of condolences already present privileged conditions of effectiveness—no exchange, no circulation, no communication with any outside. Projection and reflection take place in a closed space and those who remain there, whether they know it or not (but they do not), find themselves chained, captured, or captivated. (What might one say of

the function of the head in this captivation: it suffices to recall that for Bataille materialism makes itself headless—like a wound that bleeds and thus transfuses.) And the mirror, as a reflecting surface, is framed, limited, circumscribed. *An infinite mirror would no longer be a mirror.* The paradoxical nature of the cinematic mirror-screen is without doubt that it reflects *images* but not *"reality";* the word reflect, being transitive,* leaves this ambiguity unresolved. In any case this "reality" comes from behind the spectator's head and if he looked at it directly he would see nothing except the moving beams from an already veiled light source.

The arrangement of the different elements—projector, darkened hall, screen—in addition from reproducing in a striking way the *mise-en-scène* of Plato's cave (prototypical set for all transcendence and the topological model of idealism[24]) reconstructs the situation necessary to the release of the "mirror stage" discovered by Lacan. This psychological phase, which occurs between six and eighteen months of age, generates *via* the mirror image of a unified body the constitution or at least the first sketches of the "I" as an imaginary function. "It is to this unreachable image in the mirror that the specular image gives its garments."[25] But for this imaginary constitution of the self to be possible, there must be—Lacan strongly emphasizes this point—two complementary conditions: immature powers of mobility and a precocious maturation of visual organization (apparent in the first few days of life). If one considers that these two conditions are repeated during cinematographic projection—suspension of mobility and predominance of the visual function—perhaps one could suppose that this is more than a simple analogy. And possibly this very point explains the "impression of reality" so often invoked in connection with the cinema for which the various explanations proposed seem only to skirt the real problem. In order for this impression to be produced, it would be necessary that the conditions of a formative scene be reproduced. This scene would be repeated and reenacted in such a manner that the imaginary order (activated by a specularization which takes place, everything considered, in reality) fulfills its particular function of occultation or of filling the gap, the split, of the subject on the order of the signifier.[26]

On the other hand, it is to the extent that the child can sustain the look of another in the presence of a third party that he can find the assurance of an identification with the image of his own body. From the very fact that during the mirror stage is established a dual relationship, it constitutes, in conjunction with the formation of the self in the imaginary order, the nexus of secondary identification.[27] The origin of the self, as discovered by Lacan, in pertaining to the imaginary order effectively subverts the "optical machinery" of idealism which the projection room scrupulously reproduces.[28] But it is not as specifically "imaginary," nor as a reproduction of its first configuration, that the self finds a "place" in the cinema. This occurs, rather, as a sort of proof or verification of that function, a solidification through repetition.

The "reality" mimed by the cinema is thus first of all that of a "self." But, because the reflected image is not that of the body itself but that of a world already given as meaning, one can distinguish two levels of identification. The first, attached to the image itself, derives from the character portrayed as a center of secondary identifications, carrying an identity which constantly must be seized and reestablished. The second level permits the appearance of the first and places it "in action"—this is the transcendental subject whose place is taken by the camera which constitutes and rules the objects in this "world." Thus the spectator identifies less with what is represented, the spectacle itself, than with what stages the spectacle, makes it seen, obliging him to see what it sees; this is exactly the function taken over by the camera as a sort of relay.[29] Just as the mirror assembles the fragmented body in a sort of imaginary integration of the self, the transcendental self unites the discontinuous fragments of phenom-

*It is always a reflection *of* something.—TR.

ena, of lived experience, into unifying meaning. Through it each fragment assumes meaning by being integrated into an "organic" unity. Between the imaginary gathering of the fragmented body into a unity and the transcendentality of the self, giver of unifying meaning, the current is indefinitely reversible.

The ideological mechanism at work in the cinema seems thus to be concentrated in the relationship between the camera and the subject. The question is whether the former will permit the latter to constitute and seize itself in a particular mode of specular reflection. Ultimately, the forms of narrative adopted, the "contents" of the image, are of little importance so long as an identification remains possible.[30] What emerges here (in outline) is the specific function fulfilled by the cinema as support and instrument of ideology. It constitutes the "subject" by the illusory delimitation of a central location—whether this be that of a god or of any other substitute. It is an apparatus destined to obtain a precise ideological effect, necessary to the dominant ideology: creating a fantasmatization of the subject, it collaborates with a marked efficacity in the maintenance of idealism.

Thus the cinema assumes the role played throughout Western history by various artistic formations. The ideology of representation (as a principal axis orienting the notion of aesthetic "creation") and specularization (which organizes the *mise-en-scène* required to constitute the transcendental function) form a singularly coherent system in the cinema. Everything happens as if, the subject himself being unable—and for a reason—to account for his own situation, it was necessary to substitute secondary organs, grafted on to replace his own defective ones, instruments or ideological formations capable of filling his function as subject. In fact, this substitution is only possible on the condition that the instrumentation itself be hidden or repressed. Thus disturbing cinematic elements—similar, precisely, to those elements indicating the return of the repressed—signify without fail the arrival of the instrument "in flesh and blood," as in Vertov's *Man With a Movie Camera*. Both specular tranquillity and the assurance of one's own identity collapse simultaneously with the revealing of the mechanism, that is of the inscription of the film-work.

The cinema can thus appear as a sort of psychic apparatus of substitution, corresponding to the model defined by the dominant ideology. The system of repression (primarily economic) has as its goal the prevention of deviations and of the active exposure of this "model."[31] Analogously one could say that its "unconscious" is not recognized (we speak of the apparatus and not of the content of films, which have used the unconscious in ways we know all too well). To this unconscious would be attached the mode of production of film, the process of "work" in its multiple determinations, among which must be numbered those depending on instrumentation. This is why reflections on the basic apparatus ought to be possible to integrate into a general theory of the ideology of cinema.

[TRANSLATED BY ALAN WILLIAMS]

NOTES

1. Translated from *Cinéthique*, No. 7/8 (1970), pp. 1–8.
2. Cf. on this subject Derrida's work "La Scène de l'écriture" in *L'Ecriture et la Différence* (Paris: Le Seuil).
3. [*Travail*, the process—implying not only "work" in the ordinary sense but as in Freud's usage: the dream-*work*.—TR.]
4. Obviously we are not speaking here of investment of capital in the process.
5. Cf. L. Brion Guerry, *Jean Pellerin Viator* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1962).
6. We understand the term "subject" here in its function as vehicle and place of intersection of ideological implications which we are attempting progressively to make clear, and not as the structural function which analytic discourse attempts to locate. It would rather take partially the place of the ego, of whose deviations little is known in the analytic field.
7. The perspective "frame" which will have such an influence on cinematographic shooting has as its role to intensify, to increase the effect of the spectacle, which no divergence may be allowed to split.
8. See Cohen-Séat, *Essai sur les principes d'une philosophie du cinéma* (Paris: Corti) and Bazin, *What Is Cinema?* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press).—TR.
9. "We know that the spectator finds it impossible to notice that the images which succeed one another before

his eyes were assembled end-to-end, because the projection of film on the screen offers an impression of continuity although the images which compose it are, in reality, distinct, and are differentiated moreover by variations in space and time.

"In a film, there can be hundreds, even thousands of cuts and intervals. But if it is shown for specialists who know the art, the spectacle will not be divulged as such. Only an error or lack of competence will permit them to seize, and this is a disagreeable sensation, the changes of time and place of action." (Pudovkin, "Le Montage" in *Cinéma d'aujourd'hui et de demain*, [Moscow, 1956].)

10. [*Écriture*, in the French, meaning "writing" but also "schematization" at any given level of material or expression.—TR.]

11. [Specular: a notion used by Althusser and above all by Lacan; the word refers to the "mirror" effect which by reflection (specularization) constitutes the object reflected to the viewer and for him. The body is the most important and the first of these objects.—TR.]

12. It is thus first at the level of the apparatus that the cinema functions as a language: inscription of discontinuous elements whose effacement in the relationship instituted among them produces meaning.

13. "In the cinema I am simultaneously in this action and *outside* of it, in this space and out of this space. Having the power of ubiquity, I am everywhere and nowhere." (Jean Mitry, *Esthetique et Psychologie du Cinéma* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965), p. 179.

14. The cinema manifests in a hallucinatory manner the belief in the omnipotence of thought, described by Freud, which plays so important a role in neurotic defense mechanisms.

15. Husserl, *Les Méditations Cartesiennes* (Paris: Vrin, 1953), p. 28.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

17. [Apodicity, in phenomenological terminology, indicates something of an ultimately irrefutable nature. See Husserl, *op.cit.*—TR.]

18. On this point it is true that the camera is revealed as incomplete. But this is only a technical imperfection which, since the birth of cinema, has already in large measure been remedied.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 34, emphasis added.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

22. Mitry, *op.cit.*, p. 157.

23. The lens, the "objective," is of course only a particular location of the "subjective." Marked by the idealist opposition interior/exterior, topologically situated at the point of meeting of the two, it corresponds, one could say, to the empirical organ of the subjective, to the opening, the fault in the organs of meaning, by which the exterior world may penetrate the interior and assume meaning. "It is the interior which commands," says Bresson. "I know this may seem paradoxical in an art which is all exterior." Also the use of different lenses is already conditioned by camera movement as implication and trajectory of meaning, by this transcendental function which we are attempting to define: it is the possibility of choosing a field as accentuation or modification of the *visée intentionelle*.

No doubt this transcendental function fits in without difficulty the field of psychology. This, moreover, is insisted upon by Husserl himself, who indicates that Brentano's discovery, intentionality, "permits one truly to distinguish the method of a descriptive science of consciousness, as much philosophical and transcendental as psychological."

24. The arrangement of the cave, except that in the cinema it is already doubled in a sort of enclosure in which the camera, the darkened chamber, is enclosed in another darkened chamber, the projection hall.

25. Lacan, *Ecrits* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1966). See in particular "Le Stade du miroir comme formateur de la fonction du je."

26. We see that what has been defined as impression of reality refers less to the "reality" than to the apparatus which, although being of an hallucinatory order, nonetheless founds this possibility. Reality will never appear except as relative to the images which reflect it, in some way inaugurated by a reflection anterior to itself.

27. We refer here to what Lacan says of identifications in liaison with the structure determined by an optical instrument (the mirror), as they are constituted, in the prevailing figuration of the ego, as lines of resistance to the advance of the analytic work.

28. "That the ego be 'in the right' must be avowed, from experience, to be a function of misunderstanding." (Lacan, *op. cit.*, p. 637.)

29. "That it sustains itself as 'subject' means that language permits it to consider itself as the stagehand or even the director of all the imaginary capturings of which it would otherwise only be the living marionette." (*Ibid.*, p. 637.)

30. It is on this point and in function of the elements which we are trying to put in place that a discussion of editing could be opened. We will at a later date attempt to make some remarks on this subject.

31. *Mediterranée*, by J.-D. Pollet and Phillipe Sollers (1963), which dismantles with exemplary efficiency the "transcendental specularization" which we have attempted to delineate, gives a manifest proof of this point. The film was never able to overcome the economic blockade.

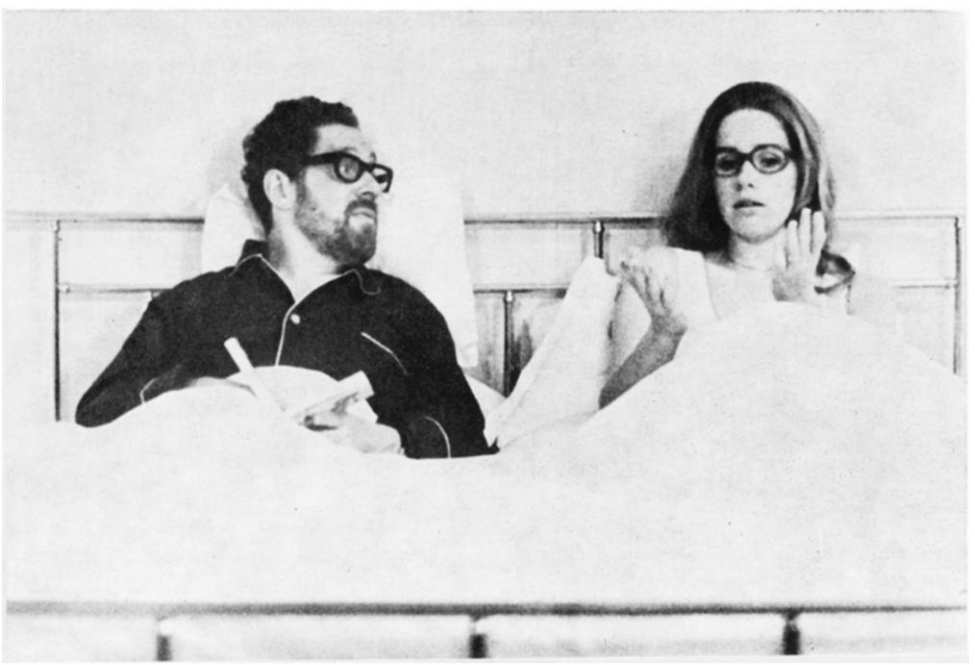
Reviews

SCENES FROM A MARRIAGE

Written and directed by Ingmar Bergman. Photography: Sven Nykvist. Cinema V.

Scenes from a Marriage is emotional dynamite. That may not be surprising for an Ingmar Bergman movie, but in some important ways this film moves in a new direction. It reaches new depths of psychological realism, and at the same time is actually hopeful. Normally when I see a Bergman film, I am exhilarated by his artistic brilliance and overwhelmed by his insights into human suffering, but I leave the theater feeling emotionally drained and depressed—especially after films like *The Silence, Shame, Hour of the Wolf,* and *Cries and Whispers.* I may feel less isolated in my pain, but there are few signs of relief; all humans seem doomed to experience unrelieved suffering. But *Scenes from a Marriage* made me feel more hopeful about the human condition—more willing to accept the contradictions in the desires and actions of myself and others, and more willing to believe in the possibilities of growth and change, particularly for women.

The film presents Marianne (Liv Ullmann) and John (Erland Josephson), a middle-class married couple, in six scenes spanning a ten-year period. In the first scene, called "Innocence and Panic," they are interviewed for a woman's magazine as the perfect couple. They live in a comfortable home with two lovely daughters and both have interesting careers; he is a psychology professor and she a divorce lawyer. Yet he seems arrogant and vain while she is self-effacing and unconfident — a reflection of traditional sex roles. Nevertheless, they get along harmoniously, particularly in contrast to their friends Peter (Jan Mahnsjo) and Katarina (Bibi Andersson), who have an ugly quarrel and are on the verge of a messy divorce. In the second scene, entitled "The Art of Sweeping under the Rug," Marianne and Johan begin to be aware of the dangers inherent in their conventionality. She tries to rebel against her mother's control over their lives and is frightened by a middle-aged client who rejects a safe, loveless marriage like her own. Johan is told by an old friend and colleague (Gunnel Lindblom) that his poetry is disappointingly mediocre, and we suspect that he may be having an affair. Hesitantly, Marianne and Johan begin to admit that they have sexual problems but don't do anything about



"Open-ended, slow-paced, and multi-climaxed": SCENES FROM A MARRIAGE.

solving them. In the third scene ("Paula"), Johan tells Marianne that he has fallen in love with another woman and intends to leave. Shocked and humiliated, Marianne begs him to stay. Although he feels guilty, he leaves anyway. Scene four ("The Vale of Tears") takes place a year later when Johan comes to visit Marianne and spends the night. Things have begun to go wrong for Johan, particularly in his relationship with Paula. Although Marianne is beginning to grow and to have new lovers, she is still in love with Johan and wants things to be as they were. Scene five ("The Illiterates") is the most explosive and the most contradictory. They meet in Johan's office to sign the divorce papers. The fact that Marianne no longer loves Johan enables her to seduce him and to be more sexually aggressive than she has ever been. Immediately after making love, they vent their anger and rage. Johan tells her how much he loathed her while they were married and then confesses that he really didn't want the divorce. They have a violent bloody brawl, and then quietly sign the papers. The final scene, which takes place years later, is called "In the Middle of the Night in a Dark House Somewhere in the World." Both are remarried to other persons, but they spend a weekend together in a friend's cottage. In contrast to the first scene, Johan has shrunk and become more humble while Marianne has expanded and discovered her strength. Yet they are both independent human beings who have grown tremendously. They speak honestly and despite all fears, doubts, and confusion, they find they love each other.

The themes and situations are not new for Bergman. We find the same courageous exploration of what lies behind the conventional masks and social personae, the same intensity of psychological encounters, the sudden outbursts of violence and rage, the same range of volatile emotions and shifting power dynamics that we have seen in films like *The Ritual, Persona,* and *Cries and Whispers*. Bergman's work has always, of course, had an extraordinary degree of psychological realism, but between *The Silence* and *Cries and Whispers* it has been expressed in a highly symbolic framework. In these films ordinary reality subtly merges into dream and fantasy, characters function as fragments of a single personality, editing style and visual imagery call attention to the film-making process, breaking the dramatic illusion. These characteristics are not present in *Scenes from a Marriage.* Rather, the mode is an expanded psychological realism, which consistently strives for and achieves an extraordinary verisimilitude. The acting performances of Ullmann and Josephson are so convincing, the dialogue so realistic, the conception of the relationship so subtle, that it is difficult to believe we are watching a theatrical illusion.

The action is confined almost entirely to simple indoor settings—comfortable living and dining rooms, modern bedrooms and bathrooms, sunny breakfast rooms and hallways, sparsely furnished offices and labs, small cottages. Unlike the interior locations in *The Ritual* and *Cries and Whispers,* these environments are ordinary and realistic rather than theatrical or symbolic. Yet the rooms inhabited by Marianne and Johan express a great deal about their marriage. Despite the warmth of the earth colors and wood panelling that gloss its surface, their house is dominated by a routine symmetry in the arrangement of chairs, couches, lamps, tables, and flower pots, which is very restrictive. In the first scene when they are entertaining their friends for dinner, Marianne remarks: "Both Johan and I like to tidy up." It is precisely this overly patterned life which Johan attacks when he runs off with Paula. In the final scene, when Marianne and Johan come together after they have learned to accept the confusion in their lives, they reject their own former country house, which is still dominated by the old doublet patterns, and go instead to a friend's cottage, which is terribly cluttered. In the act of sorting out the confusion and "tidying up" together, Marianne is strongly moved by Johan and discovers how much she loves him. Throughout the film there are very few exterior scenes, which helps to make their relationship seem more "hermetically sealed." The few street scenes that do

occur retain the sense of isolation by showing no people other than Johan and Marianne. Yet, whenever the camera goes outside, we experience a sense of freedom. This effect is most powerful in the third scene when Johan leaves Marianne. The scene opens with a long-shot of Johan driving to the country house at night, passing a lone dwelling; he comes with the intention of running away to Paris. After a heavy encounter, which is played out within the narrow confines of the small rooms, Johan finally breaks free from Marianne's desperate clinging and the camera follows him outside and watches him drive off in the morning as the wind blows through the trees. Then Bergman intercuts between huge close-ups of Marianne's face, taking over the whole screen as it slowly registers the painful reality of the situation, and long-shots of Johan's car speeding away from the claustrophobic house. The final scene, in which they have both gained considerable freedom, opens with an exterior overhead shot of a city street. A car drives into the frame, parks, Marianne gets out, runs across the street, as wind blows through the trees. Johan drives into the frame, parks, gets out; they kiss behind a tree, then run to his car and drive off to their rendevous at the same house John previously abandoned. But this time we are more aware of the surroundings —especially the trees and the sea. During the night, we see briefly a moody dark landscape of the isolated cottage in the misty air as a foghorn wails in the distance. This jarring image introduces a different mode of reality (which is familiar in other Bergman films such as *Persona, Shame,* and *The Passion of Anna*) and prepares us for the next shot, where Marianne awakens from a terrifying nightmare, in which she has lost her hands and is sinking in soft sand, unable to reach Johan and the children. The ordinary reality has temporarily receded, and Marianne, who is so proud of her ability to cope realistically in the world, is momentarily out of control.

As in earlier films, Bergman relies heavily on the facial close-up to explore the feelings of his characters, but this technique is handled less self-consciously than usual. Characteristically, a scene starts with a symmetrical medium two-shot. As the conversation becomes more intense and the characters begin to drop their social masks, the camera moves in for a close-up of the individual. The close-ups grow larger as the emotions become more heated. For example, in the scene where Marianne is interviewing the woman who wants a divorce, we first see the two women equally balanced in the frame, then intercut between a close-up of each. As the woman describes her loss of sensation, Marianne's face grows larger, enabling us to recognize the terror in her expression. Throughout the film the camera is usually static. When it does move, it has tremendous impact, particularly in the violent struggle between Marianne and John. Similarly, the characters are also frequently static; when they do move, their gestures frequently help to express their feelings. Marianne paces in anger when she describes what she endured in their marriage and paces in fear when she tells Johan her dream. Although the film's style is highly controlled, it is almost invisible; it does not call attention to itself. The only sign of artificiality is the division into six scenes, which is carried over from the original television format (six 50 - minute segments, which have been cut down for theatrical distribution to two hours and 48 minutes); yet these divisions function like chapter headings in a psychological novel.

Scenes from a Marriage belongs to a new genre of expanded psychological realism—the four- or five-hour film exploring complex modern relationships, focusing on intense encounters between two or three people, and achieving a depth of characterization previously thought possible only in the novel. This genre also includes Jacques Rivette's *L'Amour Fou (Mad Love),* which presents a marriage between a theatrical director who is working on a production of a classical play and his actress wife who quits his play and retreats into madness, temporarily drawing him into her schizophrenic world of playful destruction. Another example is Jean Eustache's *The Mother and the Whore,* which examines a complex triangle involving a

childish, charming, exploitive young man who is gripped by the fear of death; the economically independent woman he lives with in a modern relationship of limited commitment; and the dependent, alcoholic, promiscuous nurse he takes up with, who longs to have his baby and whom he ultimately agrees to marry. The four-hour length of these two films may be essential to achieve the unusual depth of characterization and to reveal the many contradictory sides of these unconventional relationships, but it has seriously limited their commercial distribution. The long version of *Scenes from a Marriage* probably would have done better because of Bergman's stature, but he didn't take the chance and decided to cut it for the theaters. Although more conventional in length, some films by John Cassavetes (particularly *Faces* and *Husbands*) share the same focus and are related to this genre. Like Bergman, Cassavetes relies on the intense psychological encounter between two individuals as a recurring structural element that works against the more conventional narrative line and that highlights the acting rather than the visuals or editing rhythm. Like both Bergman and Eustache, Cassavetes is a writer-director who is able to draw upon his own emotional experience, using some of his intimate friends both as models for his characters in the writing stage and as actors in the final production. This intimate rapport enables all three film-makers to tap the inner resources of their actors, allowing them a great deal of freedom in the roles while still exercising considerable control over their performance. The result in all three cases is an extraordinary emotional authenticity. When watching a Cassavetes movie, we are aware that Gina Rowlands is his wife, and Peter Falk and Ben Gazarra his buddies. When we see *Scenes from a Marriage,* we can't forget that Liv Ullmann and Bergman used to be lovers. Undoubtedly, in making the film, they both drew heavily from this shared experience.

In some ways, *Scenes from a Marriage,* and indeed the entire genre of expanded psychological realism, is related to the soap opera. The basic materials and subject matter are the same, though they are handled very differently. The connection was very apparent in *The Lie,* a teleplay written by Bergman, but directed and produced by others in the United States, Canada, and England. Despite the fact that the American production used very talented actors (the husband and wife were played by George Segal and Shirley Knight), the performances lacked the authenticity we are accustomed to seeing in Bergman movies. The timing was off and the visuals mundane. As a result, *The Lie* looked more like conventional soap opera than a Bergman film. In *Scenes from a Marriage* Bergman retains this same subject matter and adopts the soap opera's serial structure, yet without losing his usual depth and power. He transforms the sentimental popular form and proves it is capable of becoming high art. Thus, the growth of his characters and their relationship is analogous to the growth of the genre or form in which they are presented.

Soap opera appeals predominantly to a female audience, particularly frustrated housewives. A couple of years ago at a meeting of the Modern Language Association, Leslie Fiedler argued that the soap opera was a revolutionary form in disguise, for it enabled oppressed females to watch women triumphing over men. Like the sentimental novel, it presents a world in which the capacity to feel is at the top of the moral hierarchy, and our culture has traditionally assigned this virtue to women. The soap opera's appeal to women might also rely partially on its structure. Open-ended, slow paced, and multi-climaxed, it is in tune with patterns of female sexuality, particularly when contrasted to the "well-made" play, with its emphasis on a single climax, and to the fast-paced picaresque adventure story. The psychological and sentimental novel, which also appeal strongly to a female audience, grew out of Samuel Richardson's eighteenth-century epistolary novels, *Pamela* and *Clarissa,* which focus on heroines whose exceptional virtue and strength of personality enable them to break social convention. In these works, the action is presented in a series of long, highly detailed, slow-paced letters which also

have multiple climaxes. The reader is concerned less with discovering what actually happens than in learning how the heroine feels about it from moment to moment, and these fluid feelings can only be captured in the personal letter, which is the prime vehicle for honest and sincere expression.

In *Scenes from a Marriage,* as in the soap opera and the sentimental novel, the woman expands her power. In the opening interview, when Johan is asked to describe himself in a few words, he rambles on confidently:

> It might sound conceited if I described myself as extremely intelligent, successful, youthful, well-balanced, and sexy. A man with a world conscience, cultivated, well-read, popular, and a good mixer. Let me see what else can I think of . . . friendly. Friendly in a nice way even to people who are worse off. I like sports. I'm a good family man. A good son. I have no debts and I pay my taxes. I respect our government, whatever it does, and I love our royal family. I've left the state church. Is this enough or do you want more details? I'm a splendid lover. Aren't I, Marianne?

Besides the list of glowing adjectives, we learn that his self-image is largely based on social roles and attitudes and that he requires validation from Marianne only in the area of sex. Huddling beside her husband on the couch, making herself look as small as possible, Marianne is asked the same question and replies: "Hmm, what can I say . . . I'm married to Johan and have two daughters." The rest of the film is spent revising these answers. In scene four, when Johan visits Marianne a year after their separation, they sit on the same couch and she tries to answer the same question by reading from a journal which her therapist has encouraged her to keep. She reveals an awareness that she has played the role of the passive female dictated by the culture, that she has learned to dissemble and to deny her own sexuality, that she has no idea who she is or what she is capable of. As we listen to this moving speech, we see a series of still photographs of Liv Ullmann. A blonde child is singled out from a class picture. We see her again naked, then mischievous as she holds a cat by the tail. We watch this spirit disappear in awkward adolescence, and observe the young woman arranged in a series of stilted poses, trained to act out a variety of roles, culminating in the bridal portrait. We try to figure out what, if anything, these frozen images can tell us about Marianne's inner self. Perhaps we remember her desperate examination of Paula's photograph when she was trying to accept the reality of the other woman's existence but could comment only on her "lovely breasts" and "dyed hair." Marianne is eager to hear Johan's response to these first signs of honest self-exploration, but he has fallen asleep. As her consciousness begins to awaken, his slips into unconsciousness. Later, after they have made love and he is about to leave, she reads him a letter from Paula, which redefines Johan as an insecure man full of self-doubt. In the next scene in Johan's office, the situation is reversed. This time Marianne is the seductive visitor who yawns as Johan delivers an identity speech; he is the one who offers the brandy and wants to return to the safety of their marriage. Yet his clinging is a lot more violent than Marianne's has been. In the final scene, Johan comments directly on the reversal: "We've discovered ourselves. . . . One perceives his smallness. The other her greatness." And then as he invites her to bed, he jokingly asks, "Can you possibly, I say *possibly,* ration your boundless female strength?" The development of Marianne's sexuality is reinforced by Bergman's choice of the soap opera structure. The original five-hour version, which focuses on six scenes from a period of ten years, already presumes time gaps and the omission of other significant encounters. That is one reason why the cutting of two hours does not really ruin the movie. Of course, I would love to see the whole five hours and hope that at some time this will be possible; but even that version is partial. In the theatrical version, Bergman creates a two-part structure, each part comprised of three scenes. In contrast to the original, he omits all characters other than Johan and Marianne from the last three scenes. This narrowing of focus and the balanced two-part

structure may intensify the claustrophobic nature of the couple's relationship, yet part two presents a reversal of many scenes from part one and thereby becomes a vehicle for expressing growth. Unlike the conventional soap-opera structure, the movement is not merely linear.

The primary distinction between *Scenes from a Marriage* and soap opera is the way it affects us emotionally. The film's impact is tremendous. Instead of leading us to forget about our own lives and to get caught up vicariously in the intrigues of others, it throws us back on ourselves and our own experience. The violent quarrel between Peter and Katarina and the panic felt by the woman seeking the divorce should have been signals for Marianne and Johan to examine their own relationships; we are invited to use their experience in the same way. In this film we do not escape into the conventional fantasies offered by soap opera, but courageously explore where a relationship is capable of going. We watch Johan and Marianne experience a kind of growth that has never before been captured on film. The portrayal of their marriage is so complex, so subtle, so varied and multi-dimensional that it is bound to trigger personal associations for anyone who has been involved in a long-term relationship. It makes us think about our own ex-husbands, ex-wives, and ex-lovers, wondering if those relationships would have followed a similar course if only we had had a similar capacity for growth and the courage and energy to persist. It makes us consider where those relationships stopped, at what stage and for what reasons, and to try to see where we are now in our own process of growth. The film implies that if we have the strength to take a relationship as far as it will go, to discard as many false masks as possible, to live through the outbursts of hatred and violence, to confront honestly our full range of feelings, we may discover an emotional capacity that is much deeper and richer than we expect. The doubts are never quieted, the struggle is never over, the confusion is never eliminated, but the imperfect love comforts and survives. —MARSHA KINDER

LUCIA

Director: Humberto Solas. Screenplay: Solas, Julio Garcia Espinosa and Nelson Rodriguez. Photography: Jorge Herrera. Tricontinental.

Of the more than 50 feature films which have been produced in Cuba since the revolutionary government set up the ICAIC (Instituto Cubano del Arte e Industria Cinematográficas) *Lucía* is only the second to be distributed in the United States.[1] Since its release in 1968,[2] *Lucía* has won several international awards, including the Society of Italian Producers' "Golden Globe" award, the International Film Critics' Prize, and the grand prize at the Moscow Film Festival.

Lucía is composed of three separate films about women named Lucía. Each lives in a distinct period of Cuban history, indicated by the dates which introduce the three parts of the film —1895, 1933, 196–. These years correspond respectively to the war of Cuban independence from Spain, the end of the dictatorship of Gerardo Machado, and the period of the post-revolutionary literacy campaign undertaken in 1961.

Solas uses different sets of actors and distinct cinematic styles for the three historical epochs. Moreover, each Lucía belongs to a different social class—landed creole aristocracy, the upper middle class of the depression years, and what would have been the rural peasant class before the Cuban revolutionary government came to power in the late fifties. Each Lucía thus lives in a period of great political and social change which inevitably and profoundly affects her private life. A love story serves as the basic plot outline for the unfolding of the three parts, and each Lucía's circumstances and choices are related to a love affair and/or marriage with one man.

According to director Solas, in an interview in the Cuban magazine *Bohemia,* the links between the three stories are:

> . . . a woman's presence, a woman's attitude during a specific period of history, and her relationship with a man. On the other hand, what is most interesting for me is that, throughout the film, there's a theme of a particular society, though this has several levels to it. The most important level, it seems to me, concerns a certain decolonization process, which I try to reflect.

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I

This idea of decolonization takes a different form in the three parts of the film. The first shows Cuban society in the midst of its violent rupture from Spanish colonization. In the second, Lucía breaks away from the cultural colonization implied by the US-aping bourgeoisie of her family background. The idea of decolonization can also extend to the characters' participation in the popular struggle to oust the bloody dictatorship of Gerardo Machado, and to their obscure vision of a different and better society. Solas indicates that the love story of the third part was intended to blatantly portray a relationship of submission and power. This last section of the film can thus also be seen to involve a kind of decolonization process, defined by Lucía's efforts to personally liberate herself from the chauvinism and domination of her husband Tomás.

In *Lucía 1895*, the extremely stylized acting and luxurious settings reflect the nineteenth-century Romanticism which blossomed late in Latin America. The fluttery, superficial behavior of Lucía and her companions in the lavish drawing-rooms of *fin de siècle* Havana convincingly convey not only a Romantic ambience, but the latent decadence of the creole upper class which was to replace the Spanish aristocracy following Independence.

Of the three parts, *Lucía 1895* utilizes the most varied cinematic resources and places the most emphasis on symbolism.[3] The violent contrast between the space occupied by the wealthy, represented by the family of Lucía in their stately mansion, and what goes on in the streets immediately outside is the predominant technique employed to communicate the message of the first *Lucía:* the old colonial structure is crumbling and what is happening in the streets serves as a prophecy of the changes to come. One of the reasons for the more expressionistic effects of *Lucía 1895* in comparison to the forties realism of the second part and the comic social realism of the third is that the characters of the lower class portrayed in the street are at the same time allegorical figures. *Lucía 1895* is also the only part that uses surrealistic sequences, filmed in overexposure, which symbolically show the violence of Cuban life under Spanish rule.

It is in "la calle"—the central plaza between their mansions and the Church, which serves as center for the social life—that the film opens, with close-ups of lavishly dressed, parisoled daughters of the aristocracy gossiping about the latest courtships in Havana. The director spares little in the film's first scenes to show the excessive opulence, leisure, and superficiality of the Havana upper class, with its imported furniture, sculptures, photographs, and drapes. As the women sit around in Lucía's (Raquel Revuelta) drawing room making soldiers' hammocks, we learn for the first time that Cuba is in fact in the throes of a bitter war of independence against Spain. The director thus builds up to the first dramatic cut to the street scene outside—the first juxtaposition of many which make *Lucía 1895* the most cinematically complex of the three sections.

In stark opposition to the previous aristocratic settings, the camera switches to a cart full of bloody, ragged bodies of soldiers making its way through the streets. For the first time the character Fernandina appears: the mad woman who plays a pivotal role in the film. Fernandina never appears anywhere but *en la calle*. Her figure serves to show that the Cuba of 1895 is a society in convulsion; it is as if all of the violent and brutal reality for most of Cuba bursts out like a boil on the surface in Fernandina's savage fits of public madness.

But Fernandina's "madness" has a quality of

◀ LUCIA 1895

heightened lucidity. Her piercing yell, *"A callarse, Cubanos"* (Be still, Cubans) brings to focus the historical moment of crisis and change. "The Cubans are sleeping," she screams. Grabbing a dead man passing by in another cart, she shouts the words which will also end the film and which can be seen to represent its principal theme: "Wake up, Cubans."

From the gossiping of the young women who gather in Lucía's house, we learn of Fernandina's past. Here takes place undoubtedly the strongest visual sequence of the film: in surrealistic, overexposed shots, we witness the rape of the former nun Fernandina by Spanish soldiers. In the background of the rape sequence hang the bodies of three men on a gibbet, as nuns come to pray for the dead and dying. We watch the anguished terror of the nuns pursued and captured by rapists as music, nightmarish sighs, and silence fill the lapses in the narrations. In this dream-like allegory, the rape of Cuba by Spain is made unforgettably clear.

Although it is the film's point that the romanticized, privileged setting of life for Lucía and for the other young women of the aristocracy is about to be destroyed, it is in fact largely from their perspective that the camera views life in Havana, both in its opulence, its sordid street scenes, and its grotesque fantasies. The unfolding course of events reveals to the film viewer, and finally to Lucía, that it is in fact a world of ruthless colonization and domination to be maintained at any cost. This is the message contained in the betrayal of Lucía's love by a Spanish man of fortune, Rafael (Eduardo Moure), who convinces Lucía to go on a lovers' tryst to her family's coffee plantation, which the Spanish suspect to be a center for insurgent Cuban fighters.

The long scenes describing the vicissitudes of Lucía's affair with Rafael are perhaps the least interesting and most overdrawn parts of the film. However, the extended crescendo of their sentimental relationship heightens the sense of betrayal of subsequent events.

As Rafael dumps her in the middle of invading Spanish troops he had led to the site, Lucía realizes his betrayal. It is through her eyes that we see the subsequent battles, including the arrival of blacks on horseback who join in the fight against the Spanish—authentic reminder of the participation of the black population of Cuba in the war of independence.

According to Solas, love from Rafael's perspective is a utilitarian instrument of political and economic expediency. What interested him in filming their love affair was

> . . . how an individual at a particular time in history, in order to obtain a particular piece of military information, can reach the point of perverting and adulterating the sentiment of love . . . how bourgeois Christian morality can disorient an individual, can alienate him, inhibit him, repress him until the individual can become the victim of almost anything. . . .

Despite Rafael's role as traitor in the film, he as well as Lucía is thus ultimately presented as a victim.

After Lucía's discovery of her brother's body following the Spanish raids, the film shifts to Havana and returns to the concentrated symbolism and the overexposed surrealistic shots characteristic of the earlier parts. The "mad" Fernandina again plays an integrating role in the film. Her warning from the street to Lucía, "Don't go with him," has been borne out by Rafael's betrayal, and she now returns to take part in the final drama of Rafael's murder by Lucía.

That profound cultural transformations as well as political independence from Spain take place at this period in Cuban history is a strong message of the story's ending. As Solas points out in the *Bohemia* interview, the black part of Cuban society was at that period "the purest cultural element." The music and festival activities of blacks in the background as Lucía charges through the streets suggest the important influence that the country's African heritage will have in post-independence Cuba. In the final scenes of the film, no one speaks, another of Solas' indications of deep cultural transition. According to the director, they "lose their language," "they stammer like children, as if they were being born all over again."

The ending is as extraordinary visually and symbolically as the beginning. Lucía takes to the streets in a wild nightmarish sequence in which she stabs Rafael to death before terrified onlookers. Lucía, as symbol of both colonized Cuba and exploited woman (albeit of the aristocracy) literally and symbolically kills the oppressor.

Lucía's madness at the end symbolizes further the powerful and violent nature of this cultural transformation, and lends a dramatic symmetry to the film, particularly in the culminating moment when the madness of Lucía and that of Fernandina becomes one. Fernandina reappears to observe Rafael's murder and to console Lucía as the latter is dragged away. The classes and different cultures of Cuba briefly come into climactic contact in the street in the figures of Lucía and Fernandina.

II

The second part of *Lucía* is sharply counterposed in content and style to the symbolic intensity and romanticism of the first.

The film begins as a flashback in Lucía's (Eslinda Nuñez) mind as she sits working in a grim cigar factory in Havana. The flashback starts with a shot of Lucía and her mother disembarking during one of their frequent vacation trips, while Lucía's father remains back in Havana with his mistress. Like the first part of *Lucía,* the second sets the viewer up for dramatic change by long scenes first showing the life of a privileged sector of the Cuban population, this time the well-off who enjoy a vulgar, materialistic life style embodied in Lucía's loud and dependent mother. Again, juxtapositions introduce the political theme of the film: Lucía sees the wounded Aldo (Ramón Brito) arrive clandestinely by boat after a gun battle in the streets of Havana, and eventually becomes involved with him.

One important aspect of the film which defines the differences between the three *Lucías* is not only their separation in time (each part is in fact a superb period piece) but their differences in location and in the treatment of spatial movement on the part of the characters. In *Lucía 1895,* scenes alternate between the central plaza, Lucía's house, the side streets, and one extended scene in the area of the coffee plantation. In *Lucía 1933,* after the opening scenes in the Keys, the rest of the film has frequently changing locations in and around Havana. We see much more of Cuban life—the factories and white-collar offices of Havana, the theaters, high-class brothels, government buildings, bars, beaches, working-class living quarters, etc. In contrast to the settled space of *Lucía 1895,* the next *Lucía* shows the mobile, industrialized world of Havana's middle and working class of the thirties.

Lucía, because of her relationship to Aldo, literally changes class in the film, completely abandoning her family to become a factory worker in Havana, where she helps Aldo, materially and morally, in his fight against the dictatorship of Machado. She becomes politically active herself, participating in a workers' demonstration which is violently suppressed.

As does the first Lucía, the second goes through dramatic changes brought about by personal and historical circumstances. Here too the process of changing consciousness is circumscribed by the limited possibilities of the period. For the Lucía of the independence period, disillusionment and grief lead to a nihilistic act (however symbolic its meaning within the context of the film), the murder of her lover. For the second Lucía, despite her changing awareness and participation in political struggle, all seems ultimately hopeless once Aldo is killed. The close-up on Lucía which ends the second part reveals utter despair and isolation.

That the well-intentioned and idealistic fight of Aldo and Lucía is bound to fail is exactly the point of *Lucía 1933.* Changing consciousness

LUCIA 1933 ▶

and political struggle lead to futility in the individualistic framework of Aldo's idealism. He and his handful of friends have no movement and no ideology, and thus are easily drawn into the materialistic and decadent rewards available to them after Machado's fall. Aldo, disillusioned by the continued injustices he sees daily, and realizing that nothing has changed, begins fighting against the next regime, only to be gunned down, leaving Lucía utterly isolated and broken.

A criticism sometimes directed at *Lucía 1933* is the difficulty of understanding what is going on politically—who they are against and why—as Aldo and his companions embark on lightning sub-machine gun raids in downtown Havana. However, it is precisely this confusion which defines many of the sporadic struggles against various repressive dictators in Cuban history. Although there were a few ideologically organized groups in the thirties, the film mirrors the general political chaos of the street fighting of the time.

If Fernandina's words "Wake up, Cubans" sum up the theme of political and cultural transition portrayed in *Lucía 1895,* the phrase "Esto es una mierda" ("This is for shit") used by Aldo and his friend toward the end of *Lucía 1933* sums up their disillusionment and the ineffectiveness of their struggle.

Several cuts to the figure of Lucía, pregnant and alone in their room outside of Havana during Aldo's long absences, dramatize the marginality of women to the events of this period. Even her political involvement at the factory can be seen as merely an adjunct to Aldo's activities. Nevertheless, the moments of solidarity among the women of the factory show more promise for the future than do Aldo's individualistic and ultimately nihilistic acts.

III

The final part of *Lucía* clearly reveals that the film is not only an account of three women named Lucía in different historical settings. It is also about the problem of revolutionary filmmaking itself and the search for new forms. One might have expected that the third part would also deal with a moment of crisis and governmental transition, perhaps 1959. Choosing to set the third part in a post-revolutionary, non-crisis situation seems to have everything to do with Solas's search for new content and for more revolutionary forms.

The story line of *Lucía 196–* is extremely simple: a sensuous young couple, Lucía (Adela Legra) and Tomás (Adolfo Llaurado) come into conflict because his *machismo* possessiveness is so strong that he refuses to allow Lucía to work once they are married, despite her will to continue working and the pressure exerted from the community. The film is comic and farcical from beginning to end; the one-dimensionality of the central problem (the couple and community seem to have only this one frustration to work out) and the simplicity of background settings are a deliberate part of this comic ambience. The background music of the popular folk-song "Guantanamera" is set to humorous and often moralistic verses which follow the ups and downs of Lucía's and Tomás's relationship. The songs, which are superbly sung by Joseito Fernández, add to the exhilarating good spirits of the story. The choice of boisterous comedy as the mood for the *Lucía* of the sixties reflects the exuberant optimism characteristic of the country-wide literacy campaign and of the tremendous efforts begun in the early sixties to develop and diversify agriculture in Cuba.

One frequently hears today from people visiting Cuba how drab and deteriorated the once thriving and lushly decadent Havana now appears. Yet as soon as one leaves the city proper, the traveler in Cuba is struck by the extraordinary amount of productive activity going on in the rural areas. Solas's shift in the third *Lucía* thus authentically reflects this real change in priorities since the advent of the revolution. The only connection to Havana evident in *Lucía 196–* is the modest presence of Lucía's literacy teacher. This change, from the violent and tragic social settings of the first two parts of the film to the sense of small, stable community which one gets in *Lucía 196–* is one of the most impressive points made by the film.

LUCIA 196–

The third *Lucía* is shot in a relatively straight-on, eye-level close-up style. Long shots are so few that when they are used for the couple's chases through the salt pans where Lucía returns to work, the switch in perspective is almost startling.

The extreme localness of its rural setting in contrast to the mobile, cosmopolitan world of both of the preceding parts further promotes this sense of audience closeness to events. The close-range film-making and the limited changes in locale—the couple's modest house, the community's meeting places, the agricultural fields and salt pans, brief scenes in a bar—bring the viewer into intimate contact with the people of this small country community. The graininess of the stock used in the third part also helps lessen the distance between characters and audience through a certain "home-movie" quality. The brightness of the lighting which emanates from all of the outdoor scenes also gives some feeling for the hot, tropical climate where the characters live and work.

Yet despite Solas's consciousness of the need to find a different form of film-making to portray a revolutionary reality, the real sense of "difference" which one gets in viewing *Lucía 196–* seems to come not from its cinematic techniques but from *who* and *where* the people are in the film. The most revolutionary aspect of the third *Lucía* is the fact that its major character is a rural, illiterate woman in a multiracial, communal society. A film with this subject matter could simply not have been made at all before the Cuban revolution. This kind of film production, both in its content and in its freedom of experimentation with techniques, would have been proscribed by the capitalist, commercial nature of the Cuban film industry of pre-1959 Cuba.

Like Milos Forman's *Fireman's Ball, Lucía 196–*'s subject matter and cinematic methods successfully capture the quality of life of a whole community. Much of the good humor of the third *Lucía* comes from the fact that the characters already have patterns of collective priorities and interrelationships. In both films, a general feeling of collective closeness, solidarity, and human warmth gives space to individuals to work out their problems, whether petty thievery or male chauvinism.[4] At the same time, both films operate as self-criticisms of real problems that persist within their societies.

Although one occasionally finds *Lucía* billed as a feminist film, it is neither told from a woman's psychological perspective (although some of the filming, particularly in *Lucía 1895* and *1933* is done from the character Lucía's *visual* perspective), nor does it deeply explore women's oppression by patriarchal forms of society nor by individual males. Nevertheless, the film makes an important contribution to the image of women in film by the very length of time given to female activities together (such as the birthday party in *Lucía 1895* and the conversations in the back of the truck among the workers in *Lucía 196–*). In addition, the director captures the texture of the three Lucías' daily relationships to the people around them in a way rarely seen in the cinema. There is also no doubt that Solas takes seriously the developing political consciousness of women, recognizing both their historical importance and the imperative of their equal participation in the ongoing construction of Cuban socialism.

In the last analysis, *Lucía* reveals itself to be above all a film which magnificently shows three stages in a process of historical transition in a country which, within the space of seventy-five years, has moved from European colony through socialist revolution. —ANNA MARIE TAYLOR

NOTES

1. Gutierrez Alea's *Memories of Underdevelopment* which was listed as one of the New York Film Critics'

"Ten Best Films" of 1973 was released for general distribution in the United States previous to *Lucía.*

2. *Lucía,* first scheduled to be shown in March, 1972, at the New York Festival of Cuban Films, was confiscated by the Treasury Department along with the other films for suspected violation of the "Trading with the Enemy Act." Its first subsequent showing took place at the San Francisco International Film Festival in October, 1973. It is presently available for rental from Tricontinental Film Center, Box 4430, Berkeley, Ca. 94704.

3. Solas has credited Visconti's *Senso* as being the major influence on the making of *Lucía 1895.* This debt is clear in the latter's impressionistic, operatic effects, and even in some similarities of plot: "Visconti (aristocrat by birth, Marxist by conviction) offers in *Senso* an extraordinary portrait of a decadent and corrupt aristocracy in which Livia's seduction and treachery and Franz's cowardice and deceit are an inevitable result of their environment." (Georges Sadoul, *Dictionary of Films,* p. 332).

4. Another excellent Cuban film, Gutierrez Alea's *Death of a Bureaucrat,* a hilarious self-criticism of socialist bureaucracy, will hopefully become available to US audiences.

EVERYTHING READY, NOTHING WORKS

(Tutto a posto, e niente in ordine) Script and Direction: Lina Wertmuller. Photography: Giuseppe Rotunno. Sets and costumes: Enrico Job. Music: Piero Piccioni. Euro International.

The English title is not altogether satisfactory, I'm told; our old saying, *Situation Normal (All Fouled Up)* might be closer. In any case Wertmüller is taking another look at the Western industrial world, this time closer to its incipient collapse. She means business. Coming in with a ferociously agile visual style, with slapstick, music that roars and jars, high-key performances, she will do anything for a laugh, anything to make us see that we are living in terrible times. There is no measured restraint in Wertmüller, no caution, no aesthetic snobbery. She is going full out all the time. And although I only got one look at this new film in the midst of the San Francisco Film Festival, it seems clear that we must admit Wertmüller is not only the best woman director in the world, but one of the best directors, period.

She outrages a lot of people; her particular brand of emotional radicalism maddens rational radicals, and her total unwillingness to pass up comic possibilities even in horrific melodramatic material makes us choke because we are not used to laughing and crying at the same time. *Tutto a posto* includes outrages for everyone. For the film buffs Wertmüller satirizes Busby Berkeley (who could use it, God knows) with an elegant number where steers in a slaughterhouse, hanging from overhead tracks, are balletically pushed about, ever so gracefully, wheeling and spinning to gracious music—and get skinned, split, and quartered. She does a surreal vengeance scene in which a police official's car is totally painted, inside and out, with shit. She uses tried-and-true slapstick routines without shame: an inept burglary gets interrupted, and the thieves' escape does the whole guilty-restraint-before-flight routine. Some of her characters work in ice-houses, snuffling; others in a restaurant that makes Arnold Wesker's *Kitchen* look like a rest-home. Her vision of the consumer society is hilariously flamboyant: a funky old artist's apartment, completely surrounded by highrise monstrosities, gradually becomes a consumption paradise for its whore inhabitants and their victimized male room-mates. In it virtue is literally sacrificed to goods, as the Sicilian virgin is ravished when she uses her hands not to fend off her assailant but to keep a color TV from crashing to the floor. And as to politics, well, the apartment house is finally saved from demolition only by direct-action tenant protest, "after 15 years of leftist administration."

Wertmüller tosses her bomb into the lap of the industrial West, which doubtless she expects to die laughing. Like her other films, *Tutto a posto* oscillates between (and mixes) comedy which is always on the verge of self-indulgence and melodrama which is often on the verge of horror. The honest soon learn the futility of their ways, but dishonesty pays no better. A man yearns for a wispy blonde; he gets her, and she keeps having children, endlessly, until his life is ruined (even quintuplets have no redeeming commercial value any more). The young and energetic protest, and suffer for it. The central image of the social madhouse gradually becomes the restaurant kitchen. Something about

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food seems to galvanize Wertmüller. Just as the whores' mealtime in *Love and Anarchy* gave the occasion for an extravagant tour-de-force of dialogue, acting and camerawork, so here she creates a dizzingly intricate kitchen sequence. With dozens of cooks, helpers, and waitresses rushing about, the camera swoops among them, magically catching episodes on the fly: put-ons, come-ons, jokes, arguments, fights—a whole high-pitched Italianate opera. But not a comic opera: this mixes in tension, misery, exploitation, craziness, despair.

A bomb is thrown into the restaurant—a fascist provocation. (The unwilling father is mistakenly arrested outside, naturally). The incessantly loud sound track falls unnaturally silent. Why don't we just stop working, somebody says. Not strike, but just stop—and then start in a new way. The electricity of the silent moment grows; the workers stare offscreen—at what? The shadow of sequestrations, of workers' control? Something unprecedented, unheard of, *truly* revolutionary this time?

But it doesn't happen, not now. There is a cry that people are sitting out there, waiting to eat; somebody begins to dash about again; the madhouse resumes, seeming the same as before. Only, after that moment, which will make those who await some new revolutionary development claim Wertmüller as their own, nothing will be quite the same. And as Italy plunges on into chaos, with food riots and heavy police repression expected this winter, or even the total collapse of the banking system, Wertmüller's film may prove more of a harbinger than she anticipated. —ERNEST CALLENBACH

HEARTS AND MINDS

Director: Peter Davis. Producer: Bert Schneider. Photography: Richard Pearce. Editing: LynZee Klingman and Susan Martin. Sound: Tom Cohen. BBS/Touchstone Productions (933 N. La Brea Ave., Los Angeles, Calif.). Columbia Pictures.

There have been, to my knowledge, only two full-length commercial documentaries by American film-makers on Vietnam. The first, Emile de Antonio's powerful *In the Year of the Pig* (1970), came at a time when the U.S. was still

directly engaged in the combat; one obvious aim of the film-maker, in addition to compiling an accurate historical document, was to mobilize domestic and foreign opinion so as to force the U.S. out. It should have been aired on American TV, but of course it wasn't: too "controversial" (by which is meant that it possessed an ideology), and as a full-length feature too much of a whole. American networks preferred to show thin slices of the war on the evening news, sandwiched between commercials for nasal spray and vaginal deodorants—the overall effect being to turn that far-away slaughter into merely another aspect of the daily unreality.

Now comes *Hearts and Minds,* a color documentary by Peter Davis, brilliant in spots, confused in others, made on a $950,000 budget for Columbia Pictures. De Antonio's film (made at a cost of $168,000) emerged from a long-held radical perspective, solidly grounded in history, geopolitics, and an understanding of the U.S. power elite. Davis's film, less firmly anchored, attempts to focus on the cultural and political bases that led to the U.S. imperialistic drive worldwide, and the effects such unbridled power had, in this instance, not only on the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese and their society, but also on the Americans and their social fabric as well.

Using 250 hours of original footage and 20 hours of stock, Davis weaves his cinematic tapestry out of war sequences (more than a few of which—uncredited—were unearthed through de Antonio's research and appeared in his film), scenes shot in Vietnam with bitter victims of the carnage and with greedy war profiteers, inter-

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views with such eminences as General Westmoreland, Clark Clifford, Walt Rostow and Daniel Ellsberg, and with numerous Vietnam veterans, both pro and con the war effort. Added are clips from old American war movies, and footage shot at highschool football games, elementary school classrooms, and PTA meetings: the cultural matrix that helps explain how the U.S. evolved from unthinking chauvinism and the competitive emphasis on winning at all costs to a holy crusade against "the gooks."

What emerges is a stunning, searing indictment not only of the American policy-makers who enmeshed the U.S. in the Vietnam quagmire, but of America itself and the racist-militarist-macho mentality that led and/or permitted those leaders to execute such policy—and, unless changed, will lead inevitably to more such imperialist incursions. The film is overly long, repetitious, and lacking in both tight organization and an ideological framework, but it contains some immensely powerful moments and is an extremely important film, perhaps because of its very capacity to go beyond ideology to touch the emotions. One would wish, even with its flaws, that it were required viewing for every U.S. citizen in whose name that war was waged—and, as the film notes almost in passing, continues to be waged, by proxy, with $2 billion annually of U.S. aid propping up the Saigon regime.

However, whether *Hearts and Minds* will ever be seen on a mass basis is, as of this writing, open to question. It is part of a six-film package for which Columbia contracted with BBS Productions several years ago, after BBS made millions for Columbia with its two blockbusters, *Easy Rider* and *The Last Picture Show*. Now, however, Columbia leadership has changed, the political situation has altered (more than ever, Americans seem to want to forget that Vietnam ever happened), and Columbia is reportedly balking at releasing the film, even after its recent sold-out showings at the Cannes and San Francisco Film Festivals and the rave reviews in the popular press that followed. Litigation may ensue in an attempt to free the film from Columbia's control, but until that happens—unless the studio changes its mind—this timely work, which could affect the outcome of the amnesty question, remains stored in the vaults. (Those seeking late information on the availability of the film can write to BBS at the address listed at the head of this review.)

Davis is the former CBS producer of the controversial TV documentary *The Selling of the Pentagon*. One of his editors on *Hearts and Minds,* LynZee Klingman, and his photographer, Richard Pearce, both had worked for de Antonio, Klingman on *In the Year of the Pig*. Another editor, Susan Martin, produced and edited Peter Watkins's brilliant *Punishment Park* (*FQ,* Summer 1972). Using a mix of TV technique and de Antonio's pioneering collage method, they get viewers into the Vietnam quagmire with remarkable cinematic economy: old movie clips from what looks like a Busby Berkley-staged U.S. military extravaganza, and some basic history about early French and U.S. involvement in Indochina, with footage of a guileless President Eisenhower saying quite openly that U.S. interest is motivated by the rich tin and tungsten deposits there that American industry can't afford to lose.

Davis interviews former U.S. policy-maker Walt Rostow, seeking his response to this early colonialist-imperialist history, but Rostow, embarrassed, tries desperately to throw Davis off the scent by protesting that this history is "very sophomoric, pedestrian" kind of stuff. This at-

tempt at evasion reveals more than do his answers, which are the usual distortions and lies.

In spite of the fact that much of this history is widely known, Davis still is able to present frightening revelations. There is an interview with France's Georges Bidault, who was foreign minister when the French were trapped at Dienbienphu. Bidault reveals that John Foster Dulles, then U.S. secretary of state, took him aside during a conference and offered the beleaguered French two atom bombs. "Never three, never one," Bidault specifies in English, "deux . . . I was the only witness."

The film then moves on to the war itself, with footage of U.S.-caused devastation and interviews of some U.S. airmen and GIs coldly describing how they burned villages and bombed and strafed. One airman, Randy Floyd, flew 98 bombing missions and tells of the pride he took in his "technical expertise" in destroying villages and their inhabitants.

Davis utilizes a clever technique in these interviews with the ex-soldiers. Throughout most of the film, while they describe their backgrounds, their education and how they became perfect technological soldiers in Vietnam, he photographs them in close-up; the effect is that we come to see these men as proud representatives of the U.S. military effort. Later in the film, Davis pulls his camera back: these men are amputees and paraplegics, and their evolution from traditional, unthinking patriots to rational and deliberate antiwar activists is brought home with especial force. Randy Floyd, for example, who was arrested in an Oklahoma antiwar demonstration, says that he never saw what his napalm bombs did to Vietnamese children. His voice quakes. "I don't know what I would do if my children were napalmed." His eyes begin to water and he turns away, unrelieved sorrow wracking his body. "You see, I can't even cry—because it would destroy my 'manhood' image."

These are powerful sequences, and mixed with those showing an ex-POW, a Lieutenant Coker, delivering apple-pie homilies to women's clubs and elementary school students, help sharpen the point of how young men are thoroughly brainwashed into acceptance of the American mythology by the time they reach military age. Coker stands before a room full of middle-aged women, resplendent in his medal-heavy white uniform, and says, "You, you moms, made me what I am today." He's proud and they're proud of him, and that's the sickness Davis is out to help exorcise.

Davis includes footage of deadly herbicide-spraying in Vietnam, then cuts to an old Vietnamese coffin-maker, who has lost seven of his own children to the war and who has nailed down 800 to 900 coffins weekly for children killed by bombs or poison spray. His face weathered, his voice crackling with pain and bitterness, he risks his life to speak before the camera of the Americans: "We will fight until the rice gives out, then we will plow the fields again and fight again. You will never win Vietnam." In those comments, and in the faces and eyes of other Vietnamese interviewed, one understands why the U.S. was destined to fail in its attempt to control Southeast Asia by force of arms. (Davis also interviews an avaricious Saigon banker, a proud war-profiteer, who bemoans the fact that "peace is coming, whether we like it or not.")

In contrast to the callous remarks and lies by such U.S. power-wielders as Walt Rostow and General Westmoreland (who tells the interviewer that Asians place little value on human life), Davis also interviewed Daniel Ellsberg, and his comments offer what little hope there is that the American establishment is capable of change. In fact, *Hearts and Minds* originally was to revolve around Ellsberg and his release of the Pentagon Papers. Ellsberg, the ex-war-hawk turned radical dove, spits out: "It wasn't that we were on the wrong side—we *are* the wrong side." He begins to describe the antiwar speech he had written for Robert Kennedy to deliver the night the senator was assassinated, and he breaks down, his tears expressing not only the loss of a friend and political associate but the sense of powerlessness shared by millions as we watched yet another avenue for peaceful social change blocked by the insanity of violence.

The film ends with a hometown parade some-

where in the U.S., complete with doll-like majorettes, little boys dressed in military uniform, the oompah of martial music—and a grinning character in an Uncle Sam suit who tells everyone along the parade route (and through the camera to us) to smile and be happy, this is the U.S. of A.

It is precisely this desire of Americans to ignore and forget their unspeakable war-crime —symbolized by Columbia's reluctance to release the film—that *Hearts and Minds* aims to confront. The film serves as a moving American *mea culpa.* As one of the interviewed U.S. veterans, a black paraplegic says: the war waged against the Vietnamese was such an atrocity that the American population should be made to experience it daily, to the point of "puking up their dinners" every night. The carnage shown in *Hearts and Minds* is enough to make one retch and cry, but is an utterly necessary purgation for millions of Good Americans who went along willingly in support of that immoral war, and even for those of us who fought the war for years in the streets and on the political and cultural battlefields.

A major strength of the film in the popular sense—its lack of ideological roots—is also its basic weakness. In reminding viewers on a very emotional level of the guilt each American shares, it provides a too-easy way for Americans to assuage their consciences, while suggesting little in the way of a political program for the future. And, in aiming for the emotions, the film is not averse to some simplistic agit-prop that would be hissed off the screen if something similar were included in a right-wing film: the U.S. soldiers and leaders are depicted always as the killers, whereas the only footage of North Vietnam leadership shows a kindly Uncle Ho surrounded by adoring little children. Or superfluous guilt-by-association footage is included in order to put down the opinions of those who supported Nixon. Or sensationalist footage: there is a brilliant *cinéma vérité* sequence of two GIs in a Saigon whorehouse; the point is made early about GIs' degrading treatment of Vietnamese civilians and the devastating effect on their culture, but Davis can't pull himself away from this amazing, but ultimately superfluous, footage.

The film is unnecessarily repetitive in constantly referring to the easily understood connection between the American educational system and its competitive sports structure. Some of this material, along with some of the Saigon brothel sequence, could well have been cut to include more analysis of the economic imperative that led the U.S. into Southeast Asia and that made Vietnam a test-case for counter-insurgency warfare, the impact of monopoly capitalism on U.S. domestic and foreign policy, and the dynamic social revolution being carried on by the Vietnamese people. As it is, viewers sit through nearly two hours of this powerful material, go through an emotional catharsis, and walk out somewhat disconnected from the struggle, unsure as to what to do, as if they've witnessed merely another moving film.

However, having said all this, one must always return not to the film one would have preferred to see but to the film actually produced. Despite its flaws, its tendency to pander to the emotions rather than to respect the intellect, its lack of ideological praxis, *Hearts and Minds* is still a supremely important political film, at times brilliantly assembled and edited. One only hopes that it receives the wide distribution, exhibition and critical reviews from the Left that it deserves. America owes at least that much to the Vietnamese people.

—BERNARD WEINER

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER

Script and direction: Marco Bellocchio. Photography: Franco di Giacomo. Music: Nicola Piovani. New Yorker films.

Two male figures, one young, one old, walk towards the camera under the dimly lit portico in the courtyard of a Jesuit college. Without warning, the older of the two lashes out at his companion, shouting: "Respect me! Respect me!" For each blow received two are returned with gusto. We deduce the pair are father and son. This is the opening of Marco Bellocchio's *In the Name of the Father,* and the image of violence

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and counter-violence and rejection of parental authority sets the tone for what follows.

The film falls within the tradition exemplified by Vigo's *Zero de Conduite* and Lindsay Anderson's *If* where the school serves as a metaphor for human society, stratified classes, regimentation, and the eventual eruption of smoldering resentment. It is certainly not the polite world of *The Browning Version* or *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*. Bellocchio has set his film autobiographically in the late fifties, partly to vent his own feelings about a quasi-monastic education, while at the same time imposing on the dramatic framework the social responses of the sixties. The schoolboy prank of 1958 takes on an overt political significance a decade later.

The school is a detailed microcosm of an inflexible class system. The "good fathers" are despots, and their methods, perfected over the centuries, reveal a balanced application of the carrot and the stick. But moments of tolerance (such as permitting the students to spit on the statue of the Founder) should not delude us. They rule by fear, in their case of secular and Divine punishment. The students are trained to be the future acquiescent leaders of society, reared to despise all social inferiors, but fearful with respect to their teachers, family, and the State. They are promised middle-class privileges on condition that they make no waves. The sort of citizen produced here, explains the vice-rector to the rebel-hero, Angelo, is a person "with a solid moral base, even if he is not an eagle."

Below stairs sweat the servants, watched over by the fathers, mothered by the nuns, and despised by the students. Vico has an artificial arm, Nicola is an ex-juvenile delinquent, Salvatore a Southern immigrant, Beato a homosexual, Tino a mental deficient in touch with the planet Mongo: in short, the rejects and sweepings of Italy who can thank God for the fathers' charity (as they are reminded to do by the unctuous rector at their annual treat, Christmas dinner). The spirit of revolution potentially exists in this submerged proletariat. And indeed, angered over the suicide of Beato, whom the fathers try and bury with all indecent haste, they do come out on strike. (One of their first acts is to refuse to work on pro-Christian Democrat electoral flyers.) Coupled with the image of a bulldozer demolishing a portion of the building, this could signal a system in a state of collapse. However, their leader Salvatore is dismissed with a letter of recommendation (just as the prefect, Diotaiuti, was removed earlier for insubordination, and also given a letter of support). The Church takes away and the Church gives. It wounds, but applies the balm. The strike fizzles for other reasons. An impassioned plea on behalf of the servants by the intellectual Franc is angrily rejected by his classmates who want nothing to do with these beasts of burden, whom they see as replicas of their future employees. Salvatore, invited to this meeting, melts away. Angelo has already discovered he has nothing to say to the servants. The outrageous, diabolical play he stages as an expression of his protest is a total irrelevance, even an irritation, to Salvatore and his comrades. Rightly they sense in Angelo a future leader whose passion is power, not social justice. He is, after all, a product of his class.

Stylistically *In the Name of the Father* moves beyond the more prosaic representation of both *Fists in the Pocket* and *China Is Near*. Bellocchio has said that he is no longer interested in anything resembling a documentary reproduction of reality; but what he has achieved here is a workable fusion of naturalism and metaphor. On the one hand we have the concreteness of detail and the precision of memory, as well as the solid historical dating of the material (a TV documentary, which nobody listens to, describes the death of Pius XII, bringing an era to an end). On the other hand, however, is the grotesqueness, the surreal reality, the metaphorical significance of the school as microcosm. Bellocchio has gone one better than Lindsay Anderson. Instead of separating the elements of documentary fact and the dream of rebellion, as occurred in *If*, Bellocchio presents the routine of school life as a permanent nightmare, a horror film in itself. The stylistic consequences follow logically. Hallucination is the truth, reality is a delirium. ("Am I dreaming? Am I in the wrong century?" asks Angelo of the vice-rector). Examples abound. The students interrupt the

class of senile Father Nevvero—so called because of the interrogative "No?" at the end of every phrase—with maniacal laughter. A missionary to China appears who has cut out his tongue so as not to abjure his faith. A priest—Mathematicus—in love with death sleeps in a coffin. Father Granita's sermon on the dangers of masturbation can only inspire one student to risk the consequences, and the Madonna comes down from the wall to embrace him. The constant dimness of the lighting adds to the feel of this somnambulistic world in which the ogres of German Expressionism, the Caligaris, the Nosferatus, the Mabuses, would feel at home. Claustrophobia, too, is represented in the enclosed spaces—refectory, classroom, and especially the cells where the boarders are locked up at night—to which the action is restricted. In all of this the central hall of the College is exactly like the prison setting of De Sica's *Sciuscià* —a curious echo of neorealism, and reflecting a view of education as a form of incarceration.

The Germanic tone of delirium and the conflict between authority and rebellion is maintained in the play put on by Angelo and his fellow students, which is for one thing an outrageous parody of the Faust legend. In it the veterinarian Faustolo—specialist in gory castrations—casually gives up his soul to the Devil ("After all," he says, "I haven't got one") who has taken refuge in the monstrous hound, Bobi, pet of the Countess Cazzaniga. The sustained mockery of accepted values laps over into cultural territory. Enjoined to sing the Ave Maria, one of the Countess's angelic sons bursts into Iago's "Credo" from *Otello*. After Verdi comes Manzoni, the pious author of *The Betrothed,* from which an entire scene is lifted, but with the theme of penitence turned inside out, to represent instead the pleasures of perdition. Bellocchio's use of drama as a medium of protest reveals his view that the college and the system it embodies is no more than a debased form of theater, from which one can walk away. It is no more real than the play presented, and conversely the play is no more fictional than the continual sermons heard in class and the insane regulations to which all are subject. Intended

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER

to strike fear into the audience of priests and students—for it is fear that rules the college and the world beyond—Angelo's play also exposes the limits and dangers of his ideology. First, this is largely an aesthetic gesture rather than the battle cry of revolt. It is the product of one of the clever sons of the bourgeoisie, and fails either to mobolize the servants (Salvatore sneers indifferently from the wings) or to bowl over the fathers (who, by applauding at the end, absorb much of the iconoclastic energies of the troupe). Furthermore if Angelo is right in his doctrine that he who can manipulate fear in others will govern the world, then he is no revolutionary fired with the will to free the servant masses. He is a fascist who responds to the spiritual fascism of the fathers by adopting their most potent weapon. His real complaint against his fellow students is that they are mediocre non-entities, and he is particularly hard on Franc whose words spell out a determined social principle, but who has to be shoved into action. Angelo is resolved to lead rather than liberate, to be a superman rather than a member of an obedient mass, whether bourgeois or proletarian. It is this elitist, d'Annunzian streak that turns Angelo into an ambiguous and dangerous character. While we root for him as he attacks an invalid social and clerical authority, we wince at his contempt for humanity, his thirst for power, and the vision of the world of the future he would like to command. He is another of Bellocchio's heroes in whom social rebellion is vitiated by bourgeois upbringing. His predecessors are Ale in *Fists in the Pocket* (played by

Lou Castel who here takes the role of the intransigeant Salvatore) and the confused maoist, Camillo, in *China Is Near*. Whether Angelo will usher in an unpleasant Brave New World, or whether he is doomed to impotence, is a matter of choice at the end of the film. As he drives along the highway sealed up in a car with the babbling Tino who talks largely in a language of his own, you can take this to mean that in the Tinos of the world Angelo has discovered the ultimate contollable undermass, happy to submit to a higher command. But optimists will conclude that Angelo has failed: to excite Salvatore with his play, to lead a combined revolt of students and servants, even to communicate with Tino whose mind roves crazily in outer space. It is true that both have just cut down the miraculous pear tree, in tribute to technocracy, and as an attack on superstition. But the movie still ends with this dialogue of the deaf.

—HARRY LAWTON

Short Notices

Children of the Golden West, alleged to be the world's first super-8 sync-sound feature, consists mainly of hand-held close-ups of the film-maker's family and friends—stoned denizens of Alameda County's own mega-poly-versity: Berkeley, California. Lenny Lipton's "stars" speak and look directly into the eye-level camera, and Lipton converses casually with them from behind his $130 Kodak Ektasound (editing machine costs another $180). "At last," says Lipton, "we can be independent of the independents."

Space limitations prohibit me from even summarizing the melange of fascinating hippies that animate Lipton's world, but we are generally treated to a provocative documentary kaleidoscope of Berkeley wit, defiance, insight, mania, obsession, and delusion. The camera is always moving, either panning across a room from face to face or tilting down to look at someone's hands, or shaking violently from the tension in the cameraman's body. This is a viscerally upsetting experience for those unaccustomed to watching "informal" movies, and several persons attacked Lipton's camera style in a discussion after the showing. He replied that he purposely limited his range by cementing a close-up lens to the front of the camera. Thus there is little depth or spaciousness in the images and the motion within each shot is nervous and occasionally claustrophobic. However, a definite intimacy and spontaneity are maintained by the close, direct-eye-contact approach. The "characters" stare unstintingly into the lens as they speak, and the effect is very much like standing toe-to-toe with someone during a conversation. This technique greatly increases emotional identification by the audience with the screen personalities, and invests the film with a sense of familiar honesty that is pleasantly and nakedly uncontrived.

The camera style is not visually analytical or even particularly probing. The limited range and the incessant jumpy close-ups seem somehow blunt, and although they promote the unfettered superficial expression of the characters, they are neither aesthetically pleasing nor psychologically revealing, nor do they provide us with any feeling for the characters' psychophysical environment. As as experiment, I think Lipton's camera technique is a success; as a continuing style I would like to see it elaborated and refined. (For all I know, Lipton may never use it again.)

The super-8 image is surprisingly good. Mildly disconcerting was the clacking of the camera, which is tolerable in an informal documentary but which might disrupt a super-8 sync-sound dramatic effort. *Children of the Golden West* is both a home movie and an "art" movie. It is a home movie because it was made casually and because its main purpose was to film Lipton's family and friends in a relatively "unstructured" and non-dramatic context. (Lipton introduced the film by declaring that it was better suited to be shown in a living room than a theater.) It is art because its production demanded the processes commonly associated with art or craft—creative purpose, selectivity, expression of ideas or emotions, technical skill, etc.

I'm not so much interested in judging Lipton's film as in exploring some of the limitations of movies about the counterculture. There aren't many, and those that exist vary widely in inauthenticity from the Suzuki-conquers-boredom reductionism of *Easy Rider* to the addict-betrayer-criminalism of *Panic in Needle Park*, to the bizarro-sex-blur-deteriorationism of *Performance*.

Zabriskie Point portrays America's Consciousness III shock troops as short-sighted plastic visionaries. Peter Watkin's *Punishment Park*, although it contains a number of very powerful scenes of verbal confrontation between the proto-mutants of martial America and their establishment executioners, nevertheless limits itself to examining the retreat and extermination of Aware Youth rather than the creation of new values and rela-

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tionships. *Trash,* with its scag-inertia and groaty onanism, emphasizes a very limited view of rebellion and regeneration. *Woodstock* remains a music film with integrated hippie vignettes. There are others, but among big features, only Penn's *Alice's Restaurant* and Varda's *Lion's Love* strike me as even attempting a comprehensive exploration of the New Values. Morley Markson's *Breathing Together,* with Yippie elucidations by Allen Ginsberg, Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin, John Sinclair and others, is the most articulate exposition of the counter-culture that I have yet seen, although it is not a narrative dramatic film and has little in common with the above-mentioned commercial efforts.

With *Children,* as with his previous film *Far Out Star Route,* Lipton has set himself the task of documenting the New Culture, not analyzing it or discussing its process of emergence, but simply showing that it exists. The films have an after-the-revolution realism to them—injustice and rebellion are not invoked, and the characters are obviously already at home with their countercultural identities. This is a crucial kind of documentation to undertake, but limitations inhere either in the genre itself, or, more likely, in Lipton's approach to the genre (although he has helped to create the form, and these criticisms should be considered friendly).

Mainly, I question the communication potential of these films. Do they get the message across? One indication might be drawn from the question-and-answer period after the screening of *Children.* A number of people in the audience chided Lipton for presenting "inarticulate" characters and claimed that Lipton was doing the counterculture a disservice by parading out a gaggle of stoned freaks. These criticisms came from a funky Berkeley audience, people who are relatively predisposed toward the values expressed in the film, and yet they were still offended by the alleged absence of lucidity. The film could almost be considered a parody of the counterculture by anyone who was not wide open to unabashed hippieness. The depth and power of the ideas embodied in Lipton's film are implied, unexplained, diffused, and might be inferred only by those persons who were already aware of their significance.

Enough criticism. Lipton is struggling valiantly for the democratization of film art and the rejection of corrupt commercialism. His rebellion is an active and important one—his books and movies are concrete contributions to a freer and more creative world. *Children of the Golden West* is a carefully considered personal and political document, imbued with mystery, suffering, jubulation, revolt, originality and beauty.

—MICHAEL SHEDLIN

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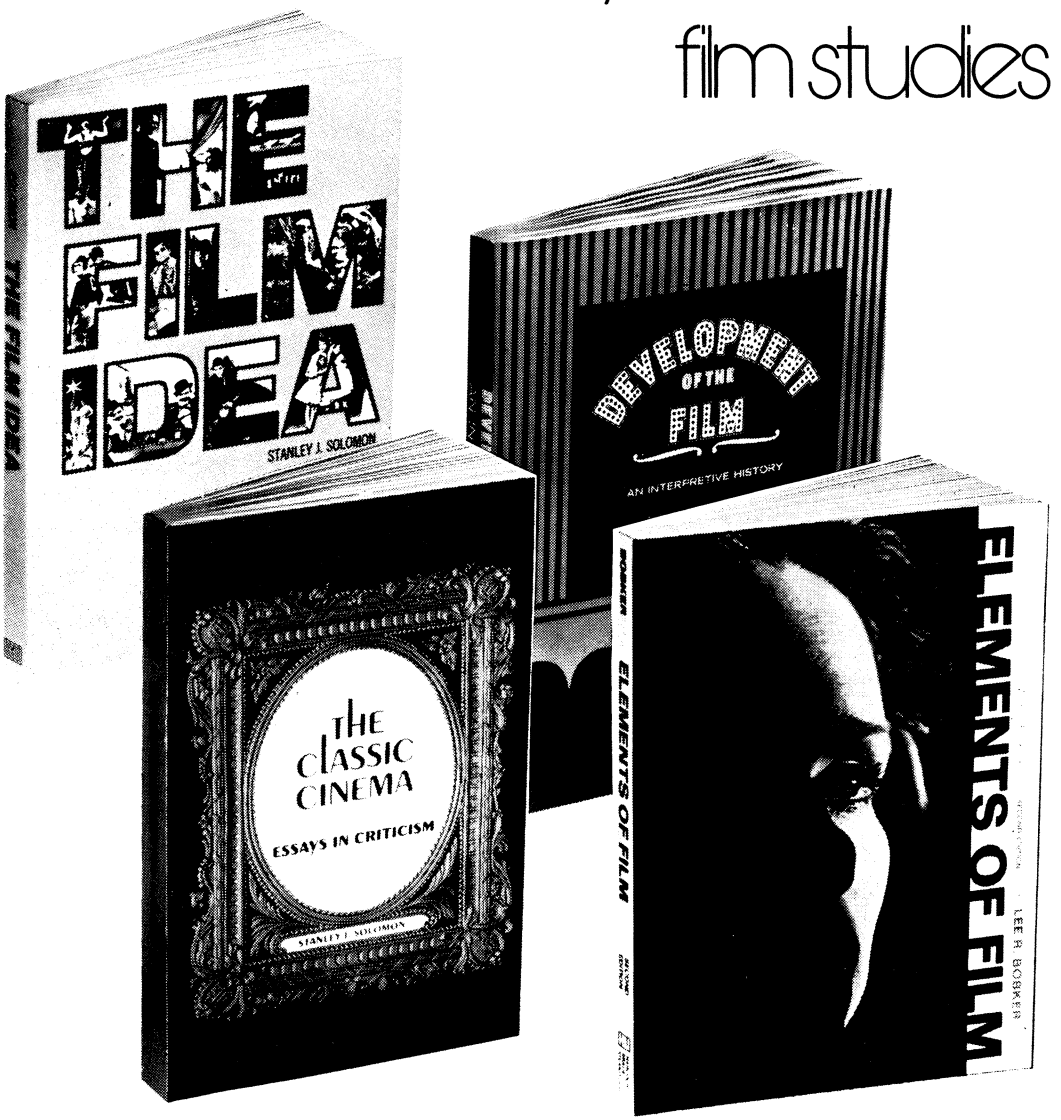

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[2]Media and Methods, *November 1969*
[3]*Peter Hogue,* Film Quarterly , *Spring 1974*
[4]*William A. Blackwell, President, Capital Area Media Educators Organization, Inc.*
[5]*Bob Lehmann,* Today's Film Maker, *August 1973*

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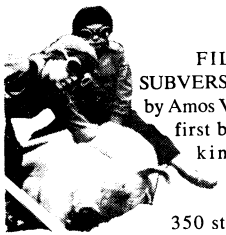

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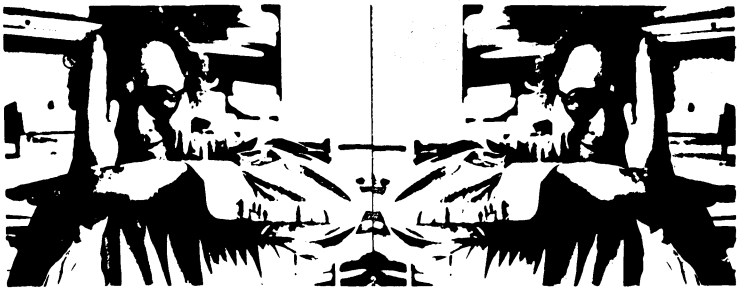

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