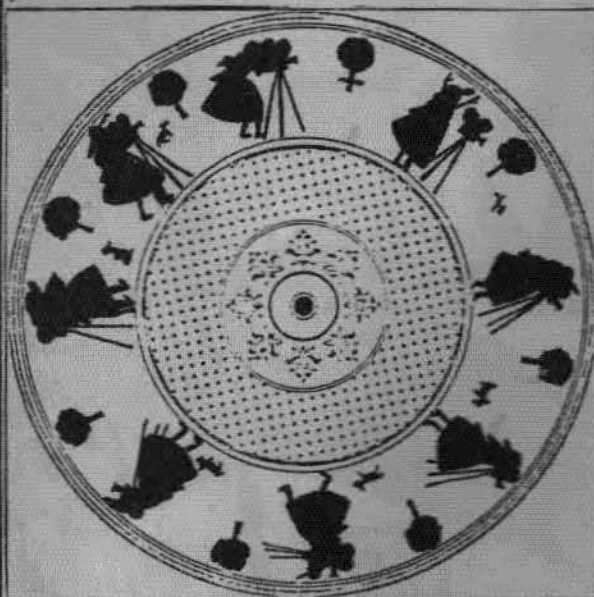


WOMEN & FILM

NO. 1



FILM HISTORY REVISED
HAWK'S WOMEN
FESTIVALS
GODARD
MARILYN • MAO



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OVERVIEW

The tape in the Museum of Cinema History at Universal Studios begins by quoting Stalin: "Give me the cinema and I'll rule the world." Stalin didn't have his way; Hollywood rules the world. The Hollywood movie is an international film model. Europe, Africa, Japan, S.E. Asia (particularly under the Shaw monopoly), and India (to name a few) have been extraordinarily conscientious in patterning their packages after every detail of the Hollywood product. Whatever is peculiar to American film is easily transplanted (where there is the same pattern of exploitation and monopoly film conglomerates) in other countries for local audiences. Other peoples of the world come to know the real/unreal movie lives of Americans but not vice versa. The U.S. cinema, joining hands with local capitalists of other countries, has deformed peoples everywhere forcing them to be passive consumers of an alienating ideology but not creators of their own ideology.

Hollywood (System) cinema is not only the country's principal vehicle for ideological oppression but also a major economic exploiter. In the silent era Hollywood was the fifth industry in the nation rising to take fourth place when sound came in. Even though the industry suffered during WWII, McCarthy, and television, it always maintained significance in the stock market and business world. It viciously generates enormous surplus value off the labor and talents of thousands of workers with an inher-

ent hierarchy of exploitation according to education, color, and sex -- no different from the Detroit assembly lines.

In the Hollywood top echelon were Zukor, Fox, Mayer, Laemmle, Goldwyn, the Warner brothers and Loew - all without exception originally petit bourgeois European immigrants - who created big monopolies and incredible wealth as business tyrants and kitschmen with artistic pretensions. They survived the cut-throat industrial wars and established destructively competitive patterns in the film industry there after. These movie barons generated oppressive ideology, perpetuating false sentiments and values, and reinforcing stereotypes. The top male stars, directors, and other male lackeys had it good, as long as they conformed to System Cinema. Also, a handful of women who became big stars (especially at Warner's in the 40s) made it materially, but most were ultimately destroyed by the roles they had to play and perpetuate. These roles - child/woman, whore, bitch, wife, mother, secretary or girl Friday, frigid career woman, vamp, etc. - were all portrayed falsely and one dimensionally. The 40s saw a flourishing of interesting female roles because the women, left home by their soldier husbands and lovers, formed a large audience to which the eternally opportunistic bourgeois catered. The word went out to package movie glamour queens. Yet these female characters had to sell out within the last minutes of the film (e.g. Barbara Stanwyck running after Barry Sullivan in *Forty Guns*) so as not to jeopardize the system. The white, glamorous women who played men's inferiors and stereotypes were paid more than blacks, chicanos, Indians, Chinese, and Japanese playing niggers, chinks or gooks. The voracious appetite of the industry also swallowed child stars (Judy Garland, Mickey Rooney, Linda Darnell) who grew up destroyed by a dream machine.

CINEMA



CINEMA



CINEMA



CINEMA



CINEMA





While Hollywood ran rampant, the guardians of public morality and decency in the form of censorship boards set up extensive codes against obscene or gangsterish behavior which could "incite to crime" or "appeal to prurient interest" or that might "jeopardize the safety of the government". In Memphis there were codes against using any songs by Lena Horne "because there are plenty of good white singers" or of a film Curley which showed Black children visiting a white school: "the south does not permit Negroes in white schools nor recognize social equality between races even in children" (Movies, Censorship, and the Law by I. Carmen). Thus while censorship boards everywhere were diligent over maintaining public "morality and decency" and System safety, they never even bothered about the derogatory, stereotyped image of women, children, and third world people. They never once agitated against the perniciousness of false values, perpetuation of false sentiments, or misleading superficial interpretations of Freudian psychology turned out by the dozen by hack writers and directors. As Marcuse says in One-Dimensional Man "Institutionalized desublimation thus appears to be an aspect of the 'conquest of transcendence' achieved by the one dimensional society. Just as this society tends to reduce, and even absorb opposition (the qualitative difference!) in the realm of politics and higher culture, so it does in the instinctual sphere. The result is the atrophy of the mental organs for grasping the contradictions and the alternatives and, in the one remaining dimension of technological rationality, the Happy Consciousness comes to prevail." So while we exist with this one layered consciousness, the System continues to cause and reinforce our neuroses. Those who have a healthy reaction by allowing their neuroses to surface, are conveniently put into a hospital or jail.

It is no mere coincidence that Los

Angeles is the world's most kitsch city. (Kitsch being the sick development of the Romantic tradition initiated by the bourgeoisie and destined to be the middle-class way of life). It is a city largely founded by Hollywood and lived according to its values. The vicious circle becomes incredibly pernicious when entertainment figures like Lawrence Welk who provides family entertainment with kitsch from "down-home", rise from farm boy status to owner and controller of skyscraper office monstrosities which oppress inhabitants physically and aesthetically. Here, Ronald Reagan governs, made popular by his all-American "perfect male" roles (even as gangster disguised as policeman in The Killers (1965) he is an All-American male) and his super patriotic speeches in the movies of the war years. The movies become a dangerous vehicle of false values and sentiments when people begin to live by movie standards, cite movie characters as exemplary figures, and adhere to movie values for definitions of what is good, bad, love, hate, beauty, ugliness, marriage, patriotism, etc. For example, Linda Darnell's mother was known to wear a snake or two around her neck and insist that the height of all her aspirations was a costly bedroom completely lined with white satin. Women aspired to look like Jean Harlow or Marilyn Monroe and other trendy stars, to have 40" busts even though manufacturers are too practical to make 40" bras. This is a small detail out of numerous daily situations that cause women to be schizophrenics -- the screen, supported by magazines, set up ideals impossible to imitate (while objective living calls for a more practical approach to life). Hollywood settings (e.g. Cecil de Mille among others) created a flourish of kitsch decor, architecture, and life styles all over the country. According to Gillo Dorfles in the book Kitsch: "...kitsch is essentially the falsifica-

tion of sentiments and the substitution of spurious sentiments for real ones. That is to say that real feelings become sentimentality; this is the moral argument against kitsch... Nevertheless it is possible to say that kitsch goes practically hand in hand with bourgeois morals, which are now in decline although they reigned supreme in the golden age of Kitsch...

Legitimizing stereotypes and false values is a significant part of the kitsch element. When the System movie image and System movie values are substitutes for real values, then schizophrenia, superficiality, perverted egocentricity, violence, and other neuroses become rampant.

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

The women in this magazine, as part of the women's movement, are aware of the political, psychological, social and economic oppression of women. The struggle begins on all fronts and we are taking up the struggle with women's image in film and women's roles in the film industry -- the ways in which we are exploited and the ways to transform the derogatory and immoral attitudes the ruling class and their male lackys have towards women and other oppressed peoples. We realize that the System will attempt to divide us politically and economically. There will be frequent confrontations with the System and its accomplices dressed up as "progressives". In order to keep pace with trends to ensure its survival, the System Cinema will produce seeming "radical" or "women's lib" films. It is for us to realize their limitations and watch that the carpet is not, yet again, pulled from under our feet. "In reality the area of 'permitted protest' is much greater than the System is willing to admit. This gives the

artist the illusion that they are acting against the Establishment by going beyond certain narrow limits. They do not realize that even anti-system art can be absorbed and utilized by the system as both a brake and necessary self-correction." Irwin Silber, "USA: The Alienation of Culture," Tricontinental 10.

We will at times be our own worst enemies, coming from an oppressed situation with our head level and gut level at a disparity. But with our awareness of internal conflicts and psychological conditionings we dare attempt to tear down the old vicious structures and assumptions that victimize us. We condemn presumptuous self-elected male interpreters who set the ground rules as to how women function or ought to function, how women feel or ought to feel, how women think or ought to think. We want to take charge over our minds, bodies, and image. As Solanas and Getino said in "Toward a Third Cinema (Cineaste, vol. IV, no.3), "Revolution does not begin with the taking of political power from imperialism and the bourgeoisie but rather begins at the moment when the masses sense a need for change and their intellectual vanguards begin to study and carry out this change through activities on different fronts."

For the Women in Film the immediate problems are 1) A closed and sexist industry whose survival is precisely based on discrimination. (If women are accepted to work in the industry they are usually given servile roles - receptionist, secretary, odd job girl, script girl, prop girl etc. 2) The persistently false image of women on the screen no matter how "liberal" looking Ali McGraw is in Love Story. 3) The persistence and consistency of the publicity department's packaging of women as sex objects, victims of chain or cycle gangs, or vampires of horror stories. 4) The auteur theory which has evolved into a male and masculine theory on all levels (e.g., pg. 216 of Andrew Sarris' The American Cinema). Even if the auteur theory should include



an equal number of women directors, it is still an oppressive theory making the director a superstar as if filmmaking were a one-man show. 5) The process of System Cinema filmmaking itself, which is inhuman, involving an elitist hierarchy, destructive competition, and vicious internal politics. 6) The prejudice on the part of film departments in universities and film institutes in accepting women in the faculty or as production students.

Our goal is to create a People's Cinema where human beings are portrayed as human beings and not servile caricatures. A cinema that is close to the masses who watch it. We wish to change the process of filmmaking to one of collectivism, and away from a sexist-elitist hierarchy. We wish to change the traditional modes of film criticism dominated by male critics and historians. At best their works are descriptive and interpretive within the confines of traditional criticism which focuses solely on aesthetics and the individualistic values of the middleclass way of life. Therefore it is up to the women who suffer the bad end of the cinematic image to initiate a form of film history and criticism that is relevant and just to females and males. Aesthetic considerations have to evolve from this end. We cannot afford to indulge in illusions of art for art's sake.

While there is a long term struggle with these problems, the internal conflicts among women will be: discouragement, discomforts from being harassed, no immediate successes in sight, the inclination for women to withdraw into seclusion and personal problems, and the betrayals of other women in the media once personal success is in sight. But the awareness that supercedes and encourages women in all struggles is that we have nothing to lose.

We're so down we couldn't be downer.

Structurally we differ from the staff organization of other film magazines. We do not function in the usual editor/staff contributor relationship. Everyone participates in manuscript meetings to discuss and thrash out problems. Decisions are by consensus. A definite direction evolved as we

went along. Hopefully a collective will emerge. The process that went into the making of the magazine was a learning experience. The most difficult task was in trying to get women to write, to convince them they can and should contribute. The interest and enthusiasm were there but even in the most articulate of women there exist definite psychological obstacles in the way of reaching the goal. Finally, we are non-professionals who dare put a magazine together because there is a real need for an arena for debate and presentation of views especially from a feminist-marxist-anarchist direction. We encourage as many women as possible to write and also men who are on our side. We also invite criticism. For those who detest writing we need physical help as well as financial support.

In conclusion, we support the liberation of workers, blacks, third world people and children, and we hope they support us equally. No movement today is sufficiently radical unless women's liberation is on the list of priorities - for under every oppressed male/colored/worker there usually lies a woman. ■



A ONE-SIDED STORY: WOMEN IN THE MOVIES

Christine Mohanna

It is not possible to discuss the roles women play in movies without first recognizing one inescapable fact: Most movies are made by men. Of course every rule has its exceptions, but how many people have heard of Dorothy Azner and who thinks of Ida Lupino as a director? Just about every major, influential picture made in the United States throughout the entire history of film has been directed, and most likely produced, by a man. Sometimes women have written the novels upon which the movies were based, and sometimes even the script (*Five Easy Pieces*, for example) but it is inevitably a male-dominated studio which chooses the book from which to make the movie, and edits the screenplay. And so, if we think of the evolution of film as a kind of mirror which reflects a changing society, we must concede that the mirror has always been limited in its reflection, and possibly distorted. Of course, a single film can never be, and is never intended to be, an accurate reflection of our lives and our roles. Films are made by intelligent men, moronic men, reactionary men, radical men and each sees it quite differently. But they all see it from a masculine viewpoint--this distortion, if it is one, has remained unvaried.

We have few clues to tell us whether a woman's viewpoint would result in a film substantially different from a man's, for we have so little basis of comparison. However, we do know that, although Harrold Robbins writes sexploitation novels, so does Jacqueline Susann. Our society conditions men and women to be very different in their goals and their behavior, but it could be that they both see male and female roles through the same distorted lens. For example, if the majority of men in a particular society agree that "a woman's place is in the

home," won't a majority of the women agree also? Because if they did not, they would cease to behave as if it were true, and, in time, it would cease to be true. In other words, if certain sexual stereotypes do exist, they exist because both men and women believe in them--though they do so in different ways and for different reasons. When the stereotypes fade, then perhaps more and more women will be accepted as serious filmmakers, and the reflection we see on the screen will be really transformed for the first time in film history.

In any case, movies, especially popular ones, tell us both directly and indirectly what it means to be a man or woman in our world. In the 70 odd years that the movies have been in existence, our ideal of masculine and feminine has changed in subtle ways. Without trying to, movies record these changes and, in proportion to their influence, make some small changes of their own. Life feeds the screen and is fed, in turn, by its own reflection on that screen.

In tracing the evolution of sex roles, we can begin with the first film story-teller--Melies the magician. His most famous work, *A Trip to the Moon*, is a satiric fantasy which pokes fun at scientific societies. However it also says something quite subtle about the roles of men and women at the turn of the century. A group of astronomers and scientists build a rocket ship which they ride into space. On their way to the moon, they pass beavies of reclining bathing beauties who represent the constellations, and smile and wink provocatively as the ship passes by. Quite innocently and inadvertently Melies is making a statement about men and women: Men are scientists and adventurers who aim for the moon and pass, on their way, women who are like

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stars--stationary, winking temptations, not quite real and not quite attainable. Women, at the turn of the century, were thought of as pale, weak creatures, tempting in their defenselessness and somehow unattainable in their purity. Melies' film reflects perfectly the sexual stereotypes of his time.

The heroines in the films of D.W. Griffith are likewise fragile, though nevertheless capable of great courage. In Broken Blossoms Lillian Gish plays a poor girl who is cruelly beaten by her father--but he can never destroy the purity of her heart. In Griffith's Birth of a Nation womanhood is a precious flower that must be protected at all cost from rapacious black men (how often sexism and racism walk hand in hand!) This traditionally Southern weakness of woman gives the Klan a convenient excuse to murder their former slaves. In the same film, Flora is a typical Griffith girl--she twitters, giggles, jumps up and down with goodness and glee. The portrayal is so exaggerated that it becomes almost a caricature of the silly, young female.

Griffith's women were pale and beautiful, but almost never overtly sexual. When Clara Bow became the "It Girl" movies began to look upon women with a leering eye. They were no longer quite so pure, nor quite so vulnerable, but became instead, naughty little visions of sex who were always just beyond reach. "Thus Clara Bow might invade a bachelor's apartment, dance suggestively in front of him, and leap provocatively into his bedroom. But when the bachelor made the proper responses, she promptly ran home to mother." (The Liveliest Art, p. 113). But the "Imp Girl" and the "It Girl" were not inventions of the movies. They correspond exactly with the ideal "sexually emancipated" woman of the twenties--a "flaming" creature who was still, at heart, a prude,

but who could cut her hair, shorten her skirts, dance wildly and pretend she was not. Yet while the movies did not invent this new woman, they undoubtedly reinforced her image. How many sweet "Griffith girls" watching Clara Bow tempt men on the screen (and in the audience) went home, cut their hair and tried to be just like her? And how many men suddenly found themselves bored with good little girls and yearning for that tantalizing image on the screen? For the screen reflects life, but in such concentrated magnitude that it seems more desirable than the original. It becomes for a while, a more potent reality than life itself.

Hollywood learned its lesson fast: Sex, especially in the form of young female bodies, sells exceedingly well to men and women alike. Paramount advertised Robert Flaherty's Moana as "The Love Story of a South Seas Siren" and hired hula girls to gyrate at its premiere. The fact that Moana is not a love story at all, but a serious, beautifully photographed documentary about an entire way of life, made no difference at all.

However, not all silent films saw women as pale heroines or sex objects. In 1928 Carl Dreyer made The Passion of Joan of Arc, a film which is not only a work of art, but evokes an image of one woman which is so powerful that it escapes all sexual stereotypes. His Joan is a simple girl whose depth of commitment makes her male judges look like pompous fools. Her face is not conventionally pretty--she wears no make-up and her head is brutally shaved. But she is infinitely more substantial and truly beautiful than the heroine whose beauty is all she has. Dreyer's Joan cries "like a woman," is often afraid and unsure of herself, but how many aggressive, confident men could face death by

fire the way she did? She is powerful in her conviction, a quality so rare in the women films create, that she seems monumental.

In the same year that Dreyer made Joan, Von Sternberg made a silent film called Docks of New York. It tells the story of a blustering, super-male stoker from a tramp steamer who comes ashore for a night of fun. He saves a beautiful woman from drowning and then, to keep her from trying it again, marries her. But he marries her only out of pity, fully intending to ship out the next morning. She wakes up to find him gone, a pile of money on the end table making her no better than the prostitute she had probably been before. He comes back for a short while and we see how desperate she is to hold him--in small, traditionally feminine ways, like sewing a button on his shirt, she tries to convince him that he needs her too. But he is a man, by "nature" independent and eager for adventure. She is "only a woman" who must wait and wait, hoping he will return. She has only her young body and her implied promise of servitude to tempt him back. By avoiding the more refined relationships of middle class society, Von Sternberg has exposed the eternal pain of woman with painful clarity: The man has his life; the woman has only her man.

During this entire period, of course, the western bloomed, and the West was indisputably a man's world. Women entered as prostitutes or reformers, but always at their peril. A cowboy like William S. Hart might fall in love, but it was a temptation he tried to avoid. Often women were in westerns solely as vehicles to demonstrate the hero's courage--she's an "Eastern lady," there for him to rescue from evil gunmen or physical danger, but otherwise, only in the way.

In contrast to this masculine world, a few films were made specifically for and about women and their problems. One typical example, made in the 20's, is called Smouldering Fires. It tells of a cold, successful career woman who rediscovers her femininity when she falls in love with the much-younger foreman of her own garment firm. She marries him, and as she falls more deeply in love, she seems transformed into a kinder, softer person. When her husband falls for the woman's younger sister, she takes it bravely, pretending not to care. But it is obvious that her happiness is destroyed. She has now only an empty career to keep her warm. Such films, like the soap operas of today, had the effect of reinforcing the ideas women already had about femininity. The career woman was made to seem unnaturally aggressive--she was looked upon as a tyrant by her employees. When she finally falls in love and becomes a "real woman" it is too late because she is middle-aged and cannot hold a younger man. Careers are bad for women, the film is saying, a woman must find love and marriage while she is still young, or it will be too late. Of course, women thought this way already, and so they enjoyed films like this which simply reassured them that they were right.

When sound films came into their own, and with them the musical, woman was given a new role--that of glamour queen. This was a period in which films, rather than reflect reality, attempted to avoid it completely by inventing an artificial world of dazzling costumes and witty conversations. Housewives who wore the same dress day after day could sit entranced as the parades of expensive gowns worn by women whose only task was to remain beautiful, passed by on the

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screen. Busby Berkeley went even further and reduced each woman to a bit a glitter which, multiplied, made a magnificent shifting design. With so much beauty on the screen at once, each woman lost her unique value in a sea of abstract femininity.

At the same time, the super-male had not been forgotten. In the 30's, the underworld flourished like never before and gangster films suddenly became the rage. Here again, we see a man's world, but one more evil and sophisticated than the old West. This was a life of violence where women became mere fancy accessories on the arm of a "Scarface" or a "Little Caesar." In the musical, woman may have been an empty shell of glamour, but at least she was important--in the gangster film she meant no more than a glossy new car.

Whether women were queens or molls, they were always infused with a quality of helplessness--in dangerous situations they always needed a man for protection. But Mae West was a woman who could take care of herself. In the 30's she towered above her fragile sisters by creating for herself, almost single-handedly, a character who combined glamour and sexuality with a masculine ego and sense of assertion. Mae West was sexy, but she could never be called a sex object--rather, men became the objects of her desire. In her presence, an actor like Cary Grant seemed to shrink to the stature of a small boy. Men might gawk and whistle as she walked by, but their reaction always seemed more like admiration than exploitation. Here at last was a woman who could seduce a man, use up his money and his good looks, and then move on to the next. At times, despite her fur and diamonds, she seems almost a female parody of the stud who feeds his ego with a succession of

defenseless women. And, like the traditional hero, she could take care of herself physically as well. In My Little Chickadee she shoots it out with a war party of Indians, a six-shooter in each hand, while weak men cower. Fields might call her cheek "as soft as the fuzz on a baby's arm," but Mae West was never soft the way a woman was supposed to be. And her character was as rare and refreshing in life as it was on film.

World War II had a certain liberating effect on the American female. She was recruited into jobs that had formerly been male only, simply because there were no longer enough men to go around. More women received Ph.D's in the 40's than they had before or have since. An important job made a woman feel important (she was helping to win the war, too), and as a result, she became more independent. She even dressed in a more austere manner--dark colors and shoulder pads lent a masculine touch to her appearance. The films of the 40's reflected this changed woman. She was still sexy, but she sometimes smoked and chewed gum, and she knew how to sass back. In a film made in 1944 called A Man Named Joe a WAC saves her suicidal boyfriend from death on a dangerous mission by stealing his plane and completing the job herself. Women were portrayed as missionaries, factory workers, spies. When they were prostitutes, they were usually tough, and as girlfriends they were often gutsy companions. It is interesting that, only later, in the 50's and 60's, were films made like Catch 22 and Bridge on the River Kwai which emphasized the male-dominated, violent aspects of war. In these later films, female lieutenants never steal planes, they merely loll on beaches or stroll through barrages of wolf whistles. During

the war, women were needed by the economy and by the military. For their new tasks, they needed to be tough and self-sufficient and the country wanted them that way. So films were made which emphasized this independence, made it seem even more attractive, and so reinforced it. When the war ended and the men came back, women were once again a surplus job force and were pushed back into home and motherhood. Fewer women tried for Ph.D's. Their former toughness, being no longer useful, was forgotten. Hollywood began making war films about brave or sadistic or terrified men, leaving women with one-dimensional, sexual roles. In Catch 22 Paula Prentiss rises naked and gleaming from a raft in the ocean--she is there to distract men's minds from the dirty business of war.

It is difficult to look at the major films made in the last 20 years and find a single sexual stereotype for men or women. We can, however, trace a theme that began with Clara Bow and William S. Hart and continues to this day: The woman as sex goddess and the man as adventurer. In the 50's and 60's women like Marilyn Monroe and Jayne Mansfield became feminine ideals. Their popularity made it clear that a woman needn't be intelligent or independent to attract a man--she need merely be voluptuous. In films like The Seven Year Itch, Marilyn Monroe played a child-woman--her quality of innocent vulnerability, which destroyed her in life, was transformed on the screen into something so desirable that it became an obsession. A woman could sense her date's excitement as he watched a busty sex symbol move about, larger than life, in the darkened theater. She might begin to feel undesirable and he might reinforce this inferiority by ogling every real life goddess who passed him in the

street. Magazines like "Playboy" only reinforced her fears. Some women wore padded bras and tried to hide their intelligence. Some went even further and paid to have their breasts tightened or enlarged. A few committed suicide like the twin sisters who died together of carbon monoxide poisoning in the family car. Their father said that they had been despondent for months because their figures were less than voluptuous. They killed themselves because they were not Marilyn Monroe. How ironic that Marilyn herself died for the opposite reason.

The ideal of the super male, which began with the first westerns and can be traced through the gangster films of the 30's and the war films of the 50's and 60's, has taken on new trappings in the 70's. The heroes of Easy Rider and Five Easy Pieces may seem a far cry from Scarface or a brave marine, but deep down they partake of the same overblown male myth. Dennis Hopper rides a motorcycle instead of a flying tiger, but he is no less caught up in the role of adventurer and part-time lover. To such men, women are shallow, stationary creatures who provide sex, and with their contrasting weakness, help inflate the ego. Scarface buys his women, the soldier and the Hell's Angels rape theirs, the Easy Rider just "balls chicks." But it all comes down the same.

In the thousands of films made since the war, not all have looked upon women as sex symbols and men as pilot fighters. In 1953 Robert Wise made I Want to Live. Perhaps because this film is based on a real life character, she is far from a stereotype. Sheila Graham is a strong, quick-witted woman who is not easy to push around. She has a sense of loyalty to her underworld friends that is rarely attributed



Monroe in
THE SEVEN
YEAR ITCH

to women. She can be depended on, just like a "good joe." At the same time, she is traditionally female in her love for her child. In a word, she is complex, a quality women don't often have in movies. When she puts on lipstick and combs her hair before facing the lights and the cops, she does it, we feel, not from some silly "female" vanity, but out of pride for herself as a person--she does not want to be beaten, and so she is not. In the film *Red Desert*, by Antonioni, a woman's strange inner turmoil is an agony large enough to fill the screen for two hours. She suffers, not because of a man, but because of some tension growing in her own head which tells her she is basically at odds with her own civilization. Like Sheila Graham, she is defined not in romantic or sexual terms, but in her own terms. She is a person.

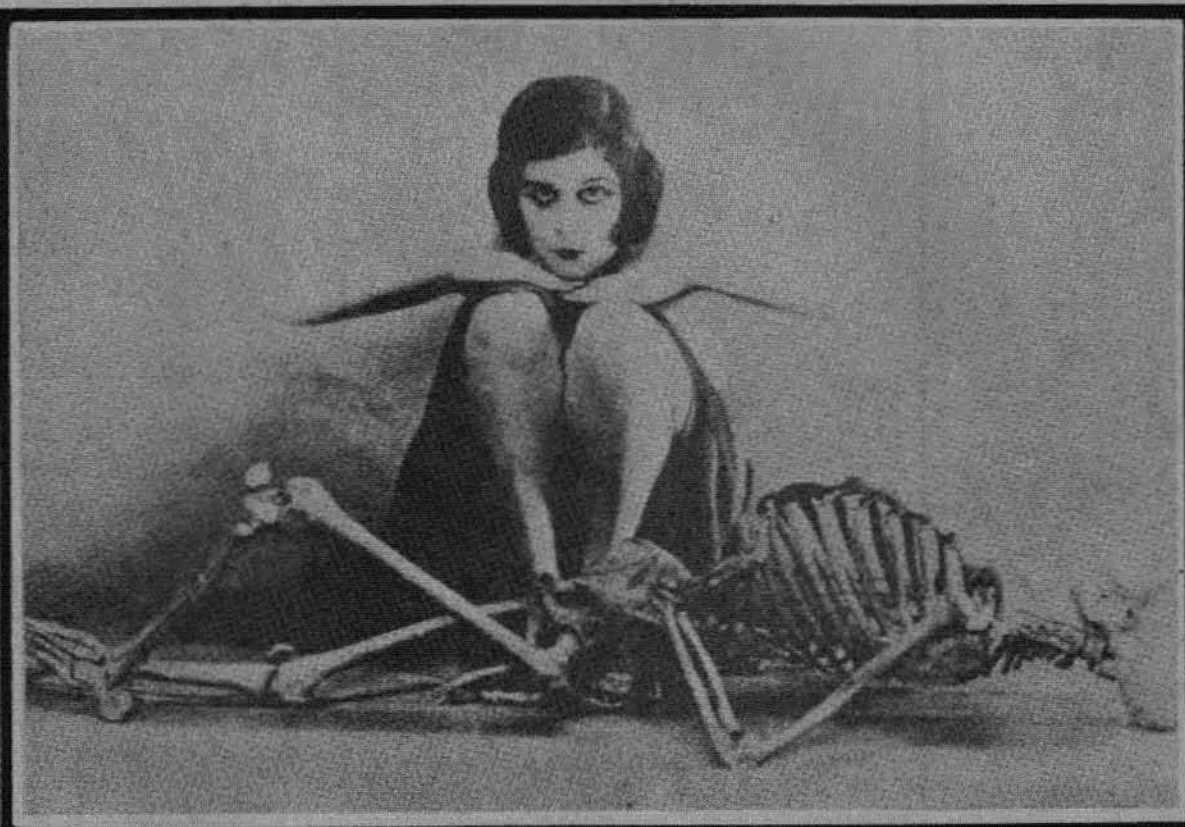
All in all, however, male and female roles remain almost as rigid in 1971 as they were at the turn of the century when movies began. Men are still defined in terms of their accomplishments, their faults, their potential, and women are still defined primarily in terms of their relationships with men. A recent film called *Performance* seems to point towards a new reality, one that may not be desirable, but is at least different. The film shows us two worlds and a man who leaves one to encounter the other. The first is the milieu of the professional killer, a world of sadistic men and masochistic women. James Fox plays Chas, a professional gangster who loves to kill, but who is shaken and changed by his encounter with a lifestyle which totally opposes his own. In the few days that he spends with Turner and the two women he discovers a world in which sexual identities blur, and grown men and women are like children, playing with each other's bodies without urgency

or shame. Because he thinks of himself as a super-male, Chas fears homosexuality. In bed, the woman makes fun of his fears and gives him a hint of bisexuality that leaves him confused. He finds this strange life evil, but compelling. Turner, with his long hair and sensuous lips, looks as much female as male. The young girl has a chest as flat and hair as short as a boy's. When Chas finally covers his close-cropped hair with a long wig, the transformation is complete. He has come from a hard world of rigid sexual identities to a soft, almost sexless one where men and women do not not fear each other because they are essentially the same. In a sense, Chas's world represents a masculine force in collision with Turner's, which is feminine. Yet both worlds remain, in the end, unsatisfactory. Both are filled with violence--Turner's world seems peaceful only because its violence is hidden. Each is filled with a different brand of unhappiness--one is cold, the other warm. But if only because it seems to offer an alternative, the film is important. It indicates that people may be changing, or at least beginning to want to change. Perhaps it means something too, that in the hip younger culture boys and girls are beginning to look, to talk and behave, more and more alike. They are rejecting aggressive, materialistic life styles and adapting gentler, more traditionally feminine values. Perhaps we are moving into a more loving, female age in which creation will supplant destruction. In any case, we can be sure that as more and more people become aware of the imprisoning walls of sexual stereotypes, there will be fewer and fewer people who will accept them blindly, both in real life and in the "real life" of the movies. ■

THE IMAGE OF WOMEN IN FILM: SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Sharon Smith

THEDA BARA
AS THE VAMP.
FEMINISTS
ARE CIRCULATING THIS
WITH A NEW
TITLE:
HE ASKED
ME TO EAT
HIM - AND
I DID!



Women, in any fully human form, have almost completely been left out of film. This is not surprising, since women were also left out of literature. That is, from its very beginning they were present, but not in characterizations any self-respecting person could identify with. Notable exceptions can be pointed to: A Room of One's Own, The Doll's House, etc., in literature, and a handful of films. Through history males have done almost all the writing and filmmaking, naturally from a male point of view. Of course that point of view has been molded or tempered by the culture each man lived in. However, in

modern times, through the sudden (historically speaking) sophistication of the media and their uses, there exists a very large possibility that media now shape cultural attitudes, as well as reflect them. The attitudes of the (traditionally male) filmmakers towards women, and the roles they typically give them in films, must be evaluated in this light.

The role of a woman in a film almost always revolves around her physical attraction and the mating games she plays with the male characters. On the other hand a man is not shown purely in relation to the female characters, but in a wide variety of roles - struggling against nature (The Old

Man and the Sea; Moby Dick; 2001: A Space Odyssey), or against militarism (Dr. Strangelove; Catch-22), or proving his manhood on the range (any John Wayne Western). Women provide trouble or sexual interludes for the male characters, or are not present at all. Even when a woman is the central character she is generally shown as confused, or helpless and in danger, or passive, or as a purely sexual being. It just seems odd that these few images, and others like them, are all we see of women in almost every film.

For example, take the films reviewed in the October 27, 1971 issue of Variety:

Dr. Jekyll and Sister Hyde. Having Dr. Jekyll turn into a female Hyde provides opportunity for plenty of sexual adventures and misadventures. When the tale was purely male it was a complex story of the good and bad in all of us (or at least all men). The addition of a woman changes a serious story into a sex gag.

Fright. A woman is held hostage by a madman and must make love with him to delay being murdered. She is finally rescued by the police. A man being held hostage would either free himself or die trying (Un condamné à mort s'échappe), not simply "submit" to sex and be freed by the police. Someone in the film industry feels there's no excitement in dying like a woman!

Dagmar's Hotpants, Inc. "About a comely prostitute who decides to close up shop and marry her straight boyfriend." Woman as whore.

Blood From the Mummy's Tomb. A female Egyptian mummy is reincarnated in a quiet London suburb and embarks on a reign of terror. Classic woman-as-evil theme.

La cavale. This is a very promising idea, "an incursion into prison life as adapted from a book by a woman who has served time." A major topic, with prison riots in the news. But,

"this is not a crusading film about penal life." It is about the woman's love for a male inmate, their marriage and attempted escape. Variety calls the part, "a meaty role...a childlike but knowing girl who does not blame society for her state." Any chance for a broader theme is smothered by the necessity to define the woman entirely in terms of her sexual interest in a man. And the "childlike but knowing girl" is yet another stereotype.

1000 Convicts and a Woman. The daughter of a British prison governor arrives home from finishing school and "goes on the make for every man in sight." Woman as whore again - not even for money!

Boulevard du rhum. Brigitte Bardot is a silent film star who is loved by a boat skipper. The story is about the men who try to control her (and succeed), as the skipper's love is hindered by his boss and "her Hollywood chiefs", who finally kidnap her and leave the skipper "again looking at her screen image dreamily." Woman as object of male fantasies and power.

The films I have just listed don't promise to be particularly well-made films, and it could be argued that there is little depth to any of their characters, male or female. But my point is not that the films don't have deep characterization, or even that the characters they do describe in depth don't exist (somewhere in the world a prostitute may have been married this very minute). My concern is that the range of roles open to women is very strictly limited. This problem is found in moderately good and even excellent films.

For example, Puzzle of a Downfall Child is a study of one person's confused life. It is difficult to imagine a similar study of a male central character which would purposely lead only to a cloud of confusion and mystery. But the story is about a woman,

and by traditional male standards women are puzzles, confused and confusing creatures. Woman-as-mystery cliché.

The French Connection is an excellent film, very realistic in what it chooses to portray. But where are women in good films? One is the wife of a member of a dope ring, another is a flicker of skin in the hallway of the male central character's room.

The strongest female characters I can find are the female heavies discussed in Ian and Elizabeth Cameron's book, Dames. But even when female heavies do turn up, "they are often pushing wives of the Lady MacBeth type or are tormenting their menfolk, whether with infidelity, greed or lust for power."¹ In one of Mari Blanchard's later epics, Machete, she was the wife of a man who ran a sugar plantation. Her future plans did not include her husband, which, "of course, meant by the accepted rules that she didn't have a future."² Or Gloria Grahame: in the famous coffee-throwing episode of The Big Heat one side of her face is disfigured by a jug of boiling coffee thrown by a man (Lee Marvin). When she gives him back in kind at the end, she ends up dying, "in the way of tarnished ladies who help movie heroes."³ Think how rare it is, even among the female heavies, for a woman in a film to make a successful effort to protect herself, as Rhonda Fleming did in Slightly Scarlet when she plugged a gangster with his own harpoon gun. The film tradition of weak and confused women is so strong that in the same film Arlene Dahl is shown as definitely unbalanced, with no explanation offered. Since very few filmmakers have given much thought to their habits of sex-role stereotyping, even a film which has one strong female character will revert to cliché

motivations and actions for the rest.

That last point is a very important one. Filmmakers' minds must be changed, or this stereotyping will go on forever. When a film is being made the emphasis is usually on the main theme, whether the film is about a spy ring or gangsters in the 1930's. Questions of modernizing sex-role stereotypes are rarely on the filmmakers' minds, even when the story is about a woman and man in love. In their desire to make the plot clear and get the message across, writers and directors often use short-hand expressions of characterization. Does a science fiction movie need sparking up? Bring in a female scientist and have a love scene (The Forbin Project). A woman who "doesn't know her place" (that is, who has a career besides sex and motherhood) can bring a laugh and move the plot along. As John Simon put it, "today's American actresses fall mainly into two categories... those who in some way deflect, trayesty, or blatantly overstate their womanliness and sensuality; and those who suppress it, or have nothing to suppress."⁴ Can you imagine the male hero confined to two categories, those who overstate their sensuality and those who suppress it? Men in films are judged on courage in war, loyalty to friends, faith in themselves - a thousand things. Who cares whether or not the hero of The Confession would be a good lay? By the way, I fully realize that the image of males in films is often stereotyped as well as that of women but in most cases this is the cliché of the virile and virulent macho male, which, though potentially destructive, is at least a symbol of power and authority.

Industry heads, as well as new filmmakers, male and female, should be provoked to think twice before inserting a woman simply as a mechanism for action which hinges on

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the man - the woman who gets pregnant inopportunistically and forces the man to give up his career plans (Blue Denim). Or whose sacrifices help the man rise in his career while she lives, and be heartrendingly pained when she dies (Love Story). In both these cases, with the general theme of unplanned pregnancy or of death in mind, perhaps the people making the film might think: "let's make Blue Denim into a film about how a young woman feels who had hopes for a career but finds herself shunted into being a housewife, while the parents only worry about the young man's career plans."

Films express the fantasies and subconscious needs of their (mostly male) creators. How has the stereotype changed from the beginnings of film to the present? Here are some suggestions of the trend as I see it:

In the early 20th century, when women were just starting to have legal rights to money and possessions, Cecil B. DeMille produced The Cheat (1915), the story of a woman who has borrowed \$10,000 from a Japanese man and tries to pay him back in cash instead of paying in sex. She is branded on her shoulder as one of his possessions for daring to presume a female could use cash instead of sex in the world of men. This was "praised for the realism of its players"⁵ in its day.

In the 1920's women were beginning to be employed in a number of fields. Men who confused business power with sexual potency were made insecure by the presence of women in jobs, even in jobs of an obviously servile nature. Clara Bow had such typical roles as manicurist, usherette, waitress, cigarette girl, taxi dancer, and lingerie saleswoman. All of these were roles in which a working woman's prime duties could be interpreted as flirting with the ever-changing male

clientele (yea, even for lingerie). As time went on and women took themselves more seriously in jobs, any film about a working woman was at first funny - The Lieutenant Wore Skirts - later sexy - The Stewardesses. The message? Why take yourself seriously when all you have to do is be young and pretty to succeed where it really counts - with a man!

Moving into the thirties - research desperately needs to be done about censorship and Mae West. Suddenly there was a woman who simply enjoyed sex, didn't use it to hurt men, didn't suffer about it herself. As Lewis Jacobs put it, "Mae West eyed a man from head to foot. All the time you knew she was evaluating him in terms of virility, as James Cagney eyed a woman."⁶ Six months after the release of She Done Him Wrong the Episcopal Committee on Motion Pictures was formed (1933) heralding the age of censorship. Was it the sex in her films that frightened the censors? Motion pictures had always been able to show naked or semi-nude women, in guise of historical or Biblical stories. And Mae left her clothes on, down to the last diamond. Or was it the obvious fact that she enjoyed every moment of her conquests, she, a female!

As she says in her autobiography, "She Done Him Wrong changed the fashions of two continents... Women were trying to walk and talk like me ... Women became more sex conscious, and this, for some men, was a big break; for others, a bother. Sex was out in the open, and amusing."⁷ The film producers were getting enormous amounts of money from West's successful pictures, so they didn't try to stop her. But it would be very interesting to examine the motives of Will Hayes and the censors. Women expressing interest in sex was, for some men, "a bother"... It makes one wonder about the many films in which

the woman "naturally" is frigid and must be "brought around" by the man. Generally a woman who actively likes sex, but on her own terms, seems to be cast as a "castrating woman" by the men on whom she makes demands; or, like Betty Field in Of Mice and Men, her sexuality brings death and destruction to the males.

It would also be very interesting to see research about the changing film image of women before and after the war. During the war, women worked at "men's" jobs, went to college, supported themselves. Since the men were at war the women were naturally afraid they might never have love, homes and children. Then the GI's returned, and took back the jobs and the places in college. The fifties saw an enormous change as women immersed themselves in babies and housework. Was it partly the movies which made them feel that "the cold dimension of loneliness which the war had added to their lives was the necessary price they had to pay for any interest outside the home"?⁸

For example, The Star (1952): A movie actress's career starts a decline; she struggles against alcoholism and self-pity, even working as a shop assistant when her funds run low. At last, she gives up (it is a happy ending when a woman gives up) and marries a patient man who "had been waiting for her to get the stardust out of her system."⁹ In Jeanne Eagels (1957), on the other hand, the woman pursues her goals - and dies. One of the few films of the 1950's which encouraged women (by example) to have a career was The Actress (1953). Written by a woman (Ruth Gordon) and based on her early life, it ended with the woman having her father's blessing for her career.

In serious dramas tragedy hits the career woman (or marriage does, for a happy ending). In 1950's sex comedies, the laughs are on her. She is

assumed to be frigid, and the plot rolls along on the tricks a man plays on her, with liquor or words - until the very end of the film, when he suddenly gives in and marries her. With very few films available which provide a strong female character to identify with, women have learned to masochistically enjoy seeing women ridiculed on film. They murmur, "of course, I would never be so foolish", or enjoy seeing a younger, more attractive woman "put in her place". And men have once more succeeded in dividing women's ranks.

It seems to me that the "sexualization" of women in films started slowly but has been increasing at a tremendous rate, especially in the last few years. Ninotchka (1939) merely made it clear that a female diplomat should not complete her mission to recover the jewels, but must make loving a man her mission. Current films, from Lolita to 1000 Convicts and a Woman, show not only the sexual awakening, but (in ever more explicit details) the many physical acts the woman performs.

Naturally, it is possible for a woman to enjoy watching films of explicit sex acts. But out of bed the sex-star's role will be the usual: bitch,



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HAVE THE SAME
NEUROSES.

nymph, housewife, whore, essentially passive, nothing any sane woman would want to identify with. And it is the female star whose naked, silicone-stuffed body is plastered on billboards, not the male star. I don't think anyone will deny that when a female's body is the focus of attention the action is aimed at male viewers. The intent nowadays is not to give a mixed audience an interesting (humorous, tragic, etc.) study of male-female relationships, but to work out the neuroses of male filmmakers with an ever-increasing vengeance, aimed at titillating male audiences who have the same neuroses. And in men and boys who do not already have these prejudices - it creates them.

What bothers me most about pornography is not the cubic inches of flesh displayed (which censors so misguidedly snip out) but the image of women in these films. Plenty of research has been done on the effect of violence on film and TV viewers. I imagine it is very rare that a person would see a murder on TV and immediately kill someone. But what about the persistence of attitudes learned from films? Many films persuade men that any and all women, walking down the street or sitting at home, day or night, are ripe for sex with any man who knows a few trick words, or is strong enough. I've never met a man who believed it, but it is a very unpleasant and frightening daily experience for a woman to walk down a street while men poke at her, make noises at her, and carry on monologues about her anatomy. But sex movies suggest that this is an effective way to excite a woman.

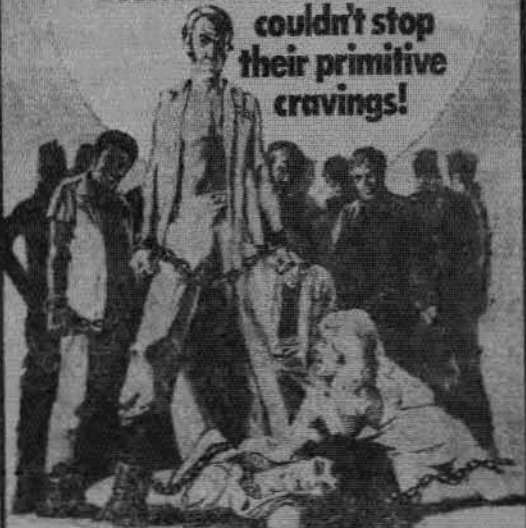
Films use all their powers of persuasion to reinforce - not the status quo, but some mythical Golden Age when men were men and women were girls. Traditionally the entire world is male. "Man" means the whole human race, and "woman" is just a part of it. But

think "in female" for a moment. Imagine:

That everything you have ever read uses only female pronouns, she, her, meaning both men and women. Recall that most of the voices on radio and faces on TV are female, especially when important events are in the news. Recall that you have only one male senator representing you in Washington (if you are tempted to laugh and say that would lead to catastrophe, ask yourself where we are now).

Imagine that women are the leaders, the power centers. Men are shown in films only in their natural roles as husband and father, or else as whores and very nasty persons. Men are shown only in their natural functions of trying to attract women and making the world a comfortable place for women. Film men who rebel against this die

**CHAINED
LIKE ANIMALS-
treated like trash**
even the filth and sweat
couldn't stop
their primitive
cravings!



**CHAIN GANG
WOMEN**
color by de luxe

JOHN H. AUSTIN, JR. PRESENTS
A DE LUKE PRODUCTION
A FILM BY JOHN H. AUSTIN, JR.
CASTING BY JERRY JORDAN
MUSIC BY JERRY JORDAN
EDITED BY JERRY JORDAN
PRODUCTION DESIGNER JERRY JORDAN
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JERRY JORDAN AND JERRY JORDAN
PRODUCED BY JERRY JORDAN
WRITTEN BY JERRY JORDAN
DIRECTED BY JERRY JORDAN

very ugly deaths. Women star in all films of international excitement or adventure.

Imagine that countless films show men as simple-minded little sex objects, and you despair of finding a strong role-model for your little boy (for whom you see other futures than slut, bitch or house-husband).

Imagine that the women in charge of the film industry use their power to ridicule the men's liberation movement, presenting them in films as a bunch of frustrated studs, deluded into thinking they can be women, burning their jockstraps and waving signs - but always ending up in the boudoir of a condescending woman, always giving up the struggle and being happily subservient to her.

Then imagine that if you complain you are given the biological expla-

nation: by design a female's genitals are compact and internal, protected by her body. A man's genitals are exposed and must be protected from attack. His vulnerability requires sheltering - thus, in films, men must not be shown in ungentlemanlike professions. Psychological films remind men of their childhood, when their sisters jeered at the primitive male genitals, which "flap around foolishly" while the sisters could ride, climb and run unencumbered. Men are passive, and must be shown that way in films, to reflect and protect reality. Anatomy is destiny.¹⁰

I hope by now it is obvious that women must be shown in a much wider variety of roles. Their characterizations must have heroism and human dignity - expressed in fields besides homemaking, loving a man, and bearing children. Women must be shown as active, not passive; strong women shouldn't constantly face ridicule and unhappy endings. Women should be shown in adventures which don't revolve around sexual attraction for a man; or working with other women without cattiness. Men will become more sensual in sex roles - how many films I have seen in which the hero somehow makes love without unzipping his fly! This does not mean that men and women's roles in films must be completely and irrevocably reversed. Women just want a chance to be heroes; a chance to be shown as humanly (not just femininely) frail; and a chance to see men in some of the ungainly situations in which women have so commonly been shown. When you think "in female" you will know that traditional themes, characterizations, and even, perhaps, standard approaches to tragedy and comedy, need to be translated "into female."

What sorts of themes would these be? An old college text suggests

A STRONG
WOMAN:
TO BE
RIDICULED
OR TAKEN
SERIOUSLY?



Associated Press

This photo of a North Vietnamese militia woman and a captured U.S. airman is said in Hanoi to be the most popular photo in a war exhibit there. The photo was originally released by Hanoi in January, 1967.

HOW OFTEN
DO YOU SEE
PUBLICITY STILLS
OF THIS NATURE?



the three basic themes of tragedy are: Man vs man, man vs nature, man vs himself. Translated into female, these would become: woman vs man, woman vs woman, woman vs nature, woman vs herself, and, perhaps, woman vs society.

Woman vs man could be a woman trying to accomplish something important, who is hampered by a man who expects her to cater to him. Woman vs woman could examine the ways in which lack of jobs sets women against each other as they compete to be the company's "token woman". Woman vs nature finds a woman coming to terms with herself in a wild and rugged countryside - it could be the biography of an explorer, pioneer, flier, etc. Woman vs herself could show a woman made schizophrenic by the conflicting roles she is expected to play. And woman vs society could be one woman's epic struggle to live the way she knows she must and society rules she must not. There have already been films about these struggles, but they have very, very rarely been about women.

Comedy "in female" will be very difficult to develop. Not because women are unable to laugh at themselves (they can, masochistically, as 1950's sex comedies proved). But because the shorthand methods of characterization commonly used see women as butts of a very specific and

destructive kind of humor. A self-assured woman is pompous (or saved by being unsure of herself around the hero), a career woman is frigid, a beautiful woman is stupid or cruel, a smart woman is ugly, a strong wife is a henpecker (for tragedies, a castrator), etc, etc. As Legman pointed out in his book about sexual humor, "this material has all been created by men, and there is no place in it for women except as the butt. It is not just that so preponderant an amount of the material is grossly anti-woman in tendency and intent, but also that the situations presented almost completely lack any protagonist in which a woman can identify herself - as a woman - with any human gratification or pride."¹¹

This leads to a major question, which has been present in my constant use of the term "male filmmakers" throughout the paper. Will all these problems change immediately for the better as the film industry is integrated by women?

Not necessarily. In the first place, it will be a long time before women will be represented in every aspect of the film industry. As a woman in the writer's guild put it, "women are discriminated against in all aspects of the media. They are given the lower paying jobs, and have to fight twice as hard and be twice as good as males to get comparable jobs."¹² And once in, they are traditionally kept from power. As an independent filmmaker (female) put it, "behind every 'masterpiece' of male intelligence are hidden women, the editors, continuity girls, script girls, who are forgotten in that most incredible of all male film fantasies, the auteur theory."¹³

In the second place, even with women fully represented in the film industry, men will continue to write, direct and produce films about women. Unless convinced otherwise, they will continue to produce the same old stereotypes.

Finally, many women, products of the same society that created the neurotic male filmmakers, are anti-woman. Simply having more females working in film will not change the films' content unless everyone working in films, male and female, start rethinking the traditional sex role stereotypes.

Culture influencing film content, in turn influencing culture - this need not continue to be a vicious circle. I believe publication of research is the first step, to convince people a problem exists and what it consists of. Men, for example, might want to catalogue the types of role models provided by the classic sex role stereotypes of men. And I am presently researching women (some 350) who are working in film; their example might spur more people to hire women, and more women to enter filmmaking.

Correcting the stereotypes will open up a new world of film themes. And new images of women and men in film will provide more constructive models for film viewers. ■

¹ Cameron, Ian and Elizabeth, NY, Praeger, Inc., 1969. p. 3.

² Ibid., p. 12.

³ Ibid., p. 42.

⁴ Simon, John, *Private Screenings*, Macmillan, NY, 1967. p. 297.

⁵ Walker, Alexander, *Sex in the Movies*, Penguin Books, 1966. p. 214.

⁶ Jacobs, Lewis, *Rise of the American Film*, p. 533.

⁷ West, Mae, *Goodness Had Nothing to Do With It*, p. 152.

⁸ Friedan, Betty, *The Feminine Mystique*, p. 177.

⁹ Gow, Gordon, *Hollywood in the Fifties*, pp. 150-151.

¹⁰ suggested by an article in *Everywoman* newspaper, by Theodora Wells

¹¹ Legman, G., *An Analysis of Sexual Humor*, p. 217.

¹² my own research

¹³ my own research

BED AND SOFA/MASTER OF THE HOUSE

Beth Sullivan

Viewing of the two early film works, *The Master of the House* (by Danish Carl Dryer) and *Bed and Sofa* (by Russian Abram Room) makes for a very interesting and educational comparison. Both are impressive in their attempts to deal with the position and treatment of women in society; however, they approach the question quite differently and come to dissimilar conclusions.

The films are alike in many ways. Most important, they were made at the same time about the same subject. Made within a year of one another (1925 & 1926), both dealt directly with the question of woman's role in society. Also, both films use a similar format to present the subject--the personal relationships of individual couples in the nuclear family unit. Here the similarities end; but they provide an excellent background against which to examine and analyze the significant differences between the films and their approaches to the question. Because of their common structure, disparities cannot be blamed on the age of the films nor on the quality of the individual filmmakers, since both have been recognized as equally innovative in relation to the societies they represent. Rather, we shall see that it is those very societies which can be viewed as responsible for the attitudes and ideas expressed in the films. First, an examination of the films themselves:

In *Master of the House*, Dryer has some interesting and sensitive insights into the everyday condition of the life of a housewife. In the opening scene, and throughout the film, there is an explicit portrayal of the endless, repetitive chores that all women must perform in the care of a home: cooking, cleaning, laundry, constant care of the children, and, on top of it all, minding the husband's "special" needs and wishes. We see

Mary carrying out her chores not only dutifully, but cheerfully, as a "good wife" should. She sacrifices constantly in her loss of emotional dignity before John and in more specific material ways, such as scraping her own bread so that he would have more and the best of the food. It is she who "makes ends meet." She acts as the pressure valve, attempting to keep life pleasant (or at least tolerable) for her husband John, and if she "fails," then she can at least be patient with him and allow him to vent his anger and frustrations upon her.

John is constantly critical of her every move. He demeans the work she does and gives the ultimate insult when he reprimands her about watching their son. When questioning why she can't look after him properly, he tells her, "You've nothing else to do all day!" This is a common concept still prevalent today. "Woman's work" isn't really work in the sense that the society defines the word. She does nothing, earns nothing, and, therefore, is nothing.

Mary's reaction to all of this is totally internalized. Her anger is channeled into anxiety, frustration, and guilt--all of which add up to tears and more tears. However, Nana, an old neighborwoman, is able to confront John, and even slaps him when he dares to blow smoke into her face after her scolding. In response to this we see the little anger that Mary does allow to surface, but she is slapped back down with the threat that John will leave her if she doesn't rid the household of meddling old women. He makes it a choice--the most difficult of all for a woman to make--between what she feels is right and "him." In the face of this she does the expected: she chooses in favor of John, seeing the old women as the unreasonable ones. She blames herself for

not being able to manage, and she defends him, asserting that "he's not bad." She rationalizes with excuses about the great pressures that are on his shoulders. But her own pressures have gone beyond her limits, and she breaks down and is taken away by her mother to recuperate.

The following events revolve around John and his awakening to the reality of the situation. This culminates in his realization, "What fools we men are! We think we do all the work, but you women do three times as much and earn nothing for it!" This point is well taken and has Dryer taking a generally progressive stand on the subject, however viewing through a more conscious eye, it becomes clear that there are important failings in the work.

The major problem is that the change in conditions comes about independently of the action or will of Mary. In fact the last thing she actively does is to defend John, refusing to recognize his behavior as selfish or intolerable. She is then whisked away because, it seems, her better instincts are overcome by her physical ill-being (how convenient!). She never confronts or struggles with the problem--with John. The old women, especially Nana, are left to fight her battles for her. This is really a cop-out because the old women have nothing to lose; they aren't taking any chances in confronting John, so the task is relatively easy and almost enjoyable because of their position. It wouldn't be such a simple job, of course, if it were Mary who had to stand up to John on her own behalf. But the only time we see even a flicker of anger from her is on behalf of another--of Nana when John gets rough with her. When she is faced with the real problem and the choice, she is too weak to even deal with the situation.

In the final analysis, it is John who must face matters and really confront the ideas involved (this would be too much for Mary?!). And on top of this, we are intended to feel sorry for him, as Nana does in her "better" moments. The attitude is that he is being punished; but this so-called punishment really only consists of doing things he should normally be responsible for doing!

In Bed and Sofa, the Russian film director Room begins the film in a very similar manner to that of The Master of the House. In the opening scene we find Ludmilla in a situation which is easily recognized. It is the start of another day--for her husband, Kolya, it seems almost an adventure, but for her merely a repetition of isolated drudgery. We can see harboured within her an unconscious resentment, evidenced most clearly by her reaction to his finicky attitude at the breakfast table. She remarks sarcastically, "His majesty, the husband!" After he leaves we sense even more her utter anguish. She is listless about her duties, and when Kolya brings his friend Volodya home to stay with them, she is still unmoved from her lethargic state. At first she sees him as basically just another burden around the house, but he proves not to be so. In fact, he is thoughtful, helps with chores around the house, and brings her diversions--magazines, a radio, etc. We see more of her resentment rise in the scene where she overhears Kolya discussing with Volodya a three-week trip he must make. She reacts angrily when she hears him reassuring Volodya of her adoration and devotion--and how he would punish her if she ever were unfaithful to him.

Once Kolya is gone, Volodya takes her out on the town--on an airplane trip and to the movies--a rare treat for her. She is extremely happy and

grateful for the attention, and soon afterwards, the warm feelings culminate in bed. The scene in which she awakens is interesting. At first, while Volodya is still sleeping, she appears unhappy and gives a sardonic laugh when she looks at his feet in bed next to her. But, when he wakes and embraces her, those feelings give way to ones of "love," and the next shot is of her fondly sewing his shirt. Clearly, her unconscious reaction was one of anger at being plied with attention only to end up in bed, but she must block these feelings in order to justify to herself what she has done.

To this domestic bliss Kolya returns, and discovers what has happened. His reaction can mainly be summed up in his own words, "Damn-ed woman!" He expresses some anger at Volodya but basically it is Ludmilla who is blamed and condemned.

Now Kolya is on the sofa, but the triangle is soon back to normal. The two men are together again--fraternity triumphs. Ludmilla is again the third party, ignored by both of them. She is bored and miserable. She lashes out that she is "tired of them both," but this does no good and it is clear that she is the victim of the circumstances. Volodya is behaving just as Kolya used to. He orders her about and when she resists and tries to leave he forbids her. At this point she reprimands him, "His majesty...as loud as the other one and just as bad!" This is an important realization for her, even though she is not fully conscious of the implications as yet. By now she is extremely frustrated and she even tries to turn back again to Kolya in her confusion. Herein lies a major contradiction for women. Ludmilla is unable to see beyond her own structure; she cannot (as yet) see any solutions except in relation to the men in her life.

To complicate matters even more she becomes pregnant. It is not absolutely clear in the film whether Kolya is completely ruled out of paternity, but it seems so since he decides (and gets Volodya's approval) that Ludmilla should have an abortion. She is angry that the decision was made independently of her, but she is confused and agrees to go through with it. At the clinic she is frightened and becomes nostalgic when looking out of the window at some children playing below. As a result she rushes out and home where she packs her things and leaves a note to the effect that neither of them are fit to be fathers and that she can take care of herself. She says she realizes that she is better off alone than with either of them. With that she takes off her wedding band, places it on the note, and leaves. Next we see her in the window of a train, speeding far off into the distance. The look on her face is not happy, but she seems content in her new freedom. And, in the final scene with the men, we see Kolya and Volodya having accepted their fate. They mildly admonish themselves as "rotters" and then proceed to drift back into life as usual, contemplating their "tea with toast and jam."

Based on the above descriptions and criticisms, we can now attempt to examine the gross and more subtle ways in which the two films approach the question differently. Both begin at the beginning of a new day. In Master of the House we see Mary already up and well into chores while John is still abed, but in Bed and Sofa it is Ludmilla who stays in bed and must be roused by Kolya throwing the cat on her head (dear fellow). Mary is shown to be totally resigned to and in acceptance of her role--a quality which never changes and one which we are encouraged to admire, in a way.

However, from the beginning we see a disenchanted Ludmilla, tired to death of her hum-drum existence, not even wanting to wake to face it. Her attitude is clearly one of dissatisfaction. She makes sarcastic remarks at the breakfast table while Mary bows and "scrapes." Ludmilla is careless and disinterested in her work, while Mary goes at it with the mindless fervor it necessitates.

These general opening attitudes set the stage for the entire presentations. Mary is the typical self-sacrificing, obedient housewife. She is simple and childlike and fits the stereotype perfectly. What's more, she never becomes anything else. She is basically the same woman in the end of the film as in the beginning. In spite of changes around her, she remains, because she has not in any way been a part of any of these changes. Mary is a static character...she does not develop in consciousness nor does she change, move, or act throughout the entire film. She is somehow only necessary in order to pose the problem, and then she is eliminated. She is a lesser character than both Nana and John, when in fact she should be the main character, because the film is about her oppression. But, no, John is the main character. He is the one who develops. She is passive and he is assertive, just as it "should be."

Also, the other women in the Dryer film, Nana and Mary's mother, are negatively stereotyped. Both are "nags," a familiar image which is frequently applied to women. Nana especially is seen to be an old henpecking meddler, who enjoys "emasculating" men. She "takes him back thirty years" and proceeds to scold and "pick on" poor John. She is the old hag, as opposed to Mary's mother, the good wife, and neither are full human beings. Woman is portrayed as either an angelic simpleton or a castrating bitch.

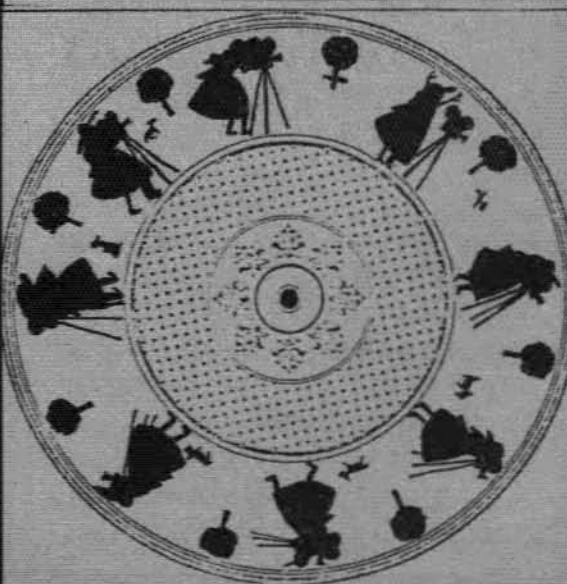
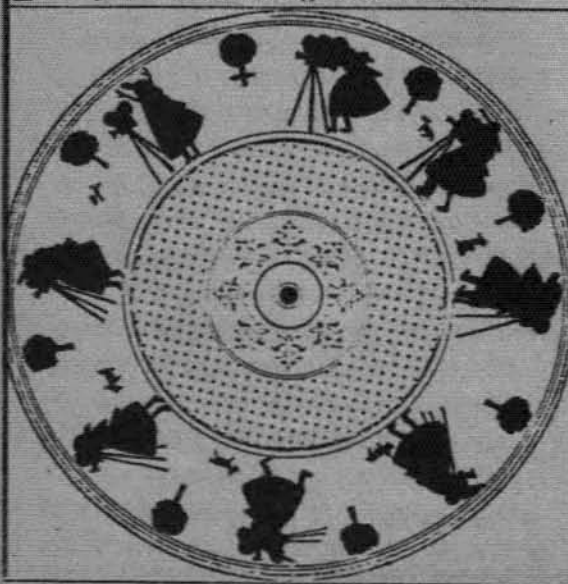
On the other hand we find no such negative stereotypes in Bed and Sofa. Ludmilla is a feeling, thinking being, whose character develops fully in the course of the film. The emphasis in the ending on the abortion issue and the maternal instinct seemed to be something of a cop-out, in that she leaves not as much for herself, but for her child. However, that she leaves is significant; and that the men's lives go on almost uninterrupted shows how really peripheral she was to their existence and how correct her decision was.

Dryer has attempted to present a progressive opinion on the condition of women, but becomes bogged down in stereotypes and attitudes which he has failed to challenge. The obvious reason seems to be the fact that he attributes the oppression of women to attitudes in individuals. This is in a sense true, but he doesn't realize that such attitudes only reflect the society around him. In fact, woman's position in the household is the position she has been assigned in society (whether she works outside the home or not). When Dryer has John realize that women do three times as much for nothing, we see no attempt at an answer why this is so. Also, Mary's role as equalizer is never questioned. In fact, her sacrificing would never

have been given a second thought, had John's behavior not been excessively cruel. Even this was explained away by the fact that John had had a recent financial failure, and all is solved by the generous gift of a whole new business in the end. This explains why John is able to go from the beast that he was to the perfect fellow he turned out to be.

Of course, these are not real reasons at all for Mary's oppression. Basically they have a minor effect; but moreover, the situation itself is unrealistic. Far from the average situation, it indicates that Dryer is seeing the problem from an upper-class view point. What is really behind these problems is a class society (in this case capitalism) which needs the free labor and services of women in order to expropriate larger profits. It also needs women as scapegoats so men can vent their anger on them, instead of on those who really oppress and exploit them.

It also follows that the reason the film is about John, and not Mary, is that Dryer has accepted the host of ideas of inferiority that have been created over the centuries to justify woman's position. Specifically, he accepts the stereotype that Mary is the less intelligent and the more passive partner, who does not act but is acted upon. ■



HAWK'S WOMEN: DON'T YOU THINK I COULD KNOW A GIRL?

April Ford

Howard Hawks is an "action director" not because of the amount of movement in his films, but because Hawks' actors express their personalities through their actions. Hawks never deals in abstract psychology, but makes every motion of his actors a manifestation of character. The way a man rolls a cigarette, cocks his hat, or pulls his ear defines the man; it is a tangible sign of lifelong failure when a guy can't light his own cigarette lighter.

Because Hawks' films are so engrossing in this way, it takes time to become aware that Hawks passes over many of his female leads by endowing them with little more than deep voices, snappy clothes, and a profound dependence on men. He either doesn't understand, or is not interested in the ways in which women can function. Or, he may be afraid to explore seriously the irrational and humiliating forces he sees in women. Not all the women in Hawks' films are as superficial as this suggests, he tries to relate to all the people he works with, and is unrestrained enough to depend on the knowledge and talents of his actresses to help him create convincing characters--as with Katherine Hepburn and Rosalind Russell. Unfortunately, Hawks is not always so wise or so lucky in his casting, and his recent actresses-cum-fashion models contribute very little to a collaboration.

John Ford made male action films during the same period, and for the same audience as Hawks, but Ford creates a controlled world where the women are stereotyped and idealized; they exist in a tradition where specific roles are ordained for them. Ford's code has frightening political implications because it is based on group standards forming the indivi-

duals. Yet these (beautiful, but) repressive films are praised as art, while Hawks, who centers his films around the peculiar beliefs and actions of individuals, has often been criticized for his conservative tendencies. People feel more threatened by (therefore more critical of) Hawks because he encourages his audience to become involved by varying his films with his actors, and with the political climate of the time, much more than Ford does.

Hawks tries to make his characters true to themselves rather than to an imposed order by accenting and carrying over the actor's personal quirks and preferences to the character he plays. Dean Martin made perfect material for Hawks' drunken Dude because he bordered on alcoholism himself. John Wayne and Robert Mitchum always play close friends and professionals; indeed they are good friends, and, if not experienced cowboys, they are professional actors. The feeling of honesty and directness this conveys, along with the straight-on, eye-level camera--totally unlike Ford's distancing, low-angle heroic shots--makes any shallowness of his actresses role-playing much more noticeable and disturbing than that of Ford's most tradition-bound virgin.

Joanne Dru may work so smoothly in Ford's *Wagonmaster*, and yet fail so flatly at the end of Hawks' *Red River* because Hawks uses her more: he gives her more lines and tries to make her a more complex character. But his attempts seem very surface and male-oriented; she gains Montgomery Clift's esteem, for example, by pointedly acting like a man--shooting Indians, and not crying out when she is struck by an arrow. Even so, her emotional honesty, her practical concern, and her insight into the men could be interesting as a description of a kind of woman. Her final speech--"Hey, why are you fighting when you know you love each

other!"--ought, too, to be a refreshing contrast to the dull, worked-up hatred of Wayne and Clift. But on the screen her lines are forced, she is pretending in a way that consistently appears in Hawks' women: it is as if she, a woman, were playing the part of a man playing a woman. She seems to deny her individual qualities in favor of some conception of women Hawks possesses.

The women in Hawks' films are more often independent-spirited than subservient, but they are always subsidiary, existing only in relation to the men. No matter if the woman is a professional photographer (Hatari!) or the wife of a racing driver (Red Line 7000), she lives next to, and outside of, the all-important male group. She has no alternative because there is nothing of interest going on outside the group. In the films that center around a man-woman love relationship, the group diminishes in importance, but the characters still work within the framework, breaking the usual rules of the group in one way or another. In the "male adventure films", the women often try to join the men by bringing them coffee, food, sex, or information, or by being particularly good at something. Jean Arthur gains the respect of the fliers in Only Angels Have Wings by playing the piano as well as any man when they are all trying to forget the death of one of their friends. This respect the men often show for the women is generally due to the women behaving like men. But Robin Wood takes it as an expression of "spiritual equality" of Hawks' men and women. He contradicts himself without realizing it when he says that "the establishment of male authority will be a matter of voluntary surrender on (the woman's) part." That male authority will be established, or that authority need be established at all in a relationship, is a rather grand assumption. However, Hawks seems to live with the same contra-

diction--he presents Feathers (Angie Dickenson in Rio Bravo) as strong and independent because she decides when she will let Wayne take control over her. When Wayne comes to visit her, she wears a sexy dancer's costume, and arouses his jealousy by telling him she plans to entertain in the saloon. He forbids her, and in a Hawks film, this marks the beginning of their sexual relationship. Lauren Bacall hopes for the same kind of direction in To Have and To Have Not when she asks Bogart if she should steal a wallet. She would like him to demonstrate his love for her by ordering her not to steal, but his overwhelming fear of attachments, or "strings" causes him to refuse to make that commitment. Bacall, like Dickenson, is forced into an aggressive role in an attempt to make the man respond. It is finally the man's response that is most significant in the film. The women are used either to act as foils for the men, or to arouse emotional and natural drives in the men that would not otherwise be apparent in the men.

The women are more significant as characters at the other end of the Hawks spectrum, in the heterosexual love-oriented films (most of which are comedies). They play a larger part in the action, and are wilful enough either to challenge the man in his own field, (I Was A Male Warbride, His Girl Friday), or to destroy the man's belief in the ultimate importance of his work (Bringing Up Baby). The group, the profession, is no longer the safe retreat it is in the adventure films, it has lost its relevance, sometimes even become a threat. In Male Warbride, the occupation, soldiering, becomes inessential to Cary Grant when Anne Sheridan, eating breakfast on a sunlit patio, refuses to identify Grant and accomplishes his mission with inhuman efficiency while he is in jail. Grant has quit his army post in order to marry Sheridan, but instead of fading into the background, the army

NO MATTER IF
THE WOMAN
IS A PHOTO-
GRAPHER
(HATARI!)
OR THE WIFE
OF A RACING
DRIVER (RED
LINE 7000),
SHE LIVES
NEXT TO, AND
OUTSIDE OF,
THE ALL-
IMPORTANT
MALE GROUP.



RIO BRAVO

becomes a frustrating bureaucracy that locks Grant in a maze of "female buildings" where he can't sleep alone, much less with his new wife. His humiliation culminates in the necessity of his impersonating a warbride in order to enter the U.S. However, Hawks does reserve the marriage bed, once they find one, for male domination; Sheridan, in other areas as amazon, is a shrinking virgin in bed, even the thought of Grant rubbing her back terrifies her.

In *Bringing Up Baby* Grant plays a different sort of fellow, a stuffy and absent-minded paleontologist. It is Katherine Hepburn's part to rescue him from the stifling influence of that ultimate exaggeration of professionalism, the dinosaur. Miss Swallow, Grant's prim fiancée, is as dried-up as Grant's assembled brontosaurus skeleton. He winces as she insists that they needn't bother with babies, that "this (indicating skeleton) will be our child". All the same, Grant is too naïve about his own drives to think of protesting, he uses the same system of value. When he discovers that the final bone to his dinosaur, his intercostal clavicle, will arrive on his wedding day, his response is, "Imagine, two such important things happening on the same day!" and an earnest, enthusiastic look. Hepburn, with the aid of her pet leopard, Baby, pesters and harasses him out of his over-civilized complacency into a more human, if more confusing, existence.

Hepburn plays the part of Susan, a rich, presumptuous, and hopelessly mixed-up society girl. They meet first when she, for no apparent reason, claims possession of Grant's golf ball. Grant seems to feel that he must get the ball from her as a matter of principle, he becomes as insistent and childish as she is because he knows he's right, and is mystified by her completely irrational, but equally positive position.

Again, because the man is reticent, the woman must initially take the aggressive role. Hepburn risks herself in a task that a Hawk's man would never endeavour: she tries to interest someone in marrying her. She chases Grant wildly, using any crazy excuse to attract his attention. She tricks him into visiting her by pretending Baby has attacked her, and she blackmails him into accompanying her to Connecticut by refusing to make the leopard stop following Grant. In her excess of enthusiasm, she often humiliates Grant unintentionally and laughs helplessly at what she's done. The height of his humiliation is when he has to wear her fluffy pink bathrobe because she sends his clothes to the cleaners. As he comes downstairs, he is besieged by a loud little dog, Susan's dowager aunt, Colonel Appelgate, and an hilarious Hepburn.

Through all this nonsense, Hepburn keeps a perfect comic distance from Susan, making her interesting by drawing on her own personality, but constantly aware of the differences between herself and her role. Hawks has something of the same success with the performances of Rosalind Russell in *His Girl Friday*, and Lauren Bacall in *To Have and to Have Not* and *The Big Sleep*. These women are defined more by their relation to the man than Hepburn is. Grant prevails upon Russell to give up the thought of the home life Ralph Bellamy offers her, and to stay with him as wife and employee.

In *To Have and Big Sleep*, Bogart basically tames the clever, independent, and sharp-tongued Bacall. These women attain fulfillment by learning their "true" roles from the men. The men also have a need for the women, but they do not need to change in order to find fulfillment.

Hawks often encourages this kind of relationship by choosing his male lead from a small list of stars: Bogart, Wayne, Grant...and then trying to find a novice female lead. In this

way he is able to control the women, he is not threatened by their attempts to take over the direction. The spontaneity of Bacall's performances under Hawks stems in part from just this attitude. She necessarily relies a great deal on Bogart as an established actor, the same way that the character she plays relies on him as a superior, more experienced being.

Hawks continued to use this system throughout his career, but with less and less interesting results. Hawk's lead male stars become older and weaker--Wayne deteriorated from the near-invincible *Chance of Rio Bravo* to the "comfortable" old man of *Rio Lobo*--and as a result of using much younger actors with the older star, the close friendships that united the group begin to disintegrate. As the lead men become less interested sexually in the women, they gradually become more insipid, less real characters, and more a collection of characteristics; they no longer have a strong, almost paternal figure to define themselves with. These later women retain their basic attempt at self-determination, but their spirit, garrulity, intuition, have become imposed, mechanical, as if Hawks impressed his conceptions of innate feminine qualities on his actresses.

The women in Hawks' later films are weakest. The way Charlene Holt in *El Dorado* laughs at the antagonism she arouses between Wayne and Mitchum is entirely too smooth and forced; she is pointedly showing her Maturity and Independence. Jennifer O'Neill in *Rio Lobo* conceives and executes many of the films most ingenious plans because of her combination of "masculine" intelligence and coordination, and "feminine" irrationality and intuition. It is her idea to drive her medicine wagon up to Jack Elam's shack so Wayne and Jorge Rivaró, concealed in the back, can get in range of the gunmen they are trying to kill. And it is she who

finally enters the house by running crazily through Elam's shower of bullets.

The women seem particularly proud of these admirable, imposed traits; O'Neill thinks she is pretty good when she leads Rivaró to believe she can't ride, and then mounts her horse and prances around to show off her riding skill. It is as if, by emulating men, she gains a sort of superiority, she becomes a part of the Hawks elite. A sign of Lauren Bacall's achievement is that Bogart tells another, uninitiated, woman not to get tough with "Slim," "she's apt to slap you back" and he winks approvingly at Bacall. Sherry Lansing, in *Rio Lobo*, brazenly assumes such an elitist position--she is, in fact, so obtrusively secure in her sexuality, and so proud of being the first bare-breasted woman in a Hawks film, that she smirks through her whole "want some chili or enchiladas..." scene with Rivaró.

It is strange that the only scene with a woman that had any emotional force was the one where the woman was least in control: Susana Dosomantos has a convincing moment when she weeps in frustrated hysteria while Sheriff Hendricks and his men brutally beat up Chris Mitchum.



I Was a Male War Bride: Captain and Madame Rochard (Cary Grant and Ann Sheridan)

INTERVIEW WITH JUDY SMITH S.F. NEWSREEL

Mitch Tuckman

(San Francisco Newsreel, The Woman's Film)
New York, April 16, 1971

(This 45-minute film, the best woman's film so far, starts off with a series of stills in rhythmic collage of women working, women in TV and billboard commercials, women in wedding gowns, models in magazines, etc. The tempo is to the beat of the once-pop hit "Can't Get No Satisfaction." The film then focuses on individual interviews with white, black, and Chicano working women in their homes talking about their pre-marital days--days when the big hope was of the one man who would transport them from the drudgery of their four walls. Following that disillusionment comes a raising of consciousness about women's real position in life. At this point the film is interrupted with a series of cut-outs from the days of the slave market. Black women like black men were sold to the highest bidder. The parallel: "women as niggers," the private property of one man to another, from father to husband.

The second part of the film follows the women to their individual consciousness-raising groups where the attempt is to help each other in specific matters, from child-care centers to personal problems. Other women find action in strikes where they can finally pinpoint a big enemy in the large corporation. The film largely shows women's economic exploitation and finally how women learn to be fighters.)

MT: The thing that struck me when the film was over is that you see these five women all through the film speaking, and I had a feeling that they were almost randomly se-

lected. Then at the end you see that all these women are in fact organizers: they were all on a platform speaking. You get the feeling, well, maybe not all women could have these feelings or could talk about this, and it seemed to change the whole nature of the film in the last shot.

JS: Well, none of the women are really in organizations. They're not like professional movement people in that kind of way. We chose them because we thought they were representative of the ordinary working woman, but it's not like they are the normal woman because they have really achieved a very definite . . . they've gone through certain processes that made them know certain things.

MT: They were all speaking someplace in the end.

JS: Because each of them has gotten involved in their community and they were asked to speak at certain rallies, but they're not like movement people at all. They just were asked to speak because they had been involved

MT: Coming at the end of the film and not knowing that they're women who have spoken publicly on the issues, it seemed to me to change the nature of whom you had been listening to.

JS: It seems you say we're sort of deceiving people, but basically I think it's both things: they are women, I mean the first impression you get is that they're just regular women who've had the same experiences everybody has had. I think that's true, that's who they are, but then they've also

had certain experiences that heighten their consciousness, like Vanda's husband going out on strike, that you see in the film.

MT: Are they all San Francisco people?

JS: San Jose also. That's where a lot of them are from. That's where they really . . . I mean they have the same life experiences as most poor women in this country--they had certain experiences where things began to crystallize and they became much more radical, and at that point they began speaking out. When Vanda was tied in the house by her husband she wasn't out giving any speeches.

MT: That was an astonishing story.

JS: I showed the film to fifty male telephone workers and they cheered when she said she was . . .

MT: You mean they liked the idea? They thought it was funny?

How did you happen to show it to fifty telephone workers?

JS: Some guy who's working in the phone company got us in to show the film at lunch hour.

MT: Is that a standard Newsreel thing?

JS: Well, that's the main focus of what we want to do.

MT: And that's the intended distribution for the film? How do you feel then about its being shown at the Museum of Modern Art?

JS: I think it does say something to middle class people. I think it speaks to all women. I think it also says something very important to middle class people, that there are working class people, that you don't have especially middle class women's liberation people, you don't have a thing on women's liberation that there's a whole class of

people out there who're really going to make the struggle.

We did a whole thing, we had press conferences. We built a whole series of publicity. And the reaction of even the press people is, "Wow, there really is going to be a revolution," you know, there really are people out there. And I think that's a really important political message to everybody.

MT: In a way The Woman's Film works the same way as Finally Got the News. You get the women's jobs and problems, and then you spread out to the problems of black workers, I think men and women. Finally Got the News is basically about black workers, but also shows that the struggle is the same for white workers. Did you consciously structure that in a dialectical, building way?

JS: The structure we saw first was personal oppression, and then was economic oppression on the job, and finally was political oppression and solution.

MT: Was it an all woman crew on the film?

JS: Yeah.

MT: How many people made the film?

JS: There were three people and one of them left, so basically two of us did all the editing.

MT: And the shooting?

JS: Uh-huh.

MT: Were you the ones doing the interviewing?

JS: We did everything. One woman was there for the interviewing.

MT: How long did it take?

JS: A year.

MT: When did you make the film?

JS: We started a year ago March and we just finished in February.

MT: San Francisco Newsreel made a women's film and must worked through a kind of women's issue somewhere in their history, whereas when Detroit tried to do that, it was one of the things that made Detroit Newsreel fall apart.

JS: Right.

MT: Why didn't San Francisco fall apart?

JS: I think one of the main things is that as women, we also saw our focus on working class analysis, whereas the split in Detroit happened like the women had much more--well, I know it from the man's point of view, so I don't really know the women's point of view, but they said it was really a class split rather than a male-female split, that the women were identifying with the middle class women's movement and the men had a more working class analysis.

In San Francisco Newsreel we were very consciously making a film about working women, not middle class women, and so our identification was more with that. It helped the whole group more than anything, like we really took leadership . . . it was really important, I mean the whole group was supporting us making that film for a year. That was really all the group was doing.

MT: Was that the only film that they made in that time?

JS: Yes. The labor history script was written. We're making a labor history film and you have to raise the money for that.

MT: And how is that working out in terms of men and women staff? Who's going to direct it?

JS: Labor film? There aren't any directors or anybody in Newsreel. It's two men and one woman working on it. It's going to

have hopefully a lot about women workers too.

MT: Built in rather than tacked on.

JS: Oh, yeah.

MT: That'll be better than Finally Got the News where it was an interruption.

JS: They're going to have an interview with one of the women who led the Flint strike in Michigan.

MT: Another thing I wanted to ask you about was the aesthetic quality of the film--was it just a matter of gaining experience with the equipment? Sometimes there're these jerky zooms and out of focus shots, or was that intentional?

JS: We had the screening at the Elgin and we were walking out and some woman said, "I don't know if I like that fuzzy camera technique." It was not intentional. It's because we were using different cameras each time we shot, because we were using borrowed equipment, and it was a matter of not knowing the equipment.

. . . I think one important thing in the film was the slave auction song. It's after the workers' section. The whole thing of how black women and women in general have been slaves. We thought that was really important in a historical sense--it comes right before the welfare section--and also the whole idea of women has been as saleable items, and black women particularly. The whole historical thing is done for that, the whole history of women being sold.

MT: One thing then in the use of that song: everything else is a present-day documentation. How did you organize it in an aesthetic way--to what degree is it a film, as opposed to merely being the most expedient way of getting across the information?

JS: I think it was really important for us. See, I think the thing that's different between this film and Finally Got the News

is that this film came from the people. When we started out to make this film we decided that we weren't going to write the script, that the ideas would come from those women, that --like what Mao says, from the people to the people.

MT: The ideas came from those women? Then when did this . . .

JS: We spent like three or four months talking to people.

MT: When did you decide how you were going to edit it together? Before you shot the material?

JS: First we did preliminary interviews and then we compiled everything they had told us.

MT: With film or without film?

JS: Without film, just talking and out of everything they told us, we structured a series of questions that would elicit that information. And we chose what we thought was most important and most common from all the women, and so that was like preliminary editing. Then we had a huge script at that point that included many, many things.

MT: Script in terms of . . .

JS: Ideas.

MT: But not in terms of things people said?

JS: Well, like we said, Vanda's story about being locked in the house, Florence's story about the candy bars, Mary's story about . . . that is really important to us there, their problems and the way they found the solutions, and rather than getting over-specific . . . originally we were going to make a history film on women's oppression.

MT: Coming up to what point?

JS: To today, past struggles, present struggles.

MT: Was it all going to be voice-over narration?

JS: No, we weren't sure. We just thought we'd have a whole lot more information about the suffragettes. Women have always had a history of struggle and this was just part of it. But we just saw the strength of those women and the vitality was much more important than any kind of facts.

MT: When did that come out?

JS: Once we met the women. As soon as we met them.

MT: The inclusion of the stories that they tell, certainly the story about being locked in the house, work in a dramatic way--in the same way as in the beginning of Weekend, when a woman nearly nude sits in a room and tells a very erotic story although nothing erotic is going on, it's all carried by the words. And in The Woman's Film different people tell these stories, you don't see them happening, but these things are all carried by the words. She's ironing all the time she's talking, isn't she?

JS: Except when you see her finally leave the house.

MT: Was that sort of thing planned or were they just things that happened while you were filming?

JS: No we planned. We wanted something to show her doing, leaving and saying that. So that's what we did. We asked her what she thought would be like an act of saying, "Fuck this."

MT: And that was when she finishes ironing . . .

JS: . . . takes the bowling bag and leaves.

MT: So in other words, things like that which are very filmic types of communication were all...?

JS: Oh, we considered ourselves making a film. We spent a very long time editing. I mean like we had a lot more material and we realized we had to make one film, and a film that worked emotionally as well.

MT: Are you making any other woman's film now, or will the material be incorporated in the labor history film so that the women's struggle will be part of the over-all all...?

JS: New York Newsreel's also making a film about one woman, Janie. She's a white welfare woman. She's 28 and she has five kids. She left her husband. It'll be ready in about a month.

MT: Is the distribution going to continue to be through Newsreel? For instance, if people start seeing The Woman's Film at the Museum, do they make any association where they start demanding Janie to be shown at the New Yorker Theater?

JS: We wouldn't mind showing them in theaters. I mean if Rugoff wanted to distribute The Woman's Film, we'll let him do it. If NET wants to buy it, they can buy it. We think the film stands on its own.

MT: Who pays for The Woman's Film to be made? Rentals?

JS: We did fund-raising, rich liberals.

MT: Just going around and asking?

JS: That's why it took so long, because we had to stop and fund-raise every three months. People have a lot of money they give away to liberal causes, not radical ones. ■

CONFRONTING THE CONSCIOUSNESS INDUSTRY:

TWO ANALYSES OF WOMEN'S ROLE IN THE MEDIA



By Irwin Silber

The paradox of demanding from the bourgeois cultural super-structure a consciousness which runs counter to the basic class interests of those who control the media has been one of the perennial political dilemmas confronting radicals.

In retrospect, one sees how the various struggles for the "rights" of blacks, women, and political dissidents to participate in the system on an equal footing inevitably leads to that structural absorption of both ideology and cadre that has served the bourgeoisie so well in the period of its greatest agonies.

At the same time, one must recognize that people's lives are not put on hold while the objective conditions for revolutionary social change mature. There has always been a significant leftist current which continues to be outraged by any attempt to improve the situation of oppressed peoples that falls short of the total socialist restructuring of society. The problem of understanding the proper dialectical relationship between "reform" and "revolution" remains one of the thorniest questions confronting serious revolutionaries.

It is with a sense of this overriding duality in mind that one approaches the question of women and the mass film medium. The question divides naturally into two areas--although their inter-relationship is obvious. First there is the matter of employment. Surely the frame of reference of readers of this publication does not require a polemic or a debate on the "merits" of women functioning as film directors, screen-writers, cinematographers, editor, etc. More and more women are undertaking such

roles and, given the general societal thrust, there is no way in which this process can be reversed. But auteur theories of film to the contrary, the emergence of women in these crucial creative roles in the film-making process is hardly a decisive change in the real power structure. Film producers are rarely--if ever--women; and the giant banks and holding companies who really define the reality of all aspects of the commodity process (and films are, before anything else, intellectual commodities), are, by definition, mainstays of the oppressive class structure. (To be sure, one might undertake to crusade, as some leaders of NOW have done, for more women stock-brokers and bankers, but does anyone still seriously think that such changes in the character of the ruling class will have any significant effect on the lives of any but a handful of women?)

The fact is that the right of women to participate equally in every aspect of bourgeois society, while obviously reflecting elementary justice, is not incompatible with the larger workings of the system. True, it threatens enormous pockets of privilege among particular men and introduces a source of competitive energy that can only add to the anxieties of the already socially neurotic professional and upper middle classes while violating the assiduously cultivated ideological systems of eons. But since the classic division of labor out of which sexual role differentiation* developed historically rests today, as the result of technology, on a completely new set of assumptions, ideology is in the process (as usual) of catching up with changed social reality.

Social anachronisms, however, rarely wither away. The tenacity

THE ARTIST IS HARDLY AN IMPARTIAL EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL OBSERVER OF THE HUMAN CONDITION, THE VERY PROCESS OF PRODUCING AND DISSEMINATING ART IS SHAPED BY THE CLASS AND SEXUAL POSITIONS OF THOSE INVOLVED.

of outmoded consciousness and counter-productive social authority require that they be overthrown. And in a sense the most important aspect of the struggle for women's rights is not in the illusory "victories" of tokenism but in the new consciousness growing out of the struggle itself.

Aside from the actual employment of women in hitherto unavailable jobs--thereby enabling that many more women to achieve at least that minimal degree of self-definition which men in an equivalent class position think they have, and creating psychological "culture models" for other women--the notion is advanced that the participation of more women in such "creative" enterprises as filmmaking will significantly affect the consciousness of those media. Women, we have been told, being more life-oriented than men, will not make films based on the same unabashed assumptions of violence and death. It is an appealing thought--to those who fear violence. And the fear of violence (except for their legalized brand, of course) that runs rampant among the ruling classes of North America and western Europe in the face of their collision with history might well be labeled paranoid--were it not based on a real perception of what the future holds in store for them.

Let me make it clear that I am not questioning the right of women to grab and hold any position inside this system they can. But I do question the significance of it in the larger social pattern. Surely the point becomes much clearer if one imagines the "importance" of Nixon replacing Gen. Creighton Abrams with a woman general in Vietnam. And if we understand that the mass media operate--for the most part--as ideological

weaponry for the ruling class, irrespective of the intent and personal predilections of its particular instruments, then perhaps we can begin to counter some of the illusions which have developed around such questions.

The fact is that the continued cultural colonization of the oppressed takes the form of a voracious ruling class eliciting from the exploited themselves the new ideas and methodology which, in fact, will maintain and deepen the hold of the system over their lives.

Concededly, there are significant differences between the military and intellectual apparatuses of the ruling class. The internal contradictions of the system manifest themselves in a variety of ways and frequently enable us to exploit them against the system. But we have seen for several decades now the naked careerism of scores of pseudo-radicals and hipsters cloaked in the rhetoric of "using the man's technology against him."

In terms of the larger social process, the "new" cultural assumptions about women now finding their way into film are even more interesting. It is one of those internal contradictions of the system that in order to sell its intellectual commodities (which is certainly the first law of capitalism) it must satisfy a genuine socially-felt need. True, the culture mills have become expert at manufacturing those emotional needs for which it can then supply the appropriate product. But the slickest advertising agency in the world knows the limitations of artificially-induced anxieties. (Even the body odor syndrome, after all, has some fleeting acquaintance with the reality of population density and chemical support systems.)

In any event, the media did not

create contemporary feminist consciousness. This new awareness grew out of radically changed social conditions which gave rise to a whole new set of expectations capable, for the first time in history, of being met.

The crucial area for all art (I use the word "art" here not in an evaluative sense, but only as a functional description) rests in the tension between outmoded consciousness and changed social reality. One of the methods of art is to explore the ramifications of that tension in particular lives. But since the artist is hardly an impartial extra-terrestrial observer of the human condition, the very process of producing and disseminating art is shaped by the class and sexual positions of those involved.

Inevitably, therefore, film in bourgeois society (and I am not now speaking of "outside the system" political and underground film), while it must deal in some fashion with the awakened consciousness of feminism--and even appear at times to be proceeding from "revolutionary" assumptions--will be functioning primarily on behalf of capitalism. This will be the case whether the film is as neanderthal as a classic macho western (or even a "hip" macho western like *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*), as supercilious as *Marriage of a Young Stockbroker* or as troubled as the current *T. R. Baskin*.

For bourgeois society is a complex infra-structure and a great variety of seemingly contradictory (and mutually exclusive) intellectual needs are forced to exist within its bowels. The assuagement of violated outmoded consciousness through the recreation of such less-troubled fantasy worlds as *Hello, Dolly* or the mock-heroic frontier is one way of mollifying the restless "natives." But pacification is only one of the functions of

BOOK TABLOID

NOVEMBER, 1933

Tragedy to Happiness

Chrisman

Clark's attempt at suicide when he leaped from the window of their room on the seventh floor of a cheap theatrical hotel in New York. Clark lived but Helen was at first accused of having pushed him from the window! Is it any wonder that when she came to Hollywood, after her liberation from Clark, that she cared little what hap-

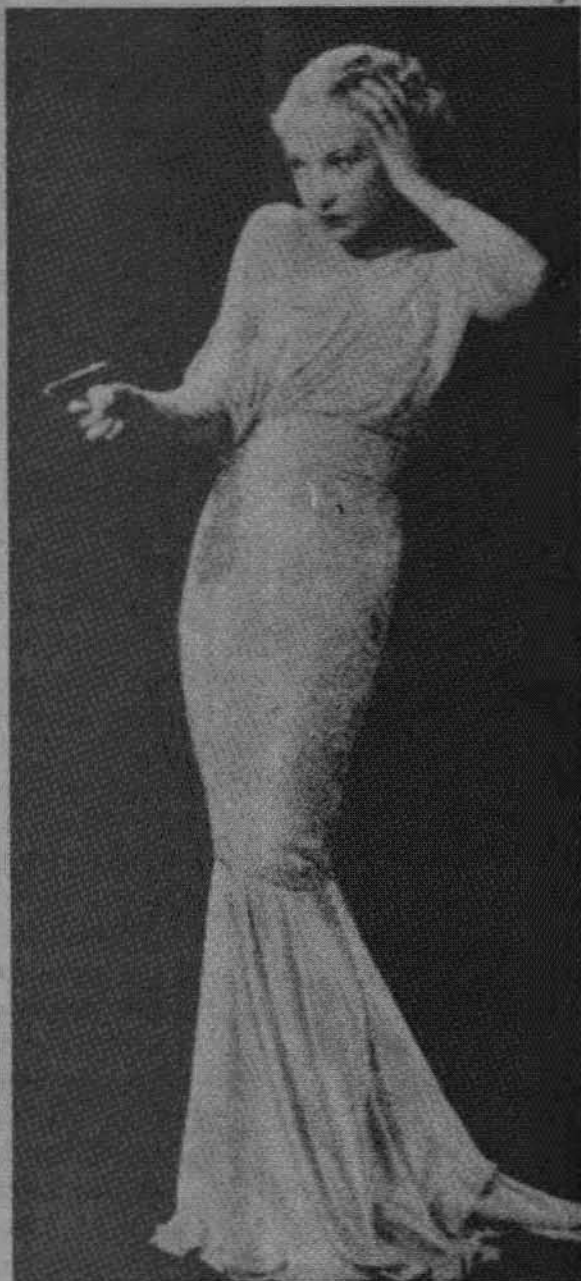
pened? Hollywood did not save the little girl from Brooklyn with open arms. Three pictures for Fox failed miserably to enter. Then, at last, and Goulding selected for a rôle in *Grand Hotel* which raised her to the ranks of stardom for the first time.

But it remained for a picture called *Her Man* to really give Helen her opportunity. She knew that this was the hit of her career before the first week's shooting was over but that was not the greatest thing that *Her Man* was to do for the Twelvetees.

HILLIPS HOLMES was a member of the cast. One day, when he had a luncheon date with Helen, he absent-mindedly ran into another with a young estate man named Woody. Laughing at the three went to together.

Frank Woody fell in love with Helen at first sight. She was with him but the memories of that first unrequited infatuation stood between them. Helen was afraid and why not? Woody was gentle, persistent and his wooing was a decided contrast to the impetuous ardor of young Twelvetees. Helen decided to wait a while to be sure. At last they were mar-

ried. Hollywood turned up its nose in its cynical sneer. Another one of



Helen Twelvetees, who appreciates happiness now, having suffered tragedy in early life

those things. Frank and Helen settled down in a home on Bristol Avenue in Brentwood Heights

(Continued on page 182)

EXTRA

THE NEED
FUNDAMENTALLY--
FOR THE WOMEN'S
MOVEMENT AS FOR
ALL LIBERATION
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HELP CREATE AN ART
THAT FLOWS OUT OF
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POLITICS.

bourgeois art. It must also prepare society for changed social reality; by reflecting the new social tensions, it not only helps to up-date consciousness, it also inexorably defines the limits beyond which the ruling class will not allow it to develop.

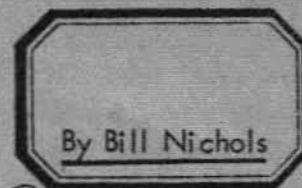
Needless to say, little of this process occurs on a conscious level. There is no ideological board of directors plotting out these nuances of mind manipulation. In fact, if the process were dependent on the individual alertness of the consciousness-dealers it would not be able to function one-tenth as well as it does. (This is not to deny the extremely artful conspiracies which do exist--especially in network television--and which quite deliberately are shaping emotional responses in relation to the needs of consumerism.) But the real value of such films as Diary of a Mad Housewife, or Husbands, or Sunday Bloody Sunday to the system is that all of these confront genuinely-felt experience. That for the most part they distort reality does not necessarily take away from their social value to the system--because they are able, thereby, to simultaneously give the illusion of concern while diverting social outrage into non-productive channels. In the process, they may also make some contribution to, if not consciousness-raising, at least the demystification of authority, a development which, under certain circumstances, can be translated into meaningful politics.

The need fundamentally--for the women's movement as for all liberation movements--is to help create an art that flows out of and is dependent upon not just ideology, but politics. That is, an art whose very life and communication emanates from the realities and needs of struggle. All commodity art--with-

out exception--is inevitably compromised. At best, it can momentarily exacerbate some of the system's own contradictions. But as a medium for developing revolutionary consciousness or the ideology of liberation, commodity culture can only play a destructive role--either neutralizing such ideology or turning it into its opposite.

Commodity culture is important to observe and understand because it provides us with a great mass of evidence on the changing needs of the system and the variety of its counter-revolutionary devices. But there is nothing more dangerous than developing the illusion that it offers revolutionary forces an opportunity to change contemporary consciousness in any significant way. ■

*We take exception to Silber's analysis. "The natural reproductive difference between the sexes led directly to the first division of labor based on sex, which is at the origins of all further division into economic and cultural classes and is possibly even at the root of all caste (discrimination based on sex and the other biologically determined characteristics such as race, age, etc.)" Firestone, Dialectic of Sex.



Of what concern is women's role in the media for a radical movement? The answer hinges on the function of the media as a socializing element that contributes to the creation of consciousness, particularly in so far as it hinders or obstructs the development of revolutionary consciousness. Many

argue that the increased presence of women within the media (at precisely what level is often unclear) will at least lessen the intensity of reactionary ideology (often equated with the glorification of violence and the self-sufficient ego), if not build a truly radical alternative. It is this assumption which requires closer examination.

The basic role of the mass media is to disseminate ideology within a society, i.e., the ruling-class ideology. There is not, however, a one to one correlation between economics and ideology and the consciousness industry is therefore not a monolithic slab of bourgeois values. Numerous mediating factors come into play which diffuse the content and broaden the range of the consciousness that is expressed and aroused. Some, like Irwin Silber, even argue that the most advanced elements of the media (generally associated with the counter-culture) help formulate new ideology and new forms of consciousness that are necessary to the bourgeoisie if it is to keep in step with economic transformations and dislocations (most notably the shifts from competitive to finance capitalism and from Horatio Alger frugality to James Bond-like consumerism). As such the media may present many ideas that are potentially revolutionary but always within a format that makes them amenable to the continuing control of the ruling class. In such a situation then, how can women enter the media and avoid playing a role that is ultimately counter-productive?

History does not often make precipitous leaps across recurring patterns, and the woman's movement appears to be no exception as it moves through stages that blacks have experienced here and that numerous revolutionary movements have undergone in various countries. Its spokeswomen

in the late sixties when the New Left became a vital force, were predominantly elements of the white middle-class intelligentsia (who had the leisure and wealth to organize protest) and their programs amounted to a bourgeois-democratic revolution-- a radical thing when you are struggling against feudalism (a man's home is his castle, etc.).

These elements are still very powerful (e.g. NOW) and their programs reminiscent of the legal reforms advocated by the Civil Rights movement in the early sixties. At the same time, extremist and separatist groups have developed who do not recognize aberrations within a basically sound system as the enemy but the other half of humanity-- men. Still less powerful at this point, but growing in strength-- as black and Third World and working class women in general who saw no point to these predominantly white, idealist groups discover a rationale for common alliance-- is a Marxist, feminist movement that recognizes the fundamental conflict to be a sexist/class conflict.

For the most part, however, women's battles against the media have been fought by reformists and radical feminists with a rank and file of basically white, middle-class, individualists. Not only have their manifestos and proposals had little meaning for working-class women in general, but little attempt has been made to overcome the mystical aura that surrounds the mass media and which stands as a major consciousness barrier to greater working-class activism in this field. Hence, most efforts have been directed toward forcing wedges into previously all-male preserves so that women can compete more equitably (and under the same, pre-existing, ruling class rules). The most common cry has been discrimination against women in the media rather



WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

We must make political films.

We must make films politically.

1 and 2 are antagonistic to each other and belong to two opposing conceptions of the world

1 belongs to the idealistic and metaphysical conception of the world.

2 belongs to the Marxist and dialectical conception of the world.

Marxism struggles against idealism and the dialectical against the metaphysical.

This struggle is the struggle between the old and the new, between new ideas and old ones.

The social existence of men determines their thought.

The struggle between the old and the new is the struggle of classes.

To carry out 1 is to remain a being of the bourgeois class.

To carry out 2 is to take up a proletarian class position.

To carry out 1 is to make descriptions of situations.

To carry out 2 is to make concrete analysis of a concrete situation.

To carry out 1 is to make BRITISH SOUNDS.

To carry out 2 is to struggle for the showing of BRITISH SOUNDS on English television.

To carry out 1 is to understand the laws of the objective world in order to explain that world.

To carry out 2 is to understand the laws of the objective world in order to actively transform that world.

To carry out 1 is to describe the wretchedness of the world.

To carry out 2 is to show the people in struggle.

To carry out 2 is to destroy 1 with the weapons of criticism and self-criticism.

To carry out 1 is to give a complete view of events in the name of truth in itself.

To carry out 2 is not to fabricate over-complete images of the world in the name of relative truth.

To carry out 1 is to say how things are real. (Brecht)

To carry out 2 is to say how things really are. (Brecht)

To carry out 2 is to edit a film before shooting it, to make it during filming and to make it after the filming.

(Dziga Vertov)

To carry out 1 is to distribute a film before producing it.

To carry out 2 is to produce a film before distributing it, to learn to produce it following the principle that: it is production which commands distribution; it is politics which commands economy.

To carry out 1 is to film students who write: Unity - Students - Workers.

To carry out 2 is to know that unity is a struggle of opposites (Lenin) to know that the two are in one.

To carry out 2 is to study the contradictions between the classes with images and sounds.

To carry out 2 is to study the contradictions between the relationships of production and the productive forces.

To carry out 2 is to dare to know where one is, and where one has come from, to know one's place in the process of production in order then to change it.

To carry out 2 is to know the history of revolutionary struggles and be determined by them.

To carry out 2 is to produce scientific knowledge of revolutionary struggles and of their history.

To carry out 2 is to know that film making is a secondary activity, a small screw in the revolution.

To carry out 2 is to use images and sounds as teeth and lips to bite with.

To carry out 1 is only to open the eyes and the ears.

To carry out 2 is to read the reports of comrade Kiang Tsing.

To carry out 2 is to be militant.

JEAN-LUC GODARD January 1970
Translated by Mo Teitelbaum
Reprinted from After Image

THE CONTINUING
DETERMINATION ON
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GROUPS.

than transformation of media that discriminate against all working and oppressed people.

Consequently, what victories have been won, have generally been channeled into the co-optive, non-deleterious forms that Silber warns of. Elsewhere in this issue, for example, Silber indicates that women may tone down displays of violence, but that this is not necessarily dangerous to the bourgeoisie. (For an excellent analysis of how the bourgeoisie can exploit both violence and pacifism, see Christopher Caudwell's superb essay, "Pacifism and Violence," in Studies in a Dying Culture.) If women are to work within the mass media in any kind of radical capacity, it would seem to require discreet, coherent forms capable of maintaining a revolutionary thrust against the counter-revolutionary tendencies surrounding them as well as a more explicit and pervasive agreement on who is the enemy.

Two models come to mind. In the late 30s and through most of the 40s, the artistic left in Hollywood preserved a degree of autonomy and mutual defense through formal, professional organizations like the Screen Writers Guild and Screen Actors Guild. As Abe Polonsky has explained, however, these organizations endured while the mass base of support in the craft unions was being systematically undermined. Finally by the time of the Hollywood 10, the only form of reprisal left was moral indignation and that has never won any decisive battles.

The other possibility is the formation of independent propaganda units like Newsreel, American Documentary Films, and The Guardian. In this case, however, the always difficult problem of distribution increases exponentially and the mass media are left to their own, often devious, devices. It is an option requiring a different level of com-

mitment from that which many are willing to make and a range of artistic expression perhaps narrower than many would like. While such cultural and political guerrilla units are necessary and vital, it is not likely that they are capable of providing a large enough arena, either in membership or audience, to satisfy the total needs of a revolutionary movement.

The women pressing for representation in the media are often aware of this and have opted to carry the fight to the multi-national conglomerates that determine the shape of most of our entertainment if not art. Like the leftist intelligentsia of the 30s and 40s, they have not developed a base within the media's worker population nor very firm ties to leftist, male artists or even among themselves. So far, women in the media have mostly been individual victors in competitive struggle with men and have not produced work significantly different from their bourgeoisie counterparts (who happened to be men). The continuing determination on the part of women to transform consciousness, and the consciousness industry, though, will inevitably lead to a sharper definition of the enemy and stronger alliances with other exploited groups. Without the deliberate broadening of class representation, preservation of autonomous, collective units and a firm linkage to the pool of technical labor on whom the consciousness industry is dependent for its existence, the women's movement in the media threatens to become a self-enclosed, moralistic voice ultimately no more resilient than the leftist pioneers who are remembered principally by the Blacklist that destroyed them.



Red Army cadre battles the landowner's lackey.

RED DETACHMENT OF WOMEN

Siew-Hwa Beh

"This dance drama portrays the revolutionary development of Wu Ching-hua, the daughter of a poor peasant. It takes place on Hainan Island during the Second Revolutionary Civil War (1927-1937), where Ching-hua served as a slave in the manor of the despotic landlord Nan Pa-tien. After one escape attempt she is so severely beaten that she falls unconscious and Nan Pa-tien leaves her for dead. The disguised Hung Chang-ching, a Red Army cadre, and his messenger Pang find Ching-hua. After hearing her story, they tell her where to find the Red Army. Ching-hua is welcomed at

the revolutionary base, and her story of bloody class repression is told to educate the people.

In a scheme to destroy the tyrant, Nan Pa-tien, revolutionaries Hung and Pang enter his manor disguised in order that they may strike from within, while the Red Army attacks from without. Making contact with Pang, Ching-hua sees her former master and filled with rage, prematurely gives the signal to attack.

Ching-hua realizes her mistake and learns that only through the emancipation of all mankind, rather than personal revenge, will the proletariat achieve its own freedom.

The Red Detachment assembles to combat the Koumintang Army. Hung, leading a contingent of Red Army men, fearlessly holds a mountain pass, covering the main forces victorious attack at the enemy's rear. Hung denounces the cruel landlord and dies heroically. The battle won and the despotic landlord shot, the workers whose families suffered for generations are liberated. Ching-hua joins the Communist Party at the Front, and carries on as Party Representative. The revolutionary masses rise to join the Red Army and songs of battle resound to the skies: FORWARD, FORWARD, UNDER THE BANNER OF MAO TSETUNG, FORWARD TO VICTORY!

This film, sent to the people of the United States by the people of China, not only holds great relevance for women's liberation in this country, it is a lesson for us all: Only by uniting to fight for the freedom of all mankind will there be victory over every form of oppression."

from the U.S.-China Friendship Association.



"In the world today all culture, all literature and art belong to definite classes and are geared to definite political lines. There is in fact no such thing as art for art's sake, art that stands above classes or art that is detached from or independent of politics." Mao Tse-Tung.

China's recent film, The Red Detachment of Women, clearly illustrates that an old dying art form can be made very much alive by subject matter and highly skilled performances. It is a film that came at an appropriate time to add a strong thrust to the Women's Movement - the combination of feminism and class analysis. China, North Vietnam, North Korea are revolutionary in recognizing women's equality in decision making and capacity to

change history even in a traditionally male dominated activity like a combatting revolutionary army. Even though Israel includes women in military training, it is in the name of nationalism -- a nationalism that still supports a male dominated bourgeois structure. The Red Army frees women from such bondage.

The Ballet, which has its roots in the court of Louis XIV of France has through the centuries become an international dance form. The pointed toe, created as a result of Louis' excesses in costume, evolved into the toe shoe to show off the daintiness and fairylikeness of women. In the hands of the Chinese, the pointed toe has become a source of strength and aspiration. The dance technique of the Chinese Ballet is basically akin to that of the Bolshoi Ballet. In skill and aesthetics it far surpasses the French, American, the British Royal Ballet and that of the followers of the English school -- Danish Royal, Australian, and other Commonwealth countries. The latter group is incredibly rigid in line and limited in choreography.

The Chinese Ballet is innovative in borrowing movements and choreographic inspirations from Tai Chi Chuan, Chinese acrobatics, Chinese folk dances, and the Chinese Operatic Theatre. The movements are strong and angular ending in clenched fists, bent elbows, and closed, up-turned fingers in Chinese operatic style. The line is radically different from the usual curved arms ending in soft wrists and dropped middle fingers and rounded body movements of other national ballets. The facial expressions, all again adapted from Chinese opera and the mime, are precise, direct, and kept to essentials. There is no "balletic" nonsense that involves too many trivial mimetic movements. The choreography respects the subject matter. The women dancers perform

their arabesques and grand jété; without male support. There is no pas-de-deux to "show off" female dependence on the strong arm of the man. The only pas-de-deux are confrontations in physical battle with the male landowner and his lackeys.

In subject matter The Red Detachment of Women shows up the Russian revisionist Bolshoi Ballet which still dances in "Tsarist costumes" (an apt phrase from WR: Mysteries of the Organism) and is still preoccupied with dead bourgeois fantasies like Giselle, Dying Swan, Faust, and Swan Lake. Their main concern is to boost the fame of Ulanova, skilled in dying-swan imitations, and paralleled only by another Russian, Pavlova. But the women in these ballets inevitably dance themselves to death or insanity for the love of a man (usually a prince) as in Giselle or to success and fulfillment through marriage, again to a prince, as in Sleeping Beauty or Swan Lake.

The costumes of the Peking ballet are those of Chinese peasant workers and Red Army cadres opposed to the fine silk of the mandarins and the uniforms of Chiang Kai Shek's army. There are none of the usual tutti-frutti powder-puff-like tutus of fairies in A Midsummer Night's Dream or dolls in Nutcracker Suite or Coppelia. The sets in Red Detachment are of realistic landscapes of Hainan and the period is that of war-time instead of magical castles in the land of supernaturals. It is well shot in three-strip color and the camera angles are chosen in consideration of choreography and significant moments.

While other national ballets have become museum pieces making the ballet a dead form of the past, The Red Detachment of Women has revolutionized and revitalized the ballet in technique and content. It has brought the international dance form close to the masses and has made it a People's Ballet.

We urge readers to see the Jan. '72 special "Women's Issue" of TAKE ONE, P.O. Box 1778, Station B, Montreal 110, Canada.

FESTIVAL OF WOMEN'S FILMS

THIS TWO WEEK EVENT WILL FEATURE SCREENINGS OF FILMS MADE OR DIRECTED BY WOMEN, AS WELL AS A SYMPOSIUM TO DISCUSS TOPICS OF PROFESSIONAL INTEREST AND TO EXPLORE THE IMAGE OF WOMEN IN FILM.

- PURPOSES:**
- To discover and exhibit the work of new filmmakers.
 - To permit a general audience to see films made by women that have not received wide distribution.
 - To make the public aware of the great number of highly creative women working in the film profession.
 - To see the images that women are creating for themselves.
 - To present a comprehensive exhibition of films made by women in order to investigate the possible existence of a particularly female film sensibility.
 - To provide a forum for discussions among women filmmakers.
 - To encourage women of all ages to enter the film profession and pursue their ambitions in this field.

DATE: The target date for the Festival of Women's Films is April 1972.

DEADLINE: Films received after Jan. 18 will not be considered eligible.

For more info: Festival of Women's Films, 1582 York Avenue, New York, N.Y., 10028 (212) 628-5652



A WOMAN LOOKS AT THE S.E.I.F.F.

Dora Kaplan

"Last night I was in the Kingdom of Shadows...I was at Aumont's and saw Lumiere's cinematograph--moving photography. The extraordinary impression it creates is so unique and complex that I doubt my ability to describe it with all its nuances...It seems as though it carries a warning, fraught with a vague but sinister meaning that makes your heart grow faint. You are forgetting where you are. Strange imaginings invade your mind and your consciousness begins to wane and grow dim. But suddenly, alongside of your gay chatter and provoking laughter of a woman is heard...and you remember that you are at Aumont's, Charles Aumont's. But why of all places should this remarkable invention of Lumiere find its way and be demon-

strated here, this invention which affirms once again the energy and the curiosity of the human mind, forever striving to solve and grasp all, and...while on the way to the solution of the mystery of life, incidentally builds Aumont's fortune? ...I am convinced that these pictures will soon be replaced by others of a genre more suited to the general tone of the 'Concert Parisien.' For example, they will show a picture titled: 'As She Undresses,' or 'Madame at Her bath,' or 'A Woman in Stockings.'" Maxim Gorki, June 1896.

The answer to Gorki's query "why of all places...here?" is simple: Culture itself is male; and the invention of cinema, the art form with the greatest potential for revealing man to himself has also the greatest potential for revealing woman to herself as seen through the eyes of men. And as Gorki points out, one of the initial directions of the new art was towards representation of woman as sexual object. Politically and sexually the Aumont prostitute is the slave of masculine overlords: pimps control the hookers and the profits; clients demand their services; male police and male judges arrest and imprison them; male legislators make laws which condemn them; and male filmmakers create the market for their commodity.

It is obvious that the greatest male artists (Joyce, Proust, Tolstoy) were mentally androgynous --able to depict female reality as well as male reality, but only in the specific context of their cultures; they were unable to grasp female aspirations to power, self-definition and creative achievement. "Not only do most artists not overcome, they are not even aware of the existence of a cultural limitation based on sex." (Shulamith Firestone, The Dialectic of Sex) Gorki, had he been aware of

"sexual politics" would not have posed his question. Most art, says Firestone, "fails to achieve a comprehensive world view because it does not recognize that male reality is not REALITY, but only one half of reality. Thus its portrayal of the opposite sex and its behavior (half of humanity) is false: The artist himself does not understand female motives." Firestone's contention here is that female behavior can be understood as an attempt to adjust to and rectify a position of absolute powerlessness.

The solution to the false portrayal of woman's reality in art is, clearly, more art by women. But this is unlikely to occur in a society which oppresses woman and defines for her (in relation to art) the role of emotional supporter and inspirer. As G.B. Shaw in "Man and Superman" says, "Perish the race and wither a thousand women if only the sacrifice of them enable him (the artist) to act Hamlet better, to paint a finer picture, to write a deeper poem, a greater play, a profounder philosophy. For mark you... an artist's work is to show us ourselves as we really are. Our minds are nothing but this knowledge of ourselves and he who adds a jot to such knowledge creates new mind as surely as any woman creates new men." Shaw's belief that men create mind (our world), and thus by extension create woman's mind as well, and that the artist's duty is to reflect reality, has led to the fact of the imminent destruction of life on our planet. The nature of the artist's work must be re-examined. The artist's role itself was questioned by a great revolutionary of the last century (Bakunin), who declared the most creative act to be the act of destruction; and it seems to be the case that art without concomitant revolutionary commitment ceases to attract the best minds of our time.

opposite page:
Jan Kadar's Adrift

"NOT ONLY DO MOST ARTISTS NOT OVERCOME, THEY ARE NOT EVEN AWARE OF A CULTURAL LIMITATION BASED ON SEX."

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The most relevant work for the existant artist is the neglected half of his job: to not only mirror reality as it is, but to imagine reality as it might be, i.e., without sexual, racial and senescent chauvinism, or as Firestone posits, without the dichotomy between art and reality. To imagine reality as it might be, in idealistic terms, is one of the main tasks of the aesthetic activity in man; and therefore, the imaginative expression of social ideals is peculiarly the role of the artist.

"Ideals provide a utopian consciousness which may enable men to transcend the barriers of their existing social reality and promote historical change." (Sir Herbert Read) For the filmmaker, who possesses "the art of the masses par excellence" with the profoundest possibilities for reflecting and imagining reality, there should be no choice.

This is all along the way of looking at the 15th San Francisco International Film Festival from a woman's perspective. A (male) cultural event of the greatest magnitude, the international festival offers the film enthusiast his/her rare chance to view the world's film art. Regretfully, in four years as a festival-goer, my experience has been that the great films never find commercial release in this country. Again, regretfully, it is difficult to talk about films without talking about distribution. Godard: "If you make a film of the Chicago trial...and Metro Goldwyn Mayer distributes it, you get a Metro Goldwyn militant picture. Which is still a Metro Goldwyn picture." None of the significant films screened at last year's festival have been seen by the public in any number because of the repressive distribution and exhibition networks: Funeral Parade of Roses (Japan), Ramparts of Clay (Algeria), Medea (Italy), Blood of a Condor (Bolivia), A Swedish Love

Story (Sweden), Garden of Delights (Spain), Landscape After the Battle (Poland), Double Suicide (Japan), On the Comet (Czechoslovakia), A Journey Around My Skull (Hungary), and Bronco Bullfrog (Great Britain). Film distribution, like the Festival itself is a male dominated institution, and as such, reflects male power maintaining itself, at all costs, by showing films which confirm the existing consciousness rather than expand it. This year, 50% of the evening films already had commercial releases or were to obtain them within the month. This does not mean the commercial distributor is showing better films but that the festival is neglecting its responsibility of showing films which cannot be seen anywhere else! The festival also found itself a victim of distributor's package deals, i.e., in order to show WR - Mysteries of the Organism, they had to show Sunday Bloody Sunday, which opened a week later. Actually, this year probably saw the demise of the festival as an artistic and radical event. Failing to screen all but token films by third world and female filmmakers, where revolutionary cinema is being defined; the festival resembles more and more its European predecessors, which under commercial pressure, make art the dupe of the market place, reminding one that art is not to be learned from, but capitalized on. Controlled by four men, including Mayor Alioto, and its existence underwritten by his campaign contributors, the festival does not reflect the consciousness of the people. Already, a People's Third World Festival has taken place (November 18-21) in San Francisco, and a Women's Festival is planned for April in New York. And the distribution monopoly is being broken by Newsreel, the Women's Film Co-op, Third World Cineam, American Documentary Films, etc.

At least 75% of the free daytime screenings were laudatory of a past hardly worth reviving. The Festival, co-ordinated in conjunction with British Week in San Francisco, acquiescing to the proper authorities presented "A Retrospective Tribute to the Popular British Cinema (1932-1952)," from which came nearly all of the morning entertainment genre films. The crown of British Week, the retrospective tribute to Rex Harrison, defined the grossest abuse of film as art. Scanning 42 years and including 11 directors (ironically, all of his British directors studied and/or made films in Hollywood; half of them were Americans), running at a total cost of over \$200 million, the film clips shown offered a study of film as propaganda: Storm in a Teacup, St. Martin's Lane, Major Barbara, Anna and the King of Siam, King Richard and the Crusaders, Yellow Rolls Royce, Agony and the Ecstasy, Flea in Her Ear, Cleopatra, Dr. Doolittle, and My Fair Lady. Harrison's films, in form and content, perpetuate the ideologies of sexism, racism, and imperialism. He plays exclusively ruling class roles: millionaires, aristocrats, Kings, Popes; professors, lawyers and doctors who are independently wealthy, and, in The Honey Pot, the wealthiest man in the world. Asked if he had ever played a working class character, Harrison jeered that he found it very difficult, but that he had tried. His characters move amongst a crowd of servants including his "leading ladies." In Storm In A Teacup, his woman, after clearing up after him is put in her place with "that's what women are for." In St. Martin's Lane, a woman is insulted by being called a woman. In Anna and the King of Siam, Harrison at last proclaims "I am the Law." As Professor Higgins in one of his most popular films, My Fair Lady, we are instructed that the noblest thoughts of man

have come through the English Language. Lerner and Lowe lyrics add "I'm glad she's a woman, like a habit, easy to forget." And Audrey Hepburn in the end returns to be dutiful wife to his closing line "Where are my slippers?" As Harrison left the festival stage after questions from the audience he was followed by a dutiful woman in miniskirt, transporting a rose. He didn't even see her.

Briefly, a few notes on the remaining retrospectives: (1) Save for Sergei Bondarchuk, the retrospectives were chiefly disappointing for their American bias. It is blatantly absurd to honor directors Rouben Mamoulian, Frank Capra, Vincente Minnelli, Arthur Penn, screenwriter turned director Dalton Trumbo, actress Merle Oberon and actor turned director Clint Eastwood whose films can be seen on TV or have recently run the commercial circuit when the choice existed of screening the works of great directors out of the past (Abel Gance) whose films have never been seen in this country or contemporary international directors, writers, cinematographers and actresses/actors (numbering in the tens of thousands) whose works would undoubtedly be more substantial and at the very least, unfamiliar. (2) "No matter where you put the light you can't ruin it... Let's try to ruin it. We lighted her from the top, all sides, cut the face in two, lit it from below. No matter what we did, that face was luminous." Rouben Mamoulian's story about Garbo's face in Queen Christina brought to mind the time, expense and energies (male) filmmakers have spent in devising lights and angles to show the female actress only at her most beautiful. How many innovative lighting techniques, camera angles and movements were a result of man's obsession to keep woman as an instrument of pleasure? (3) The name of Vincente Minnelli "shines forth most



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brilliantly" in the genre of the film-musical, a genre in American film history which rather than reflect reality attempted and utterly succeeded in avoiding it altogether, producing the musical "glamour queen" who became, literally, a piece of glitter.

(4) Merle Oberon was chosen for retrospective tribute, or so we are led to assume by the Program Notes, because of her "qualities of gentility, romantic mystery and feminine remoteness (which) have always given added dimension to the exoticism of her features." (5) Sergei Bondarchuk, actor and director, known in this country for War and Peace and the abysmal Waterloo, appeared after the screening of his anti-war Destiny of a Man --his first and most significant work. Asked what percentage of Russia's 120 annual films were made by women he responded that quite a number were made by women but in his private opinion "it is not a profession for women." After a brief shocked silence, the audience boomed its disagreement causing Bondarchuk to be shocked in his turn and to say that he finds directing to be very hard, very exhausting work while "women should be conserved for beauty." Finally, realizing his audience was in a state of disbelief and outrage he quit the subject with the statement that one woman had been making films for 14 years and that she made such heavy films that there were very few men who could equal her. Hmmm.

Because of the scope of the Festival averaging five feature film screenings daily plus two short subjects and two hours of film clips for 16 days, it is impossible to do justice to the films, their historical contexts, the 30 directors and actors who attended, the audience reactions, interactions, intrigues, events, hallucinations, etc., without writing a complex and lengthy novel. (And especially to critically examine a film, one needs to view it at least twice and have

time to reflect on it before seeing 75 others!) For me, the Festival condenses a year's experience and growth into two weeks; a phenomena of such intensity it can only compare to time-traveling on acid from the 14thc.

(The Decameron) to the present where one is locked into questions as to the nature of Time, Memory, Consciousness, Dream, Reality and Revolution.

Of the 38 evening, new director, and special program features, six had female protagonists--Red Detachment of Women, Le Debut, Brother Carl, Peau D'Ane (which glorified in perpetuating sex-role stereotypes), Angela: Portrait of a Revolutionary, Valerie and Her Week of Wonders, and one, WR: The Mysteries of the Organism produced world revolution (or Wilhelm Reich) as it's protagonist. Of the 38, one failed even to reflect reality (The Bus Is Coming) and only two attempted to imagine reality as it might be (WR and The Heart-Murmur) in both cases, by advocating an end to sexual repression, which would lead in WR to the liberation of women, the demise of fascism and authoritarianism, internally as well as externally. And in The Heart-Murmur to the breakdown of the patriarchal nuclear family and the liberation of children.

Spider's Strategy and Partner offer minor characters of androgynous identity suggesting a world free of rigid sexual roles and Partner deals with the attempt to merge art and reality in the creation of revolution. In In the Name of the Father was the most artful reflection of reality.

The following film comments are not inclusive nor intended as "movie reviews;" some are included so at least we are aware of their existence as they are unlikely to obtain distribution, some because I disagree with other reviewers and feel there is a need to re-examine them from a radical and/or feminist perspective.

The most insulting film of the Festival was the much publicized The Bus Is Coming, directed by Wendell Franklin from a "script" by Horace Jackson, Robert E. Raff and Mike Rhodes. This ridiculous piece of crap purported to capture the mood of the black community, and to examine some of the conflicts of a black returned veteran whose beloved brother has been killed by local white police. The gentle-but-firm hero is pressured by "militants" to join their Black Fist organization.

The film succeeds in debasing all of its characters and portraying the black revolutionaries as stupid hoodlums. I'm willing to accept styleless direction, and bad acting if the artists display some passion, or vision or commitment or even sincerity, but The Bus Is Coming came across as a hoked-up, "topical" exploitation film made to soak up money from poor blacks who are looking for a black movie. (I don't pretend to have my finger on the pulse of the black community, but I do know that the majority of the blacks in The Bus Is Coming audience vocalized profound disgust.)

The Bus Is Coming is a fine example of the worthlessness and mockery of rising up through the ranks in Hollywood. The director Franklin started out as a parking lot attendant at NBC and eventually became the first black director to be admitted to the Screen Directors' Guild. So he gets financing because he has experience. By backing someone like Franklin, the money men are assured that waves will not be made, that strong social criticism will not be generated, that their businesses will not be associated with any controversial project. A filmmaker with Franklin's record, a Negro who has made it in the gray world of Hollywood is sure to be tame, relenting, inane, and thoroughly acceptable. ★

"Fairies like women hold grudges."

Jacque Demy's Peau D'Ane (Donkey Skin) mollifies traditional status-quo consciousness by escaping totally into a fantasy world. Jacques Perrault's fairy tale with a talking rose, a hag who spits frogs, a donkey who shits gold, and servants with blue skin to match costumes and decor, is rationalized as an enchanting story for children and "adults with a certain nostalgia for childhood visions." In reality, the film perpetuates: (1) the idea of magic as a kid's toy having no relation to the real world (2) the concept of a children's film without a single character under 20-years of age (3) sexual stereotypes and bourgeois values - the beautiful princess and the resourceful prince find true happiness in marriage! However, the cinemaphotography (by Ghislain Cloquet who also photographed Penn's Mickey One), the special effects and art direction are lavish enough to hold one's attention against his/her will. Because it's content perpetuates existing consciousness, Peau D'Ane will secure commercial release in this country. ★

Some of the most significant films, in terms of indicting authoritarian systems have been documentaries--the films of Frederick Wiseman (Titticut Follies, Hospital, High School, Basic Training), Santiago Alvarez (Diary of Ho), Fernando Solanos (Hour of the Furnaces), and now Le Chagrin et La Pitie by Marcel Ophuls. A detailed indictment of the French governments collaboration with Hitler during the German occupation, the film was made for French television; but because of its content, was only shown in a small art house in Paris preventing a mass audience viewing. One of the main thrusts of the film was to demonstrate the French ruling and middle-class co-operation with the Nazi's in or-

der to maintain their own class position. (The French fascist, Christian de la Don Maziere, "there was nothing else for us, except communism.") The French passed more repressive laws against their own people than the Nazi "enemy," including persecution of those attempting to organize the resistance, (Mendes-France, later prime minister of France was jailed; and escaped) and anti-Jewish statues exceeding the Nuremberg racial laws (A special popular exhibit was created, "How to tell a Frenchman from a Jew"). 7,000 Frenchmen joined the Nazis on the Eastern Front (The Waffen SS, Charlemagne Division); there were 10,000 resistance fighters. A cinema and brothel were maintained at Buchenwald. French actors and singers traveled to Berlin to entertain troops. Families betrayed their members; like in the U.S. today, parents fail to support their draft resisting sons. Industry, forced by the scarcity of goods to be constantly innovative in maintaining woman's function of sexual object, produced brown body paint as a replacement for nylon hose (undoubtedly a precursor of the modern tanning lotions

which die the skin). A promotional film showed a woman standing in a bathtub demonstrating the product's merits over real stockings: waterproof, and no runs!

The town of Clermont-Ferrand, near Vichy, a major center of the Resistance, where its leader, Emmanuel d'Astier, founded the journal "Liberation" was used to focus the virtual mind-boggling material of the film (running 4 hours, 20 minutes). And within Clermont-Ferrand, extensive interviews were conducted with two resistance fighters, the brothers, Louis and Alexis Grave. These segments highlighted the film, creating a desire for more personalized accounts, i.e. the people's point of view, of WWII, or any historical phenomenon; and, at the same time, revealed the sexual prejudice of the resisters and the filmmakers. In "An Evening with the Grave Family" the camera is focused on the two brothers sitting at a dining-room table; their wives are in the background of the frame, standing in the kitchen doorway. Their comments, including an impassioned speech, are not translated. The film leaves one exhausted, depressed, but eager to discover other suppressed pages of history. ★

Peter Bogdanovich's Directed by John Ford was preceded by a dreary special award presentation for John Ford who has already been awarded into the ground with six academy awards--an event in itself, which has proven to be consistently irrelevant and injurious to serious filmmaking. Bogdanovich has ruined a potentially important film - significant for its innovative documentary form of exploring a director's work through film clips and interviews with those who helped realize the film - by choosing John Ford as his subject and interviewing only actors (John Wayne, James Stewart and

"THAT JACK FORD, HE YELLS REAL LOUD - HE'D MAKE A GOOD DIRECTOR."

Peter Bogdanovich & John Ford



Henry Fonda) and Ford himself. What an achievement it could have been, say if he had chosen to explore the themes of Godard or Chaplin or Eisenstein (director's who wrote their own scripts) and to include interviews with their cinematographers, editors, actresses, etc. The major offense of the film was its attempt to portray Ford as a chronicler of American history--the kind one receives in high school history courses and which reflects the ideology of among others, Edward Thorndike, the "father" of intelligence testing who invented the basic form of the S.A.T. and wrote in 1940: "One sure service, about the only one, which the inferior and viscious (his term for non-white people) can perform is to prevent their genes from survival." At least Arthur Penn, in talking about Little Big Man showed some awareness of the horror Directed by John Ford perpetuates: "My American History courses were crap. It's time to put different legends on the screen that are closer to the truth." Ford got his first directorial job from Laemmle who observed his creative talents: "That Jack Ford, he yells real loud - he'd make a good director." ★

Valerie and a Week of Wonders, an exquisitely imaginative visual delight designed and co-written by Ester Krumbachova (known for her work with Jan Nemec and Vera Chytilova) is one of the six festival films to produce a female protagonist, and the only film I am aware of that hints at the fact that a woman menstruates. In fact, it is Valerie's first menstruation that precipitates the fantastic week of wondrous sexual awakening. Valerie's imagination turns the idea of her flowing blood into an edifying adventure which reveals to her, for the first time, the sexual underpinnings of her town, i.e., dignified priests are really lecherous old men whose chief ambition is to rape



Valerie and Her Week of Wonders

wholesome virgins. One remembers the art direction and design of the film much more than its content and I confess to being one of those viewers who neglected the subtitles for the pleasure of eye-feasting on lyrical-surreal imagery. A male friend mentioned that he had been told by a group of radical women that Valerie was a good "woman's film." This may be so on certain levels, for instance, marriage was seen by Valerie to be the end of a woman's life; but Valerie's granny was willing to become a vampire (she even tried to suck the blood of her grandchild) to regain her youth and beauty. If Valerie was any kind of political allegory, it was an elusive one; much of its impact subdued by the lushness of its visual imagery. ★



Mother & Son in
THE HEART-MURMER

The Heart-Murmur is an exception to the prevalent theory that feature films are unable "to effect changes of behavior, inspire actions or even alter opinions." (Furhammar & Isaksson, *Politics & Film*) It does not function as a substitute for reform or act as a political safety valve by restoring the justice and balance lacking in society. On the contrary, *The Heart-Murmur* goes right to the heart of social inequity - the family - and revels in the violation of its most rigid taboo precipitating in the viewer a heart palpitation of such magnitude that his/her psychic-emotional structure is irredeemably altered. The consequences of the incestuous relationship between a 15-year-old boy and his mother are increased self-respect, mutual respect and love. For the boy especially his sexual awakening is tinged with joy, rather than guilt, fear, and increased sexual repression. (The same night after bedding with mother, he makes love with two females his own age and returns in time for a happy breakfast family reunion.) Most important

the boy experiences the act of physical love within its most fulfilling context of an already existant emotional and intellectual love. (Earlier, in the film, his older brothers had forced him on a prostitute, an experience fraught with shame; echoing societal values and associations of sex and money, woman as sexual object, and sex as rape. As Louis Malle intended, the audience experiences the process of dealienation; the incestuous act is a positive, natural, health-giving one and it's principals are better off because of it. This is no substitute for reform but an act of subversion--the immediate unavoidable gut response is that traditional family relationships will never be the same. One can never contemplate the family again without the thought inching in, that the patriarchal nuclear family has had it and that the gestures of maternal love and those of love pure and simple are practically the same.

However, this demystification of the incest taboo and its consequences is relevant, within the context of the film, only to the bourgeois classes. Malle has set his story in France, 1954, the year of Dien Bien Phu, at a time when a young person is looking at life lucidly for the first time and there exist these moral and political elements that make him aware of deceit, fundamental hypocrisies and the consequences of the kind of education he has had. (The film opens with our young hero collecting money for the wounded in Indo-China.) The boy's father is a gynecologist, completely involved in his work, who sees his family only at meal-times and is unaware of family goings-on. His mother is an Italian liberal-minded woman, living on the margins of upper-class life and continually in conflict with the traditional values of her class. She married young, is still attractive when

her youngest of three boys is 15, and so forays into an occasional affair in her free time. As in the Italian film The Head of the Family, the nominal head is the father who knows his children less well than a casual business associate; the real head of the family is the mother who develops deep equalitarian "Best friend" relationships with her children. This trend is not so much a glorification of the traditional female role of wife-mother but an exploration of family relationships which reveal the mother to be involved in more meaningful work than her husband--that of living in a mutually enlightening, non-hierarchical positive manner with other people. In The Head of the Family the father's progressive architectural work is meaningless, compromised and ultimately co-opted into strengthening the fascist system he wishes to destroy; whereas the mother is "raising" children who will be free from authoritarian conditioning, who are living the new "system." It is only in this context that a sexual relationship could materialize, at the same time ruling out a similar development between daughter and father.

Both Heart-Murmur and The Head of the Family are bourgeois-comedies because, as Malle says, "it is the quickest, most incisive way of totally demystifying a certain education, a certain milieu;" and both films, in different ways demystify the morality which teaches the oppression of children. In The Head of the Family, their self-determination is increased by a more liberal education. Rather than being locked into the parochial public school system which is clearly linked with the development of a fascist mentality, the children are sent to an Italian Montessori school which insists that the teachings of the school are carried out in the home (The door knobs in the house are

lowered to a height where they could easily be reached by a six-year-old). In The Heart Murmur the increased self-determination is at a more basic level--recognizing children as sexual beings. Malle, at his press conference, "This thing about the Oedipus complex is very much based on the incredible sex repression that was on the adolescent, at least in European society--I won't say anything about American society--at least the last two centuries in this bourgeois world we're coming out of. There was strong repression, so that when you get to the age of 14 or 15, (or 6!) you want to express yourself sexually--it's physiological, it's normal. And it's repressed, incredibly repressed in those families. You sort of had to turn to what you had in front of you, to your mother, your sister. So I'm sure that a good part of this build-up of the Oedipus complex came from that sexual repression, and I hope it's going to fade out quick."

Perhaps Malle's most significant achievement in The Heart-Murmur is in the presentation of his ideas. Realizing that a mass audience, at this point, is going to get their "politics" through character and emotion, in a linear, conventional, representational and humorous form; Malle has defined a new form of film militancy. ★

Valparaiso...Valparaiso! or "The Very Fabulous and Very Edifying Adventurous Life of Comrade Balthazar Lamarck-Caulaincourt" is a poetico-political comedy dedicated to Alice in Wonderland and Gone With the Wind, satirizing pseudo-revolution and pseudo-revolutionaries. Our hero is a successful fifty year old writer, poet, art critic, best known for his political treatise "Art, Love and Revolution." His knowledge of the surrealist poets, the example of

writers who fought in Spain, Hemingway's beret, Malraux's cigarette, are his revolutionary credentials. "His life is rather pleasant, both his wife and home are beautiful." He regards Revolution as the most beautiful form of art. He embodies all the good intentions of a drawing room leftist: the sort of Don Quixote you meet in every intellectual circle in the world.

One day Lazlo, the activist-anarchist, closer to Chico than Karl, jumps into the back seat of Balthazar's car and takes him for a ride instead. He convinces Balthazar that direct involvement in revolutionary affairs is necessary and that only he can lead the uprising in Valparaiso to its triumphant conclusion. Balthazar meets his "revolutionary wife" who, over roast duck and chocolate mousse, gives him his new identity: "We met in Marienbad, fell in love, and took the Trans-Europe Express..." while Balthazar (like the audience) is unable to discern role-playing from sincerity, remarks with genuine (?) passion "Your hair smells of a revolutionary springtime;" and Laszo with his hippie army closer to the circus world than politics makes off with Balthazar's lover and home. Finally, Balthazar "misses the boat" to Valparaiso while right behind him on the pier, a group of workers are striking. They are from another world, one he knows nothing of, the world of class struggle in France.

Valparaiso... Valparaiso! is Pascal Aubier's first feature. Besides keeping us doubled-over with aching jaw, (a rare filmic experience, comparable in contemporary American cinema only to the feats of Woody Allen and Robert Downey) we all got a painful look at our own revolutionary pretensions. Although the film failed to satirize the male chauvinist revolutionary as such, it did include a great, wall-sized painting of a group of armed women, looking through the window at the "revolutionary activities" in

Balthazar's home.

We talked at length with Pascal Aubier but took no notes because we were recording the conversation. The tapes and recorder were stolen. Aubier was one of the most sincere and serious film people we had ever met, as well as being an exceedingly nice person. When we came in he was studying Marx and Lenin and smoking French cigarettes. He said that their collective, Les Films de la Commune (after the Paris Commune of 1871) did not live together and all were paid equal wages. They are in close contact with Godard and Gorin's Dziga Vertov group and they seem to believe in the French Communist Party, which Aubier said was loosening up since May '68. We laid the anarchist challenge to authoritarian communism on him and he indicated that he would expect young American radicals to be anarchists. He also said that he had traveled around the states 10 years ago (at 18) and that not one person had talked about politics, now everybody he meets goes on and on and on... ★

Le Debut, one of the three Russian entries, (King Lear and The Byelorrussian Station) directed and co-written by Yevgeny Gabrilovich sports a fairly interesting Horatio Alger type story about Pascia who works in a factory during the day and plays hags and singing witches in a local amateur theatre at night. She is discovered by a young director and offered the leading role in Joan of Arc because she embodies the "peasant qualities and emotions" of the great saint. As her career climbs, her relationship with her married lover, Arkady, crumbles. The film's significance lies in its revelation of working-class values under Russian Communism which resemble, more than anything, the bourgeois values of contemporary male-dominated capitalist society.

Although the economic independence of the Russian female is commensurate with that of the Soviet male and far exceeds that of the American woman; Le Debut delineates the stifling existence of Arcady's wife, a victim of traditional "family life" who scrubs floors and takes her misery out on her kids; and the lives of Pascia's three girlfriends - mini-skirted and wigged - searching for a husband to relieve them of the meaningless jobs offered in the labor market. The film is unforgettable in its totally awkward use of the wide-screen format reminding one of the talent required to put such expanses of screen space to advantage. ★

Annie Tresgot's first feature, The Passengers documents in cinema-verité style, the two years' experience of a young Algerian who immigrates to France to find work... Beginning with Rachid's journey aboard a steamship to France and including the moment when he looks back on his stay after having worked in factories and building sites, Miss Tresgot has accomplished a detailed exploration of the immigration phenomenon with exemplary honesty and a very sensitive feeling for inquiry into real-life situations.

N. Ciment, in his review, says that one has to go back to the last century to fully understand Rachid's exploitation today. Then as now, Algeria was allowed the development of those industries which complimented and completed French industry. So, "Rachid does the work the French refuse to do: hence the dialectic irony of the final slogan on the wall: "France is for the French!" During the war, Rachid might have known the same fate as 12,000 Algerians who were killed or disappeared in the metropolis; today he is one among the 600,000 Algerians working in France.

This, then is part of Rachid's

story. There is no work in Algeria. France controls immigration and re-immigration. Rachid pays an immigration tax which supposedly goes to an Algerian fund to pay for housing. In reality, the Algerians have no control over their own fund and pay exorbitant rents in ghettos from their small salaries, most of which is sent home to help support families in Algeria. Trade unionists explain that unfamiliarity with the French language and industrial machines are responsible for the highest accident rate among North Africans. After two years, Rachid is a skilled laborer with no work. He explains that girls can't work in Algeria. They work for their families, or husbands, for no pay. France has taught Rachid: "every man for himself." The film's only real weakness is in its lack of coherence in uniting its separate stories of Rachid and French racial discrimination against Algerians.

Annie Tresgot appeared on stage for discussion of her film after its screening. In 1969, Miss Tresgot was commissioned to make a film for the Algerian government, Visages de L'Emigration, which would show to potential emigrants that everything in France was not as rosy as the applicants might think, and, as a result, there might be some limitations upon the requests. Although they did not like the film she made, since an entire story about one individual had been filmed and not used (over 24 hours of rushes), she managed to convince the Algerians to let her make a second film, Les Passagers. She said she hoped the film was as critical of Algeria as of France. It has been difficult to show the film in France but she is determined the French officials and students have a chance to see it. She said that Rachid's current situation is worse, in that he is responsible for more people. She is currently proposing to French TV a film on the women's movement in France.

Fernando Arrabal's first film based on his own novel "Baal Babylone" establishes him as an avant-garde filmmaker as well as playwright. As Bunuel defined cinematic sur-realism using his dreams as an expression of human anguish; so Arrabal carries on Bunuel's tradition, in the true language of film, adding his own sense of the absurd and defining "Cinema of the Grotesque," "Cinema of Cruelty." His characters, like children, suffer the cruelty of the world as a meaningless affliction. For Bunuel (in *L'Age d'Or* and *Un Chien*

Andalou) and Arrabal, dream is a matter of realism, of reality that contains surrealism, just as surrealism contains reality. Arrabal possesses "the savage eye," an ability to derail the mind through the use of image. (The image is a pure creation of the spirit. It cannot be born of a comparison but of the bringing together of two realities which are more or less remote. The more distant and just the relationship of these conjoined realities, the stronger the image - the more emotive power and poetic reality it will have. Pierre Reverdy, 1918.)



VIVE LA MUERTE

Vive La Muerte shocks us into confrontation with man's inhumanity to man, woman and child. Arrabal's images, a direct expression of his personal dreams and emotions, too constant and complex to fully digest in a single viewing, are yet overwhelmingly clear in their denouncement of the institutions of government and religion, which have made of history a horror. The most experimental of the Festival films, Arrabal successful-

ly used video-tape footage transferred to film with bizarre color separations and a sound track of unusual electronic sounds to heighten his dream imagery.

Briefly the plot: When the Spanish Civil War breaks, Fando's mother, a victim of national taboo's and religious fanaticism, is persuaded to denounce her husband as a rebel. Fando, in turn, a victim of his mother's fears and indoctrinations,

painfully acquires knowledge of adult society. This knowledge, reflected in his dreams and hallucinations of torture, violence and death begins to destroy him when he learns of his father's betrayal by his mother. Fando recognizes the futility of creation when he burns his wooden theatre, and grasps a moment of hope when he realizes his young girl friend does not enjoy being beaten like his aunt. She persuades him to begin life in a search for his father.

The power of Arrabal's imagination cannot be overstressed. His images rage in the mind of the viewer long after the film ends. And because of his uncompromising politics and imagery, *Vive La Muerte* will probably never get a release. ★

A nobleman and elderly lord of a 15th century French castle lives with his faithful wife Blanche (the film's title) and his son, Nicholas, by a previous marriage. Traveling through the domain of the nobleman, the King and his page, Bartholomew stop for rest, food and company. They are both enraptured by Blanche and soon bent on discovering some means of seducing her. The four men never consider the possibility of relating to Blanche other than on a sexual level. Bartholomew, speaking for the others as well, seems to place all reason for living in a woman's sex sexual organs: "My only hope is in your body." Their attempts at seduction create the chaos which reveals the unavowed love of Blanche and Nicholas. The passions in each of these characters inevitably clash, creating extraordinary suspense, humor and unexpectedly, immense violence, tragedy.

The camera style - straightforward, static shots, without severe angles - explodes as unexpectedly as the story into its equivalent apocalypse. The photography in the last scene is shocking in its mastery of experimental movements expressing the

point of view of a character dragged by a horse at full gallop over a rocky, cavernous dirt road.

Ultimately, Blanche is a tale of the victims and executors of authority; of minds formed and lives taken by the morality of a church which preaches the sin of sex and love, a double standard for men and women. Blanche is Walerian Borowczyk's second feature film, freely adapted from Juliusz Slowacki's romantic drama Mazepa (1839), and as in Goto, Isle D'Amour he displays a great cinematic talent for trenchant and unusual evocation of milieu. ★

With Partner, one of the world's great cinema geniuses, Bernardo Bertolucci, confronts us with his most complex and intellectually challenging films. An inspirational adaptation of Dostoevsky's "The Double," Partner at once became one of the most relevant festival films and at the same time defied everyone's abilities to discuss the masterpiece. Repeated requests by the audience for a second showing went unfulfilled.

It's content is concerned with an individual -- his internal and external selves and their oppositional propensities to deal with a single obsession - art and revolution. Destruction of structure, the form of Partner, as well as a major theme, has become the new establishment for serious filmmakers reflecting the anarchistic tendencies of both the revolutionary and the artist and, more important, the merging of art and reality.

Jacob, a young drama teacher, sees his existence in ideal terms as an extension of drama into life and vice versa ("Theatre is one of the roads that leads to reality."); and hopes to carry the Theatre of Cruelty to its logical conclusion... Revolution. Jacob, however, is incapable of realizing his ambitions, including the seduction of his professor's daughter.

ter Clara, and carries on lengthy dialogues with himself, building up his courage and then smashing it with self doubt. Returning home late one night after being booted from Clara's home, he becomes aware of a presence tracking him by noticing, not the sound of footsteps, but a smaller human shadow thrown up against the wall alongside his own fifty foot image. Later, in the process of one of his reveries--thrashing those who have rejected him (an awesome acting and photographic execution of shadow boxing) the second shadow materializes as his partner, the alter-ego of his wish-fulfillment who is capable of bringing his intentions to fruition. Except, Jacob II (the alter-ego) does not function entirely according to plan; reality falls short of dream. He does succeed in getting Clara alone in the backseat of an automobile (which, unable to run, is pushed down a slope and spouts a chauffeur who imitates the sound of a working car) but calls her "filthy bitch," "whore" while she attempts to seduce him.

Jacob II moves in with Jacob I whose property is now shared communally and they vow "nothing but changes after today." Their conversations together, requiring both Jacobs (Pierre Clementi) to be in frame at the same time elicit some highly sophisticated and imaginative special effects. They trade-off in a series of episodes which expose the major concerns of the contemporary artist and revolutionary and explain why the Revolutionary Spectacle never comes off.

Bertolucci's dialogue, constantly punning and metaphorical, "us two alive in a big dead thing" expresses the fantastical surrealism of his images. Partner speaks to the necessity of inner (individual) revolution as well as outer (social) revolution, as in the above quote, and hints at the concept of individual liberation through narcissism: When they first meet, Jacob I tells Jacob II, "I like you. You resemble

me." It exposes the conversion of sex to advertising and bourgeois idiocy: A young, beautiful woman whose real eyes are closed but has opened eyes painted on her shut lids tries to sell detergent to Jacob. "Men never refuse to buy...I strip." She enjoys her work because it has meaning, "My employers are clean; the world is dirty." Jacob denounces advertising as a fascist instrument and in a sexual groping among the suds of an overflowing washing machine they exchange clothes with each other before she is murdered by her product and it's accomplice, male egotism. Partner explores sexual role reversal and transcendence (Jacob's male servant has a woman's name) as well as reflecting the dislocation and destruction of language, itself an instrument of sexual prejudice, in Jacob's habit of wearing ear plugs and speaking French and Italian in the same sentence.

Revolutionary (theatrical) violence is a major issue: A molotov cocktail, which Jacob has prepared in class for the edification of his students, instead of exploding, circulates around the room (full frame, close-up, the cocktail is attached to the camera platform) hypnotizing the spectator and becoming the spectacle. The students do not show up for the real spectacle--there are no masses to prompt. And the crisis of conflicting identities and social realities escalates to the possibility of individual and collective suicide.

Only the surface of Partner can be perceived in a single viewing but enough is discerned to back-up Godard's hailing of Bertolucci as "one who with Straub, Skolomowski and Rocha will make the post-revolutionary film;" and to applaud the preference of artistic indulgence over form, especially in the politically committed artist. Made before The Conformist and The Spider's Strategy, Partner has never obtained a release in this country and has shown only once at the New York Film Festival. ★

Feel! Enjoy! Laugh!
 Who will police our judges?
 Who will will our will?
 He who chooses his slavery - is he
 a slave still?
 Man creates his world out of paradox.
 The image for these voice-over pronouncements is three hippies juggling an egg yolk, then a couple fucking, seen through the prism of the Erotoscope from the Gallery of the United States of Erotica.

Dusan Makavejev describes his fourth feature, WR: The Mysteries of the Organism as a "liberating trap" ("some people are liberated; some are trapped, against their own will."); and as a fantasy on the Fascism and Communism of human bodies, a summary of the pornographic essence of any system of authority and power over others." WR is a very important film. It was the only film at the San Francisco International Festival, and remains one of only two films (Les Stances a Sophie) that I know of, to deal with sexual politics and the anti-authoritarian, radical-feminist revolution. Dusan: "There is no women's movement in Yugoslavia now, but it will come...out of the student movement." Les Stances a Sophie and WR complement each other. WR hints at collective action; Sophie's solution does not go beyond personal liberation. WR confuses sexual revolution with women's liberation but provides an essential element in the analysis of women's and children's oppression missing in Les Stances a Sophie: sexual repression anchors submission to authority and the fear of freedom into peoples' "character armour," resulting in the reproduction, generation after generation, of the basic conditions essential for the manipulation and enslavement of the masses.

The film's action alternates between documentary footage of Wilhelm Reich, his wife, friends and followers in the U.S. and a fictionalized, surrealistically stylized dramatization of some of Reich's concepts in Yugo-



MILENA DRAVIC IN WR: MYSTERIES OF THE ORGANISM



slavia. From the U.S. footage we glimpse parts of the conspiracy to silence one of the centuries great social scientists. In 1960 the F.D.A. supervised the burning of all of Reich's books. An interview with a grocer reveals that Reich was a communist since he waited three weeks to pay his bill!" Dusan: "I think that Reich's political ideas are mainly anarchist-communist ideas, and what we now call this tribal movement, this whole communal movement is also the anarchist-communist movement."

Orgone therapists help their patients get back in touch with their emotional-sexual centers. Dusan: "I think contemporary humans are not able to handle their emotional lives and the trouble is you're nice and good but when you become emotional you can't stop. I think that's what happened with nice boys in Viet Nam. They come into a terribly emotional situation and they can't stop. They can't control their emotions...and

they kill. No control. People are over-controlled. So they know how to behave in a strictly controlled situation, like ritualized situations of everyday life. Any unpredictable situations leave them completely helpless because they have no natural pulsating way of living, like reacting naturally."

The last shot of the U.S. before cutting to Yugoslavia is the logical outcome of Reichian thought on the American culture--Tuli Kupferberg, revolutionary gun in hand, pacing the streets of New York. In Yugoslavia, Milena Dravic, a beauty parlour assistant ("I am a hopeless female and I will never let a man walk over me.") lectures her neighbors on the necessity of the sexual revolution after being reprimanded by a comrade, "Now that you've passed the Party test you are no longer intimate with proletarian friends." She declares, stepping into her orgone box, "Communism without free love is like a wake in a graveyard."

Her roommate lives a variation of what Milena preaches. She is always naked and always coupled--on the bed, under the bed, under the rug, in a chair, standing, eating, etc. Far from being a symbol of the sexually liberated, her lovemaking is an illustration of the mechanistic sex act.

Shock cuts: footage of Stalin, then forced feeding of a patient, then electric shock "therapy" for another.

(These sequences of mental patients originated from film documentation produced at Hitler's orders to prove the necessity of the Euthanasia Act.) The statement "Life without fucking isn't worth a thing" is projected under footage of Stalin and Mao.

Milena falls in love with the Soviet figure skating champion, Vladimir Illich. Bloated up with pride and prick he declares: "I am the people's artist. My biggest triumph was Madison Square Garden... Only work and achievement count." Dusan: "On July 7, one article appeared in the largest Russian writer's weekly. They attacked my film heavily. They said that my actions were anti-soviet. I don't agree with that. I think that my film is not anti-soviet. It is polemical. I don't think that the way I presented the Russian champion is unfair. I think that what he speaks is what many of their people are speaking. He is a true kind of socialist-realist character. You know that socialist-realist theory of art believes in a positive hero that is more positive than the normal character--and has some sort of educational qualities. And this guy has educational qualities--he can be a model of behavior. Of course, I don't believe in this character but I think I built this character according to their norm of what's good and representative. So I don't believe that they can be offended by it. I don't feel that they can get the irony I have for the character because the character is made in line with their own belief."

Shock cuts: Over an image of a man



Dusan Makavejev



in a straight jacket, repeatedly slamming his head against a wall: "We thank our glorious party for bringing happiness to every home," is sung. Cut to Nancy Godfrey, a modern sculptress, making a plastic replica of Jim Buckley's penis (founder and editor of SCREW). Close-up of plastic penis complete. Cut to Stalin. Cut to Tuli Kupferberg masturbating his gun. Dusan: "Stalin is the revolution frozen."

Vladimir Illich ("I live for my art. It demands all of me.") and Milena stroll along the banks of a frozen river. He declares, "though in principle we oppose all violence..." and slugs her. She confronts him with his contradictions, "You say you love all people, but you are incapable of loving one individual." He accepts her challenge. They fuck on an icy river and he decapitates her with his champion skate. "What wonders men create!" Freedom begins with the disappearance of the state." Dusan: "So called Russian communism is actually state capitalism. We have all this power structure and establishment and people out of control over their own lives and over the social processes. So I don't believe that we have in the world now any country where the people are really controlling the situation. More or less...there are countries that have more freedom than others. I believe that in my country we have more freedom probably because we are more chaotic. The whole country is in a permanent social experiment. I believe that the Scandanavian countries are also involved in a permanent social experiment trying to do something. But I do not believe that people in the world today have a lot of control anywhere."

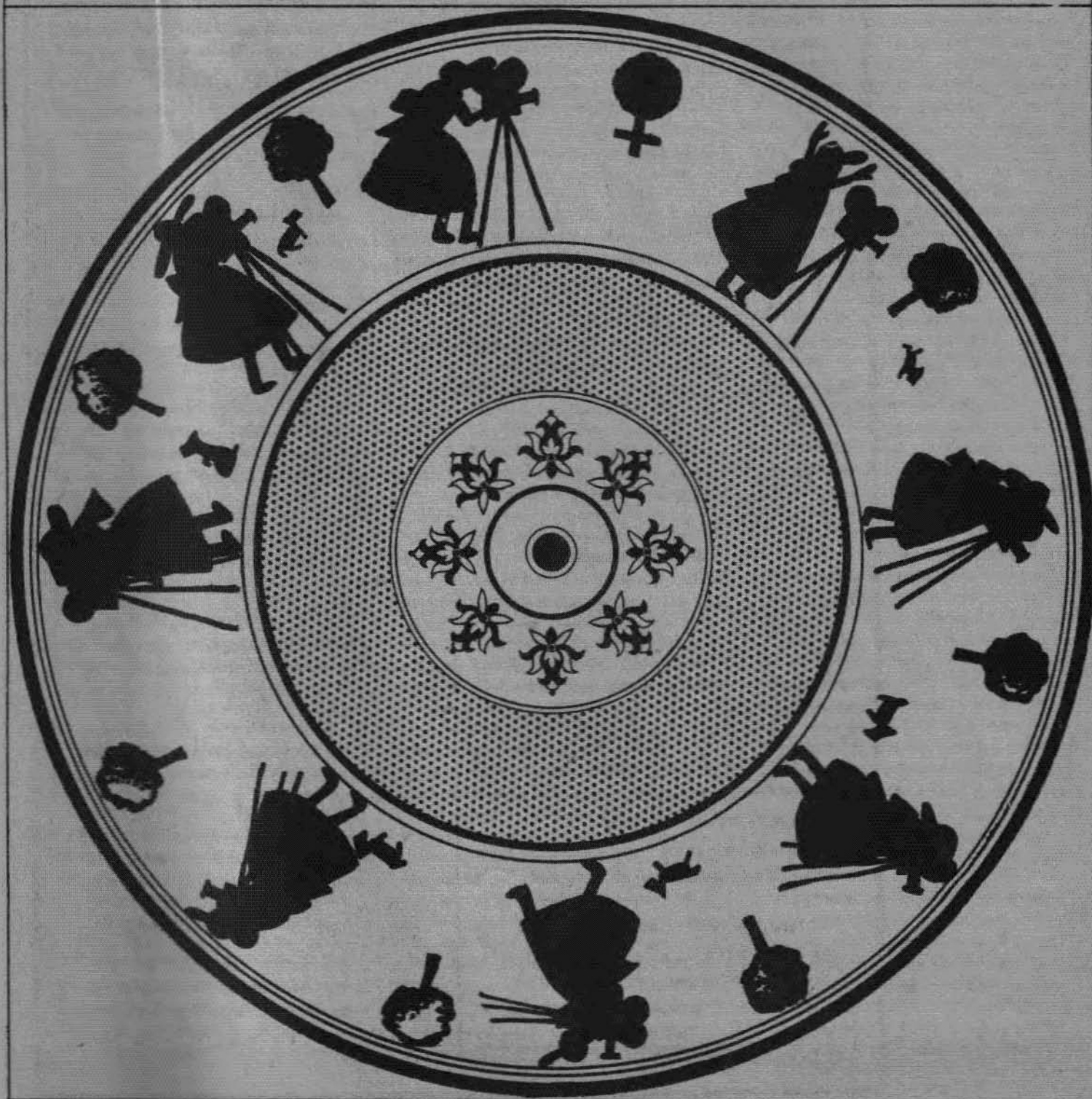
The scenes delineated above are brief recollections of several moments of the film interspersed with statements by the director at his press conference. WR: Mysteries of the Organism found sexual repression to be the

direct cause of fascism. "The suppression of the natural sexuality in the child, particularly of its genital sexuality, makes the child apprehensive, shy, obedient, afraid of authority, 'good' and 'adjusted' in the authoritarian sense; it paralyzes the rebellious forces because any rebellion is laden with anxiety; it produces, by inhibiting sexual curiosity and sexual thinking in the child, a general inhibition of thinking and of critical faculties. In brief, the goal of sexual repression is that of producing an individual who is adjusted to the authoritarian order and who will submit to it in spite of all misery and degradation...The result is fear of freedom, and a conservative, reactionary mentality. Sexual repression aids political reaction, not only through this process which makes the mass individual passive and unpolitical; but also by creating in his structure an interest in actively supporting the authoritarian order." (Reich)

The film's only flaw was it's lack of emphasis on Reich's theories on the function of the family. "As the economic basis (of the family) became less significant, it's place was taken by the political function which the family now began to assume. It's cardinal function, that for which it is mostly supported and defended by conservative science and law, is that of serving as a factory for authoritarian ideologies and conservative structures. It forms the educational apparatus through which practically every individual of our society, from the moment of drawing his first breath, has to pass...it is the conveyor belt between the economic structure of conservative society and its ideological superstructure." (reich)

WR, however, offered solutions to the problem of an organized, violent, destructive and oppressive social order, rather than to simply reflect it; for this reason and others, WR is a film classic.

FILM REVIEWS



THREE LIVES

Susan Rice

"Cinema is the natural home of those who don't trust language, a natural index of the weight of suspicion lodged in the contemporary sensibility against 'the word'. As the purification of language has been envisaged as the peculiar task of modernist poetry and prose writers like Stein and Beckett and Robbe-Grillet, so much of the new cinema has become a forum for those wishing to demonstrate the futility and duplicities of language." (Susan Sontag on *Persona*, "Sight and Sound")

Interestingly enough, *Persona* is the film playing with *Three Lives* in New York. And though I don't propose to treat Kate Millett's film in the light of Bergman's masterpiece, I do think there is something self-defeating about the theatrical coupling of these films. Millett's film (like Bergman's) seems to me a reaction to the history of filmmaking, and American filmmaking (unlike Bergman's) in particular. The interest and fascination that *Three Lives* evokes in female audiences especially owe not so much to the quality and accomplishment of the film itself, but to the sorry fact that there is a significant paucity of intelligent, respectable, resilient female figures represented in the contemporary film idiom. The subject and impact of Bergman's *Persona* cuts deeply into this argument and undermines (to some degree) the import of *Three Lives* because, despite the presence of an all-male crew (with the traditional exception of a female editor), Bergman has constructed a rich, fictional treatment of many of the conflicts, tensions and personal testimonies that Millett suggests in her documentary format.

Another issue that the contrast of these films seems to indicate is the questionable appropriateness of movie theatres for "liberated documentaries." *Persona* matches up to the literal and figurative size of its projected image by virtue of its complex substance and intense characterization; it requires the high contrast and quality sound of theatre projection. *Three Lives* would be much more comfortable on television - were television ready for it. Even the initial stage of ex-

plicit films for and about women, I am not sure that the novelty of identification is enough to satisfy the moviegoer.

Three Lives is a Women's Liberation Cinema production, and it is the only feature film I know of that not only takes women as its subject matter, but was produced, directed, shot, recorded, lit and edited by women. What makes this more than a stunt is the intimacy that this female crew seems to have elicited from its subjects. The element I find most compelling about the film is that it captures the tone and quality of relationships and significant conversation between women. If the film were to fail on every other level, this would stand as a noteworthy achievement. Happily, *Three Lives* has other virtues. One of these is the style of the film itself - which is unpretentious, unobtrusive and unselfconscious. Millett's filmmaking style (if, indeed, it is Millett's responsibility) is blessedly free of the contrivances and indulgences that have marred so many contemporary films, and documentaries in specific. There are no artful double exposures, no lingering telephoto shots, no accompanying rock score, no romps in the field, no still-photo montages, no pointedly ironic visual juxtapositions. Ellen Adams' and Ann Sheppard's editing seems to strive for a largely straightforward, linear effect, and this results in clarity rather than polemics.

The substance of *Three Lives*, as the title indicates (and it is an homage [femmage?] to Gertrude Stein without much further parallel), is three character monographs: the first having to do with Mallory Millett-Jones, a thirty-year-old divorcee who has traded a roundly conventional life for involvement in the liberation in both the parochial and the personal senses; the second centering on Lillian Shreve, a fifty-year-old ex-chemist who has been happily married for twenty-three years; and the last involving Robin Mide, a twenty-one-year-old renegade who willfully evades categorization and is the subject of the longest and most energetic of the three portraits.

Early in the film, Mallory Millett-Jones states "I am trying to make myself heard in a very silent way." Despite the film's emphasis on verbalization, I think this quality applies

mysteriously to all three excerpted lives in Millett's film, and this is what distinguishes it from an audio-tape or radio talk show. What we see is as important as what we hear. In this sense, an aspect of Bergman's *Persona* extends over in *Three Lives*, as does that snippet from Sontag's interpretation of Bergman's work. One of the ironies of *Persona* was that every smile veiled a grimace. I do not mean to suggest by this a lack of synchronization between what is seen/heard and what is felt about the characters in *Three Lives*. Rather, that beneath their self-assurance (and it is their willingness to assert themselves before a camera that allows them to be exploited, in the kindest sense, for the purposes of this film), there is an intimation of suffering uncertainty that is experienced from time to time by any woman who attempts to claim an identity for herself other than the one prescribed by Society, as these women have. There is an element of hysteria in Mallory's exceedingly frequent smile; a peculiar abstraction and pre-occupation in Lillian's recollections (her episode seems most rigorously submitted to cutting and pasting); and a somewhat contentious, almost cavalier distance in Robin Mide's "performance." Because she is the most exhibitionistic, the most professional, the most "on" of the three, Robin Mide is also the most interesting and dramatic in conventional movie terms, although the most unconventional in her life style.

It is too early to speculate on Millett's talents as a filmmaker - and contrary, I suppose, to the notion of solidarity and identityless collaboration that are alleged to characterize The Movement and this movie. We will have to have more than one instance of Millett's work before we can leap to the kind of generalizations that make auteur critics so happy. In any case, the value of *Three Lives* does not reside in its contribution to the craft of movies, for its modesty is its primary formalistic virtue. And though this is a distinct relief in relation to other films, it is hardly a criterion for greatness. What is significant about the film is that it is innovative in its treatment of women, and as such is hopefully a first step in the evolution of portrayal and emphasis that will gratify and enlighten the 50% of the audience that has been in large part neglected, abused and misrepresented so woefully in the past.

DIRTY MARY

Brenda Roman

Dirty Mary, a delightful farce on sex and class relations in a provincial French town, is the first feature written and directed by the French film historian, Nelly Kaplan.

The original title, *La Fiancée du Pirate*, taken from the revenge song in *The Three-Penny Opera*, "Jenny, the Pirate's Bride," provides the key to the movie's theme. In the song Jenny silently scrubs hotel floors while the gentlemen say, "Hey, girl, finish the floors, get upstairs, make the beds, earn your keep here," but Jenny is "countin' the heads" while she's "makin' up the beds," and dreaming a fantasy of revenge in which a pirate ship sails into the harbour and levels the town with its cannons. Before sailing off with the pirates Jenny orders the immediate death of any survivors, calling out, "That'll learn ya."

Mary's revenge on her town, considerably different but almost as devastating, is triggered by the hit-and-run killing of her mother and the unconcerned response of the town notables who carry the body like a bag of fertilizer back to the mother's shack and make no attempt to apprehend the guilty driver. But we soon learn that Mary's revenge is motivated by a good deal more—a lifetime of class and sex exploitation by these very townspeople.

It becomes clear that Mary and her mother are viewed as outsiders and outcasts even after they have lived in the town for many years, and that the villagers see their own actions toward Mary and her mother as altruistic: having allowed them to stay in the town and having permitted Mary to go to school so that she could get an honest job. Their generosity is

such that, although we first see Mary's employer (Irene) angrily kicking a bucket of water in Mary's face, Irene—like most people who employ domestics—thinks that her treatment of Mary is kind. "I fed you and kept you like a pet," she asserts, trying to get Mary to return to the farm with her. But Mary's steely reply is, "In my house I'm not an animal." When (much later) the mayor recalls his own generosity at the time Mary and her mother arrived during the war and he let them sleep in his barn, Mary reminds him that he made them work for a week in his fields and paid them less than the others because they had no identity papers.

Mary's sexual exploitation is also emphasized in these first scenes. A plainly dressed and somewhat skinny servant girl, she is chosen by the townspeople as the object of their sexual preoccupations—because of her vulnerability as the poorest young woman in the town, and because of her marginal and somewhat exotic social position as the daughter of a gypsy. The mailman is shown, for example, stealing a pair of Mary's panties and spying on her from in front of her house with field glasses. But he is not the only townsman drawn by voyeurism to Mary's house, and in one scene he almost falls over all the others gathered there.

Very much like Jenny, the pirate's bride, Mary submits to the villagers' advances while "countin' the heads." She allows the clumsy advances of the farmhand, Julian, and she sullenly permits Irene to seduce her after Irene goes through a charade of sympathy for Mary's orphaned condition.

If femaleness in this movie is characterized by Mary's initial

powerlessness and vulnerability to sexual exploitation, then Irene's position is "male," as a property owner and exploiter. Even though she is exotic in her own way—as a lesbian—Irene has none of Mary's marginality. She is shown instead as being among the town's first citizens, and the mayor refuses to listen to gossip about Irene's sex life since she owns more land than he does. This toleration of Irene is in contrast to the violence the townspeople eagerly inflict on Mary in the name of respectability when, on one occasion, they all charge her house and stand by as the mailman kills her pet goat.

Mary is not only an outsider but in a town with such tightly locked traditional relations as this one, she is given no possibility of moving upward in the class structure. Mary will always be poor like her mother, Irene informs her, although she is in a position to change that by paying Mary higher wages. And Mary is later admonished to stay in her place when she browses in the general store and picks up a bra with curiosity. "That's for ladies," the owner tells her. Mary's life choice in the villagers' eyes is then essentially a moral one—since they will open no other choice to her—of being "honest poor," a humble, virtuous servant girl, or exhibiting the qualities the rich attribute to the poor—drunkenness, loose morals, unreliability—essentially the characteristics of Irene's farmhand, Julian.

What the townspeople only slowly recognize is that there is a third choice open to Mary as a marked outsider, and this is the choice she makes—to accept the villagers' labelling of her as an outcast and to create out of her oppression an identity at once

proud and rebellious, much as a transvestite might do in coming to terms with derision and ostracism by defiantly exaggerating his difference. Mary's flamboyant waving at Irene with both arms as she rides to town in her lover's truck, and again as she returns home with her first real customer, is an action of this kind. So is the playful way she draws attention to herself and bothers the customer by honking his car horn while he's in the general store.

With her mother's death, then, Mary begins to exact her revenge on the town which has refused to treat her mother and her like human beings. She starts by charging for what she previously gave away for free; however, her object is not so much to make money but to become independent and to humiliate her clients--first by making them pay, and then by raising her prices arbitrarily, in that way asserting the change in power relations. Irene is thereby forced into the position of a paying customer, and Julian is forced to steal from Irene to pay Mary's prices, something Mary deliberately reveals to Irene--who horsewhips and fires Julian, to Mary's gratification. He is finally, rather improbably, shown reduced to being a beggar in front of the church.

Other characters are also humiliated. Mary forces the mailman out of her shack at gunpoint after she tantalizes him and tells him he can keep her blue panties. She then promptly seduces the mailman's repulsive son as another gesture of retaliation against the father, while stuffing "Biscuits Lamour" into the boy's mouth, one after another. The mayor neglects his crops to frequent Mary's house. Emile engages in petty corruption with the town's materials to build Mary's water tank, and the grocer's wife can't make ends meet because the grocer spends the store receipts

on Mary. All seem to become virtually addicted to Mary's sexual services.

The delight that the audience feels with this tale is in seeing Mary turn the tables on these mean village characters by becoming attractive, independent, and proficient in her trade, creating havoc with the villagers' finances and with their domestic lives. When they vainly attempt to impose "price control" on her, because they think she is growing rich at their expense, she cleverly parries the attack and raises her prices once more.

That Mary's primary interest is in changing the power relations between her and her former exploiters, and not in the money and consumer goods her trade brings her, is revealed at the end. She disposes of her possessions and goes to church--that bastion of respectable pretensions--during mass, and leaves a tape recorder playing devastating confessions she has elicited from the townsmen. We last see her marching off into the distance, tossing away her shoes as she goes to meet her lover, an itinerant movie projectionist who, in this witty ending, is showing a film called *La Fiancee du Pirate* in a neighboring town.

Kaplan skillfully enhances the farcical qualities of Mary's revolt by playing with the witch-gypsy characterization the townspeople have attributed to her, and the effect is one of delightfully arbitrary and sometimes incongruous details and events. First there is the strangely satanic night-time burial ceremony with candles eerily flickering in the trees, and drunken grave diggers laughing and staggering and talking about "the old hag weighing a ton" and "packing her down," while Mary stands aside soberly feeding cigarettes one by one to her goat. There are the wall

decorations in Mary's bizarre little shack: a bat pinned by the wings to the wall, a "Wanted Dead or Alive" poster (in English) of a man in prison uniform, displayed like a family portrait, which it is indeed. There are the furnishings in Garish colours of red, yellow, lavender, orange and blue. There's the eccentric running-water system, the goat charm Mary wears around her neck, and then there is the increasingly elaborate pile of junk Mary fashions on each grave in front of her house, monuments to her ill-used family, created with the money she gains from the pockets of the townspeople. As these elements appear one by one throughout the film they add to the contrast between Mary's initial dull submission to exploitation and the high-spirited mastery of life which she later develops. It's nice use of decor which reveals Kaplan's talent as a script writer as well as director.

For an original screenplay, however, *Dirty Mary* has many of the qualities of a stage farce, and it could probably be adapted to the stage with little difficulty. It is tightly plotted, and Kaplan provides a clever exposition which uses the extraordinary event of the mother's death to provide necessary background information--without once slackening the pace and without recourse to flashbacks, voice-over narration, or tedious monologue. Most of the action occurs in one location, inside or just outside Mary's one-room shack. And the breakneck speed of the pacing, which doesn't allow the viewer second thoughts about the credibility of what he or she is seeing, depends not on quick cutting from shot to shot but on characters dashing into and out of the fairly static medium-long shots much as they would enter and leave a stage.

When closeups are inserted in this context they often seem heavy-

handed, as in the three closeups of Mary's face, the first of which occurs during the scene in which drunken men are burying her mother—to contrast her wildly vindictive mood with their drunken gaiety. This shot has a nice bizarre quality, however, since Mary's face is made up "witch-like" in her first use of cosmetics, berries for rouge and burnt matchsticks for eyeliner. The second closeup, however, after Mary has buried her pet goat, creates a self-conscious effect, since it's stylistically so far out of keeping with the rest of the movie. It starts in a slow zoom along the blood-stained path where Mary has dragged the goat, to the grave where Mary is standing with a spade, and then up to her face where it holds far too long. The third of these closeups occurs after Mary has set fire to her shack, preparing to leave town. Her face is shown in closeup with flames burning in front of her. The trouble with this shot is that it draws too much attention to the camera viewpoint (supposedly from the middle of the flames), but it's adequate as a substitute for showing the house on fire. Generally the camera work is quite unobtrusive, however, and it is the narrative which occupies the viewer's attention throughout.

Mary's revenge, finally—unlike Jenny's, which remains only a fantasy—is carried out to a successful conclusion, with Mary emerging unscathed and triumphant. But one almost wishes for a Brechtian epilogue as in *The Three-Penny Opera*, perhaps a final sobering verse to Mary's "I Swing High, I Swing Low" song of carefree prostitution, a verse which would say that while this is a fine ending for a farce, in real life the townsmen would impose their "price control" in earnest. Mary would be reduced to servitude again, her rebellion crushed. And the villagers' humiliation would be at the price of her own. She would be unlikely to have such an ideal means of escape, since the lover who imposes no restrictions on her freedom and offers simply the opportunity to accompany him from town to town seeing interesting movies is an illusion, very much like the mounted messenger from the Queen in *The Three-Penny Opera* who delivers a pardon at the last minute. In real life "they come far too seldom." ■

STANCES A SOPHIE

"In an alienated world, culture—obviously—is a deformed and deforming product. To overcome this it is necessary to have a culture of and for the revolution, a subversive culture capable of contributing to the downfall of capitalist (sexist) society. In the specific case of the cinema—art of the masses par excellence—its transformation from mere entertainment into an active means of de-alienation becomes imperative. (Solanas & Getino, "Toward a Third Cinema," *Cineaste*, vol. IV, no. 3)

Les Stances a Sophie, co-written by Christine Rochefort and Moshe Mizrahi, based on the novel by Rochefort and directed by Mizrahi is such a film: it analyzes the process of de-alienation of one woman and to a lesser degree her husband, her friend and a child. To the extent that the woman's awareness of her oppression is an awareness of male-structured and dominated society; it is a "feminist film." And *Les Stances a Sophie* is the only commercial film that I know of that could be called "feminist." (The present movement lacks a manifesto of Feminist Cinema, which initially would mean films made collectively by women and all female crews. A good starting point for such a document might be Solanas' and Getino's essay. I feel *Les Stances a Sophie* is not a revolutionary film (as *Hour of the Furnaces*) in that the director has chosen a conventional, dramatic form in the interests of mass distribution; but its content is radical, i.e., plunges to the roots of the nature of woman's function in contemporary society. The film was shown for only three weeks in France. One of the reasons for its short run was the refusal on the part of the director to permit exploitative and sensationalistic advertising, and as of the present time, no distributor has purchased the film.

The film's heroine, Celine, is initially the capricious, impulsive, femme fatale, the eternal woman-child adventuress, familiar as Catherine in *Jules and Jim*. Daydreaming, she steps in front of a moving car, whose driver, taken by her seeming helplessness and beauty, returns her to her "universal love pad." The driver, Philippe, involves himself in her life through his jealousy: he forces her away from her

environment, demanding to know why she has just kissed three men. Celine: "I love all men as if they were one." Philippe: "I want one woman to symbolize all women." Inevitably, they marry.

The introductory scenes of the film seem cliché-ridden, possibly because the director and writer are setting up a background with which we are all too familiar: The conventional bourgeois marriage; the female's identity ripped-off in the interests of male politics. (Kate Millet defines politics broadly as any power relationship, and marriage is certainly that!) A tension and frustration is built up in the audience as the meaninglessness of these lives is drawn: From the motives for marriage, (Philippe wants Celine for himself; Celine is bored, wants to try something new) to the typical "honeymoon night" (Philippe is intent on investigating the smooth functioning of his latest acquisition; Celine is emotionally alienated from him after witnessing his energy for violence in a silent, speedy, race to the country house) to the bland breakfast monologues (Philippe outlines his wife's duties for the day; she daydreams to escape the very reality he describes). The only difference in this marriage so far is the woman's slight awareness of her situation. She confides to Julia, the wife of her husband's best friend, at her reception: "I get food and a screw anyway, that's not why I'm getting married." "Marriage is an ego thing... Sex is just part of the system."

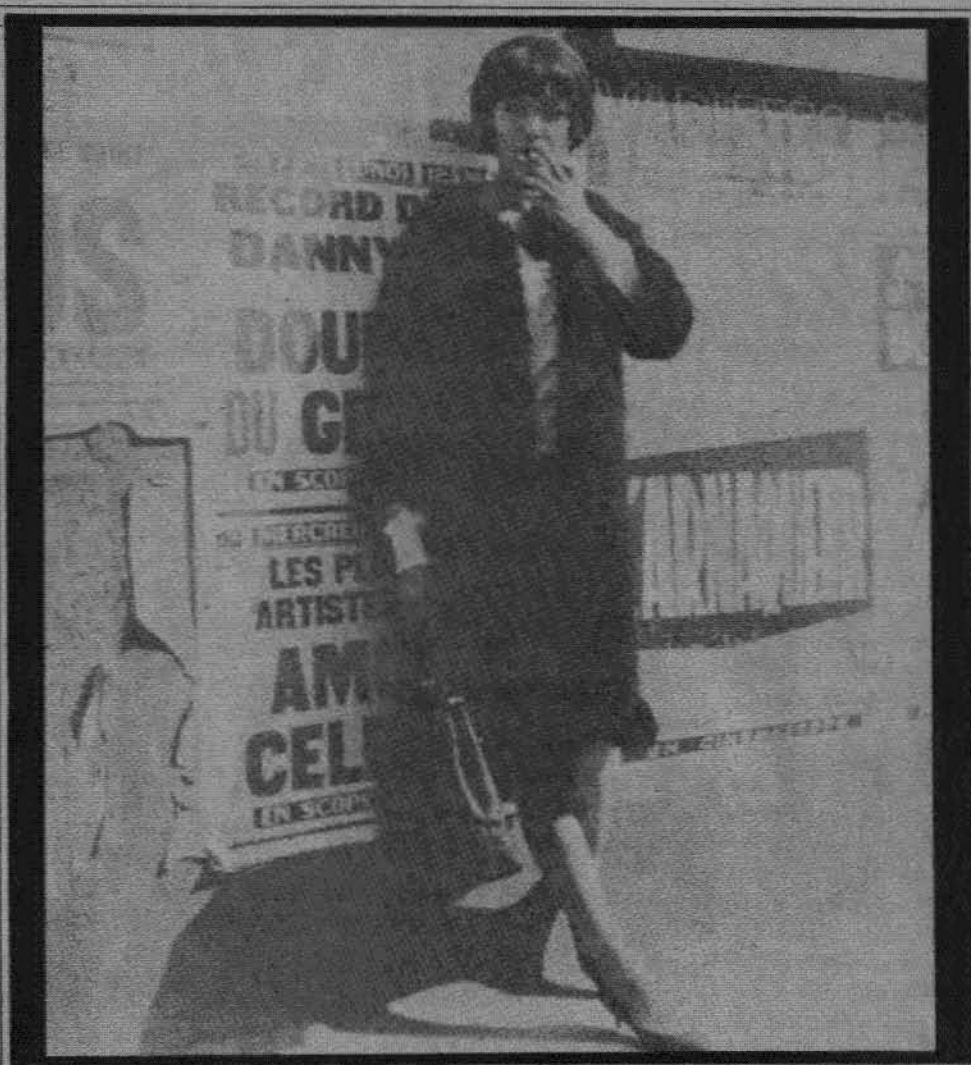
Julia is the catalyst for change. She initiates Celine into the tactics of the oppressed. By "adjusting" the budget, by maintaining the aura of the expensive show piece, by avoidance of expression of true feelings, she can minimally cope with her essential powerlessness as woman/wife. In a bar, Jean-Pierre, Julia's husband, and Philippe discuss the drawbacks of a new bill which would ultimately mean a cutback in road construction. Celine breaks her traditional, "respectful" silence of deference to the male intellect, and protests angrily their insensitivity to ecological issues. The men

calmly demand how she can possibly attempt to understand the complexity of the problem. "Oh, our Celine is getting angry." She is a child, in the throes of a temper-tantrum; she must be indulged. In the powder room Julia explains to Celine that her voice is literally music to their ears. They do not hear the words; her anger is a scherzo.

Beyond this point, however, the women grow together. Their equality of relationship, intellectually, emotionally and sexually, destroys the need they have for authority, and the bastion of authority, male society. After the physical consummation of Julia's and Celine's love, Celine is transformed. She has transcended many personal problems and can now actualize different roles (she makes faces at herself in a mirror). She is able to function in her role as housewife; she sees it for what it is, a job with economic security. She exchanges roles with her husband. At breakfast, she is the ideal housewife, planning the days events, feeding her husband, getting him off to work on time. Phillippe is the dreamer now; his behavior a psychological reaction to his sense of loss of Celine's dependency. During the day, Celine engages herself in an ever expanding circle of projects: painting, tapestry, ecology, film. Phillippe reacts to her new found energy for creative projects as "fads" which take time away from her real job. She should give the same loving care to him and their home, he explains. He works hard, the least she can do is help him by paying the bills on time. Celine responds, "You invented paper work, you do it. You work hard for the destruction of life. You don't know how to live."

Celine and Julia enter a new phase of struggle--collective action and separatism. They commit themselves to writing a book exposing the true nature of sexuality. The action intensifies during the last half of the film: There are political reactions to the women's partial rejection of male culture--murder, attempted rape; and the continuing, painful awareness of the scope of their struggle, including the oppression of children.

The film suffers at times from a limited knowledge of current feminist ideology and lacks solutions--other than individual liberation which was articulated over 100 years ago in *The Doll's House*--but basically its analysis is sound. It is brilliantly scored by the Chicago Art Ensemble; was shot in color in seven weeks, all on location, using mostly natural light. The acting throughout is stunning, particularly in the final scene in which Phillippe begins to see himself through "feminist" eyes. ■ Reprinted from "Everywoman"



VIVRE SA VIE

stew
hwa
BEH

So far, the films made during Godard's bourgeois period have been more successful as political films than his recent ones. *Contempt* and *Vivre Sa Vie* are great works in their explorations of sexist problems within unique structures. In order to deal with ideas seriously and effectively, Godard creates a new film language--novel expressions to cope with the complexity of these ideas. Perhaps he should re-evaluate the aesthetics of his former works in his present search for revolutionary ways of putting sound and images together. On another level, *Vivre Sa Vie* and *Contempt* (I have not seen *One or Two Things I Know About Her*) are necessary stages towards *See You At Mao* (his best political film) where the sexist problem is articulated overtly in precise political terms, offering no convenient es-

capisms into story/plot or poetry per se. A large part of this criticism will concentrate on the structure that has rendered his ideas so effectively: We ignore aesthetics in political works at our own peril.

Vivre Sa Vie is a film that uses prostitution as a metaphor for the study of a woman. It is a legitimate metaphor, for every woman is directly or indirectly a prostitute. An irony is suggested in the title *My Life to Live* when the film reveals the objective nature of Nana's life--a society that gives her the illusion of freedom yet systematically strips her down. The story is that of Nana Klein whose last days are told in twelve parts. The beginning of the film starts with the end of her marriage with Paul--Episode I "Nana and Paul. Nana feels like giving up." Aptly, the beginning of each episode is her end--a series of deaths culminating

in the fatal gunshot in Episode XII. Paul is unsympathetic and refuses to lend her money. He will not pay for what he cannot get. Nana's landlady refuses her the apartment key because of unpaid rent. She tries unsuccessfully to break into movies through a phony press agent. Then she gets arrested for pocketing 1000 francs. Desperate and drifting Nana is accidentally propositioned in the street--presumptuously type-caste as a whore for being alone and wandering. Later she is introduced to Raoul, a pimp, who seduces her into professional prostitution. As Raoul's property he offers "protection". Raoul treats her like a child and an object. He becomes hostile when Nana tries to participate in Raoul's conversation with a male friend. To ward off a disciplinary confrontation, the friend performs a clownish act to appease Nana. Later, Nana falls in love with Luigi who is kind to her. She believes herself to be free enough to leave Raoul and prostitution for a relationship with Luigi. But Raoul sells her off to another syndicate of pimps. The trade-off misfires and Nana is inadvertently killed by the exchange of gunshots.

In several instances the film transcends Nana's individual predicament to elucidate that of women in general. In one episode Nana meets Yvette in a cafe. Yvette tells the story of being abandoned with several kids while her husband takes off to make money in the movies. She is then forced into prostitution. The scene is counterpointed by a couple sitting at the next table whose love is articulated by a song blasting from a juke box--a mockery of romantic love. In episode II Nana cries while watching Dreyer's *Jeanne D'Arc* who was burned at the stake for being a woman. A woman leading a victorious army is a witch and a disciple of the devil. A man winning a battle is a hero and patriot. (Falconetti who

portrayed Jeanne D'Arc ended up herself as a prostitute in Brazil.) Then, of course, the name Nana is reminiscent of Renoir's *Nana*, a beautiful woman put on a pedestal who manipulates men since they inversely control her money and status rendering her powerless. For that act, the "logic" of the film ends in her dying of syphilis.

Another example of the film transcending the personal life of Nana to a broader perspective is the television documentary style of Episode VIII which talks of the laws and rules regulating prostitution in Paris and the hazards involved. There is a series of fast cuts illustrating the routines of such a vocation in hotel rooms and on sidewalks. Many shots include the handling of money in exchange for sex. Reverting to a *cinéma-verité* style broadens the whole moral issue. To stamp out prostitution calls for rehauling the entire system and giving women the political and economical power for self determination. Failing this the problem is postponed indefinitely since prostitution reinforces male control, and solves unemployment for women.

In order to deal with the complexity of the subject matter, the film's structure and Godard's style are an integral part of our understanding of Nana and of prostitution. Godard employs specific aesthetic considerations to render intellectual and emotional involvement. For example, he uses a fragmented narrative mode after strong Brechtian influences by dissecting the film into twelve parts with a short preface before each describing the scene or action to follow. The episodes are accompanied by the same strain of music stopping and starting. Within this basic and open structure, Godard simultaneously abstracts and involves the spectator in spite of jarring mergers and intermittent plots.

Secondly, by using the present tense in relating the story of Nana,

the experience becomes immediate, incidents occurring become immediate facts. *Vivre Sa Vie* tells us what happens but not why something happens. The absence of explained motives or cause-effect is essential, for involving psychology would lead to dealing with the past, present and future. We are not told about what had preceeded in the relationship between Paul and Nana, we just witness a break-up in the opening scene. We do not know why Nana chose to become a prostitute. All we see and are told is that she did accept Raoul's proposition.

Thirdly, *Vivre Sa Vie* has the look, the casualness, and the potential sensuous energy of cheap thrillers, and the sexual glamour of popular sensation magazines, to allow the film maker freedom to abstract without losing the appeal to the popular audience. *Vivre Sa Vie* is, after all, about a prostitute and prostitution, about machine gun fire in the street, and love and murder--ultimately about the tragedy of being a woman.

Another reason that keeps the audience at a constant high point of interest is the allowance for voyeurism. Ordinarily, private scenes in movies freely admit the audience. But in *Vivre Sa Vie*, such scenes are set up in a way as to render the thrill of peeping Toms. For example, the first scene opens on Paul and Nana with their full backs to us engaged in private conversation. Their attitude does not admit us but all the same, we hear everything. In another scene we are allowed to read and hear Nana's letter to a madam of a brothel. In the fifth episode, we hear all about the private life of Nana's girlfriend Yvette in the cafe. We witness the first hotel scene where Nana takes caution to close the curtains, or a later scene when Nana has her back turned while the man carries on with another prostitute in the same room.

An important consideration which is finally the essential ingredient,

lies in the two types of material used--the word and the action to create gaps or spaces for the lively participation of the imagination. This involves alienating elements which at once sets up the paradox of distancing and involving simultaneously. Godard, by treating his films as attempts at cinema and above all, as exercises in intelligence, expels the conservative and misleading distinction between literary and visual intelligence. The purists who rule out words seen or heard for a pure cinema of visuals, are dismissing other real sensibilities found in words as a linear visual or audio suggestion. Total cinema should invoke as many of our faculties and sensibilities as possible. The fact that cinema can admit language gives it a unique and superior position and freedom compared to other art forms. Realising the power and susceptibility of the imagination to linear images as well as to audio suggestion besides pictorial visuals, Godard engages the participation of the imagination by allowing spaces between word and action, what is heard and what is seen, and his use of static as well as arbitrary shots. Godard employs the aesthetic of the incomplete, and the aesthetic of discomfort.

The opening shot immediately alienates us. Paul and Nana have their backs to us. It is an awkward and casual scene at a bar. We only see their faces blurred and reflected in the mirror, the barman walks back and forth constantly, the conversation between Paul and Nana is vague. But we are given sufficient information to know that the two people face an impossible relationship. The sparing conversation keeps us curious, the setting creates enough discomfort for us to hang on. Another scene shows Nana in a frontal position under police interrogation. We do not see the interrogator as we learn that she is Nana Klein, aged 22, etc.; we hear her story which led to her arrest. The frontal shot

is static, framing her the way photos for police records would do; but from what we hear, we fill in all the visuals of the incident at the bookstore where she tried to steal 1000 francs. We witness Nana saying, "I wish I was somebody else." The frontal static shot allows us to fill in all the emotions of this one statement. We empathise with Nana Klein, who at this point wishes to die.

Sontag talks about Godard's un-erotic love scenes, how he prefers language to action. But on the contrary, the principle of "less is more," and the power of suggestion applies effectively. Personally, I find his love scenes extremely erotic. The erotic suggestiveness manifests itself effectively in the hotel scene where, after Nana got another prostitute for her client, she sits silhouetted with a cigarette against the window while from off-frame comes a man's quiet voice saying to the other prostitute, "comme ça." The economy and the still action of this scene heightens the audio suggestion. Other examples can be found in the car scene of *Pierrot Le Fou* where Ferdinand and Anna make love solely through words; or in *Weekend* when the woman sits in her underwear with her back to us (The economy stretched to a monochrome setting) describing an orgy she had experienced.

In the *Oval Portrait* scene, further reductions are made when speech between two people is reduced to subtitles and the text heard is read by Godard although we suppose it is Luigi reading with the book over his mouth. This scene which is significant in the life of Nana, for here Nana decides to give up prostitution for Luigi, is executed without a word actually spoken between the two. This minimal physical interaction paradoxically heightens audience involvement--first because of the novelty of the introduction of subtitles instead of natural sound and secondly because we are forced to complete all actions.

Arbitrariness, another Godardian characteristic used to evoke neutrality also stems from the considered problem of what constitutes decision in each shot or setting. If each shot is autonomous what constitutes more relevancy in one shot than another? The same problem faces an artist--why red and not blue? Why this angle or spot on the canvas and not another? The arbitrariness creates a naturalness and also serves to create a disturbance in our conditioned expectancy of the traditionally aesthetically well-placed shot. It is not alien enough to be too remote for any possible empathy but just disturbing enough to keep us interested.

In spite of the film's obvious non-conventionalism and experimentation on all fronts, the structure of *Vivre Sa Vie* is formal. The twelve episodes in their tableaux-like form bear heavy resemblance to the twelve stations of the cross. The framing traps Nana the way the tableaux imprisons the image of Christ. Each tableau tells us in words what we are already witnessing in the visual. The line of progression demonstrates the phases Nana goes through before her fatal end. This progression and several elements of unity contribute to a formal structure. First, there are many allusions to the classics. There is the quotation from Montaigne at the beginning of the film, the text from Poe, the name Nana from Renoir's silent film *Nana* and the excerpt from Dreyer's *Jeanne D'Arc*. Then there are preparatory scenes which are in line with conventional rules of unity. In the first episode, Paul relates the chicken story to Nana... "The chicken has an inside and an outside. Remove the outside and you find the inside. Remove the inside and you find the soul." The rest is the proof of the premise as the portrait of Nana unfolds. The first accidental encounter with prostitution develops into a full time occupation in the fifth episode. The machine-gun fire also in

the fifth episode involving Raoul seemingly as arbitrarily as other preparatory scenes is not as arbitrary as it appears for this incident hints of a similar violence in the shooting of Nana by Raoul and another party in the final episode.

The last episode of "The Young Man Again...The Oval Portrait" tells a story from Poe of an artist who in the process of capturing his wife's beauty on canvas loses her in death. While Luigi reads the story, Nana is trapped both by his words and the camera which tightens to a long take in close-up. The set up or framing is that of a painted picture. Nana as well as Anna Karina confronts a losing battle. While the artist sacrifices his wife for his art, he is also the vampire that sucks her dry. The artist exonerates himself by placing the woman on a pedestal frozen by his concept of ideal beauty. But in the final analysis, the man's work of art is for his own glory and fulfillment of his world of fantasies. The living woman is sacrificed for an abstract "greater art" and taught to accept it as the highest honour. It is the romantic myth of the blood of the sacrificial victim without which a work of art cannot transcend.

Sontag finds this last episode to be the major flaw in the structure and unity of the film. The fact that Godard relates to his own film as a film maker, and as Anna Karina's husband, is to Sontag, Godard "mocking his own tale." What Sontag finds as a "peculiar failure of nerve" I find as a double strength. The unique structure of the film provides appreciation on several levels. In spite of the fact that Godard himself read the text of the "Oval Portrait," it does not break the unity of the film. First, we never hear Luigi's voice. His voice might very well sound like Godard's for all we know or care. In the scene, he has the book constantly over his mouth. In any case, or consistently, nobody speaks in the scene. They communi-

cate via subtitles. Luigi might represent Godard, Godard might be speaking to his wife Anna and not Nana. These considerations are irrelevant because all maneuvers are within context. Luigi's choice of Poe's text is consistent with his interest in art and it serves as a preparatory hint of Nana's death in the last scene. That Nana met and fell in love with Luigi is as arbitrary as all other occurrences in the film, and Godard's speaking to his wife is his personal matter. For the audience who has never heard Godard's voice, the continuity and unity is not broken. For those who know of it and of Anna Karina's relationship to Godard, there is added appreciation. For the artist who paints the portrait of his wife does not deny the spectator the pleasure of a work well done within the context of the medium. The single woman serves a double function equally well.

When Sontag says "only as prostitute do we see a Nana who can affirm herself" the interpretation is limited. She is not respecting the structure which contradicts her statement. On one level, blatant prostitution is the logical conclusion for women who are conditioned to accept themselves as sex objects and to behave accordingly. Since Sontag is not using the word "prostitute" metaphorically, the statement does not apply to Nana. Nana is shown as someone who can affirm herself in anything that can solve her predicament for the moment. Her speech to Yvette about being responsible for anything one does, is almost rapped out mechanically, said at a time when she is cornered by circumstances. Obviously her speech parallels survival lies--the illusion of personal freedom in situations without understanding the limits of those situations. More often than not, it is the situation that chooses Nana and not vice versa. Certainly she "abets" the situation but when one is trapped, is there

any sense in talking about abetting? According to the structure of the film, we see Nana deciding to leave Paul permanently, hoping for a better life. She then sees a photographer/press agent who might be able to get her into films. If he had succeeded she would have been in films instead of prostitution. Other examples of situations determining her course are the incident with the concierge, her arrest, being accidentally propositioned, and meeting Raoul at a time of great financial stress. Again, when she falls in love with Luigi and makes the decision to leave Raoul and prostitution, she is sold off and accidentally shot that same day. If she had succeeded, Nana would have found her affirmation with Luigi and not with prostitution.

Godard has been severely attacked for being too literary at the expense of visual and emotional aesthetics. Yet *Vivre Sa Vie* is an emotional film no matter how abstract it looks. Godard attacks old cinematic conventions and experiments in all aspects. The large number of modifications in a single piece of work is rather difficult to be entirely acceptable to the popular audience. (I use the word modification because in the analysis of this film, one does not find a complete rejection of the conventional or formal structure but rather an exploitation of it in novel ways.) However alien or awkward Godard's mixture of genres may sound in principle, he achieves a unique harmony and plasticity of all elements. He has expanded cinema to include diverse considerations as legitimate possibilities for the film medium. But no matter how successful the structure is, it alone cannot make a great film without significant content. *Vivre Sa Vie* is a brilliant and sympathetic study of the woman's eternal dilemma in a world defined by men, money, sex, and violence.

IDA LUPINO (1918—)

FILMS: 1949—*Not Wanted*. 1950—*Outrage*, *Never Fear*. 1951—*Hard, Fast and Beautiful*. 1953—*The Bigamist*, *The Hitch-Hiker*. 1965—*The Trouble with Angels*. Note: *Not Wanted* was actually directed by Elmer Clifton, but Ida Lupino produced and wrote the screenplay and presumably served her technical apprenticeship with the silent-movie veteran.

Ida Lupino's directed films express much of the feeling if little of the skill which she has projected so admirably as an actress. But while we are on the subject: Lillian Gish, that actress of actresses, once directed a film (*Remodeling Her Husband*—1921), and declared afterward that directing was no job for a lady. Simone de Beauvoir would undoubtedly argue the contrary, but relatively few women have put the matter to the test. Dorothy Arzner, Jacqueline Audrey, Mrs. Sidney Drew, Lilian Ducey, Julia Crawford Ivers, Frances Marion, Vera McCord, Frances Nordstrom, Mrs. Wallace Reid, Lois Weber, and Margery Wilson come to mind as little more than a ladies' auxiliary. (The unwary historian might also include such certified males as Monta Bell and Marion Gering). A special footnote must be devoted to the widow of Alexander Dovjenko, particularly for such séance productions as *Poem from the Sea* and *Years of Fire*. A longer and considerably more controversial footnote would be devoted to Leni Riefenstahl, more for the relative objectivity of her *Olympiad* than for the blatant contrivance of *Triumph of the Will*. The jury is still out on Vera Chytilova, Shirley Clarke, Juleen Compton, Joan Littlewood, Nadine Trintignant, Agnes Varda, and Mai Zetterling.

Note: Andrew Sarris does not discuss the films of Ida Lupino as he does every other (male) director, no matter how insignificant, in his "classic" book on the American Cinema, but simply lists, in the most derogatory fashion, all the women he can think of that have "put the matter to the test."

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EDUCATION, AND DISCUSSION

GROWING UP FEMALE

"With a minimum of comment, the film shows how female human beings are brainwashed into passivity, mental sluggishness, and self-contempt. I wish every high school kid in America could see this film."--Susan Sontag (60 min., b & w)

ABORTION

A Women's Collective in Boston demands free birth control information, health centers, abortion on demand, and the equal responsibility of men for birth control. (30 min., b & w)

INSIDE THE LADIES' HOME JOURNAL

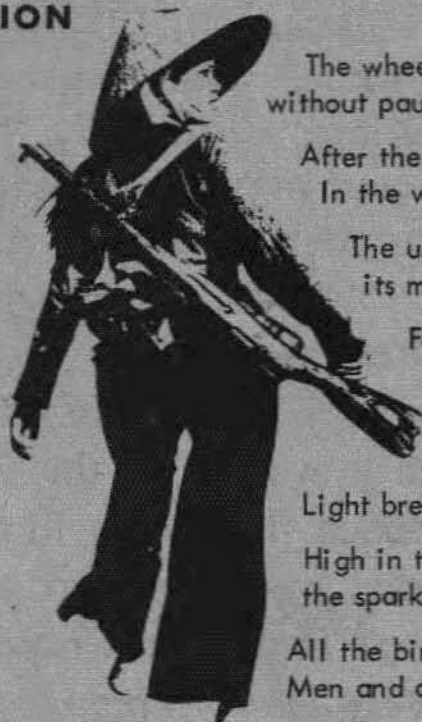
"We demand an end to the basic orientation of the Journal toward the concept of 'children, kitchen and church' and a reorientation around the concept that both sexes are equally responsible for their own humanity." (15 min., b & w)

ANGELA DAVIS: LIKE IT IS

"The success or failure of a revolution can almost always be gauged by the degree to which the status of women is altered in a radical, progressive direction." (60 min., b & w)

SALT OF THE EARTH

"Whose neck shall I stand on to make me feel superior? And



The wheel of the law turns
without pause.

After the rain, good weather.
In the wink of an eye

The universe throws off
its muddy clothes.

For ten thousand miles
the landscape

spreads out like a beautiful
brocade

Light breezes. Smiling flowers.

High in the trees, amongst
the sparkling leaves

All the birds sing at once.

Men and animals rise up reborn.

What could be more natural?
After sorrow, comes joy.

--Ho Chi Minh

what will I get out of it? I
don't want anything lower than
I am. I'm low enough already.
I want to rise. And push every-
thing up with me as I go." (94 min., b & w)

MANUELA

A young Cuban woman whose
family is killed in a Batista police
raid joins the guerrillas in
the Sierra Maestra. (40 min., b & w)

THE RED DETACHMENT OF WOMEN

Ballet by women of the People's
Republic of China on village

women rising against a feudal
landlord. (2 hr., color)

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THROW THIS BOGUS REPUBLIC AND PLANT A
GOVERNMENT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IN ITS STEAD."

Victoria Woodhull
May 11, 1871

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ESQUIRE, Pasadena - SY 3-6149, "The French Connection" Coming Jan. 5, "Trojan Women"
LOS FELIZ, Hollywood - NO 4-2169, Starts Jan. 5, Claude Lelouch's "The Crook" plus Chabrol's "La Femme Infidele"
MONICA I, Santa Monica - 451-8686, Disney's "Lady & The Tramp" plus "\$1,000,000 Duck"
MONICA II, Santa Monica - 451-8686, "Carnal Knowledge", coming Jan. 19, "Trojan Women"
PLAZA, Westwood - GR 7-0097, Dustin Hoffman in "Straw Dogs"
REGENT, Westwood - GR 7-0059, Julie Christie in "The Go-Between"
ROYAL, West L.A. - GR 3-1636, coming Jan. 12, Jack Nicholson in "Ride In the Whirlwind" and "The Shooting"

DESTROY, SHE SAID by Marguerite Duras, the French novelist and playwright has created a haunting film about the politics of alienation.

BLACK PANTHERS: A REPORT by Agnes Varda, is an extraordinary documentary exploring the goals and dynamism of the Panthers by the director of Cleo from 5 to 7, Le Bonheur and Lion's Love.

The Films of Madeline Tourtelot, a group of twenty films ranging from music and dance to film journalism by an extraordinary talent.

Also: Jean Berander's Elizabeth
Francis Lee's Le Bijou,
The Idyl and 1941
Flora Mock's Waiting



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DUET FOR CANNIBALS by Susan Sontag, is a cerebral comedy that explores the psychological effects of sexual roles.

The Films of Maya Deren, Grove Press is the exclusive distributor of Ms. Deren, generally considered the most influential American experimental filmmaker of the past twenty-five years.

SOMETHING DIFFERENT by Vera Chytilova, concerns the dilemma of modern women: the conflict between her social ambitions and the limitations imposed on her by society.

And: Marie Menken's Hurry, Hurry, and Visual Variations on Noguchi
Mary Ellen Bute's Finnegan's Wake
Agnes Varda's L'Opera Mouffe

BY AND ABOUT WOMEN

Grove Press, Inc./53 East 11th Street/New York, New York 10003/Telephone: 212 677-2400

Remembrance of Films Past

a french cinema festival

Many are tempted to attribute the quality of "slight" to French artistry and to allude to "Gallic charm" with a tender tone of condescension. The most serious of ideas and most difficult of dilemmas might be evoked and grappled with but the French style of clarity, lightness and calm simply sublimated them into an airy vapor more like perfume than the earthy scents of decay and sweat and sexuality. This core of serenity that hovers between the fatherly wisdom of a Jean Renoir and the swirling humor of a Rene Clair is vastly different from the calculating seriousness of an Eisenstein or the poetic intensity of a Dovzhenko. As many have pointed out it is also distinctly different from the laconic toughness of the American "B" movie which reached its apotheosis in film noir and which the French were the first to appreciate, as well as name. And for Americans the French cinema's lack of toughness seems far less a deficiency than a complementary virtue to the far more distinctly neurotic American cinema. Like the style they generally manifest, the films themselves stand somewhat detached, set apart

from the pragmatic business of success and happiness in American life, providing not only exemplary works of artistry but also exemplary (because detached and somewhat impotent) codes of morality and endearing (because utopian) views of human conduct.

This is not to say the films are not as significant as many claim but rather to locate them within a broader context and also to recognize the traditions against which some of the films are aligned, most specifically the "New Wave" films of Godard and the oeuvre of Robert Bresson. Virtually every film in this festival is a genuine classic in its quintessential treatment of the problem it sets itself and in the aesthetically precise nature of its working. *Children of Paradise*, for example, is a masterpiece of the sweeping epic style that nonetheless defines and limits itself to concrete characters and situations. *Carnival in Flanders* is particularly noteworthy for readers of this magazine since it is a biting comedy about male cowardice and the resolute women of a Flemish town that rescue it from Spanish carnage. *Winds from*

the East is Godard's most complex and important statement on the nature and use of revolutionary film; it's a western that subverts itself and, even more, the entire ideology within which it is forced to operate. It marks perhaps the fullest development of Godard's essay style that has been present in more submerged form in almost all his films. Renoir, Vigo and Clair present brilliant gems from the older French cinema while Resnais and Bresson demonstrate how those same concerns can be transformed and refined in newer, even more personal visions that defy easy classification within any kind of wave.

In short the festival offers an opportunity to view how national perspectives can markedly shape the style and nature of a bourgeois cinema, how some directors attempt to break out of that proscribed system and how others manage to not only survive but flourish within it. The range of ideas and thoughts which such a format provokes mark it as one of the major film events of the season.

Betsy Ross, Jr.

DEC. 29
TO
JAN. 4

CHILDREN OF PARADISE

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DIRECTED BY
ALAIN RESNAIS

ITALIAN STRAW HAT

DIRECTED BY
RENE' CLAIR

JANUARY
19 TO 25

EARRINGS OF MADAME DE...

DIRECTED BY
MAX OPHULS

ZAZIE DANS LE METRO

DIRECTED BY
LOUIS MALLE

JAN. 26
TO
FEB. 1

PIERROT LE FOU

DIRECTED BY
JEAN-LUC
GODARD

A NOUS LA LIBERTE'

DIRECTED BY
RENE' CLAIR

FEBRUARY
2 TO 8

RULES OF THE GAME

DIRECTED BY
JEAN RENOIR

GRAND ILLUSION

DIRECTED BY
JEAN RENOIR

FEBRUARY
9 TO 15

LAST YEAR AT MARIENBAD

DIRECTED BY
ALAIN RESNAIS

LE MILLION

DIRECTED BY
RENE' CLAIR

FEBRUARY
16 TO 22

CARNIVAL IN FLANDERS

DIRECTED BY
JACQUES
FEYDER

ZERO FOR CONDUCT

DIRECTED BY
JEAN VIGO

FEBRUARY
23 TO 29

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