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EDITORIAL

Though this issue of Cine-Tracts is a single one for purposes of subscription consistency, we are calling it a double issue because it is our biggest effort to date. There is no over-riding theme to the issue but many of the articles are concerned with theories of political cinema and the practice of political filmmaking.

The work of Johan Van der Keuken is, we think of utmost importance to political filmmakers. His attempt to confront documentary codes and conventions from within the specific coded instances of the documentary is a crucial contribution to self-reflexive cinema. His documentary on the present crisis of Western capitalism — Springtime — tries to, as Hart Cohen says in his review; "...deal with the relationships between subjectivity and the social institutions that both regulate and administer the economy." There is an equally important effort to critique documentary forms and conventions from within the film itself.

The interview with Jean-Louis Comolli took place during the conference on "The Cinematic Apparatus" in Milwaukee in February of 1978. The conference was organized by Stephen Heath and Teresa de Lauretis. Jump-Cut magazine (issue no. 17) has written a long and bitter attack about the way the event was organized and carried off — about its elitism and sexism and "boys club" atmosphere. This editorial is not the place for a response to Jump-Cut's criticisms. The intensely personal nature of the critique requires an answer that will reveal as a counterpoint the productive results of the work at Milwaukee. Hart Cohen and I are in the process of writing an extended article for the next issue of Ciné-Tracts on film magazines, Jump-Cut in particular. Many of the criticisms made about Milwaukee reflect the critical, theoretical and political position of Jump-Cut as a whole and there is a need to open up an honest debate about what it means to situate a publication as Marxist-radical-nonsectarian-anti-racist-anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist and anti-sexist. In writing the article we intend to clarify what our own political position is and we will try and be as "unmonolithic" as possible about it.

In many ways our position on political film is made clear by the kind of questions we ask Comolli and Van der Keuken. We are concerned with a kind of political film that sets itself up as a politicized window on the social and political process and on the contradictory forces at work in our society.

The crisis (as we see it) of political-militant film is situated within the following set of contradictions. The camera — the production process seems to reproduce empirical reality and yet by virtue of the very properties which make reproduction possible the screen cannot but reproduce the logic of a representational system that generates a tracing of the real — a shadow whose substance is defined by what is absent. The organization of images makes reproduction possible only with and as a result of a specific set of constraints that can be defined as naturalized (Barthes) because they appear not to need explication. They contain within their means of expression a clearly formulated structure that denies their artifice.

At the very moment at which film appears to recover the real and give it to us it has to deny itself as film because the mediators that structure what we are seeing become peripheral — we see because it is there to be seen—artifice is present, mediation is necessary but the reproduced reality overcomes all contradiction and flattens the constructed into an enunciation that appears to have no subject behind it (unmotivated).
The image, whether the intention behind its construction is political or not remains an image. It is a product and creator of signification — a carefully organized structuring and structured cultural object — that initially has to deny the real in order to produce a sense of reality.

Yet given that we recognize that film constructs the real and given that the notion of film as window (an unmediated enunciation) has served to confuse rather than clarify the functioning of the medium (particularly the documentary) in relation to what it is showing the paradoxical position of political filmmakers is best revealed by the following quotes:

"The documentary-vérité-political film opens up questions and creates crises in the viewer's experience and understanding of what is being shown and portrayed." (Cinema Action — London)

"We showed the film and the response was incredible. People were shouting and seemed ready to discuss how they could organize themselves and deal with the issues that we had raised." (Newsreel)

"Many members of the audience had serious questions about community health care and community health centers and our film opened up a debate on the nature of health care under capitalism . . . ." (Kartemquin)

(All of the above quotes come from personal interviews.)

Thus a reaction, any reaction, means the film has worked politically. The whole problem of the effect of a film cannot be resolved in one showing and the paradox is centered in the desire to legitimize a dangerous form of behaviorism that seeks to overcome the contradictions of the cinematic viewing situation. A political film — one that for example attempts to challenge the way an audience thinks about medicine under capitalism — cannot escape the inherent ambiguities and contradictions of the representational process. It is precisely the heterogeneity of the film-projection-interaction-consumption system that makes the political as enunciated in film open to interruption — open to being challenged. It is crucial that the gap — the spaces — opened by an intensely assertive statement be allowed their role in the critical framing by the spectator of what he/she has seen.

The struggle a spectator has to go through in relation to a political film is in part framed by the way the film organizes itself as a statement. Ultimately, if the film cannot structure itself so as to open up the possibility of an emerging critical viewer — one who can question what is being shown — question that continuously past tense image — the already seen — the built in contradictory flow of a signifying process, that appears not to signify but to duplicate and record then the film is setting up a framework of questioning that affects the nature of its political message and intent. To privilege the content implies a desire to overdetermine the audience's relationship to the screen — message — to deny the mediators that are built into the production of meaning in the cinema. The desire to see the result of political analysis in an audience's reaction to it simply confirms the linearity of the desire. The very power of the cinema (reproduction) is also its major weakness and this weakness cannot be wished away or repressed in favour of a strong message.

Comolli stresses these points again and again, both in his writings and in his film (as does Van der Keuken) and though he is attempting to do it through the narrative film it is our feeling that the points he raises apply to the documentary as well.

Robert Scott's article on Littin also tries to deal with the debate on political film via an analysis of ideology, form and representation in the cinema. He
tries to situate and then decode the ideological in film as well as dealing with the effects of bourgeois illusionism on narrative diegesis. He attacks the transcendent spectator-subject-viewer by looking at how the construction of a narrative positions the creator of a film outside the system of enunciation and thus places the viewer equally 'outside' of an understanding of ideology and its effects.

**Our Canadian section** is an important move in a direction that is central to our work. The absence of articles on "Canadian cinema" (in issues 1-3) has upset some of our readers in Canada and some clarification is in order. We see our work on cultural theory and practice as being situated within and contextualized by what is happening in Canada and Québec.

As a magazine we are trying to generate a "space" both theoretical and critical, that will allow and give impetus to work on film and culture — whether it is produced in Canada or elsewhere. The distinguishing characteristics of a national culture are open to debate and in the case of Canada with the almost colonial status, of for example our film industry, the debate has perhaps got to be shifted to new ground. The colonized nature of our culture has important effects on how we look at it. To declare that a film is Canadian because seventy percent of it was made here is a definition that works for co-production agreements but brings us no closer to grasping the particularity of our own cultural production. We are in need of theories which will raise political questions about a colonized industry that reproduces itself and the technicians that it needs.

Many of the filmmaking courses taught in our schools perpetuate precisely the kind of "professional" ethic that inhibits the development of a cinema that is politically aware of the contradictions in our culture. Students rush to duplicate the very conventions and styles — as well as the content — of films that come out of the industrial process. There is perhaps a greater need to understand that industrial process than there is to duplicate it.

The recent decline in Québec filmmaking can be traced in part to the negative effects of the new co-production agreements that we have. They build an industry of "B" films and center themselves on foreign directors. Ours is a dependent industry producing cultural artifacts for an international audience whose access to films is mediated by distribution systems controlled by American financial capital. It is from this point that an examination of our culture would have to begin. No national cinema has escaped the influence of the United States; given the present economic structure and ideological strength of the American cultural output (and film theory is only beginning to understand the source of that strength now through the influence of semiotics, structuralist and marxist examinations of the classic Hollywood cinema) the response to the American influence has to be a political response.

We are committed to publishing material on Canadian film and Canadian culture as well as to supporting and encouraging the use of our pages for debate on the central issues surrounding Canadian culture. We are particularly concerned with examining the way institutions like the National Film Board, the Canadian Film Development Corporation, and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation function. We would like to get reviews of Canadian film and Canadian television etc. . . .

The inside back cover of this issue describes our future intentions. We invite submissions from our readers in Canada, the United States, England, Australia and Europe.

Finally, we have received a number of letters from our readers commenting on the typographical errors in issues 1-3. The errors are the product of inexperience and the fact that we basically put the entire magazine together ourselves. We deeply regret some of our more embarrassing errors and hope that you will bear with us as we try and perfect the production of the journal.

Ron Burnett
QUESTIONS OF PROPERTY

Film and Nationhood

Stephen Heath

The context of this first Martin Walsh lecture is the Film Studies Association of Canada conference on "Cinema and Nationhood"; its intention is to honour the memory of Martin Walsh in a way that he would have thought appropriate — raising and attempting to develop a little some current issues in film theory that would seem to need to inform any critical discussion of the idea of a 'national cinema'. What follows is thus turned towards the conference and its theme but stands prior to it; the aim, remembering how much of Martin Walsh's own work was concerned with a certain political theoretical avant-garde represented in practice by the films of Godard and Straub-Huillet, is to indicate a series of questions of property in cinema, to suggest something of their importance for us today.
That the conference theme involves a necessary reflection on cinema is not simply as obvious as it appears. The cinematic relation of nationhood, at least if this latter is conceived politically, is a site not of given unity but of contradiction and present struggle, must problematize the cinematic, the institution of cinema, which is nevertheless the very condition of its existence, with nevertheless the term of contradiction and present struggle in cinema. One version of this is provided by four Canadian filmmakers (Betty Ferguson, Garonce Mapleton, Judy Steed, Joyce Wieland): "What has filmmaking got to do with Canadian identity and Canadian independence: How do you avoid American ownership in your film?". The question of ownership goes further than the directly economic (which is not to say that it is at any moment not the most direct concern), extends into the difficulties with regard to film and cinema of such expressions as 'identity', 'independence', 'your own film'. How are films owned? What are the incidences of proprietorship in cinema? It is these questions of property that will be envisaged here, bringing them around to consideration of the fact — the operations, the effects — of the cinematic institution that any political undertaking in national cinema has to face. The questions fall under the following headings: image, sound and language, representation and sexual difference, ideology and representing, film as historical present, use-value.

The film image is given first and foremost as the property of the reality from which by the accepted conventions of photographic reproduction it is seen to derive (inaugurating that play of copy and origin that is a constant point of exploited pleasure in film). Achieved within the photographic industry, the industry in which the Lumière brothers and Edison are inventors and businessmen the cinema is caught up in a founding ideology of the visible, reality there to be seen. That presence, however, is equally the property of the subject as spectator, the subject-relation of the vision of 'reality' (the play of copy and origin is precisely a play of an image for a subject). From the start, and necessarily, it is not simply reality that is proposed on the screen but the subject of that reality too, its completion: in fact, the subject in reality produced by cinema — which cinema really produces, for which it assigns the 'reality'. Cinema is not a vision but a circuit of vision, the overlay in which the look of the camera and the look of the eye come together, complete, make each other's turn, realize in that movement the subject in place. The circuit is effectively a shift in relation to the real, is effectively a new construction of position: the camera displaces the eye, assumes its power, sees for it, and returns that power in terms of the institution of the cinema, the terms of a standard vision, a standard of vision, remade from film to film and then becoming, as previously and continually the photograph itself, the currency of reality, subject, their relation — in the way that determines both the enthusiasm for what is then regarded as the new medium, the attainment of the 'universal language' acclaimed by the first Lumière spectators, "la langue universelle est trouvée!" and the disdain with which it is viewed by the guardians of national tradition as minority culture, as witness Leavis for whom "the motion picture, by virtue of its intrinsic nature, is a species of amusing and informational Esperanto.".

The stake of the film image is in its relation, its force of enunciation. Notions of an immediately unifying language are not by chance in connection with a cinema that is established exactly in respect of these same notions, for the universalized "mass", held to one image, to that identity (after all, as Straub puts it, "Esperanto is a bourgeois dream"); a cinema that elides the possibilities of disjunction that formed the project of Vertov's kino-eye — disalign camera-eye and human-eye in the interests of the redefinition of the subject-eye, of the individual into an operative, transforming relation to reality — or those of that dialectical development of forms posed by Bataille after a lecture by Eisenstein — "the determination of a dialectical development of facts as concrete as visible forms would be literally shattering." From its early history on, the idea of cinema as lang-
usage is symptomatically general and vague, so much analogical gesturing — images as equivalent to words and so on (that whole metaphor of language that Metz's initial semiology rigorously explored and displaced); with the generality and vagueness being the very stance of the establishment, cinema playing between articulation and reproduction (a play summed up in expressions of the kind 'the language of reality itself') to offer a form of justification by seeing, meanings sanctioned in and by the seen.

The force of the enunciation of the image in cinema is something akin to a veritable terrorism: image and succession of images are regulated, an accomplished fact, the enunciation as though over, absent, but with that absence filled by the given presence on the screen, without fissure, impossible to interrupt. In one of his first essays, Metz insists on a correspondence between the filmic image and the sentence — as opposed to the word — in natural language; the image is always actualized: "a close-up of a revolver does not mean revolver (a purely virtual lexical unit) but at the very least and without speaking of the connotations, it signifies, "Here is a revolver." What Metz is pointing to is the existence of a shot as utterance, its being there-for, its address: every image is the compulsion of an event, not simply some entry of a word. That compulsion however, comes with a certain innocence (the ideological potential of the photographic-filmic image, the play mentioned above), the marks of the enunciation are relatively unspecified in the image (there are no equivalents, for instance, to the pronouns in language) we know how to contradict a linguistic utterance, we are much less sure with an image, are confronted with its apparent completeness as image (hence the falseness of which Godard often speaks: the image false in as much exactly as it brings with it an effacement of the act of its proposition; truth is to be grasped not simply in the enounced but equally in the enunciation, in the distances, gaps, contradictions of the two). Which completeness, coming back round once more to the image as utterance, is, precisely, only apparent: the image is never complete in itself — if it were, there would be no place for any viewer and so, finally, no place for any image — and its limit is its enunciation, its address — the limit where it enters the circuit of vision completes with the subject it thus entertains.

The image completes on the subject as its spectator, term of a constant appropriation. How to resist an image, to refuse its belonging? "It is with the images that captivate its eros of living individual that the subject comes to deal with its implication in the sequence of signifiers"; writes Lacan almost as though describing cinema with its succession of images, the subject implicated there, ceaselessly, as the there of the image. Cinema works to the utmost that regime of the privilege of the subject that has it that the image for me; which is the problem of the belonging, the difficulty of contradicting my image. The succession is then exploited to compound this closing — this closeness — Of the image on the subject: articulation Of images as continuity narrativisation of that continuous articulation as the steady assignment of a developing view, a stable memory, something for someone, someone for that something, these meanings, this vision. The desire for images is maintained and fulfilled in the very time of the succession, mapped by the realized time into that desire, of the process of captivation: perpetual balancing of seeing seen, identification with camera-identification with person or object, from shot to shot and within the single shot itself via movement of human figures or camera creating new planes of fascination, a kind of extreme rendering of the scopic drive. Which is the necessity in Godard or Straub-Huillet of the attempt to disappropriate the subject of the image; images divided, crossed out, written over, multiplied in the single frame, returned to a television screen in Godard; images interrupted by black leader or, more interestingly, drawn out into an excessive time of vision and movement, something of a long chance of realities — car sequences of History Lessons, the pans of Fortini/Cani — in Straub-Huillet.
The film image, then, cannot be accepted without questions as a simple point of departure for a political practice of cinema. Linked to a production of "the visual"**, the illusion of a direct vision and the subject position-desire the imaginary, of that illusion, it must be posed as false. The visual in this sense does not exist: the image and its subject-completion are produced in codes which include, amongst others, the codes of the specific machination-the operation of the image in cinema, the codes of the constructed reality represented, and the codes of language itself — the whole problem, to go no further, of the nomination of visible object, of their linguistic visibility. The image is never pure, never "an image"; strictly, indeed, the image is not an order of the visible but of the invisible, a speculation that adjoins real, symbolic, imaginary, the subject against difference, transformation, the history of the subject in process (symptom: the degree to which the coming of photograph and cinema has undermined the critical production of history, henceforth fixed as simply past, as spectacle). The problem cited by the Groupe Dziga Vertov in Pravda — "sounds which are already right on images which are still false" — or Vent d’est — "this is not a just image, just an image" — is always contemporary.

That quotation from Pravda raises the question of sound in cinema, more particularly of the relation of spoken language and image. It is very evident of course, that sound is quite directly bound up with issues of property in the history of cinema: the coming of sound ensure Hollywood domination of the film industry at home and abroad and the bank's domination of Hollywood; equally, it sustains certain class definitions of cinema, confirming a normalization of the audience in terms of the generalising of middle-class ideology; equally again, it provides the point of reference for the elaboration of the legal status of ownership in connection with creative contribution in film, the property rights of individuals involved predicated on the traditional categories of literary expression, the whole ideology of the word, and the ownership by producers, production companies, predicated in turn on the buying of those inalienable rights

Beyond these issues, but constantly participating in them, the question of sound is the question of language and of property in and through language. Comolli, in his series of essays on cinema technology, stresses a relative lack of reflection during the time of the development towards sound as to the use to which the new possibility could and would be put: "the talking picture would talk, that was that." Which meant, once the variety-feature aspect of cinema performance important in the initial stages of sound had been displaced by the power of the word, the triumph of the aesthetic forms of linguistic organization of the middle-class — the forms of bourgeois theater, support and source of that "theatrical cinema" foreseen in its ascendency and so loathed by Vertov. The sound track is given as hierarchically subservient to the image-tract and its pivot is the voice as the presence of the character in frame, a supplement to the dramatisation of space, along with the accompanying "sound effects", with the narrative modes of cinema, established in respect of that theatricality. The emphasis is everywhere on the unity of the sound and image across the voice (locus of synchronisation) the latter at once subservient to the image (literally conceived as in the perspective of the image which in return it 'deepens'; hence the whole discussion of 'sound perspective' in the technical journals of the nineteen-thirties) and entirely dominant in the dramatic space it opens within it (precisely the 'deepening'), setting the limits of the scenes, casting little narrative parts readily available for the easy dubbing required by the international marketing of the industrial product. Marginal in the Hollywood industry, the documentary, duly categorised, receives a complimentary standard of sound and image relation: the document of the speaking subject, the 'topic of the film; the control of the commentary, the ruling enunciation, the unlocated, unquestioning voice over, preponderantly male,
that is there with the images, declares their meaning, assigns the truth that
the image must express. Whether in feature film or documentary (and the
division-categorisation would itself need to be grasped in its ideological
functioning), language owns the images, determining their space, their time,
their sense, monopolises them, making them one.

Obviously, the very choice of which language can be crucial in a given socio-
cultural situation, as between English and French, for example. It is
important to remember, however, that choices are made, conflicts engaged
just as much within the particular language, a single unified system only
under the abstraction of linguistics in most of its current versions. The arti-

culation between language and ideology is complex\(^\text{12}\) and the former can
in no way be subsumed into the latter, which would be to ignore its
productivity, its process of meaning and subject, yet it remains nevertheless
that language is never encountered other than as discourse, within a
discursive formation productive of subject relations in ideology, and that
there is no such thing as a simply national language. Benjamin was right, and
right for us today despite Stalin’s subsequent correct rectification of the
unproblematic location of language as a superstructural category, to hold to
the stress made in the following passage which he quotes from the Russian
linguist Marr in his 1935 article on the sociology of language: “One leaves
the realm of science and of every field of investigation when one envisages
such and such a language of a supposedly national civilization as though it
were a matter of a mother tongue employed by the whole mass of the pop-
ulation: national language as a phenomenon independent of states and
classes is from the very start a fiction.” Language is a site of struggle, and a
site of struggle in film: imagine a cinema that would show what was at stake
in its language and make heard what was invisible in its images. Examples?
Differently, \textit{Othon} or \textit{Ici et ailleurs}.

There is an area of political concern within which questions of property with
regard to the images and sounds of cinema are acute, an area which intersects
with and comes back on any discussion of cinema and nationhood, that of
representation and sexual difference. In the films of the dominant cinema,
the imaginary of the film is the woman, the signifier the look, as phallus, as
order, as the very apparatus of the film — cinema as relay of looks, ensuring
play in coherence, the constancy of speculation — which serves endlessly to
remake the scene, the theater of the male gaze, the total spectacle; with
narrative balancing out, accounting for the movement of the symbolic ,
taken up in the seen as scene: the object lost and gained, a whole scenario of
fantasy. That scenario can be grasped most readily out of its flat assumption,
in its exasperations in the classic tensions — the work of an Ophuls for
example, — of auteur-art/industry-standard: fascinated return on the woman
as center, the imaginary as masquerade become the very surface of the text,
laid out, exposed: the masquerade of the woman (the luxurious feminine of
jewellery, furs, mirrors....), the masquerade of woman in film, cinema’s
object of desire, its pursuit and goal (ceaseless tracking of the woman for
the gaze, the look, of her spectacle, of the desire to come there in a ceaseless
momentum of appropriation at its extreme in a film like \textit{Madame de}...).
The sole imaginary? The sole signifier? ‘Sole’ in the sense that any difference
is caught up in that structured disposition, that fixed relation in which the
film is centered and held, to which the times and rhythms and excesses of its
symbolic tissue and its narrative drama of vision are bound. The crucial issue
in this context is then that of the place of women in that relation, the place
of the look for women, an issue that has been frequently considered in terms
of an emphasis on a lack of investment in the look by women; as \textit{Luce}
Irigaray puts it: Investment in the look is not privileged in women as in men.
It sets at a distance and maintains the distance. In our culture the
predominance of the look over smell, taste, touch, hearing has brought an
impoverishment of bodily relations. It has contributed to disembodying sex-
uality. The moment the look dominates, the body loses in materiality. It is perceived above all externally and the sexual becomes much more a matter of organs that are highly circumscribed and separable from the site of their assembly in a living whole. The male sex becomes the sex because it is very visible. . . ." 13

For a woman to take place in a film, in the films of the cinema, is for her to represent male desire: to stand as the term of a social representation of desire determined by and redetermining a structure of division — the social operation of 'male'/"female", 'man'/'woman' — and oppression on the basis of that division — the difference assigned functioning as the inevitability, the right, of the domination of the one category by the other. This is clearer than ever today when images of women as woman's image are a deliberate focus of ideological concern in dominant cinema, from Three Women to The Turning Point, from The Goodbye Girl to Coma, in differing degrees of abjection (strategy of a film like Coma: produce a strong woman's image to weaken it, and her, back into place; she refuses to fix him a beer but to allow the film to fix the woman in the shower; she leaves, but, alone, her hand stretches out too late to the ringing phone in a pathetically held shot; and so on, in a perpetual process of admission and erasure, and anyway always a bind of images). The question is finally that of the fact of cinema, of this late nineteenth-century machine (contemporary with psychoanalysis, itself worrying over what Freud calls the 'riddle of femininity') and its intrication in a specific representing function, a specific construction of a male desire (so too psychoanalysis? is the nature of those decisive encounters in its history — Breur and Anna O., Freud and Dora,... Lacan and Aimée — quite by chance?). Yes, of course, the question is crude, simplistic (as is that parenthetically addressed to psychoanalysis), not allowing for the historical diversity of cinematic practices, but it remains nevertheless important, must inform any consequent alternative practice, whether attempting to evict all scene and realize film in the process of its material effects (the structural/materialist emphasis of Peter Gidal 14) or to produce a different scene, a new relation for women to film (the new language demanded as urgent by the Musidora group, for example 15).

Which is to return to the question of the look, the question of cinema for women there in that relation. The whole problem is raised acutely by Oshima Nagisa's In The Realm of the Senses, a film that seems to come close in its difficulty to a passage in which Irigaray develops the idea of women's non-investment in the look: "the possibility that a nothing seen, that a not masterable by the look, by specula(risa)tion, may have some reality would indeed be intolerable to man, since threatening his theory and practice of representation...." 16 Oshima's film is crossed by that possibility, which is its very trouble of representation: the look in the film sees everything and sees nothing, and that nothing seen is woman present and negated and present. again in the edge of that negation, that nothingness, according to a contradiction indicated by Oshima, in directly symptomatic fashion, in a comment on the film: "when I write a script, I depict women, but when it comes to filming, I end up centrally depicting men." 17 But this is to say that the possibility, a nothing seen, is not posed, as it were, from some outside; on the contrary, it is produced as a contradiction within the given system of representation, the property of the given machine. The problem is one of a specific institution of positions and relations of meaning, not one of an essence to be recovered, and the nothing seen is grasped as such from within that institution, as a point of and against its particular structure of its particular construction (just as the 'invisibility' of the sex of the woman described by Irigaray is only a figure of an order that defines woman from man and sets her as the scene of his representation and power). Thus cinema divides not in any immediate sense on women and men but on these positions and relations of 'man' and 'woman' in its representations and its
production of those representations, the subjectivity it engages; with the lack of the investment in the look by women realized there, ideologically, not from something originally wanting in women, women then being turned back to a kind or archaic sensuality (a place in which they have been historically accommodated by men).

Any political discussion of cinema and nationhood has to involve discussion of sexual difference, but that in no sense, or in a reactionary sense only, can be conceived of as the ‘addition’ of some ‘further problem’: the latter discussion is there in the very terms of the former as point of contradiction and struggle in representation, in the institutions of representing, in the property of images and sounds in the relations of men and women, their constructions.

Representation: images, argument, deputation; the turn together — representing of these different elements is important. The history of the individual as subject and as subject in and for a social formation is never finished; its constant termination, the stable relation of subject in constructed meaning, a specific subject-construction, is the effect of representation, and an ideological effect: any social formation depends for its existence not simply on the economic and political instances but also on a reasoning of the individual as subject, reproduced in images, identities of meaning, finding his or her delegation there. The term of this process is suture: the join of the subject as unity of the recognition of sense, the ground of intelligibility. Cinema is an institution of representing, a machine for the fabrication-continuation of representation; it is as such that it is developed and exploited, for the narration of the subject in a narrative that is its mapping, again and again, the constant termination, within the limits of the existing representations and their determining social relations. The category of that mapping can be called the novelistic18: the location of the spectator subject of cinema in a unity which encompasses, from apparatus to final narrative image, the individual as individual view within given social orders of meaning that are returned to the individual as his or her individual place and action; with family relations the arena of the social-individual construction-placing and of the necessary containment (possibility and limitation in one) of action, all tension of change articulated in the drama of the films produced and in the function of the producing, cinema as family machine (after and concurrent with the novel, prior to and concurrent with television, according to that pattern of inclusion in which one machine is replaced by another that embraces it and thus allows it a certain displacement into margins of excess to be exploited and delimited, commercially and ideologically — as with cinema today, for example, taking up a violence and pornography not available to television as the central machine). What is now being realized in fact, with regard to the history of the cinema, though its writing has not as yet shifted in consequence, is that that history is not be understood via the concept of "realism", ideas of "developments towards realism", and so on, but, first and foremost, in respect of relations of subjectivity, of the contract of the subject in representation, exactly the representing operation of cinema. Something of this can be seen immediately, moreover, in the contradictions of property and expense produced in the various technological innovations-elaborations which form part of that history. Family machine in its representing, not in its ownership, cinema weights expense massively on the side of production, an area of capitalist (and/or national state) investment, with reception inexpensive, the price of the ticket, of one's place; innovations - elaborations greatly reinforce the expense — hence the inaccessibility — of production (sound and colour are the obvious examples), creating indeed conditions of national inaccessibility, the collapse, weakening or sheer impossibility of starting to begin to exist of many national film industries in the face of the monopoly expansion of Hollywood. At the same time, however, the wider implication of that expansion both in industries having interests that go beyond the market of cinema — the
photographic industry for example — and in the general ideological investment in representing of which cinema is only one factor produces a crossing of cinema in its technological innovations-elaborations with developments — small gauges are the obvious example — that recast it in a different version of the family machine — notably that of the home movie. What remains constant is the very fact of the production of the machines and the force of standardisation achieved therein: standardisation of the technological base, the actual machinery; standardisation of the product, the film; standardisation of the subject, the relations-positions of meaning, the force of images. The relatively inexpensive product is as standardised (and above all in that ‘variety’ that is now sometimes acclaimed for it) as the expensive industrial one (and not of course, that the former is in any way divorced from the hold of capitalist industry): the personal is simply, as it were, restandardised, and the super 8 home-moving is a fully functioning social representing. The possibility nevertheless is that in the recasting of cinema in these new versions, in the redistribution of the existing availabilities of property for the family individuals, certain loosenings are there to be taken over, certain disappropriations — re-relations to be made — 16mm, super 8 as terms for groups, of a struggle away from the available ‘national cinema’ usually always multinational, that is, American — "how do you avoid American ownership in your own films?"
History in cinema is nowhere other than in representation, representing, exactly the historical present of any film. Which is to say that the simple relation of film and history-as-theme, as past to be shown today, an obvious strategy for a cinema developed in the perspective of a certain conception of nationhood, is an idealist abstraction, an ideal of film, and an ideal of history. The present of a film is always historical, just as history is always present — a fact of representation, not a fact of the past, a production of discourses from the-present, a construction, where the present is then equally always already historical, itself the process of that construction, a political reality. Cinema is part of that present process, which is where its history, the history of cinema, is crucial to film. To make a film is always at once a problem of film and cinema, a problem of a — of this — signifying practice and its specificity (the latter including the terms of its articulation of the non-specific to cinema), its institution. When Michel Foucault comments of the film Moi, Pierre Rivière by René Allio that "it was difficult and truly extraordinary to be able to reduce the whole cinematic apparatus, the whole filmic apparatus, to such slenderness" one has to reply that it is precisely in that supposed 'reduction' that the apparatus is most thick, most ideologically consistent. The history of a film cannot be collapsed into the alibi of a document, the past as referent-guarantee (Moi, Pierre Rivière is full of 'cinema', not of 'the past'). Any relation of nation and history in cinema, then, is reactionary if not passed through reflection on its current reality, which reality — hence also the reflection — is engaged in the specific institution of representing. Nationhood is not a given, it is always something to be gained; and a political national cinema must assume its history in that struggle.

On that assumption will depend the value for use of the particular cinema developed, the particular films made. In the dominant institution of cinema, films are set as far as possible within the limits of a strictly regulated — economically and ideologically — circuit of exchange: the film is a mode of exchange of subjects, a universal representative (which universality is its representing operation). "The relation between film-text and viewer is the prerequisite for political questions in the cinema" Alternative practices are alternative insofar as they transform the relations of representation against representing, against the universalising conditions of exchange; representation held to use (a definition of Brechtian distanciation), that is, to division, disunity, disturbance of the (social) contract (of film).

That transformation engages, has to engage, the three instances of the relation of the spectator as subject in a film: preconstruction, construction, and passage. Preconstruction involves the ready-made positions of meaning that a film may adopt, not simply large categories of definition, political arguments, thematic boundaries and so on, but equally, for example, the codes and orders of language itself, the existing social conventions of colour, the available ideas of film (genre is a major factor of preconstruction). Construction is the subject-position related in the film, more or less coherent, more or less a simple finality. Passage is the performance of a film, the movement of the spectator making the film, taken up as subject in its multiple process. The ideological achievement of any film is not merely in one or the other of these instances, it is first of all in its hold of the three together: the appropriation of preconstruction in construction (in fact, a reconstruction) and the process of that appropriation — with, in dominant cinema, narrativisation, the movement to narrative as novelistic, the final term of that hold, binding the spectator as subject in the image of the narrative, its images, and in the film as narration of that image, those images.

It is in these three instances and their hold that are produced the relations of representation of a film. Debate on film, on films, often stumbles over questions of effectivity, 'the real effect of a film', deadlocks on notions of 'the text itself', its meaning 'in it', or else of the text as non-existent other than somehow 'outside itself', in the particular responses it engages from any
individual audience; the text 'closed' or 'open'. The reading of a film, however, must be seen as neither constrained absolutely nor free absolutely but historical, and that historicality includes the determinations of the institution cinema, the conditions of the production of meanings, of specific terms of address. The property of a film is not yours or mine, whether makers or spectators; it is in a conjuncture of questions of property across those three instances of relation, which makes nationhood not a simple criterion that can be used — situation, theme, or whatever — to measure, evaluate, describe this or that film, this or that cinema. For a film, for a cinema, to begin to pose those questions of its property in a political definition of film and cinema is to begin to break exchange for use, which is after all the real and urgent question.

As did many of you here, as many people elsewhere, I knew and loved Martin Walsh. None of you, with direct awareness of his work over five years to help develop film studies and film culture in Canada, will doubt that the theme of this conference would have been important to him. Nor can it be doubted, from the interests and emphases of his writings, that he would have wished that theme to involve the issues I have tried to raise this evening in his memory. Let me say simply that I have been honoured and moved to do so.

END
The New Ice-Age

Third Part of the Triptych North-South

Diary and The White Castle have now been followed by a third film of the same length: The New Ice-Age. Together they form the Triptych North-South. The New Ice-Age shows the specific conditions under which four young factory-workers live, three sisters and a brother from a large family, all employed in an ice cream factory in the North of the Netherlands. Sharply selected fragments from these lives are intermingled with the themes of neo-colonial exploitation, population-growth, migration to the large cities and self-rule, witnessed in contemporary Peru, South America. In particular the efforts were depicted toward a socialist system of self-rule in Villa el Salvador, one of the numerous slum areas which have come into being in the desert surrounding Lima, the Peruvian capital.
In early April the editors of Ciné-Tracts interviewed Johan Van Der Keuken, whose work has been widely received in Europe, both in the cinema and on television. He spoke to us about his recent films *The Palestinians* and *Springtime*.

In order to introduce our readers to Johan and without detailing his vast filmography, we have put together the following dossier containing: an interview-discussion, a review of *Springtime* by Hart Cohen, a portion of its text in translation, and some background notes by Johan on his motivation for making *Springtime*, its development and its construction. The short excerpt on *The New Ice Age* on this page presents a good deal of information about his political, aesthetic and social concerns.

Above left: one of the girls in the ice cream factory in northern Holland; above and below: Peru, South-America; pictures taken by sound-man Chris Brouwer.

From the third part of the Triptych *North-South: The New Ice-Age* (1974).

An almost surrealistic dimension is added to the film by the element of deafness — the lack of the ability to hear and express oneself — which is initially chanced upon, almost by accident, but later determines the means of communication within the film. In *The New Ice-Age*, certain lines already evident in *Diary* and *The White Castle* are continued and clarified. Thus the three films, with their visual impressions, of Northern and Southern Europe, Africa and North and South America, join to form a unity in theme and style.
A Discussion with Johan Van Der Keuken

QUESTION:

So much of what you are trying to do in your films is a response to the history of the documentary . . . the way in which the documentary has tried to set up a false window/mirror on the world and presumes itself to be showing what is happening in the reality around us but never really trying to bring out the complexity of what it is showing, never bringing out the political, economic and social context and conjuncture of which it is a part. The window presumes a clarity on the part of the filmmaker, a unified view of the world, a homogeneity, a lack of contradiction — all these are perspectives which I think you are trying to work against. There are two levels at which we perceive you operating. One is at the level of the reality that you are trying to depict and show and the other is a level of discourse in which you try to comment upon and politicize the way reality is understood and seen. We would like to understand how you are affected by what you are filming and how you feel you are affecting, politically, that which you are showing. You are trying to include two sets of complex elements simultaneously in the act of filming, does the history of representation, the history of the documentary, the way television works for example — television news — overwhelm the spectator's capacity to recognize the level of critique which you are trying to construct?

VAN DER KEUKEN:

In Springtime, the economist Claude Ménard plays a crucial part. The documentary for me is only part of what I am trying to do. I am trying to account for a thinking process. The portrait of Claude Ménard is a double process: my inquiry into a certain set of problems and his self-reflexive attempt to formulate an answer to these problems. Film as a finished product only presents, the strongest stages, the most effective moments, of a long process; that is, it puts together strong points, and this does not allow for insight into the whole itinerary. Claude Ménard's interview-section in the film contains moments of uncertainty, where you may feel that he is not in the right setting perhaps, but I include that uncertainty so that the spectator may see where the whole process comes from — mine and his. Everytime I watch Springtime with an audience I get tense because I don't know if it works, whether or not people will accept this intrusion on their normal viewing experience. Audiences expect results, polish, they cannot accept weak phases in a product. This is where the history and ideology of representation is so strong. To me it was important to evolve the process and go through these uncertain phases and try and give them a place in any discussion of the film.

CINE-TRACTS:

Shouldn't the audience be allowed to have that desire for a finished product?

VAN DER KEUKEN:

That depends on the phase you are in yourself as a filmmaker and for me it changes from film to film. Springtime brought resistance when it was shown on T.V. and in the Cinémathèque in Holland, but my next film was well-received. All my films have breaks within them to try and alert the audience to the fact someone, in this case a filmmaker, is presenting them with a point of view but the images also have to touch the audience.
CINE-TRACTS:

Do you try and provide the audience with tools to unravel the ideology of the documentary? Or do you think that it is the way that the film structures its meaning, frames its enunciations that determines the unraveling? In *The Palestinians* there are a lot of events presented in terms similar to what we might see on television. How do you try and make the audience understand that what you are doing is a *construct* — your construct — and not just an objective representation of reality? Is there a means within the film itself for understanding the woman who stands besides her bombed out house for example? (ed. note: there is a crucial scene in the film during which the camera examines a bombed out house in Lebanon: we see some older women crying and moaning, they talk of having once lived in a house that is now rubble; the shot is a relatively conventional one and seems derived from cinéma-vérité.)

VAN DER KEUKEN:

From one film to another you may even diametrically change your own point of view. I feel there is a strong theme of unity between my films. In fact I sometimes get the feeling that I am doing the same thing in all my films! Always the same story, but taken in different directions, from different viewpoints, and even different viewpoint inside myself . . . although each new film starts at a point opposite from the last one. My film on the Palestinians was responding to the immediacy of the situation and was therefore less concerned with itself at the level of self-reflexivity. And this is an important moral choice and perhaps also an important political choice. Whereas in *Springtime* it seemed necessary to be outspoken thematically and restrict feeling, in *The Palestinians* there was certain need to make the film available to a specific group of people . . . the committee in support of the Palestinian cause in Holland . . . a country by the way that has never understood its guilt as being a major cause in its lack of understanding about the, Palestinians . . . a guilt, the result of Holland’s policies during the Second World War...

CINE-TRACTS:

With *The Palestinians* the play between the representation and what is being shown, between the filmmaker seeing and reproducing, is now shifting to the level of political utility. What is the utility of these images in relation to the overall Palestinian situation? Can you ever escape the problems of representation, that is, fictionalizing every situation you enter into?

VAN DER KEUKEN:

I fictionalize in order to arrive at truth. In *Springtime* you have people speaking. There is the pretension of truth — because that is the commitment of the filmmaker — to go and see these people, listen to them talk etc. . . . I cannot guarantee that what they are saying is true but I can establish relationships between the people speaking. In this way I try to create a comprehensive framework for the different speeches. But where the framework is brought in the use of the means is made clear. I mentioned, in relation to *The Palestinians* that at the beginning of the film there is a photo of an old Jew in the Ghetto. I had each frame printed five times. It is on the screen for two minutes with a small text and phase-like music. I think that this in itself goes against the ethos of the documentary tradition. Here the image is totally flat, it cannot deliver more information than it did at first glance. So you are presented with an image that empties itself out so to
speak, and the text that is spoken by me has the characteristic of being a text spoken by a person. I think that in this way you establish a very different relationship to the documentary. It is quite clear that the photo is not there for two minutes to prove anything. It only gives a material basis, an image and a text to the spectator. It also leaves things open, it leaves things unsaid which the spectator can fill in and which establish a framework in which the more truly recorded elements find their place. Also, what I have tried to do in The Palestinians with the commentary was never to present commentary as such over a determined action but to make a separate place for the commentary, so that it would speak over the more aesthetic, passive elements in the film — not dynamic elements. In this way the commentary itself would never interfere with the action itself. In the whole construction (but I think this is more hidden to the audience) there is one important aspect on the level of the didactics of the film, that is, that all the things which are said to people by people somehow refer to spots in the general commentary. The schoolmaster goes over the history of Palestine, the coming of the Jews and the policy of the British — this all reflects back to a commentary spoken much earlier in the film. So you have different angles, mine which is fictional in a way (and the fiction becomes fiction because this guy is telling the same things out of his practice) — the understanding of what is happening is quite different from my enumeration of these facts, or supposed facts in a commentary, which never coincides with an image. The image is a limited set of stock shots which have been designated by a printing process and which are repeated, and to some extent do away with the historical or supposed historical chronology.... I think these are some tools which may enable an audience to see that here there is no pretense to a claim to history or authenticity.

The very crucial difference between The Palestinians and the films that I did before is that with a subject like The Palestinians your moving space is much smaller. In a more pretentious film there is an element of play — the game between the filmmaker and every spectator which is much more in the forefront than the documentary content itself. In The Palestinians the element of play is at a less powerful level than the element of direct speech by the people concerned — and that is a moral choice. It is important to talk of reality in terms of relationships and not just facts. Normally they would be formal relationships, but here the form has shifted in some senses to the content — so that they become relationships of content. So the film has to deliver a set of relationships to the audience which make sense and I think that at that level the film works. As a film it is not authoritarian. It is not saying to the audience, you have been misinformed, this is the way it is. But it brings out a set of more or less disconnected images in a certain structure/construction of relationships and an audience can make sense, or get a certain tone out of it. That’s more important than what is being told exactly. Because I believe that lists of facts — and this is my experience when I see documentary films — are useless, hard to remember. But an overall image stays. To be able to communicate what is happening you have to downplay the facts somewhat to get people to realize that they are looking at a construct; the construct is there and if the spectator is interested or aware, he will see the constructs.

CINE-TRACTS:

The problem of how you establish the overall tone . . . The desire on the part of many political filmmakers has been to collapse the multiplicity of meanings that are possible or desirable in imagery into one flat directed statement so that all the complexities which make up the process of coming to an understanding of something — all of the complexities making up the process of looking at a moment in history and trying to understand it — all that is collapsed into what appears to be a pure statement of and about
reality. And that bind, the political filmmakers bind of, in the one instance wanting in one or two hours to convince an audience of something which has perhaps taken the filmmaker himself or herself many years to arrive at — that desire to completely obliterate all the mediators is a dangerous desire because it is ultimately a desire to objectify the audience.

VAN DER KEUKEN:

In *The Palestinians* the aesthetic is fully there. It is not being collapsed. It is more hidden, more subdued perhaps, but this has to do with a feeling towards the outside world you are dealing with. It is not the result of a calculation towards the audience but it is more or less an intuitive reaction towards the people and the reality in front of the camera . . . formal play should be there to help the communication but a film like *The Palestinians* is not the arena for me to discover and play with the aesthetic questions.

CINE-TRACTS:

The tradition of the documentary can be turned around to work in your favour. One has to get away from over-emphasizing the actual effect of the aesthetic and begin to understand that there is a play between the aesthetic and between the history of the conventions of the documentary and a play between what is being represented and the history of representations. It is still possible as a result of the medium itself to use the power of duplication in a positive and political manner. To move too far to the other side has its dangers to, which is that one can over-emphasize, fetishize the way the aesthetic is operating and the way the medium is determining the enunciation. This can dilute the powerful effects that the tradition of the documentary film has had. And it is within that effect, that tradition, that one begins to change the rules of the game. But it can only be done to a point. It can't be shifted entirely. It's a really difficult problem. If you negate it entirely you end up with a film which is essentially incapable of moving beyond a limited group of people. If you shift it too much the other way you end up with a collapsing of all the mediators. In between these two poles is the place to be, but not to try and become fetishistic about the necessity of keeping the representation visible as representation all the time.

VAN DER KEUKEN:

Whether or not it is possible, with *The Palestinians* you are faced with making a moral choice . . . Le film ne peut jamais dépasser le public . . . The film can never get over reality. We can never make a better model than the realities that we are faced with. If we put form as a strong fence before the screen, in front of the audience, we still put it as a fence that shows the audience and ultimately ourselves as ourselves — our own limits of perception. This is also a moral choice. With *The Palestinians* we had to open up the possibility of perception to people who, up until that point were closed to any communication with anything that had to do with Palestinians. On the level of the écriture of the film, what is very strong are the images of the airplanes, machine-like and unnaturalistic. This image, cannot, within a certain style of writing of a film, be directly connected with the scenes that follow, where people tell how they have been bombed out etc. The truth of people's speeches is almost naively accepted. I came here to take in what they had to say. It was a primary relationship. But the whole thing in its working, its mechanism as a dramatic representation is questioned by the shots of the airplane in black and white, while the other scenes are in colour. Many people in any given audience, are not consciously looking at what they see, concepts are linked up in the mind of the audience such that the planes are associated with bombing the people. What we deconstruct the audience
reconstructs. On the level of what is there materially, you have two realities which on the one hand flow over, one into another and on the other hand are strongly separated from each other. I think these are the tools we use to make clear what we want to do. We came to take in what they (the Palestinians) had to say and not to question whether or not the bombed-out kitchen was in fact the kitchen of the woman showing it to us . . . and that framework in which we organized all these images remains the framework of a conjecture. . . . At times the film is on a more far away level which permits us to see the images which come most strongly towards us in another perspective. It can never be a game which is played, a game of signs or of interpretation of signs which can be separate from our particular attitude towards the subject matter at a given moment.

CINE-TRACTS:

The way we experience films, or the forms of films that we have seen, particularly in the documentary tradition, is that the flow of rhythms generally speaking, is very difficult to contradict, mainly because even if one is conscious in the making (of a film) of a series of relationships of écriture, that the viewing somehow seems to collapse difference into unity, collapse obvious contradiction into homogeneity and so forth . . . , and the problem then rises to another level which is: is it possible to build into the structure of relationships enough of a space, a gap between those relationships so that homogeneity is impossible to arrive at as a spectator? It is not now a question of aesthetics, it is now a question of the politics of communication. If the rhythm of the relationships ends up nevertheless generating unity, then the capacity to recognize it as text for example is lessened, the capacity to recognize the profundity of the work which has gone into generating difference; each coupe is pushed to the side. It is a question that political filmmakers have been struggling with for a long time. And it seems fundamental to film because in the theater at least you can open up those spaces, you can generate that silence, the silence that you try to generate for example in parts of The Palestinians, with the scene around the campfire . . . the moment of silence, which is one of the gaps that we are looking for. (Ed. note: the scene being described has the camera circling a group of Palestinians as they silently eat and rest around a campfire. . . the camera focuses in on their gestures, looks and reactions to each other . . . not a word is exchanged.) But that gap has to be a constant part of the way in which the film enunciates itself, so that it becomes a primary element of the enunciation, as important as the images of the reality being shown.

VAN DER KEUKEN:

In response to what was said about silence: to me the silences are there in all my films. If I were able to take all my films some of these silences would be inescapable. Spectators are not accustomed to seeing films which are either silent or contain moments of silence within them. They are unaccustomed to hearing themselves breathe. What happens in front of a piece of silent film is that the audience becomes present again. You go into an inner space somehow by observing the outward appearance of someone in silence. The spectator who is willing to get into it has to project his own feelings into this silent image. It is a silence which represents a possible level of content — of what was already there. Before, I used to use silence in a kind of academic way, and at a certain moment you could state it as a problem of "lecture"— of the presence of a text. But it can also be the statement that goes beyond the overall communication of the film. For me, and this might be a false hope or a false justification, but I now experience it a small step to maturity that I don't need to make statements separate or apart from the situations I am in. I don't have to proclaim any philosophy over the heads of the palestinians for example, and Springtime is the most rigorous cut-back of left-over aesthetic, and maybe even too much of a cutback. But I can always broaden
up in the next film. There were weak moments in certain discourses, Claude Ménard's for example (Ed. note, see film script in this section) where I felt the most tension between the fullness of what he has to say and the weak moments before he can say it . . . this is the same dialectic: fullness and emptiness, sound and silence. There the silence is not really silence but maybe a defect, something missing which might be filled in. With regard to the second part of the comment that you made if you could have the same thoughts expressed by someone who had an outward distance towards the role of the person — an actor for example — I'm not sure but I think that the portraits were more or less successful in that each person revealed himself through the process — again Ménard is a good example: In the beginning he is a person who is out of touch with his surroundings, he is pretty much an actor on the wrong stage, and you feel uneasy. Is this guy going to tell me how society functions? And then I think by the third day, he picks up a certain rhythm when he is bringing together different ideas and speculations he develops a certain type of continuity. I used to think of this part of the film as the situation of an actor really getting into his role and finally finding the right approach to that role. This ties into what I feel about the fiction of the documentary. Once he has found his rhythm, then the play of angles of the camera becomes very natural with respect to what he is doing — and the music kicks him in the ass from time to time. Further on I ask him a question and he gets a bit angry. It's what we needed. These things are not predictable but they put the whole fiction as it were in its place. There is a shot of a cradle which turns out to be an advertising billboard in the street — one moment you are in one space — a huge image of a cradle — and suddenly the noise of the street breaks in. Once more we perceive the poster but this time we perceive it to be convex — it is not flat — it is convex. This also represents the different possibilities of the different degrees of reality of one single image. In Springtime each portrait was located in a definite space mostly enclosed ones. With Ménard a certain void or barrier was part of the portrait, as it was part of the portrait of the German girl. In Springtime you have compartments, there is a kind of overflow of meaning; the earlier stages of the film may seem the more insecure or weaker parts, but as they become retrospective, they work.

CINE-TRACTS:

There is a lyricism which seems to pervade all of your films, a lyricism born out of passion/conviction. It is more sometimes than what the film is trying to say . . . what is the specific kind of relationship which you want to establish with your audience?

VAN DER KEUKEN:

What can I say about the level of meaning? To me it is hard to talk about . . . why would a piece of music move you? A marxist analysis is the most valid tool for understanding . . . to talk about reality . . . why is a painting, a song a film, to some extent understandable to so many people? Another thing about my work, is that I find reality or the experience of life very bewildering. I think that the activity of making films is also the need to create some kind of order in all of this and to find some entry into reality, ways of understanding. Sometimes this happens more on an intellectual sometimes more on the level of intuition . . . or of construction. For me the element of construction is very strong, whether it be the verbal approach or let's say, relationships of connotation or expected meaning. All that works together to make a construction. The experience of time has always been important to me.

What I am striving for in Congé d'un Cinéaste (Filmmaker's Holiday) for example, as far as I am concerned as a person is to get to something which will explain the relativistic aspects of my life. On that level the problem is to have this possibility of relativity without stopping to speak socially — which
is also a conflict. Because if you take a stand politically or socially you cannot afford relativity too often. On the other hand it is true that in the development of the individual he should acquire a certain degree of relativity in order to develop or see. Showing a clock is a matter of relativity. Putting it there and seeing that it is only a clock — and in between having the joy of speculation as to what it might mean. Also it's fun. We shouldn't forget that an element of play is important even in the most serious of subjects.

I want to see film aesthetics as a relative thing. If I have an aesthetic it functions in a relative way. It is a set of relationships — but as related to outside reality, its quite relative too. This is the core of the matter. The problem is not to annihilate yourself when you are confronted with ugly reality, but sometimes accept the fact that you do not have the power to solve all the problems — or make all the relationships come off. Paradoxically, my main problem as a filmmaker is to overcome the fact that for an audience acceptance of what the filmmaker is saying is fundamental to their experience of the film.

CINE-TRACTS:

That is the bind that Godard got into, which is in evidence in much of his work of the early seventies — the bind of the recognition of the contradiction and yet the desire to suppress that contradiction for the audience. Part of the whole process has to be not fearing the visibility of that contradiction for the audience. For example, in Numero Deux there is an intensity in the way in which he begins to try and talk about the media, about film, which in one sense becomes demagogic. He seems unable to avoid it and yet he is trying to move away from it. The demagogic becomes a way of continuously re-affirming one's own statements, of validating one's premises.

VAN DER KEUKEN:

I saw Numero Deux as being of the utmost honesty and modesty trying to show what was going wrong with western capitalism.

CINE-TRACTS:

It seemed more complex than that, in which the image ceases to be an image and becomes a series of signs. Each inner frame is its own sign, becomes its own symbolic expression, its own system of meaning, inter-related to the others but now separate, possibly read as separate, possibly read as part of. . . and that complexity doesn't deal with the fact that the audience is placed in a difficult position. You have the overall frame operating as a meaning and in it is an implicit narrative; and then you have the subdivisions of the frame which begin to comment on the narrative and comment on the framing itself of the narrative. Then you have the double exposures and the splitscreen which comment on the relationship of exterior and interior space — the relationship of meaning to expression. You have all these things happening, and guiding all if it is the relationship of the typewriter to the written word-langue-parole. It was hard to see within all that how Godard was attempting to make contradiction evident and obvious. It seemed that he wanted to, in a sense, come to a statement as fully as possible, and even though it is the play of a puzzle, it ultimately becomes too powerful.

VAN DER KEUKEN:

I still felt that the fragmentation was stronger than the unity of the whole construction . . . the point that he couldn't get it together was to me the strongest impression. . . the relationships were there but they were breaking off at the same time.
Congé d’un Cinéaste, I wonder if it is possible to recover the purity of one’s own experience — my experience of making the film is now in the past but my seeing the film recovers the past — and recreates it, constantly negating to generate a new present — this for me is fundamental to film.

CINE-TRACTS:

Yes, in fact no political film can expect to interact with an audience without dealing with the circuit of exchange of memory and the present. Subjective history is a part of the film both in the filmmaker and in the spectator.

VAN DER KEUKEN:

I was looking at it from another angle which is complimentary. Film is completely different in different contexts. Some French critics found Congé to be the example of what my work was about. Dutch audiences were very touched by it. A kind of relief operated, as if to say, he can also be like this. This seemed to be a response to what a lot of people consider the lack of subjectivity in political film.... You can only be objective if you include the subjective moment. Claude Ménard in front of the window is a moment of subjectivity during which I cut in to say, well I'm here too. . . . I interfere with his speech. I flatten him out literally! The same goes for the use of music . . . someone watching the film once said, Hey someone is playing a piano in the other room! That is the effect. I did go out of the room and play piano, metaphorically. . . . In Congé I ultimately appear as a middle class person — given to middle class pleasures — going out on holiday in more or less touristic setting. I think it is important to show this because it is an important level of my existence . . . it influences what I say elsewhere. . . to negate it would be to negate that level of my films which is always defined by an absence.□
FRIDAY

Claude: Here we are in the midst of the working class 'belt' of Paris. Most people in this area are either communist or socialist. We call it the 'red' quarter. Here, politics governs every attempt to improve the quality of life, and in a city like Paris, even the desire to change the conditions under which people live day to day is looked down upon.

There are no nursery or day care facilities, no theatres either. What we really want is to be able to organize into collectives. We are setting realistic goals — those people who don't feel ghettoized here would continue to work and live under the same conditions. The changes will therefore be relative ones — carefully weighed — but which will begin to demonstrate what we might achieve at the level of collective action/collectivization.

SATURDAY

Claude: What really stands out in what we have just seen are three distinct types of housing: Many of the old traditional worker's quarters have been demolished to make way for low-income housing projects, which have come to be regarded as the suitable, inevitable response to the lifestyle needs of the modern worker. But what is even more outrageous is that longtime city dwellers — people who lived in the area for generations — are evicted, banished to the suburbs, while their former neighbourhoods are re-developed to house, in style, the petty bourgeois — employers, administrators, professionals, etc. There has been a certain amount of resistance to this move to evict people from older houses, but for the most part it has been a fairly scattered and weak resistance. Ultimately, Paris is becoming a city of middle and upper-middle class inhabitants.

WRITING ON THE WALL: "DOWN WITH BOSSES"

SUNDAY

Van der Keuken: You wanted to tell me why things didn't go well yesterday.

Claude: Yes, yesterday was really draining — I suddenly realized that you have to understand a situation entirely in order to be able to construct an analysis which amounts to something — nothing should remain at the level of abstraction. You see, I am an intellectual, but my class background has sensitized me at a very gut level.

Van der Keuken: What is your background?

Claude: My father is a worker, my mother had very little schooling. She worked as a clerk in a store for many years — but today she is a teacher.
**Claude:** Well, you just have to look at the statistics compiled by these same economists to understand that production in the United States was down months before oil prices rose... The way I see it, the oil crisis was but a particularly intense moment of crisis which exposed a process continuously at work, and revealed successive stages of economic and social contradiction. The present economic system is based on competition, and by competition I mean: producing an item which is similar to others on the market but which costs less, in order to sell more, creating larger profits... Getting more for less in the area of productivity is also one of industry's concerns. And one way of going about this is to increase workers' work loads without equivalent pay increase. You try and get away with it, right where you are. But if workers organize and succeed in obtaining salary demands and improved working conditions then, in order to maintain your competitive edge, you pick up your business and move elsewhere. Machinery too, even if it is still functional, must be replaced by more modern machines capable of lowering production costs too. Technology is not being served in terms of its possible applications and potential. Technology as well as machinery and human skills are being wasted. Waste has been incorporated into the production system. Bourgeois economists have even invented the perfect phrase to describe this integrated process: planned obsolescence. But now you must finance waste (it becomes a production cost) and so you resolve the problem by economizing in other areas, for example paying less than the going rate for raw materials. Another way of financing is by using workers' savings, that is, in the nature of the very money business borrows from the bank, and by raising prices, an inflationary situation is created. Thus the system becomes a self-fulfilling situation- prophecy, a tautological system. But a system of this kind can only exist for so long under these conditions.

The unions now enter the picture, making sure that wages do not drop or work rates increase. So business tries to get around these limitations by establishing itself in the Third World. Again there are restrictions, because you are dealing with people who are eventually going to come face to face with the nature of their own oppression, eventually organize and totally reject every notion/pre-conception with which you have entered their country (i.e. low wages, low standard of living...). Even bringing in a new piece of machinery will be balked at because it is an indication that workers will probably be laid off. If you raise prices too much, people won't want to buy. You cannot just raise prices how and when you want. Contradictions intensify when the people at the bottom don't want and the people at the top cannot... Let me explain what this means: when that segment of the population which is most severely affected by economic contradictions no longer put up with having to increase productivity, lose jobs to automation, put up with rising unemployment, high prices etc. there may be no resolution of the problem for a while, because these problems cannot simply be reduced — i.e. those at the bottom don't want (to accept an oppressive situation or the bosses resolutions) and those at the top cannot (resolve a situation which it is not in their interest to resolve, e.g. resulting in profit loss). The "crisis" which I was talking about before actually slowed down for a period following the war, its eventual or "inevitable" date shoved back while. European countries began a process of reconstruction, capitalism moved very quickly into areas in the Third World. But contradictions never cease to accumulate and by the end of the 1960's reached a new high, creating a truly explosive situation. This explosive situation was a concrete crisis for capitalism.

**Van der Keuken:** We come to believe, and it is reinforced by television and often newspapers too, that ultimately workers ask for too much and that they must accept and live within their means. What do you think?

**Claude:** What do you mean, ask for too much? *(somewhat angrily)*
Van der Keuken: What about your father?

Claude: My father worked in a factory until he was 45 years old. At 46, like a lot of others before him he was laid off because his level of productivity was not high enough. He was too old to operate well in the factory system. He was unemployed for two or three years but for the past while he has been a guard in an office building. He sits at the entrance watching whoever leaves or enters the building.

Van der Keuken: Do you feel a distance — a tension — between you and your family?

Claude: There is a certain tension I feel when I am with my family, but I keep in close touch with them. We're very open with one another. But sometimes, still, I feel out of place... My father's experience with unemployment, for example, I talk to him about economic problems — from an analytical point of view, because I do not experience these problems directly.

Van der Keuken: What are your feelings about the work you could do?

Claude: I don't see it as being easy, but I believe it is made more difficult by the distinction society makes between intellectual work and manual work, things like that. But, ultimately a consciousness of society will effect change in the organization of that society.

Van der Keuken: We looked at certain districts in Paris yesterday, right?

Claude: This society certainly gives the impression on the outside, that it functions smoothly, but underneath, that is physically, concretely, the contradictions are overwhelming. I'm referring to the actual material evidence on housing and living conditions in large urban areas. By going to these places we can begin to feel how these conditions have created the conditions for social change, even in a limited sense — to the extent that there is a will to develop a form of housing which corresponds to a collective drive. I see this as a hopeful situation. But look how, alongside all of this, we have a concept of urbanization, where life in the big city is thought of only in terms of profit, with its huge prestigious buildings in total opposition to any notion of collective lifestyle. The construction we saw yesterday is nothing more than part of a large speculative process, the product of enormous investment. But if one relates this system of investment and conversion of resources to the welfare of society in general (or to what degree society at large benefits), then one begins to perceive the cracks in the system — for there is nothing built into this system to either create or maintain harmony. Thus the mechanisms which hold society up regularly break down, and this is what is called a "crisis".

Van der Keuken: Can you be more specific as to when these crises arise?

Claude: Well, for about 20 years, official economists never said a word about crises, claiming that we were finished with economic crises. But suddenly, we were in the midst of an economic crises (but after all, "suddenly" from my point of view is not "sudden" at all...). The crisis in question was of course the product of an entire process... So these "official" economists tried to gloss over the situation with artificial explanations, such as a shortage of oil. But obviously this oil crisis was not the genesis of the problems — it is annoying to have to listen to this kind of mystification.

Van der Keuken: What exactly are the origins of these problems?
Van der Keuken: It would account for why expansion is no longer viable.

Claude: But I mean... to ask for too much...?????!!!

Van der Keuken: Maybe I'm talking in terms of salary, security benefits and things like that...

Claude: But after all, what are workers asking too much in relation to? In relation to a specific degree of economic development and profit. Right? And if they make outrageous demands maybe it is because economic development has reached a point where new sets of needs have been created.

Van der Keuken: Yes, yes...

Claude: The desire on the part of the working class for a higher standard of living, better working conditions and increased wages is linked to these needs which go hand in hand with the economic development of capitalism. If workers in 1970 want to earn enough to buy a good car it is because the economy has produced too many cars, and this surplus of cars needs to be absorbed so an artificial need is created to generate absorption and maintain a high level of profit (so as not to incur losses...). O.K. you would agree, but how is it possible to change this highly developed mechanized society? And after all, one might ask, maybe people are satisfied already? My immediate response would be: We cannot assume the degree to which people are or are not satisfied. In the area of electoral politics in France 50 per cent of the people do not support the government in power (according to the last election). I believe that underdeveloped countries will undergo a process of resistance, where the pre-requisites to building an economy will be based on both traditions of collective action and traditions by which individuals “enter into” society/consciousness. There are several important events which have taken place within the last 15 years, in the wake of de-colonization: concretely, the liberation struggles in Angola, Viet Nam and Mozambique — countries which refused to compromise or exploit their resources, raw material, manpower. Yes, to be blunt, I think collective action is a threat to any system based on competition, and that competition has no place in the kind of society I am talking about.

translated by Martha Aspler Burnett
A Review of Springtime by Hart Cohen

Any re-view of a film should (but rarely does) consider the nature of reviews: What is the particular relation of expositions and critiques to their object, that is, the film being reviewed? The above use of the terms "exposition" and "critique" are accepted procedures in the practice of reviewing, yet they are contradictory. Exposition produces "not apparent" meanings (working 'positively'); critique picks apart the workings of the object (working 'negatively'), lays bare its internal character or development. These elements of criticism are often said to complement rather than contradict one another; that 'destruction' or 'deconstruction' allows the possibility of reconstruction (exposition). This method, however, conceals far more than it reveals.

The reviewer and the film are part of a social formation. They belong to the order of a "constituted" rather than "constituting" relationship. The reviewer and the film already cohabit a space that borrows from tradition conventions that have always protected, never opened the object. This "opening of the object" is the work of the reviewer; to make the film vulnerable. But in doing so, the reviewer, remembering back, reconstructing, re-produces him/her self in the process (recreates the "I" that viewed the film).

The reviewer's repetition of the film is obviously not the film, but neither is the reviewer the 'one' who viewed it for the first time. The knowledge that the reviewer produces wins not only a present but establishes his/her presence. (It is easier to describe this contradiction than to critique it.) The central contradiction of the reviewer's discourse is it's affirmation of the 'unified' subject in the roles of author, reader, etc. The reviewer, in producing this fictitious self for the reader denies (unwittingly) the historicity of their shared knowledge — that the truths spring from memory and interpretations.

The dyad of deconstruction — (then) reconstruction methodologically speaking is not adequately complex. It does not recognize that deconstruction can only take place in the context of a construction and that as you deconstruct you are also constructing.

The problems here have a double articulation in that they coincide with the problems articulated by the film about to be reviewed.

(The distinction between text/commentary, then, is the axis along which the movement of identification between the subjectivity of the author as implied in the object, and the subjectivity of the reviewer takes place.)

1. The problem of situating a divided subject in the space of experience as defined by the "I - in - the - world."
2. The problem of a social practice which seeks alternative strategies within a context that "always already" exists to contain them.

"The subject is always absent until it produces itself, decentered in the structure which already includes it . . ." (R. Coward, Screen, 1977, p. 102.)
I viewed *Springtime* for the first time at a press screening of the Edinburgh Film Festival (Aug/77) sandwiched between *Riddles of the Sphinx* (Wollen/Mulvey) and Wim Wender’s *Alice in the Cities*. This very particular context has consequences for the way in which I re-view it (now in my living room); how would I characterize the way in which the film was used and what it achieved? The print was shown subtitled in French resulting in the departure of much of the audience at the outset. Others retreated to the rear of the cinema where a simultaneous translation was offered. I raise this incident only to re-emphasize the uniqueness of each viewing, the constraints under which the projection of effect and interpretation must operate, the particularity of the performance factor in the cinema.

"...in so far as structures have simultaneous effects on all the structures which together make up a unique society . . . we try and discover in different places and at different levels, hence a different content and a different form, the presence of the same cause. . . " (M. Godelier, *Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology*, Cambridge, 1977., p. 4.)

*Springtime* is a political film (Political in that it is based on a theoretical perspective that links the critique of political structures to a specific formal strategy for its own transmission.) that deals with the relationship between subjectivity and the social institutions that both regulate and administer the economy. Through the interweaving of different ‘personal histories’ (extensive interviews with an unemployed textile worker, an intellectual, a neighbourhood committee architect, a teacher, and a metallurgist who is an exception because he does not speak but is ‘presented’ through words) the individuals gain a subjecthood seemingly secured on their own terms. The individuals portrayed are put in the position of being able to grasp their identities as social subjects but always in response to annihilation of their subjecthood by the political and economic structures within which they live.

The context of each history is one of struggle — each character's personal history provides a vehicle for surfacing the contradictions of their contemporary social history: the specific conflicts engendered by dependency on state institutions (welfare, university) lived within the political and economic crises (unemployment, urbanization, political repression) of western European capitalism. It is through this process of struggle that the individual/subject tension is maintained in the film — that lived experience in confrontation with itself is "perceived, accepted, suffered" and worked upon. The end product is not the unified subject in the sense of either a bourgeois or working-class collective identity. Nor are the struggles solely reflective of or determined by economic structures. The film constructs an assemblage of specific histories and practices that by their differences identify the components of social processes and contradictions of which individuals, economic structures, and the struggles within them are a part.

The formal strategies used in the film, mirror, and themselves mirrored in the way these contradictions are represented. Portraiture is used, not so much as a technique, but as convention that is continuously and consciously critiqued. The ‘realism’ of the portraits resides not in the form of representation but in the tension generated when the form 'breaks its own rules'. The necessary distance in portraits (between subject and audience) is periodically transgressed through techniques of both under-distancing and over-distancing. (Examples of techniques of over-distancing: Subject not looking at camera, full body, voice-over image; under-distancing: close-up subject looks straight into camera, cameraman as interviewer. . . .) The portrait, then, is constructed out of a play of elements, many orchestrated by the filmmaker to disrupt any sense of a natural or comfortable totality.
Springtime in relating the problems of the individual in bureaucratically oppressive contexts to his/her representation as a subject-in-film, addresses the problem of the constitution of the subject. The use of words is a (perhaps the) primary source for how subjects constitute themselves in the film. Words are the material by which the individual histories unfold — through which subjective and objective realities are formed. One sequence begins with a teacher listening to the voice of her father on tape re-telling the story of his incarceration in prison. Here the subject that is constituted in language is visibly absent; his words mark the absence of his presence; his memories prevail and are juxtaposed to the image of his daughter's anguish while listening to his voice. The words of the father have meaning only as they are being contained by the reaction of his daughter to them.

This reconstruction of a history needs memory and language: the contemporary re-possession of a past that through the folds of representations, possesses us.

There is a further 'self-reflexive' dimension to the film with the incorporation of the last sequence depicting a metalurgist. (It is the point at which the film unbalances itself.) This scene which has no dialogue or monologue (just 'natural' sound), follows four scenes which had alternatively presented workers and intellectuals discussing their experience of modern day capitalism. The metalurgist's scene, out of the context of the film as a whole, is like an undescribed natural event; a day in the life of one worker! In its insertion at the end of the film, however, it can only be understood critically, problematically. Behind the silence of this portrait resides all the conflicts expressed in the earlier scenes. The metalurgist sequence is in this sense, a metaphor for the naturalistic documentary; a metaphor that plays with and within the other metaphors of the film. Yet, in its intimacy of portrayal, confirming of an undeniable presence, the metaphor seems to suppress its own implications.

Springtime is an oppositional film in that it unites the material crises with crises of identity; not by reducing one to the other but by seeking indigenous expression of a common crisis in the very functioning of the others. The film does not accept the contradictions of naturalism but plays with those contradictions to talk about reality. It transgresses its own transgressions seeking to upset its own equilibrium; borrowing from its discourse to contradict that discourse itself. This may possibly introduce a reflexive tension for the audience in the viewing of the film. If so, the contradictions of oppositional practices and their contexts will have been profoundly engaged, not to the end of resolving them, but to making them more apparent.
"In surveys of the economic situation one is very seldom confronted with the effect it has on the individual, on his perceptions and emotions. I wanted to give a personal dimension to this rather abstract economic situation, which is often perceived by the public as a kind of natural phenomenon. I wanted to show how isolation and loneliness, inherent to our production system, make themselves more painfully felt in a period of crisis.

In the films which I have made over the past few years, the problems caused by the prevailing economic system, capitalism, are shown in a world-wide perspective. In this film *Springtime* I wanted to see things on a smaller scale and look more closely at a few characters within the somewhat more homogeneous society of Western Europe. Without neglecting the cultural differences in this smaller field, I wanted to show that the contrasts between rich and poor, between powerful and powerless, though they may be much smaller in absolute terms, also lay a great strain on the people. . . .

While in most of my films I have used the image and spatial sound as driving forces, in the present film I have mainly worked on the basis of the spoken word. In my view anything can serve as the basis or material for a filmic composition: in this case words.

Thus in *Springtime* we have five characters, each in his own surroundings. Three Dutchmen and two foreigners, three workers and two intellectuals; together they make an overall picture that could be endlessly enlarged. Technically it is not without interest that I was doing the interviews while holding the camera. But while I was working in this very direct manner I wasn’t out to take reality by surprise. I was rather trying to construct a viewpoint through a series of definite visual compositions that were found spontaneously: a kind of instant shooting script, between vérité and fiction."
The Truth Lies on the Cutting Room Floor

continued

Saul Landau

Chapter 7

After the first jeep trip we again waited in Havana. This waiting period however we used to film political prisoners, farms and various scenes that we figured we would need. Nina also looked through archive footage and selected material to build historical sequences.

The Cuban film industry built since the triumph of the revolution organized the footage it found in various film libraries, newsreel companies and TV studios and made it available to us. Looking at the footage of the Batista tyranny, the bodies of young men tortured and found riddled with bullets, the poverty pictures and footage of the ornate parties held by the rich Cubans and Americans, tourists and embassy staff, presented the viewer with the obvious choice: continued tyranny and corruption, or revolution. And hectic shots of Fidel in the Sierra and of Che, and of the triumphant march into Havana with a million people in the street cheering, tell the story — or at least the cinematic story. There’s nothing mysterious about the heroic footage when one thinks of which newsmen went to the Sierra and more important how aware the great political actors have become of proper acting techniques for cameras, since cameras have become the most important means of communicating images and messages.
The moving picture gave the illusion that it was presenting an even larger than life validation of the events. And Fidel, a master historical actor, on and off camera, a man who knows and is his role, knows the importance of building people's confidence through identification with the ideas and aspirations of a strong leader. And we saw this, as filmmakers looking at earlier films of the same man whom we now had as the central character of the film. And we looked at the great events of the revolution on film compared them to the images that we had of those same events, that we had read about in the newspapers and books, and had our made-up images changed by the images on the movie screen.

The first shipment of film left with Stanley for the U.S., with us chewing our nails, fearing that U.S. customs would open and expose the precious footage. But it arrived, went through the developer and finally we spoke to the people at KQED and found out that the scenes that we filmed with Fidel had been well exposed and in focus, but the scene filmed at his nursery school, in Biran, where he was born and grew up, had turned out red. Irving had not removed the filter used for outdoor shooting, on the camera during the interior school shooting. The reddish tint actually helped create the flashback effect. Our other fears, dirt and camera hairs, abated after we heard the phone report.

We waited and filmed and thought about what we were doing for the remainder of the summer of 1968. The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia brought Fidel to the TV studio with a major speech, defending and attacking Soviet policy. His line contained perceptible changes since our unrecorded conversations in the jeep, while plowing down mountain trails. At that time he spoke of matters of principle and about how communists, when they compromise their basic principles, leave consequences for many generations. He said he wasn't sure of where and when the Soviet compromises began but certainly the Hitler-Stalin pact resulted in serious consequences for generations of revolutionaries, some yet unborn. He also praised the revolutionary attitude of the Soviet people, which he had encountered in his visit there.

But in July of 1968, with the murder of Che still fresh in his mind and his unwillingness to abandon the guerilla war policy, he felt bitter about Soviet policies. We did not discuss any of this when the tape recorder rolled, because he was working out his ideas and feelings, not performing. He used me and others as sounding boards to explore his logic; as reality checks.

Then came the speech on Czechoslovakia, where he justified the Soviet invasion on anti-imperialist grounds while at the same time mocking their official excuses. He said that neither a legal nor a moral justification existed for the invasion. But not one inch should be given to the imperialists who had penetrated the "liberals". He blasted the Czech liberals for having stated no concern for third world peoples, especially for having made no comment on the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese.

The speech marked a turning point, because Fidel then received strong attacks from the European independent leftists who had comprised one of the strongest foreign elements of support for the Cuban revolution.

The filming continued through the summer and into September and October. We would meet with Fidel for a day and film his visits to various cattle farms and experimental breeding stations, an opening of a new spaghetti factory. He would invite us to dinner at his apartment without cameras, where Nina told him about cottage cheese and the advantages of brown rice. He opened his cheesemaking book asked Vallejo for the translation, Vallejo didn't know and finally he figured out the Spanish equivalent. He said he would have some made.
On some occasions we filmed, on others we talked and socialized. Somehow during all of this time, living in the Hotel Havana Libre, nee Hilton, seeing the revolution build, sweat, change, suffer and grow on a daily basis and filming what and when we could, no longer worrying about going over the budget, which we had already exceeded by two times, we forced ourselves to think of the structure of the film although we hadn't seen a foot of it developed and our phone reports were unsatisfactory. We began to think of biography and history, the man and the revolution, with concentration on the man himself because we didn't know enough to know how to go about filming the revolution, or indeed if such a subject is filmable.

The man shows himself in his facial gestures and in his words and actions, all filmable, and in the case of Fidel very revealing. So we talked structure over meals and "dead times", and we continued to feel tense, pressured and homesick. Irving left after three months and Pepe Fraga, an ICAIC cameraman replaced him. My worries increased as part of my sense of security, in the person of Irving, departed for the US. I worked with Nina and a Cuban crew.

After one or two day outings in between long waits we finally got together with Fidel for a final interview. He had gotten out of a sick bed and we drove out of Havana to a small experimental farm and the camera rolled for almost eight hours.

The interview we knew would end the filming. Afterwards we played. Fidel, holding the camera and filming Nina singing and dancing to "Singing in the Rain," had a wonderful time watching the frames slip by his eye. Then he discussed with the cameraman how the camera mechanism worked.

We had finished filming in four months a job that we had budgeted to last for six weeks. We had accumulated some fifty thousand feet of 16mm colour film of which some three thousand would find itself in the finished product.

Chapter 8

We said sad goodbyes to everyone and returned home anticipating the enormous culture shock and the problem of making the film without money. So we made a deal and sold the film for $50,000, giving the exclusive rights to NET. The longer theatrical version we postponed.

We looked at the footage that we had shot, made an outline and then an assembly of some four hours of the best material. The tapes were transcribed and translated and the editing stage was underway.

To edit film, like editing a manuscript you begin with the material collected and assembled and attempt to make the most beautiful looking and sharp sounding statement in as precise a form as possible. The documentary aesthetic in the age of TV. Irving edited with skill and speed, using the outline that I had written. Our problem: to present controversial material, a sympathetic-to-Cuba-and-Castro point of view while maintaining a facade of balance and entertaining the audience.

We turned out a fifty eight minute and twelve second documentary. A narrator told the audience what they were seeing, so that NET could defend itself from its potential critics by pointing at what the narrator said, and challenging anyone to prove that anything said during the film was untrue. They showed little concern for the picture other than to verify that it was properly exposed and not more than a jiggle or two shaky.
Despite the requirements of conventional TV objectivity which we had to meet, more than half of the public stations rejected the film. New York and Miami stations both braved Cuban exile objections, many of them based on our last film, Report From Cuba. Picket lines, broken windows and bomb threats at various stations led to additional publicity. The newspaper reviews were mixed, but most of the prestigious papers lauded our objectivity.

The TV film finished, we had to begin reconstructing the material to make a feature length film. During this period we also had to raise more money. In the end the two films cost about $160,000. We collected about seventy thousand from investors and fifty thousand from NET. That left us with a deficit of forty thousand. We hustled for more investment in the limited partnership and finished the feature length film. All of this time I had received a regular salary from KQED, which they more than profited by since they received payments for all of the documentaries from NET. KQED began internal changes which might have involved me if I had stayed, but the shock of the Cuba experience hit as a delayed reaction. I began to feel sick about my working conditions and I quit.

At this point I had to face the situation of a filmmaker without money or work, without a crew or money to pay one. Fidel at this point invited Nina and our children and I back to Cuba for a visit. We went. He had seen the TV film and said that it was acceptable and that it was a minor miracle that it had really appeared on TV. He hadn't yet seen the theatrical version which was being printed at the laboratory. What he wanted to talk about was the next film. "Landau, why don't you make a film about Latin America, which shows the problems of underdevelopment to North Americans." When I asked for elaboration he talked about the differences between developed and underdeveloped countries and for film ideas he said: "Well, you're the filmmaker."

An idea for a film entitled, "The Ghost of Che," emerged, at least in my head. We would tour Latin America with an aging communist, in disguise, as he tried to guage the level of the struggle in the various countries. Through his eyes the film would reveal the conditions, material and spiritual, that come under the words revolution and underdevelopment. We left Cuba for Europe and wound our way back to the United States without money or work at this point, but hoping to make more films, this time without the requirements of self censorship, time and narrators saying "on the one hand and on the other."

Chapter 9

October, 1969. At this point no one knew who the left would choose as candidate for the President of Chile, or if the left could agree on one. Pablo Neruda was a contender and we went to his home in Ilsa Negra to film an interview.

Neruda talked to us about US imperialism and his dedication to the working class, his twenty odd years representing Chilean miners in the Senate and about the need to win the 1970 Presidential election. Although Neruda remained the Communist party candidate he later withdrew and supported Allende as head of a left coalition.

The interview was marred by technical difficulties — the Eclair chewed the film in the magazine — but Neruda waited patiently and, when I asked him to repeatsomeideas because I wasn’t sure the camera was functioning, he obliged.
Then he and I walked to the sea and the crew packed the gear and the interesting talk began — off camera. He told me that Ilsa Negra, where he had lived, had provided Herman Melville with the setting for his novella, *Benito Cereno*, a story about a slave mutiny aboard a ship, and how the story would make an interesting movie. He lent me his copy of the Melville story in case I was interested in directing such a film for which he, Neruda, would write the script.

Neruda talked about learning some writing style from Hemingway, of fond memories of time spent in the US and his love for the sea. His house which he designed, fit into the rock landscape. Inside, coloured glass, shells and sea objects decorated walls, windows and crevices. And books everywhere.

He drove back to Santiago, Chile. Once again I felt peculiar about my role of film producer whose job entails extracting realistic "words and actions" from historical actors.

As Chileans prepared themselves for the Presidential election, I prepared my section on Chile for an NET film, produced by Al Levin, called, *Who Invited Us?* In Chile I talked to many Latin American filmmakers, showed *Fidel* at the festival, along with about 115 Latin American films and began to develop some ideas about movies, media and the film about underdevelopment.

Many of the films at the Vina Del Mar festival looked like the US "newsreel" films. They showed good guys (students, workers, peasants) and bad guys (police and capitalists). In one sense these films reflected both the actual struggle against imperialism and for equality and justice in the various Latin American countries; in another sense they revealed the overall problems of political film. What is the relationship between form and content? Should a political film have a specific form? Are documentaries better than fiction? Can cinema-vérité be effective in communicating a political message?

Several tendencies were present in filmmaking at Vina, the most important being the Cuban features and documentaries, some Brazilian epic works, like Glauber-Rocha's and the work of a young Bolivian film director, Jorge Sanjines. In addition, *La Hora de Los Hornos*, by Solanos and Getino provided people with abundant subject matter for discussion of cinema and revolution.

The Cuban films possessed spirit, strength and a profound ideological direction. Their documentaries, especially those of Santiago Alvarez, threw their messages from the screen and moved at the alternating paces of fast mambas and slow baleros, and embodied the impulsiveness and innovativeness of the Cuban revolution.

Many discussions centered around the meaning of revolutionary cinema. The Cubans spoke from a position of authority and used Alvarez's films as examples of the attempt to combine a new form with content. In between film screenings many informal and formal discussions took place about what films ought to show and how they ought to show it.

At this point I felt discouraged about making more documentary films. I wanted more control over material and actors and felt that the documentary form restricted one's ability to speak through cinema.
Who knows if dissolves, fades and superimpositions occurred in people’s dreams before movies were invented? When reading a novel one imagines how a heroine or hero looks and acts, forming mind pictures from the clues given by printed words. Moving pictures appear lifelike, or larger than life as one sits in a dark space, tensed by the breathing of a neighbour, and watches the illuminated screen and listens to the stereo system. A film editor looks at the 16mm or 35mm pieces of celluloid through a scope or viewer or editing machine. He or she sees action moving left to right or vice versa and then finds another piece of celluloid with action that corresponds, or intercuts with the first action. The editor tapes these two pieces of moving picture together (the cut) in such a manner that the viewer in the audience will be able to imagine that he is watching real life action. If the editor lacks skill he will paste together pictures that do not match well and the audience may have difficulty making the fantasy leap. Sometimes the editor does this on purpose to jolt the viewer or create a disjuncture in the viewing process. Either way the editor takes the material that has been filmed, with professional actors in feature films or amateur actors in documentary films, manipulates them to achieve a given effect: horror (music aids much in creating terror); passion, excitement.

All cinema is fundamentally political. Some cinema has a specific political purpose: to change people’s minds about political subjects; to make them support a person or an idea; to push them over the precipice into action that they might have been ready to take before walking into the theater.

Cinema was born in the age of industrial capitalism and depends upon technology for its very existence. Fashioned in Hollywood in the age of monopolies the production of films and the making of corporate profits became inseparable. Movies had to be marketed. Films became another commodity and the form of the commercial film paralleled the form of the cheap novel, the 19th century melodrama.

So films became not just another commodity, but a commodity that, by their very nature, carried a message within that showed people how they could act, dress, talk, make love and war. It raised expectations on material and personal levels. Films, the commercial product of an art form, became the artfully produced item to be consumed, as well as a shaper of the lifestyle of mass commodity consumption.

The very grammar that unfolded in early cinema, the melodramatic rules of the celluloid form, made the possibility of a critical cinema very difficult if not impossible to achieve. The happy ending, the hero-villain duel, the manipulation of audience emotion through lighting, make-up and the close-up shot conditioned generations of moviegoers to commercially controlled levels of entertainment.

The style of cutting to induce the illusion of continuous action when a close-up follows a long shot, or the use of dissolves and fades to convey passage of time became part of a rule structure or grammar of the film industry. Like printed language, the socially formed and ideologically impregnated grammar of commercial cinema limited the possibilities of the medium.

Most political films in recent years, that is films dealing with overtly political subjects that have anti-establishment positions, have not dealt with the formal problems of the cinema. Rather they have accepted the melodrama as the grammatical nexicity and tried to work through the difficulties of making a political statement through the use of traditional roles. Instead of the policeman always being the hero, the revolutionary or rebel becomes the
hero. The films of Costa-Gavras and Pontecorvo illustrate the acceptance of the forms imposed by commercial cinema and the limitations of those forms to present revolutionary messages. *The Battle of Algiers, Z, The Confession, State of Siege, Burn, The Molly Maguires,* fall into the same category that films with their opposite political viewpoint would have. The appeal lies in the unfolding melodrama.

Costa-Gavras has utilized an old fashioned mystery formula — using music for suspense when the picture and dialogue falter — to treat broad political themes. In *Z* the theme of political assassination provides the drama for a simplified version of the fascist military takeover of Greece. In *The Confession,* Costa-Gavras moves to a treatment of Stalinist oppression, using the same lead actor, Yves Montand, and with torture as the leitmotif. In the film, *State of Siege* kidnapping and police terror are the vehicles for dramatizing U.S. imperialism in Latin America.

Many people come away from these films with many strong feelings; Costa-Gavras succeeds in stirring his audience. But the question for radical filmmakers becomes: what kind of political understanding or growth can one derive from melodrama? An analysis of the Costa-Gavras formula for the treatment of political themes raises the issue of whether to work within the the form or grammatical structure of Hollywood-Paris-Moscow melodrama, (mood music, slick cutting, illusion production, synthetics) in order to present anti-establishment messages, or to fight the grammar itself, while treating those political themes. Costa-Gavras produces an emotional and political response but the weakness of his politics might be inherent in the form itself, which by definition necessitates compromise.

In *Z* Costa-Gavras deals with the Lambrakis case in Greece and treats the theme of the rise of military fascism. Using Yves Montand as the handsome, virtuous, pacifist political leader who falls victim to brutal murder, Costa-Gavras uses all the elements of Hollywood to make his case. The audience witnesses the murder, not just once but three times so that the viewer's vicarious identification with the handsome and good Montand can move from sympathy with a noble pacifist struggling to maintain his principles to pain for the suffering, dying mortal whose larger than life presence ends with repeated blows on the head, delivered by a stock movie cretin. Throughout the film stock characters move to the beat of the film as Costa-Gavras uses the over-developed tools of suspense and mystery to pull the audience into stomach-think. Never does he allow a serious discussion of the role of imperialism, nor does he permit his characters to debate the question of non-violence as a political principle and weapon versus violence in the protection of the people's mandate.

*Z* achieved commercial success and, thanks in part to the efforts of Greek resistance people who hung around the theatres and distributed leaflets, some of the audience even had to come to terms with the Greek reality addressed by the movie. But does this understanding through melodrama mean anything? I began to think that the melodramatic form precluded the presentation of serious ideas or conflicts; that the form required the dramatic banalization of all questions of strategy or political process.

Pontecorvo, who made *The Battle of Algiers* and *Burn* attempted a more ambitious and passionate melodrama than Costa-Gavras. Using elements of the documentary form, he constructed a "realistic" situation to permit the audience to identify with the violent terrorist instead of the policeman. In *Battle of Algiers,* a political message indeed comes through. But whether or not the message relates to the events, to the history of the Algerian liberation struggle, becomes the important question. History is in fact fudged over to make room for a reversal of the Hollywood formula. Traditional heros become villains; villains assume heroic proportions. Change the story a
little, use good-guy lighting and camera positions on traditional bad guys and they become good guys. Once again political questions are placed in the background in order to highlight the manipulative and “most effective” parts of the medium.

This tendency to look for the easiest way to state a political message, to look for ways of integrating the audience into the film's perspective without trying to make the audience aware of what it was thinking, to hit at the emotional level, all this led, I think to a depoliticization of political films.

CHAPTER 11

My mother always told me at the horror films: “Don't be frightened; it's only movies and that's make believe.” And how does the revolutionary artist use the magic of make believe to uncover the historical forces at work within our reality?

Brecht became a major influence. Alienation. Remind the audience that they're at the theater. Generate a self-reflexive situation where people will become more aware of the various effects of the filmic or theatrical performance upon them.

Brecht. We made a film during the 1970 Chilean elections. A combination of people and ideas converged to make a film at a crucial time in Chile. Jim Beckett, a young lawyer studying for his Ph.D. in economics, had written a novel about Peace Corps volunteers in Chile who realize that token reform produces only illusions. The hero becomes a revolutionary. Jim and I linked up with each other and with Raul Ruiz. We sat in a cabin in Bolinas and in three days we wrote a treatment for a film that would combine fiction, documentary and a Brechtian chorus — in the person of Country Joe Macdonald. We figured out the budget based on a shooting schedule of three months and a base pay for everyone of $200 a week. So Becket and I set out to raise as much of the $250,000 as we could. We had written the scenario for filming during the elections of 1970 since we predicted that their significance would endure long after the results were tallied. We did not predict Allende's victory.

Nina and Elizabeth Barnsworth began handling production arrangements and we all plotted and planned, while searching for money and a cast. We wanted a cast that would work as hard as possible during the exciting elections in Chile and wouldn't mind getting paid afterwards. We also wanted a cast that could and would understand and agree with our perspective on both the politics of Chile and the politics of cinema. We planned to make a film that would present the alternate roads to revolution — armed struggle; populist or Catholic anarchism; parliamentary or electoral struggle — or to counter revolution. As we unfolded the story and plot through archetype characters, we would reveal the very weakness of melodrama by presenting the real characters as commentators. And finally, Country Joe would represent the filmmakers themselves, explaining to the audience the mystery behind the love scene, or simply singing an interpretation of U.S. filmmakers attempting to make a film on Chile.

When we began the final planning to leave for Chile, with about $25,000 raised out of a budget of $250,000, we felt confident that we would somehow find the resources to finish the film. The actors and crew felt eager for the adventure and since most of them shared our political commitments and our critique of melodrama, they wanted to make a revolutionary film —
revolutionary in form and content. So we loaded several thousand dollars of lights onto the Braniff plane and off we flew to Chile, some ten thousand miles away.

Once in Chile, we looked again at the treatment we had written in California, which called for the filming of the elections. So we tried to figure out how to film an election. The streets abounded with rallies and demonstrations — but how do you film the charged atmosphere? The polls showed the right wing candidate, Jorge Alessandro, slightly ahead of Allende, who showed up just ahead of of the Christian Democrat, Radmiro Tomic. Alessandro spent more than ten times what Allende did, occupying two hours a week on the television to sing tangoes, accompanying himself on the guitar. He appealed to God and motherhood, and his posters showed Soviet tanks in the streets of Santiago — the inevitable result of an Allende victory. How ironic that three years later, U.S. tanks patrol Santiago. In August, 1970, the campaign in Santiago appeared calm. Insults were often exchanged, but we didn’t see any street fighting until after Allende’s victory, when the rightists tried to provoke confrontations and disorder.

During the early days of filming, the cast and crew came to know each other, the Chileans and North Americans feeling each other out beginning a process of interaction that would last for three months. We could not raise any money because investors wanted to wait for the election results. While we rooted for Allende, all potential investors saw an Alessandro victory as their only means of salvation. Allende meant a communist takeover and the interruption of their business lives. So we found ourselves in the ridiculous position: if Alessandro won the election we would find investors for the film, but we might also be thrown out of the country for having pro-left reputations. An Alessandro victory would mean a great setback for the left, almost certain repression and a blow to all the working people of Chile. If Allende won then we would jump for joy but would not find anyone to invest in the film. That was the situation on the eve of the election.

Then after a harrowing period of uncertainty Allende’s victory was announced on T.V. The computers had declared him a certain victor and the masses celebrated in orderly ways. Outside, in the streets of Providencia, all the signs that rooted for Alessandro disappeared and all the lights were turned out. The ruling class had left the country, or locked themselves in their houses. Some carfuls of teenagers shouted that Allende had not won but their effort proved half-hearted. Others watched for the troops, the almost certain coup attempt. But the troops too remained in their barracks. Allende had indeed won. September 5, 1970 dawned and no military attack was underway. The first socialist president in Latin America would take office in two months.

While the drama of the elections took place we tried to figure out what a film could or should show and how it could best present the unfolding conflict. Despite the crew’s convictions, or my own, about the unsuitability of melodrama for the presentation of life situations, and especially political life, we had all our collective cinematic experience to combat. The tears shed in movie theaters, the thrills that vanished in the spaciousness of Loew’s 167th street, the excitement of knowing that fantasy would engage itself with characters that looked and sounded real — all this had become a part of me, and I now rebelled, revolted. I set out to attack an institution, an art form, certainly a propaganda medium that shaped in part my thinking, dreaming, acting, and probably dressing and lovemaking habits — to say nothing of speech and dialogue. But how does one unlearn habits of dreaming in dissolves, fades, and cuts.

In a sense our pleasure principles pitted themselves against our reasoning faculties — a lousy matchup — and we had to convert that struggle into one in
which our pleasure expectations became much higher and we could no longer accept the simple, the cry, the satisfaction, as our entertainment. We fought to reach a highbrow perspective without the snobbishness that comes with ruling class breeding. We, in Chile in the midst of Latin America's most important electoral campaign, felt that we had to fight melodrama in order to present anything important about what happened over the next few months.

Along with our critique of melodrama we struggled with the rudimentary electronic and technical aspects of filmmaking that have become part of a universal cinema aesthetic. Given fine camera work (easier to achieve in 25 takes than in two) and studio dubbed sound (at $175 an hour), the titillation work becomes the editor's task. We had little money, 16mm instead of 35mm equipment, a director, myself, who had never made a feature film with professional actors, a director who had never made a documentary film, Raul, and one whose experience came from theater, Nina. The director of photography, Gustavio Moris, had never shot a feature and had learned lighting at a local TV station. The production manager had been a TV assistant who did not know how to load Eclair magazines.

Sandra Archer, playing the role of the Peace Corps volunteer, we knew from the Mime Troupe, where she had been an actress for seven years. Dick Stahl came from The Committee, via TV and bit parts in movies, and would play the CIA agent. Pablo de la Barra, a Chilean studying drama at the University of California in Berkeley, agreed to play the part of the terrorist — one that his brother played in real life until he was arrested for bank robbery after a big shoot out with the police. Each member of the crew and cast came to the production with dedication and a thirst for adventure. Many felt committed to revolutionary art and politics, some just to an idea. Chile, August 1970: elections, film — unknown.

As the task changed from paper to celluloid, we faced the task of putting into practice all the ideas, some of them now appearing to us a bit pompous, that we had proclaimed as revolutionary. Blast melodrama. Attack studio sound and lovey-dovey close-ups. No artificial sets, only natural settings. For the cast of thousands we counted on the Chilean masses. We held house meetings for crew and cast, discussed politics and procedure and made certain everyone heard our ideas about bourgeois cinema.

In the meantime, I continued to address myself to the question of melodrama and cinematic grammar and language. My grim determination came in part from the insecurity of my position. Few critics had dealt with the aesthetics of cinema from a grammatical perspective and most people that we talked to were uninterested or thought that we sounded ridiculous. After all, what do you go to the movies for? To be entertained. But who sets the level of entertainment?

So we set out to create a melodrama for the purpose of demonstrating its limitations as a vehicle for presenting political issues. To do that we attempted to weave a documentary film through the melodrama, in order to show its limitations. Through various Brechtian or alienating devices — like the balladeer or the camera and tape recorder seen in the frame of the image — we would remind the viewer that he or she was in a movie theater. A melodrama, undercut by a documentary, undercut by the alienating devices. Entertaining, shocking, confusing. We tried to demystify or explain the movies, while at the same time filming an historic event. So the event could be understood by the viewer, she/he would have to realize that the images and sounds that came to his/her senses were photographic and audio reproductions of a small piece of an event, carefully edited or shaped. The pictures themselves do not lie, but the juxtaposition of several pictures — lets
say a close up of an angry woman screaming anti-Allende slogans, followed by a long shot of a young man slugging it out in the street, followed by a policeman chasing someone — pack several months of events into a few seconds.

We went to the street several times in and around election day, filming at mass rallies, but somehow, I felt we did not capture the spirit of politics in Chile. Then on September 16, 1970, Chile’s independence day, we filmed the parade and festivities. The right and left and center began to scream at each other and we filmed it. The soldiers and sailors marched by in Prussian style, military bands trumpeting and drumming the beat. Overhead, jets thundered and the cavalry down below reared to the noise. The leftists chanted against the fascist murderers, the Yankee puppets; the right shouted “Chile si, Cuba no.” The Christian Democrats called for Frei, the ex-president who would deliver the flag of power to Allende, and then shake his hand, embrace him, and plot for his overthrow and murder.

Jim Becket and I went out with a camera one day and waited outside the right wing National Party headquarters as we watched youths declare that the election was a fraud. Soon a group of young communists accepted the provocation and a street donnybrook began, with Becket filming and I whispering in his ear, “Left, steady, now hold. Now pan right quick.” The fight was violent but not extremely so. In fact the action looked sloppy. Hollywood extras would know how to make a street fight look better. Ironically the very clumsiness made the action look more real for documentaries. We used it in the film intercut with staged fights. Because that is what the movies are all about: use your best amateur actors, who make a fight look real, and then put in the staged portions and the audience will feel sure that they have witnessed the real, the historic battles that took place during the election campaign.

A group of right wing women held a rally a short distance from our house and Gustavio Moris and I went to catch some action. We caught it. Women shouted and screamed at us, calling us communists. We filmed some of it including one woman coming directly at the camera, her face becoming more distorted by the close-up lens as she approached, screaming anti-communist slogans. The women all came from the middle or upper middle classes. Later these women would take to the streets with empty pots and pans to protest food shortages even though they never handled pots and pans in the kitchen. From a distance, a voice came over a loudspeaker. Pablo Rodriguez, head of Chile’s fascists, exhorted the women to resist the Allende election, to remember God, motherhood, country and order. The women lost interest in us and listened. What we saw then, the conflicts and contradictions inside Chile, later intensified. What we filmed for the documentary part of Que Hacer we intercut with the fictional material. The prophecy that appears in much of the footage seen in retrospect, makes the blood curdle.

Our enthusiasm over Allende’s victory more than countered the grim news that affected the film. No one would invest a cent in the film. Large and small capitalists fled the country or wrung their hands in grief over their anticipated expropriation. Others looked out the windows, wondering how long it would take for the mob to loot homes and businesses. And “the mob” behaved with extraordinary discipline. They had elected their president and they had delivered their legal mandate to him. Allende said that he would carry it out and the understanding between the people and their new president became clear. Socialism would come with law and without bloodshed. But the bourgeoisie, who had always played at standing for law and order now revealed its real principles and abandoned all pretense of belief in constitutional government and legal forms. They plotted for the violent overthrow of the government. How to film such a contradiction, how to present it without dipping the film into corny melodrama?
Luciano Cruz, one of the leaders of the MIR, the left revolutionary movement, came to visit and we had a series of all night talks, him filling me in on the MIR line and finding out about the film. Luciano Cruz appeared to me like a mini Fidel. Three inches shorter and ten pounds lighter he moved with the same conviction, spoke with the same certainty of purpose, analyzed everything through the eyes of a revolutionary. While in medical school he became a student leader during a strike at the University of Concepcion. When he spoke all listened. Now I listened as he explained why MIR had not joined the Unidad Popular during the election, but had supported Allende after he had won — because MIR interpreted the electoral victory as a people's victory and that had to be defended. He warned us that armed struggle would come because the bourgeoisie would never give up their property and privileges peacefully. The MIR, he told us, would maintain an underground organization, but would also surface and organize the slum dwellers, peasants and workers.

I longed for a camera and tape recorder to record Luciano's words. But in lieu of that possibility, since he didn't want to start a cult of personality, we arranged to film with another MIR leader, Sergio Zorrilla, who was still in prison.

The fictional part of Que Hacer builds towards a kidnapping. The terrorists try to snatch the CIA agent with the help of the Peace Corps girl. We filmed the scene from the 27th floor of an apartment building and it looked super dramatic, aided by the music of Los Jaibas. After the melodramatic scene the camera picks up Zorrilla in prison explaining why kidnapping in Chile would retard the revolutionary process and only help the repressive forces. The juxtaposition of the two sequences, we hoped would stimulate the viewers to think not only about tactics and strategy in revolutionary struggle, but about the applicability of the melodramatic form to political themes. In the movies identification can push us to accept nearly anything, so we tried to dramatize the difference between the real revolutionary and the one that a professional actor created.

Two years later, Luciano Cruz, left a gas heater on at night and the flame went out and he died in his sleep. The shudder that passed through me when I heard must have gone through all who knew him. He was one of the descendents of Bolivar and O'Higgins, Sucre and Che, Fidel and Allende, the people whose names forced the idea of revolutionary struggle into one's mind, whose actions were determined by their understanding of necessity. Luciano's commitment and dedication came through every pore of his body as did his desire to live and laugh and enjoy. He lived underground for years and after Allende won he surfaced a little, but had steeled himself to wage a revolutionary struggle until death. And then to die in his sleep from gas fumes....

Included in our battles with traditional cinematic grammar we decided to use a kind of improvisation between the actors. They would understand the ideas that each scene embodied and then improvise, but not yet for the camera. When the director, helping them and feeding them, felt they had understood and filled out the idea, the dialogue would be written either from memory or from a tape recorder. Sometimes this worked and other times it resulted in actors and director being frustrated, or in not taking into account some sound or camera (lighting) possibilities.

We filmed all over Santiago, trying to finish the scenes that required the capital location. Then we headed for Copiapo, a mining town of some 50,000 inhabitants, five hundred miles north of Santiago, an oasis in Chile's great desert. By this time we had gotten three Chilean investors, two communists and the father of one of the associate producers. Instead of putting in money
he offered food and lodging for everyone. It sounded good, and when we arrived at Copiapo the lodging looked seedy but adequate and the investor owned a restaurant. So we looked forward to good food. In the month of filming many of us had lost weight. Also the pressure began to increase and the vastness of our undertaking began to overwhelm some of us, especially me.

One day we travelled with President-elect Allende, before he was inaugurated. We followed the car in and around the city of Concepcion. He spoke at the University and we filmed the big meeting where he promised to carry out the mandate given him by the people. Then we went to a nursery school and watched him kiss babies and shake hands and it seemed that he felt awkward before the camera. We then filmed Allende at a coal miner’s rally as he spoke hard hat in hand, to the miners. After the speech he gave us a short interview which later appeared in *Que Hacer*. I asked him if he thought that the Chilean bourgeoisie would sit back and watch its power and privilege slip away. He responded quickly and sharply: "Throughout history no ruling class ever gives up its powers and privileges without a fight. But when the people know their goals they will defend them, defend their own power by any means necessary." He then went on to answer a question about the identity of the enemy: "...the foreigners who control Chile's resources, the absentee landlords, those capitalists linked with foreign companies."

As Allende’s bodyguards shooed him into the waiting car amidst the miner's shouts in cadence, "A–llén–de, A–llén–de," I began to shudder thinking of the task that he had undertaken. Thousands of miners would back him, hundreds of thousands of workers would fight and die for the principles that he stood for. But he didn't want it to come to that. He wanted to accomplish his task legally, and if only the bourgeoisie could understand that perhaps several million Chileans would take up arms to defend their electoral victory, the bloody struggle could be avoided. The legal way had been chosen by Dr. Allende and the other leaders of the popular unity movement after years of electoral struggle and careful assessment of Chilean reality had shown them that armed struggle could not succeed where legal means existed.

We finished our shooting schedule, the last scenes being shot at a two to one ratio since we had almost run out of film and hadn't the money to buy new stock. Fortunately, by this time we had coordinated our crew and actors and efficiency ran high. One of the last sequences involved the formal taking of power. Allende would receive the banner in the Congress from outgoing president Frei.

We filmed the transfer of power ceremony and then Allende, dressed in a blue suit — the other luminaries wore black tuxedos — rode in an open street lined with troops. He waved stiffly to the people pressed behind the barricades. Allende's body guards ran alongside the car, their eyes darting into the crowd. When would the assassin strike? The coup smoldered in the restless livers and bloodstreams of a hardcore of fascists in and out of the military, in Santiago, Sao Paulo, and in Washington.

We left Chile, our film shot, most of it unseen so that we did not know if certain sequences worked or not. Time and money together had tied our hands and now we headed back to California to somehow weave a movie out of the fifty thousand feet of exposed film. We had asked Allende for a formal interview and he had agreed, but he had not been able to grant it to us before our departure date. I would return, I told his press aide (who was later murdered during the assault on La Moneda, the presidential palace).

Our next task involved making a film that would convey some sense of Chilean reality, while provoking the moviegoer toward different levels of
thought and feeling. We had neither money nor an editor. At this point I met Haskell Wexler, the director of *Medium Cool* and one of Hollywood's outstanding directors of photography. Haskell looked at about an hour of the dailies and with his partner, Cal Bernstein, offered encouragement and money to continue. A few months later Haskell and I would fly to Chile together to film the interview with Allende — and fall upon a story about torture in Brazil.

We began to piece the film together, following the treatment we had written in California and the revised script that we had improvised through the three and a half months in Chile. The editor, Bill Yaharus, who had worked at KQED, understood and sympathized with what we wanted to do in terms of melodrama. He immediately began to add his creative ideas. Bill had once said that editing consists of a series of puns. The play on words becomes, in film, a play on pictures and words. In *Shoot The Piano Player* Truffaut uses the most obvious and slapstick kind of pun when one of the heavies makes a statement and the heavy says: "If this isn't true, may my grandmother drop dead." Truffaut cuts to a shot of an old granny falling out of a rocking chair.

The rules for cutting follow obvious visual patterns: right to left movement, front frame-rear frame action. Cutting in the middle of zooms or pull backs, and jump cuts, are forbidden by text books. What this means is that when a cut is made that brings the eye's attention to the cut itself, an unsmooth change (uneven transition) from one picture to another results — a bad mark is registered to the editor. The only times that these cuts are permitted is when the filmmaker purposely wants his audience's attention focused on the change of images. Often on a local news show, when the cameraman fails to take cutaways (shots that show action rear view of the speaker, or pertain to the speaker seen on camera), the editor resorts to jump cuts in order to reduce the on-air time or to eliminate the "ehs" and "ahs." In *Que Hacer* we decided to break various editing rules but we didn't dare use jump cuts. We have come to think of them as ugly, as uncinematic. How much were we conditioned? ○

**TO BE CONTINUED**
JEAN-LOUIS COMOLLI:

ON THE PRACTICE OF POLITICAL FILM.

An Interview

The following interview was conducted during the month of February at the conference on The Cinematic Apparatus, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, by Ron Burnett and Phil Vitone.

Ciné-Tracts: How do you see *La Cecilia* (Ed. note: *La Cecilia* is Comolli's first film and was shown in the context of the conference.) as a political film? Do you see it working as a tool to raise the consciousness of the spectator? Is that its political task?

Comolli: I tried to think through the problem of political film in terms different from those of the militant cinema — it is a film that is in some senses a reaction to the dominant style of militant cinema particularly in France.

. . . when cinema is transitive and intensely assertive (didactic) that, as far as I am concerned objectifies the audience, so I am trying to ask political questions through the use of a fictional style and thus to push the spectator towards questioning his/her own mode of political speech and expression and not only the political content of that position.

. . . and thus the entire work of the film centers on not only asking questions about the problems the characters face (within the narrative of the film) but also the way they pose these problems to themselves, and the way the discourse of the film poses those problems in itself.

. . . the idea was to take a relatively politicized group of people who are at different levels of political, cultural and ideological development and show how various political questions and problems circulate among the different members of the group and then how these questions are screened (refracted) by the individual cultural and political codes of each of the members of the group.

. . . we wanted to ask the spectator to join the actors and work on modes of political enunciation and not only on the enunciations themselves.
Ciné-Tracts: The audience reacted very negatively to your film last night. Do you think that the film creates enough gaps in its mode of representation to allow for a critical perspective on the part of the spectator? Furthermore, there was a general criticism of the film which centered on what appeared to be its sexist and conventional portrayal of women. Even though you tried to create an almost Brechtian style of self-consciousness in the film perhaps that didn’t work.

Comolli: I disagree that the film was sexist. I adopted a strategy that like all strategies is a partial one and it needs to be criticized. In most films the spectator is not placed in the position of having to work upon his or her own placement in the film as subject but rather the film seems to do the positioning for the subject. I would include, here, films that define themselves as militant and those that define themselves as artistic.

For me the intent of political film should be to simultaneously engage and constitute the subject as political through the enunciation. The process of engaging the subject comes before the cinematic performance itself. The subject is in ideology, in the social, in society, with all his/her contradictions, and commitments, all that makes up the collage of fragments that is the subject and the purpose of political film is to transform the spectator into a political being at least for the duration of the spectacle.

So the strategy that I adopted was to entertain the spectator in a discursive relationship — a changing moving position; not to lock the spectator into a given place but to open up the context and problem of placement for the spectator. There are many ways to do this but the first essential condition is to give the spectator a place and to generate codes of representation that the spectator can identify with, otherwise the spectator has no place and the communication is finished.

So my strategy is to create a conventional code of representation with which the spectator can easily identify in much the same way as the mystifying experience of the Hollywood film.

The work is to make sure that the identifications are not fixed and are incessantly called into question.

I use the structure of the political group in the film (Ed. note: La Cecilia revolves around a political group of heterogeneous construction that tries to set up a utopian community in Brazil during the nineteenth century and the political and personal conflicts that many of the members of the group go through as they try to build the community.) as a context for identification and globally speaking if the film works at all the spectator should identify with the group. The spectator shouldn’t identify with one single character or one single theme or with one point of view. The signifiers and the enunciations are constantly changing as is the spectator’s position in relation to them. There is therefore a constant dispersal of identification, a constant repositioning that is only possible through conventional modes of identification.

A further way of dealing with this problem is to de-naturalize the codes of representation, that is, to bring into the foreground the way the artifice operates notably by the performance of the actors which has to be a consciously theatrical one.

The narration appears to be linear, without gaps or ruptures or breaks but is in effect a narrative that contains many holes, gaps, and that, as a result is missing many logical connections. This means that the spectator has to re-adjust his/her relationship to the screen because of the absence of any of the major referents that are usually found in the classical cinema.

There isn’t that sense of linear and chronological order that normally guarantees the spectator a specific position in relation to what is shown in the fiction. Let’s take another example, depth of field, which can fix the spectator within specific limits but which can also be used to widen the parameters of the reading of the image by creating a constant sense of movement and displacement.
Ciné-Tracts: How do you feel about the audience's reaction to your film last night and to what do you attribute their hostility?

Comolli: I don't really understand the cultural and cinematographic context in the United States or Canada. I also find it difficult to understand the particularity of this university context and it is therefore difficult for me to analyse the reaction. But what I did see, quite clearly, was a profound lack of understanding of how the image functions. The audience tended to overestimate and overemphasize the photographic and the assertive qualities of the representation. The audience seemed to underestimate the obviously coded nature of the text as text and seemed to reject the obviousness with which the text is readable. For example, I was really struck by the way in which the audience talked about character development and the relationship of the characters to each other in the film. To me these relationships are never situated at the psychological level exclusively but essentially are found within the logic of the form. We could ascribe to each of the characters a logical sign and the combination of these signs would give the spectator the scenario. For the people that were there last night to talk about this is not to talk about the film, but for me this is is the very essence of the film.

Ciné-Tracts: Let's look at one scene so that we can decode the space between your intention as an author and the film as an object-spectacle. For example, in the beginning when one of the main characters, a woman, appears in the film, she seems to come out of nowhere. There is a lot of ambiguity surrounding this shot because she walks and gestures in the classical manner of WOMAN as she has been represented in classical hollywood film.

Comolli: For the spectator she comes from two places at once; she arrives in terms of the look of the male characters, whom the camera has been following, the camera is thus placed in a position of subjectivity locked into the male look. She also represents all that is traditional in the representation of women in film.

Ciné-Tracts: Is it necessary for a cinema that is informed by Brecht to inscribe the dominant representations in order that they can then be broken and ruptured?

Comolli: This is an important question and my answer is yes. One can only attack what is constituted by the film and not merely the codes of representation that constitute film. (One cannot deal with individual scenes but with their juxtaposition.) Every film should give the spectator the primary material with which he/she can work. A film in itself cannot intervene against a code without first invoking that code since signifiers must also be felt as well as seen before being broken, ruptured. . . . The signifier has to work upon the spectator so as to inscribe the code and once that has been done, the inscription can be played with, must be played with. To not inscribe the code is to overestimate the primacy of the dominant codes particularly as the spectator enters the cinema.

Ciné-Tracts: Is it possible for the dominant ideology which to some degree, but not in a mechanical way, directs the spectator to be broken by another representation? In other words can one representation break another representation? Can this be done in the context of a political film and be effective? We ask this because sometimes the medium itself creates difficulties because there isn't a direct relationship between the screen and the spectator. It may be important to examine the space between the screen and the spectator.
Comolli: The effects of a film are always diffused and delayed. A film is not a book — it is not a complete text — and there is no such thing as a complete reading. A Film works during its projection and after its projection with a whole ensemble of codes, of concepts, of signifiers. All of these are situated within the social whole and it is that social whole that forms and is the mediation for the experience. It is my feeling that political cinema must deal with these problems otherwise it will continue to be at the fringes of any possible effect, politically. △
SPECIAL CANADIAN SECTION

Films of the French Unit of the N.F.B. (1958-1964)

The Film As Word (Perrault)

The Tar Sands -Docu-drama

Chronique de la Vie Quotidienne
Introduction: The Invisible Cinema

"This only true and real field in which one could test personal freedom was present possibility. Of course we could all lead better, nobler, and more socialist lives; but not by positing them only in some future perfect state. One could so clearly only move and act from today, this present and flawed world."

—John Fowles, Daniel Martin

As a collective cultural artifact, as something that informs and influences our lives on a day to day basis, the Canadian cinema remains an invisible cinema. Films get made but are scarcely seen. On rare occasions do they seriously get talked about. The NFB product still seems to fall into the limbo of school classrooms and church basements. The CBC runs specials without much publicity. If we miss them, we are likely never to have the chance of seeing them again.

An informed investigation of the reasons for this situation would itself constitute a serious article — indeed, a necessary one. But my function here is more humble. My function here is to introduce a number of articles on the Canadian cinema which, on behalf of Ciné-Tracts, I have been asked to collect.

The task has not been easy. Within the academic community, while an increasing number of people are interested in Canadian film, only a few have access to it. If they are working in small towns, they are likely not even to see the more successful theatrical product — this year — films like Outrageous, Who Has Seen the Wind, and Why Shoot the Teacher? Even in larger centres, there is no guarantee that a Quebec film like J.A. Martin, Photographe will ever appear; and that masterpiece by Quebec's most inventive Jean-Pierre Lefebvre, Le Vieux Pays Où Rimbaud Est Mort, has not been seen outside Quebec.
With this blockage of our own product, writing about Canadian cinema seems not only a political but a desperately private act. Those of us with influence can arrange special screenings of Canadian films for private study. But when we write up our research, what can our readers do? The ideas may be interesting, challenging, informative; yet to the majority of Canadians, even to the majority of Canadians interested in Canadian cinema, the product remains invisible, unseen. Unless we live in the proximity of a nationally biased cinémathèque, about the only way on a regular basis to see Canadian films is to take (or give) a course about them. Acquainting ourselves with our own product thus becomes as "academic" an exercise as studying Egyptology or learning ancient Greek!

Within this lamentable state of cultural deprivation, itself politically determined — perpetuated by government policies and an exhibition system controlled by American interests — writing on Canadian cinema is, somewhat esoteric and eclectic in approach. Critical and theoretical rigour are difficult to obtain without a prior popular acclaim that has made a culture visible. The advances in film theory over the past ten years has been most accessible when addressed to the American product — the most visible product. Interrogations of the ideological subtexts of, for example, American genres like the Western or the Horror film gain both purpose and plausibility from the immense availability of these American films. Young Mr. Lincoln — that classic, that apparently terminal example — has served nations well. But it is time to move on to other films, other nations.

In Canada, for those of us who choose to work within the buried field of Canadian cinema, we have to do several things at once. We must strive to make our product popular — to grant it visibility; at the same time, we must not ignore the conditions of hard-sell commerciality within our own society which is necessarily a part of a genuine popularity — a commerciality which must affect (indeed, infect) the final product. We must celebrate our own neglected product at the same time as we must recognize that the ideological assumptions within our own films are often not that different from the ideological assumptions that we would criticize within those more available films that come to us from Hollywood.

In the articles that follow — a new venture for Ciné-Tracts, hopefully the first of a series — there can thus be found a variety of attitudes and approaches, as well as (one must acknowledge it) of quality. But these articles record a struggle. They are part of a shared attempt to write seriously and meaningfully about our own cinema and culture. Most of them are part of more extended studies by each of the writers which are in the process of developing.

In this way, they could all be seen as the beginning of a beginning. They are part of this concealed act of unearthing and discovering, of attempting to make known. Working within our own culture, we work as archaeologists — striving to find the suppressed traces of a civilization which, when we have learned to recognize them, we might welcome as our own.

Peter Harcourt

Carlton University
From the Picturesque to the Familiar:

Films of the French Unit at the N.F.B.

(1958-1964)

by David Clandfield

"Our films have, above all, been an impassioned appropriation of the social environment. The picturesque (the outsider's view) has yielded to the familiar; the myth has yielded in the face of reality."

[Gilles Groulx - Parti-Pris 7 (April 1964)]

Gilles Groulx was a member of the French Unit at the National Film Board engaged in the making of documentary films in the late fifties and early sixties. This branch of documentary film production at the NFB is now normally referred to as the cinéma-direct movement. Groulx made the above remark when the movement as such was ending, that is, when the tightly-knit group of francophone filmmakers at the NFB was dispersing. It illustrates perfectly a characteristic dynamic which distinguishes the cinéma-direct
films of the French Unit from the Candid-Eye films of Unit B discussed by Bruce Elder. Technically, of course, both movements had much in common: shooting without script or conscious staging use of light-weight equipment, a search for the real which deliberately shunned the dramatic or the heroic. However, the dispassionate empiricism of the Candid-Eye which found inspiration in Cartier-Bresson's foreword to The Decisive Moment is held in tension in cinéma-direct with the "impassioned" involvement of the filmmaker in his pro-filmic material, the social "milieu."

For the Candid-Eye filmmakers, the subject of the film was its subject-matter rooted in objective reality. The starting-point was a social or human event, ephemeral, inscribed in an ephemeral world, the form and meaning of which require the mediation of the filmic process to become evident. The function of the filmic process, then, was not to mould but to reveal form, and with it meaning.

For the cinéma-direct filmmaker, the point of departure is the filmmaking process in which the filmmaker is deeply implicated as a consciousness, individual or collective. It is this process, this consciousness which will give form and meaning to an amorphous objective reality. Instead of effacing his presence, the filmmaker will affirm it. Instead of rendering the technical process transparent (supposedly), he will emphasise its materiality. Instead of standing apart from his object of study or enquiry, he will implicate himself within it. His search for the authentic will involve not only the critical detachment of the empirical investigator in order to strip away "myth" or misconception, but also commitment to the social project under investigation in order to avoid the pitfalls of the aesthetic or the "picturesque."

The overt personal involvement of the subject-filmmaker in the object-reality of the pro-filmic event was, then, the key distinguishing factor of the Québécois cinéma-direct from the anglophone candid-eye.

In this paper a number of the films made by the French Unit at the NFB will be considered. They are generally films made to fit a thirty-minute TV format, although two extend to forty or fifty minutes. Two of the films fit a shorter 15-minute format: Les Raqueteurs and Rouli-roulant.

Un jeu si simple is listed as 1965 in the NFB catalogue but was shot in 1963. Rouli-roulant is a late exception however, dating from 1967.

Although the more personal approach of the cinéma-direct filmmakers has often been indicated in writings on the cinéma-vérité phenomenon seen as a whole, its roots in an indigenous Québécois tradition of the ethnographic film have not been recognized outside of that province, and even there only in the last two or three years. In this respect, an article by Yvan Lamonde in Cinéma Québec of December 1974 is instructive. The work of two men of the Church, abbés, making films primarily in the thirties, forties and fifties is

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3 See, for example, Wolf Koenig, "A note on "Candid Eye" in Andre Paquet (ed.), How to make or not to make a Canadian film, Montreal, Cinémathèque canadienne, 1967, in which he quotes verbatim and at length from this foreword.

4 Golden Gloves, La Lutte and A St-Henri, le 5 septembre are "collective" films: i.e. the responsibility for the direction rests with a group of filmmakers, and not a single auteur.

5 A Saint-Henri, le 5 septembre 41'36" and Huit Témoins 58'05. Two of the films fit a shorter 15-minute format: Les Raqueteurs and Rouli-roulant.

6 Un jeu si simple is listed as 1965 in the NFB catalogue but was shot in 1963. Rouli-roulant is a late exception however, dating from 1967.

here significant. Both Albert Tessier and Maurice Proulx were travelling filmmakers, concerned with creating a personal record of life in the province, shooting in 16mm with a minimum of outside technical assistance.

Between 1927 and 1960, Albert Tessier, working as an independent filmmaker with his own funds, shot and edited about 70 short films. The running time was generally 10-15 minutes. He avoided the use of tripod, preferring the hand-held Bolex with a triple turret. He rarely worked from a script, preferring to trust to his eye and build the film into a meaningful whole by a laborious montage of shots taken from his continually growing collection of "stock-shots," and by the construction of a poetic commentary usually inserted as silent titles. Since he was invariably present at the screenings, his own voice would add a live commentary.8

The works of Maurice Proulx extend from 1934 to about 1961. In this time, he completed about 33 films, usually from 20-30 minutes in length, although the first two (En pays neufs 1934-37; En pays pittoresques 1938-39) were of feature length. He, too, shot his films alone, without pre-constructed script, using a 16mm Kodak. The funds for his films came in the form of Government grants at first and later by the sponsorship of Le Service de Ciné-Photographie founded by the Provincial Government in 1940. There was little in the way of conscious editing as a structural principle, and he claims that in his earliest films he used about four-fifths of the film shot. The commentaries were written and added by Michel Vergnes in most of the films from the forties onward.9

The films of both Tessier and Proulx bear witness to an era in the life of the province quite different from that of the NFB French team of the late fifties and early sixties. They might best be characterized as a "cinéma de la fidelité," committed to the preservation of the traditional rural way of life, based on the two intertwined institutions of the Catholic church and a conservative government. They celebrate from within the preservation of language, rural crafts, family, parish community and the Catholic religion. Nevertheless, by their overtly nationalistic concern with the definition of a cultural identity and their desire to project this image of a collective to this same public, they anticipate the aims, intentions and methods of a generation of Quebec filmmakers whose eyes were turned towards a radically changing society. The most frequently mentioned heir to this tradition, though perhaps not in a deliberate sense, is Pierre Perrault. However, the short films of the cinéma-direct team, from Les Raquetteurs on, reflect this search for a collective identity but this time in an urban, industrial society.

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Now this desire to penetrate a growing, urban industrial culture and to render it palpable to its members as a new identity was not confined to, nor did it spring from, the filmmakers of the NFB. It grew throughout the mass-media of the fifties in Quebec, and, in particular, through the medium of television whose arrival in 1952 had rung the death knell for the first Quebec commercial feature film industry.10 A new intelligentsia was forming which gradually gained access to the media and revealed the cracks in the harmonious picture of social homogeneity which had been nurtured by Church and State for so long. To embark upon a project to define the new cultural identity was implicitly to take sides for or against the old order; to assert

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9 See especially the "dossier Proulx" in Cinéma Québec IV, 6 (1975) pp. 18-33.

10 This concern to render an image of an urban society in Quebec had been anticipated in the forties by two important novelists: Roger Lemelin (Au Pied de la Pente Douce 1944) and Gabrielle Roy (Bonheur d'Ocasion 1945).
one's own national identity within a federal organism (by creating a French team) was to break away from the picturesque, the view of the outsider. Such were the conditions which served as a social background for the work of the cinéma-direct group and the other French filmmakers at the NFB.

Les Raquetteurs (1958) was the first film to propel this group into international recognition and to bring its members into contact with the international community of cinéma-vérité filmmakers. This was important not so much for the contact with the Americans as for the meetings with the Europeans, and in particular the French exponents such as Jean Rouch. This contact, in particular, was the most fruitful; not because the French cinéma-vérité filmmakers brought about a change of direction amongst those directors whom they met, but because they expressed considerable enthusiasm and encouragement for the technical innovations and the ideological approach they detected in films like Les Raquetteurs. The cachet of approval from the Parisan Cahiers du Cinéma was a welcome antidote to the cold water of the NFB Hierarchy. The international recognition gained from selection for Festival exhibition was a useful lever in the negotiations needed to secure approval for an expanded programme along the same lines.

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The very subject-matter of these films reveals their filmmakers' concern with the ethnography of a modern, industrial and urban society; this in sharp contrast to the folkloric conversation-pieces of before 1958, made either under anglophone supervision inside the NFB or by the members of the older Quebec elite outside it.

The attention is drawn frequently to the rituals of the urban masses: its attraction to ritualized violence in body-contact sports (boxing: Golden Gloves; pro wrestling: La Lutte; ice hockey: Un jeu si simple); its ritualized community leisure activities (see the shriner-type convention in Les Raquetteurs); its ritualized holidays (the Montrealeans in Voir Miami); the vestiges of a rural culture, ritualized and modernized as in the sequence of the radio-chapelet in A Saint-Henri le 5 septembre; the parade (Quebec-USA and Les Raquetteurs); children's games (Rouli-roulant and the counting-out rhymes incorporated into the sound-track of Jour après Jour); the dance (frenzied in Les Raquetteurs, desultory and mechanical in Jour après Jour, the "chicken-scratch" sequence in Voir Miami, traditional in Bacheliers de la Cinquième). These activities are not presented as merely features of a popular culture, but as ritual, the formal observance of customs, and it is as such that they are inscribed into the films. The camera movements, the cutting, the sound editing frequently serve to create this formalized quality. The swirling camera movements echo or counterpoint the dance sequences in the Groulx films (Les Raquetteurs and Voir Miami) as they reproduce the movements of the majorettes in Les Raquetteurs. Rhythmic cutting punctuates the soldiers' movements in the parade in Quebec-USA and those of the majorettes rehearsing in Jour après Jour. In Un jeu si simple, the dramatic implications of hockey viewed as contest are submerged in the presentation of hockey as formalized ritual (see the montage sequences of slap-shots, or players being taken out of the boards, or referees signalling penalties), indeed the abstraction is made complete by the sequence of overhead shots (linked by dissolves) of goalmouth activity near the end of the film. Mention is often made in the commentary of the vestigial nature of certain customs (the early dinners of the peasant in the working-class district of Saint-Henri; the gambling in Voir Miami, vestige of the gold rush ideal). In Rouli-roulant, the lore and skills associated with skate-boards are described in unnecessary

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11. It was shown at the Flaherty Symposium in UCLA Santa Barbara in 1958. Here it was that Michel Brault, who made the film jointly with Gilles Groulx, first met Jean Rouch. Brault was to be Rouch’s cameraman in Chronique d’un Été (1961) and La Puntion (1960-64).


13. Les Raquetteurs had initially been consigned to “stock-shots” by Grant McLean, see Gilles Marsolais, Le Cinéma canadien, Montreal, Editions du Jour, 1968, p. 57 and Michel Brault’s interview in Michel Brault (Cinéastes du Québec no. 11), Montreal, Conseil québécois pour diffusion du cinéma, 1972, p. 7. For a discussion of the relations between the filmmakers and the executive branch at the National Film Board at this time, see R. Boissonnault, “Les cinéastes québécois. Troisième partie: la sequence du cinéma direct” in Cinéma Québec II, 4 (December, 1972) pp. 15-22.

14. Evening prayers conducted on the radio, the rosary-hour.
detail in a pastiche didactic commentary, and a tracking-shot of the skateboards in close-up being carried into the sunset satirizes the fetishism of surfing films. In *Jour après Jour*, the children's counting-out and skipping rhymes parallel the statistical, numerical litanies which characterize descriptions of the work and artifacts of the paper factory. In *Un jeu si simple*, religious organ music accompanies shots of play and in *La Lutte* a harpsichord is used to accompany a wild wrestling bout.

The ethnographic project then tends to examine social activity in terms of ritual by emphasizing its formal qualities. This formalization is harnessed to a humanist criticism of modern industrial society associated with mechanization and automation. In *Jour après Jour*, formal or associative montage juxtaposes men rhythmically manipulating rods in the factory with shots of the factory hockey team in training; we see paper-bag handles jigging along a moving belt intercut in rhythm with close-ups of the legs of factory majorettes in practice; jiving couples at the factory dance are intercut with other shots of factory work; and so on. The pervasive mechanical rhythms of the company town's inhabitants, just as in the soundtrack we hear the numerical litanies of counting-games, weather forecasts, working-hours, paper-sizes, official statistics; for instance, in the weather forecast heard on the kitchen radio:

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"South coast of Nova Scotia, the Annapolis Valley:
Foggy to-night.
Madawasca: a low of 35, a high of 45.
A low of 38, a high of 43.
A low of 40, a high of 60.
A low of 18 years, a high of 60 years.
A low of 65¢, a high of $2.25 per hour.
A low of 35, a high of 48 hours per week."
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or, when enumerating sizes of paper:
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"2 by 4, 4 by 8, 30 by 40, 100 by 100, Monday to Saturday, 12 to 8, 8 to 4, 4 to midnight, father to son."
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The images of *homo mechanicus* are counterpointed by the sounds of *homo arithmeticus*, and the company town's population is portrayed as the victim of mechanical and statistical processes.

In *Les Bûcherons de la Manouane*, the only film under consideration which is situated in a remote rural community, the influence of the city and its mechanical rhythms is again inscribed into the film. Not only does the commentary remind us of the demands of the urban economy (the number of trees needed for four editions of the New York Times, etc.) but the loggers' activities of felling, trimming, loading, stacking, trucking and unloading into the river are shown in an accelerating montage of shots in rotation while the sound track steadily increases in volume, concentrating more and more on the mechanical roar of the logs rolling into the river on their way to the urban market. An accelerated rhythm of cutting and the isolation of certain sounds used asynchronically (e.g. also the ringing of the axes) serves to formalize the sense of mechanical routine.

If social ritual and mechanical routine seem to be recurrent motifs of the ethnographic investigation of the modern Quebec by *cinéma-direct* filmmakers, it is because these filmmakers have frequently adopted a critical perspective to their documentary material and have used cinematographic devices to give form to that perspective, to foreground it in the films themselves. Such a self-conscious mediation of the object-reality implies, at first
glance, a distance or detachment from the unmanipulated reality of the pro-
filmic event; a willingness to intervene, to interpose the filmic process as 
subject. As such, this would seem to believe the fundamental principle of 
cinéma-vérité, its power to guarantee authenticity by registering audio-visual 
impressions with a minimum of overt mediation. The supposedly direct or 
"unmediated" vision would then rely on a rhetoric of empirical objectivity 
as its guarantee of authenticity. On the other hand, a vision of reality which 
foregrounded its mediating function by emphasizing formal elements 
inherent in the process would have to rely on a rhetoric of sincerity to gua-
rantee its authenticity. The filmmaker's commitment to his documentary 
material must be demonstrated not by his effacement before the formal 
impératives of the pro-filmic event (as in the case of some Candid-Eye films) 
but by his honesty about his own role in the filmmaking process.

In the cinéma-vérité films of Jean Rouch and Chris Marker in France and 
elsewhere, this was a vital component of the style. The presence of the 
camera, far from being dissimulated, is openly revealed not only to the 
people being filmed but often to the spectator. The microphone too is often 
shown. This was not just a reflexive device (exposing the materiality of the 
process) not simply a rhetorical device to guarantee the filmmaker's aware-
ness in the eyes of the spectator. It was founded on a belief in the catalytic 
function of the camera. It was held that when people are made aware of the 
presence of a camera and microphone, their behaviour will become more 
expressive, concentrated and ultimately more revealing about their true 
elves. The interview, then becomes a standard procedure. Just as the 
probing question, or prolonged unpunctuated listening, by the interviewer is 
expected to drag the truth from the insincere subject, so too will the attentive 
eye of the mobile camera pick up the significant gesture which reveals the 
posturing or role-playing of the same person. The finest example is the inter-
view with the inventor of racing-car stabilizers in Marker's Le Joli Mai (1963). 
As the pompous self-flattery of the man continues, the camera zooms in to 
pick up a spider on his person and pans with it as it crawls across his chest 
and over his shoulder. So full is this man with his own importance that he 
does not notice, but the camera does while the interviewer allows him to 
talk on uninterrupted. Furthermore, interviews in this kind of film are invari-
ably conducted in the familiar surroundings of the subject: the inventor at 
the racing-circuit, young stockbrokers on the steps of the Bourse, architects 
on a construction-site. etc.

In the French Unit at the NFB, the interview-film as a genre was rare. Huit 
témoins is a good example, and it is noticeable that in the interviews with 
juvenile delinquents Jacques Godbout has chosen to occupy his interviewees 
with familiar activities (playing cards, shooting pool) or to remove them as 
far as possible from a studio ambience (one boy is interviewed sitting on a 
car fender at night in a parking-lot, lit by car head-lights). Nevertheless, 
when interviews are included, they are shot in the same way; see for instance 
the interviews cut into the films of Gilles Groulx (Golden Gloves, in the 
kitchen of one subject, or in the bar where another boxer works; Voir 
Miami, in a yacht or on the beach; Un jeu si simple, with hockey-players at 
rinkside or in the canteen), and of course an important one is included in A 
Saint-Henri, le 5 septembre. In most of these films, the interview is shown 
direct with synch sound, without the intercutting of other images or a syn-
chronic or atmospheric sound mixing. The counterpointing of interview 
material with other images is a feature found most frequently in the films of
Pierre Perrault which are beyond the scope of this article. In Télesphore Légaré, garde-pêche by Claude Fournier and Gilles Groulx (1959), the sound-track consists of the recorded impressions of the two old folk as they saw the images of the film made about them. But this kind of experiment was rare in the films under study here.

More often than not, the filmmaker hopes to capture conversation among his subjects while the camera remains an obvious recorder of the event. Examples of this may be seen in the self-conscious enunciation of the relevant municipal by-law by the police officer in Rouli-Roulant who is confiscating the skate-boards; the grievances of the loggers in the station or at dinner in Les Bûcherons de la Manouane; the bar-room antics in Golden Gloves; the behaviour of the boys at the Seaquarium in Voir Miami. These are all moments at which the presence of the camera is clearly obvious to the people being filmed and which by being retained in the final print of the film guarantee the implication of the filmmaker in his diegesis. This implication helps to close the distance opened by the formalizing tendency described above.

There are also other strategies used in these films which effectively achieve the same goal.

Frequently, a sequence will begin with a wide-angle shot from a hand-held camera in medias res instead of the more traditional establishing-shot which would enable the spectator to orient the action in a broader spatial continuum. The opening shots of the parade in Les Raquetteurs are a good example of this. La Lutte opens with a shot of two bare arms locked together in a wrestling grip seen against a black background and it is only as the camera follows their downward movement that their broader spatial context is revealed. There is a similar use of medium close shots of youths flexing their muscles to open the initial sequence of Huit témoins. The frequent use of such shots both to introduce sequences and within the walking camera mingling with its subjects, these constitute the practical application of Brault's concept of the "wide-angle style":

". . . one could say that there are two techniques: there is the tele-photo style and the wide-angle style. But I belong more to the wide-angle style, that is to say that the style consists simply in approaching the people and filming them, in participating in their lives and not in observing them in secret, inside a box, or from high up in a window with a tele-photo lens."

This intermingling does not merely put the cameraman at the mercy of the events he is filming; he is not merely seeking to "keep up with the action". The circling movements are often identifiable as those of a questing subject, the cameraman searching for the revealing detail which will throw the shot into relief, and convey additional meaning. This particular trait is later developed to good effect in the films of Pierre Perrault.

There is an almost surrealistic tone to the juxtapositions that are forged by such questing, juxtapositions which depend upon objective chance and the receptivity of the cameraman's sensibility to the incongruous or the merveilleux. In the short films of the cinéma-direct movement, examples may be found in the shots of the Jones brothers sparring and training amidst the shunting boxcars of Saint-Henri (Golden Gloves), the shot of the departing police-car after the dramatic confiscation of the skate-boards which closes with a tilt to reveal a small girl skipping in total indifference to the
intervention of the law (*Rouli-Roulant*). Sometimes, the disorienting "surreal" effect is achieved by the choice of camera angle: for example, the shot of the jogger in Quebec who leap-frogs over a series of bollards and, seen from behind in deep-focus, seems to be jumping over the same one again and again in defiance of spatial logic (*Québec — U.S.A.*), the shot which frames a professional wrestler performing sit-ups in training against a Discobolos seen in the background (*La Lutte*). Sometimes, the disturbing contrast does not depend upon the positioning or movement of the camera, but merely upon the attentiveness of the cameraman who shoots before the moment is lost. *Québec — U.S.A.* has many such shots, often inserted at random, like the shot of the large gentleman with an equally large double bass who disappears without trouble into a very small car. The same disorientation can be achieved by a cut: at the end of a series of gym shots of wrestlers performing physical exercises, the film cuts to another who flings himself with superhuman abandonment into a reckless somersault which, as the camera tilts downward, reveals itself as a dive into a pool (*La Lutte*). In all of these examples, the filmmaker is projecting his subjectivity, sometimes inscribing the effect into the film in such a way that it contributes to the organic development of meaning, sometimes indulging in a gag which is allowed to rupture the continuity of the work.

One of the common features of the rhetoric of sincerity in the new cinema in France of this period was to show the camera or microphone, and to foreground the materiality of the structuring process in one way or another. In the *cinéma-direct* films under study here, this is rarely done. It is found in the film made by Claude Jutra for the TV series *Profils et Paysages* on Félix Leclerc, *Troubadour* (1960) where the arrival of the camera crew at Leclerc’s house with all their paraphernalia is treated ironically. Gilles Carle inserts shots of cameramen on the high diving board into his swimming films of 1963. However, in the films we are studying here, the reflexive tendency is not demonstrated in this way. The most obviously reflexive film of our corpus is *A Saint-Henri le 5 septembre*, and its own self-consciousness is entirely a product of the commentary and editing of Jacques Godbout, whose novels share a similar reflexive tendency closely related to certain concerns of the *nouveaux romanciers* in France. The commentary amounts to an apology (or defence) for *cinéma-direct* and reveals a close affinity with contemporary currents in French cinema, notably the *Cahiers du Cinéma* group and the practitioners of *cinéma-vérité*:

(Opening sequence, after song by Raymond Lévesque)

"It is six in the morning, on the fifth of September. We have chosen this day at random to invade Saint-Henri, a working-class district in Montreal."

"I said that we chose this day at random. This is not quite true. This Tuesday, September 5 is the day when the children go back to school."

"We have chosen to live 24 hours without a break in a sort of relay race in which thirty tourists armed with cameras will be passing a lens from one to the other. We are not seeking the unusual (*l’insolite*) just because we are in America. We shall be content to seek out the everyday event in its greyness or its sunshine. We have chosen to live face to face because a working-class district is rather like the shop-window of a city."

"The most difficult task will be to adjust the image we had of reality to the one we discover. For if some (of us) already know the district from the inside, others have never before set foot there."

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16 Natation (Olympic Swimmers) & Pattes Mouillées (The Big Swim).

17 When mikes are included they are not obtrusive enough to emphasize the reflexive mode.

18 Assisted in editing by Monique Fortier.

19 In particular, Salut, Galarneau!, Paris, Seuil, 1967, in which Godbout’s central character is as much concerned by the process of writing as by solving his problems in life. Indeed, he coins the verb *vécrire* (p. 154) to describe his attempts to meld the two.

20 Reference to François Reichenbach’s *L’Amérique insolite* (1959)
"After the meal and the dishes, in some families people get together for rosary-hour on the radio. We wanted to capture the living scene of a family at prayer, but we discovered that cinéma-vérité is not always that easy nor on that night was their rosary-hour..." (there is considerable difficulty in tuning the radio).

"Some of us have gone home to bed; for the others the marathon goes on. In the quest for a facet of the truth, the camera seeks out noise, light. The truth. We have made this film without the slightest mise-en-scène, apart from this particular shot which we took because the girl was pretty. We have made this film from a spirit of adventure, out of obstinacy, out of necessity, for our own pleasure and for that of the producer. We have made it with a voluptuous love of the arbitrary, in search of the friendship of the neighbourhood residents who without hesitation have offered us their faces..."

"We would have liked to send Chris Marker a letter from Saint-Henri, to Resnais a song of sirens, to Truffaut a pianist riddled with bullets, but things did not turn out that way. And if we are offering to Jean Rouch this chronicle of a neighbourhood, we are also offering it to Hitchcock who would certainly have uncovered, pinned down and laid bare the mystery before your puzzled eyes."

Nowhere is the phenomenology of the NFB cinéma-direct spelt out more clearly in one of its films than here: the questing subject on the one hand (choosing, seeking, engaging in the adventure); the undramatic, raw reality on the other hand (random, everyday, arbitrary). Out of this collision comes the creation of familiarity as distinct from the picturesque (through face to face contact, adjustment of the image, a desire to enter the community in friendship). The tension is clearly established between the willed surrender of subjectivity to the necessity of object-reality and the affirmation of subjectivity in the sense of quest. This tension is held in balance by the affirmation of solidarity by the questing group with its social object, a solidarity generated by the participatory project. The prevailing tone is of positive paternalism, in which the commentator recognizes the social distance separating the filmmakers from the community but refuses to articulate it in material or economic terms, except in the most general way. The "adjustment of the image" here means that the commentary emphasizes social harmony (lack of racial segregation, the happy faces of children), material comfort when compared with Europe (running water and electricity in all homes) and the benefits of increased education. The commentator resists the urge to emphasize pauperism:

"...we have not brought back pictures of courtyards (fonds-de-cour) flies, filth. It is there. That is all you need to know. It should not be there. That is all we want you to know."

This passage is the clearest admission that a formative ideology (liberal humanism) has intervened to screen off a certain face of reality.

While the other cinéma-direct films under scrutiny here do not discuss the process of their making so overtly, the filmmaker often imposes the sense of a beginning and ending to his material which echoes his own experience (as investigator) of penetration and withdrawal. The most obvious example is in Jour après Jour which opens with a rapid forward tracking shot from inside a car through the streets of Windsor (Quebec) to the paper factory and closes with the same movement in reverse. No attempt is made in this film to code
this sequence as the experience of a factory-worker; rather, it stands as an invitation to the spectator to share the filmmaker’s experience.

A similar tracking-shot, this time from the back of a covered truck, opens Les Bûcherons de la Manouane, but this time we know that the camera is accompanying the loggers from their camp out to the worksite. The initial penetration of the investigator into his material is coded to coincide with the experience of the men being studied. The filmmaker effectively separates himself at the end of the film from his investigation (and participation) by showing another morning departure for work (Guy Charron with his team of horses), but this time the accompanying camera movement only goes so far and then watches the man and his two horses disappear into the white-out.

In both these films (Jour après Jour and Les Bûcherons de la Manouane) which deal with the conditions of work in an industry, it is worth noting that a structure based simply upon a work-cycle is rejected, that is, the structure used in such Griersonian documentaries as Drifters (Grierson, 1929) or Night Mail (Harry Watt & Basil Wright, 1936). Nor is the structure based on a dramatic crescendo of activity leading to a climax as in Georges Rouquier’s documentaries on the salt industry in the Camargue or on dam-construction in the Alps. Instead the structure is one that emphasizes the form of the enquiry. In this, they resemble more closely the documentaries of Alain Resnais, except that whereas Resnais focusses on the iconography of processes and artefacts, Perron and Lamothe give the collective human object, the workers, a central role.

In other French unit films of this period, a common feature is still that of the opening shot showing a journey in: the arrival of American tourists in Quebec-U.S.A. or in Miami (Voir Miami), The entry into Saint-Henri with the milk-delivery truck (A Saint-Henri, le 5 septembre). The structuring of the enquiry into a closed period of time is often underscored by opening with a morning scene and closing with a night scene (Quebec-U.S.A.; Les Raquetteurs; A Saint-Henri, le 5 septembre) or closing with the "dawning of a new day" (Voir Miami; Les Bûcherons de la manouane; Les Bacheliers de la Cinquième). The closing with a night scene recalls the traditional iconography of the earlier ethnographic documentaries of Proulx, for example, which frequently close with the "home-movie" sunset, but whereas these were rural sunsets invoking once again the beauties of the natural country way of life, the night or evening scenes which close the NFB French Unit films are rooted in the distinctly urban settings of Quebec, Sherbrooke or Montreal. In Un jeu si simple, the onset of darkness is no longer represented by an outdoor scene at all, but by a shot of the ceiling lights in the Montreal Forum gradually being extinguished. The transfer of iconography to a metropolitan environment is complete.

The opening and closing shots of Les Bacheliers de la Cinquième serve differently to foreground the experience of the subject-investigator who comes to affirm his solidarity with the human object of his study. The film opens with a traditional slow pan over the Saint Lawrence showing in sequence the river, a harbour and then some boats pulled up on the stade. It is the familiar establishing shot par excellence. The shot is repeated at the end of the film, but this time intercut with the close-up of a gazing youth who has just spent the night on the beach. The youth is one of the central characters in the film who have come to the North shore in search of employment. The film has shown their failure to find a job for lack of education or training. The picturesque calm associated in the opening shot with the undisturbed scenery
of the early morning is now re-coded as the desolate environment (a Kuleshov-effect, indeed) which greets the alienated young man who has learnt that society seems to have no place for him. The naïveté of the opening shot has now yielded by its association with the unattached, marginal youth to a re-appraisal of the scenic iconography. The peaceful riverside is now re-seen as barren workplace. The filmmaker's gaze has been re-educated and the experience is passed on to the spectator.

This seeking out of the gaze of the other, the identification of the camera-eye with eyes of a subject within the film is perhaps the key to the process of participatory investigation it most closely illustrates the link between the reflexive mode of the self-conscious filmmaker (as in the Godbout films) and the desire to express solidarity with a community (most evident in the films of Perron and Lamothe). Over and over again, shots are shown of spectators. The object of their gaze may frequently be the ritualized amusements which attract the formalized treatment of the filmmaker. The parades in Les Raqueteurs and Quebec-U.S.A., the sporting events in La Lutte, Golden Gloves and Un jeu si simple, the Seaquarium and the rocket-launching in Voir Miami, all are shown extensively intercut with shots of the watching public, either as crowd or a series of individuals in the crowd. The very form of these sequences is created from this alternation of watcher and watched. Also, the form of these sequences is isomorphic with the film's avowed project, its inscription into its society: the picture of a collective engaged in watching a formalized projection of itself. Indeed, the camera often seeks out the rituals of this very watching, its mediations, through including shots of spectators taking photographs (Voir Miami, Quebec-U.S.A.), showing the varieties of photographer's pose and the mechanical winding-up of a movie camera (Quebec-U.S.A.), or by showing the presence of the technicians of the electronic media (Voir Miami, Un jeu si simple). In Quebec-U.S.A., one shot of the parade gradually being brought into focus. We are thereby invited to participate in the mediated perception of one of the watchers. In Un jeu si simple, the opening TV sequence commentated by René Lecavalier shows the conventional dramatic image of hockey (synthesized and mediated), including a spectacular save by Jacques Plante and culminating in a goal by the Canadiens. This (mediated) sequence stands in contrast to the undramatic, analytical, almost abstract images of the game which close the film. In these last two examples, it might be said that the filmmakers are stating their own distance from the forms of mediation being practised by the spectators in their films, in order the better to privilege their own mediations. Nevertheless, the act of watching attracts most frequently the sympathy of the filmmaker. In A Saint-Henry, le 5 septembre, it is with the shock of sympathetic recognition that the filmmaker finds young men occupied, like himself, in watching and waiting idly in the hot afternoon sun. It is with hope that Gilles Groulx looks upon the watchers of the skies at Cape Canaveral (Voir Miami), since these watchers, the commentator implies, are the vestiges of a pioneering spirit or a spiritual aspiration which might yet transcend the unidimensionalism of a consumer society.

The formalizing tendency, the reflexive tendency and the expression of solidarity with a public about whom and for whom many of these films are made: these are dominating characteristics of the films made at the NFB by the French Unit during the period of the ascendancy of cinéma-direct. The expression of solidarity (or sympathy) often amounted to the outermost limit of political commitment as expressed in the films. But even this was already a good deal since the public was now being portrayed as an urban
Cité Libre, throughout the ‘50s and ‘60s, a harbinger of the quiet revolution whose contributors included, along with Trudeau, Marchand and Pelletier, film-makers like Albert Lamothe and Jacques Godbout.

Parti Pris, a more left-wing periodical of the ‘60s whose contributors included Gilles Carle, Clément Perron, Gilles Groulx and Jacques Godbout.


A critical eye turned upon contemporary society in Quebec, seeking to embody the new image of a changing society and politics, this was tolerable within the framework of liberal democracy as long as it retained a certain rhetoric and form still linking it to the objective empiricism of the Candid-Eye, end-of-ideology filmmaking of anglophone Canadians. However, the formalizing tendency gradually became more pronounced as ideological commitments defined themselves. The French Unit filmmakers could not help but be aware of the constrictions of the short-film format in comparison with the feature-length documentaries of their French counterparts in Europe, or of the accession of documentarists like Resnais and Franju to the fictional feature. Although many of the filmmakers continued with cinéma-direct shooting techniques and equipment, a certain dissatisfaction with the method grew from within. In the reflexive A Saint-Henri, le 5 septembre, this is articulated in the commentary:

"Midnight. The police keeps watch. It must indeed watch, for Saint-Henri has still not yielded its secret . . . The mystery remains quite complete, locked within."

The reference to Hitchcock, quoted earlier, is almost an admission, however ironic, that the truth not only remains below the surfaces open to the naive gaze but can only be reached or exposed by the more extensive intervention or coding employed in the fictional feature.

Perhaps the most overt reservation expressed against cinéma-direct occurs in a short film made by Gilles Carle for the TV series La femme hors du foyer: Solange dans nos campagnes (1963). Carle has explained how he made it to satirize the methods of the cinéma-direct as he had used and encountered them in making his own film on a marriage in the same year (Un air de famille). The film shows a TV production unit who engage in the search for an authentic country-girl to become "star for a day" on their show. Having selected an applicant from the many who replied to the invitation, they embark to engage in a cinéma-direct reportage. In the car-ride (in a convertible), the cameramen indulges in the acrobatics of a Michel Brault. At one point they stop for a series of shots of the hostess of the show in the countryside, indulging in the freeze-frames and pixellated effects as found in Quebec-U.S.A., or the jump-cuts reminiscent of Gilles Groulx. On reaching the farm, the interviews fail to reveal the "true personality" of the girl who persists in mythifying herself for the camera, and the naive political questions receive answers which reveal nothing about the "problems of the farmer."
The team returns and after reviewing the rushes with the producer, it is silently recognized that the experiment has been a failure.

The *cinéma-direct* has not ground to a halt at this stage but the initial élan of the French Unit as a group is henceforth lost and many of its participants will gradually be attracted into more extensive projects either harnessed to a more prolonged investigation in the manner of Pierre Perrault or to a progressive re-structuring of the milieu in the fictionalized documentary and the dramatic feature.
The Film As Word (Perrault)

Peter Ohlin

Pour La Suite du Monde
Revolutionary art is a contradiction in terms, for the artist committed to the formal disciplines of his art finds himself led in directions that alienate him from the pure engagement in the revolutionary cause. And the artist who subordinates his art to the cause of the revolution discovers, sooner or later, that the need for a clear and persuasive rhetoric ceases to revitalize him and becomes a strait-jacket. Such at least seems to be the situation in a society in which there is no necessary relationship between the artist and the environment in which he exists and for which he produces, that is, a society in which art as we know it exists at all.

Godard was always aware of the difficulties involved in this situation. And his need for a breakthrough, for a direct communication with the actions of the political revolutionary cause led him to a breakdown of the traditional preoccupation with aesthetic forms. Godard's later films can be seen as experiments within a larger medium, whether it be called agitation or continuing education, having a much more direct relationship to political action. However, it is important to realize that the crisis which moved Godard in this direction applies not only to the feature film as "art" but is inherent in the film medium as such. The very method of projection, the beaded screen separating the audience from the illusion, is inevitably alienating and thus affects the documentary film as much as, if not more than, the feature film.

For a filmmaker like Pierre Perrault, the film experience begins as something very simple: the camera and the tape recorder are tools documenting and recording an external reality. But that very simple process suddenly acquires very complex dimensions when you try to invest the mechanical record with a primarily human energy. To Perrault, this fact becomes explicitly clear when he was making a series of radio programmes about the sounds of Québec: music, songs, fog horns, glockenspiels, furnaces, trains; only to discover that what his own Uncle was telling him about the sound of his mill was much more beautiful than the sound itself: "Isn't that what you would call poetry: to make things, gestures, and circumstances in general, human through language? To go beyond the immediately visual to reach the significant." That is, the human record of a natural fact, memory enacted in a medium like, say, the spoken language, is what creates significance.

This insight had two very important consequences for Perrault. The first of these is that, in sharp contrast to contemporary trends, he was led to distrust the visual image:

"Nowadays people worry a great deal about the influence of the image. People have discovered that they live in the era of the image. One would have to be blind to saysomething that idiotic. The image has no more significance for our age than the surface of the water has for the sea. It's a mirror. A Mirage. It's what all those see who only use their eyes . . . but what's important is somewhere else, below the surface."

The attempt to break through the mirror, to go below the surface, takes, Perrault, instead, into the spoken language as a record of reality experienced. The spoken word may be the most basic medium of communication among human beings (disregarding now such bodily communication systems as dance and gestures which never become individualized personal communication in the same way as the word). The word is not more true than the image; but the difference, in Perrault's terms, is that the image is that of the filmmaker and the word that of the subject filmed; and thus, people speaking from the screen direct themselves. You get to know them
and their masks through their words. Consequently, the sound film meant a real advance over the silent film. "Even in an admirable film like Nanook, what do we know about Nanook? He is all Eskimos, but is he really Nanook? A little, but only a little."

If Perrault moves then towards a cinema of the spoken language, this is because it is through language that people communicate and define themselves in the minds of others. And all people have something to say: "It is totally inconceivable that a human being would not have anything to say. It doesn't happen. It all just depends on the questions that you ask him, on the space that you make available to him (du terrain qu'on lui impose). And if you find a favourable space, you will get, in reply, his words, his spoken language." Thus the camera produces not only a documentary record of an event but establishes a kind of liberated territory within which the individual is free to express and develop himself. What will be heard in that space is the language of experience, *la parole vécue*. (The importance that Perrault attaches to experience, to the lived life, has made it natural that his films have been categorized as *cinéma vécu*.) And if the individual expresses himself badly, this is because he has been placed or situated badly and thus will give a false impression.

Superficially at least, views such as these lead to uncomfortably radical conceptions of what film is and can do. When Perrault says that "nothing is more real than an old man telling about something that he has experienced," the result, seems quite reminiscent of Godard's statement (after making *La Chinoise*) that he could very well imagine himself filming a literary masterpiece by photographing a man, in his chair, reading the book aloud; and that this would be a valid way of going about it.

Such a film need not necessarily be static or uncinematic; nor would it have to be said about it that the image simply illustrate the words. And the justification for it is the second important consequence of Perrault's central insight. For when the filmmaker reproduces the the images and sounds of a person speaking, this is a way of reliving or reviving an experienced event; and just as the spoken language is a kind of memory, consisting of a lexicon of words and phrases with different associations grappling with an experience of the past, so the language of film is a similar memory. And that action which consists of photographing a speaking person can be experienced by both filmmaker and spectator as an attempt to *rediscover the language* — maybe just those words, or that aspect of language, which rationally or emotionally defines your relation to history or society, for instance through the linguistic tradition. To rediscover language in this way is to unite the past with the present, linguistically and historically. This union can be made concrete in different ways, but above all it belongs to the basic situation of the filmmaker and his work, that is, that reorganization of the material which occurs when he cuts into the celluloid strip and decides what to include and what to exclude. This is not a matter of objectivity, but rather of that creative mystery which makes it possible for one human being simply to respond in language to another human being; and when Perrault talks about editing, he sounds very much like, say, Chomsky main argument about the continuous creativity of every individual's daily use of language:

> How is it that out of all the words available to me I can make those that make up this phrase get ready in a certain order to produce a sentence? . . . You can describe the number of manual operations in the editing process. But what happens in the brain . . . that which has to do with inspiration . . . with emotions . . . all this remains a mystery like language itself or writing or like any kind of writing with a finite number of words given in advance.

Thus to edit a film is not primarily a way of ordering recalcitrant elements but a way of rediscovering their own inherent significance; and this rediscovery, this recovery of the possibilities of language is in itself a new
creation which unites the past and the present: the linguistic conventions of
the past with the experience of the present, the memory of an event with its
creative expression in the present.

When Perrault met and listened to the inhabitants of Ile-aux-Coudres in the
the St. Lawrence River, he experienced it, he says, as a rediscovery of
himself: he found himself not searching for an identity to set against the
other identities in the world (Eskimos, Patagonians, Indians) but experienc-
ing himself and those around him as simply people "on an island, an island
on the world's atlas . . . all with a language, with sounds, gestures, stories,
songs, temperaments . . . Here I thought I could see the beginnings of a future
i.e., an inhabitable time, a favorable present . . . I could become my own
contemporary."

All of Perrault's films deal, in some form, with this recovery, this
homecoming. This is nowhere more evident than in the first film of his
remarkably beautiful trilogy about the people of Ile-aux-Coudres, Pour la
suite du monde (1963). The film takes its origin in a note written by Jacques
Cartier when he came to Quebec and Ile-aux-Coudres in the 16th century:
he writes that he saw a great many beluga whales in the river. The islanders
tell Perrault that the whales seem to have disappeared; or at least nobody has
seen them since they were last caught forty years earlier. For the benefit of
Perrault and the film crew they decide to try reviving the old method of
trapping the whales (pushing slender poles into the beach into a complex
pattern designed to trap the whales that come too close to the shore to get
out when the tidal waves recede), using for guidance only the old legends
and the childhood memories of old men. After many and lengthy debates
about the old traditions, about time that seems to have passed them by, and
about the future, interspersed with songs and dances and anecdotes, they
catch a beautiful whale which is sold to an aquarium in New York.

Part of the undeniable beauty of the film resides in the extraordinary sen-
tivity of the photography (by Bernard Gosselin and Michel Brault) which
records the whole range of greys between black and white with a gentle and
delicate crispness and precision and a knowledgeable respect for the
properties of natural light. Beyond that, however, there is an even more
remarkable respect for anything in front of the camera, which is equivalent
to the sense that while it is desirable to see certain things as clearly and accu-
rately as possible, there is a certain distance beyond which the camera must
not go in order not to encroach on the free space the individual must dispose
in order to express himself. In terms of the theory of personal space, or
proxemics, that Edward Hall has suggested: this means that the camera
almost never penetrates space beyond personal distance, never attempts to
discover a fake revelation in the distortions afforded by the close-up at an
"intimate distance."

Above all one senses that throughout the film Perrault is using his control of
imagery and them as a attempt to recover the past. At a key moment in the
film an old man watches the whale and says, "It's been thirty-eight years
since I saw one of you." And the film unites a whole series of contradictions:
the Renaissance French of Jacques Cartier, preserved in letters and journals,
collides with the French language as spoken in Paris and "educated" circles
in Quebec, and both are at a considerable distance from the French spoken
by the islanders (frequently so different that the film has to be subtitled for
the benefit of French audiences); and the old traditions, preserved only
through legend and anecdote, suddenly become concrete reality, a reality at
the same time heroic and anachronistic. This seems to be the intuitive sense
of the simple image where we see a lyric pastoral close-up of dew drops on a
leaf, until a simple focal change of the lens blurs the image and we see
instead the river far away with a modern freighter working its way to
Montreal and inland. In its own way, the film shows an encounter of the
present with a heroic-epic past; and like all epic poems it deals with something that is lost at the same time that a new, perhaps still undefined, culture is born. And in wanting to preserve all this for posterity, Pour la suite du monde, the film, no less than the islanders, also creates the beginnings of a future for itself the possibility of a cinema used not simply to document reality but to discover, or recover, a language of images commensurate with the task of formulating possible attitudes towards that past and the present.

That task widens in the following film, Le regne du jour (1966), in which two of the main characters of the previous film travel to France to try to trace their ancestors. It is, then, a journey in space and time, an attempt to clarify the genealogical and cultural relationships. And Perrault's method of editing together similar ritual events on both sides of the Atlantic, such as the butchering of the pig, the harvesting, the festivals, makes it clear that it is impossible to go home again: we see an old man who with genuine emotion searches for his mythic ancestor in the heroic past, just as Perrault himself seems to follow the old man in a search for his ancestor, knowing however full well that the task he is engaged in in the definition of the new culture, not the resurrection of the old.

In both these films, then, the image functions in a linguistic-cultural-historical context: on one level it allows a human linguistic phenomenon to occur which in turn has wider cultural and historical implications; on another level, the image ceases to be merely a document and becomes a record of the filmmaker's attempts through the editing devices at his command, to make the images assume their role in an entirely contemporary language that would somehow bridge the alienation from the past. Perrault's intense concern with the islanders is not a search for a Québécois identity that would be rooted in a more or less rural-pastoral past; it becomes an attempt to discover in that experience an alienation as central as the alienation of the filmmaker from his subject matter. In fact, Perrault has always insisted on this kind of equation: in the same way that he describes editing as a way of reliving reality, he also describes shooting film footage as a way of life (le vécu du tournage et le vécu de la vie ne font qu'un). While in one sense, this is simply the justification for a kind of cinéma-vérité procedure, Perrault seems to take it further when he suggests that "what is important is to live the film on both sides of the lens. It is a joint adventure." But for all its expression of solidarity, that statement also codifies the experience of alienation and locates its source in one element of the very process of film itself: in the glass lens. Indeed, it seems to be one of Perrault's intuitive perceptions that the possibility of grappling with the alienation that defines Québec only exists in films (in the same sense that Jean-Pierre Lefebvre, pointing out that Québec borrows its capital from the United States and its culture from France, once suggested that a true Québec liberation could only occur through films which inherently combine those two elements: to be a Québécois is to be a filmmaker, as he put it somewhat extravagantly.)

The alienation at the heart of this experience becomes even more evident in the third and final of Perrault's films about the islanders, Les voitures d'eau (1969), in which the language of Québec, its past and present, is placed in a socio-economic context. This means that the film moves closer to a study of the possibility of a practical solution, the possibility of action. In cinematic terms, of course, Perrault's vision of the function of film does not invest action in front of the camera with any particular value in and for itself. Actions can, however, be described as a kind of physical and concrete language; Perrault talks about "paroles en actes." And those action that interest him most are those that express, or can be made to express, something significant: they can be said to be the physical culmination of the linguistic ex-
pression (*le geste culmine les paroles*); and in fact; it is by fulfilling the language act that a physical action avoids rigid codification and assumes instead the richly creative individuality of human speech.

In *Les voitures d'eau* the islanders dock their old fashioned ships with which they freight lumber, for the winter, and construct during long debates about their situation a sail boat in the old way, that is, without blueprints but only with a scale model as a guide. When spring comes, the sail boat is finished, a small, sturdy, graceful little craft, but the situation of the islanders has deteriorated: strikes, competition with giant modern freighters, taxes and insurance, make it more impossible than ever for them to survive. In the last sequence we see an old deteriorating sail ship being burned on the river; Alexis Tremblay, the old man that we have gotten to know so well in the earlier films, a man who more than anyone else gave a heroic power to the traditions of the past, says, "Yes my friend, that's the way it is with us too. The ship is old. The ship is finished." (In fact, Alexis himself died a few days later).

The working ship captains know quite well that an old man's concerns with the past, his almost reverent ability to quote the diary entries of Jacques Cartier, are practically irrelevant in everyday terms, since cultural traditions are not enough to feed the stomach. The crisis of their daily life cannot be resolved by the ties with the past; it must get a practical, political solution. But for all their understanding of the situation of Québec they find themselves largely unable to act positively. The only action that is performed in the film after all, is the building of the sailboat; and the film performs a meditative hymn of praise to the old crafts involved in this undertaking which stands in sharp contrast to the present realities, economic and political of the world of the St. Lawrence River. That contrast is also, implicitly, a measure of Perrault's perception that his vision of the documentary film must move beyond its commitment to a language founded primarily on memory in order to uncover a language in which the elements of the past enter new and creative relationships to form the substance of a language which might depict not only the alienation imposed by the, perception of the past, but the possibilities of the future as well. And it is clearly that intuition that made Perrault realize that *Les voitures d'eau* had to be the final film devoted exclusively to the islanders on Ile-aux-Coudres; any practical solution to the problem of Québec would have to take into account the complexity of a present now defined by confrontation, at both economic and cultural levels. In order to record on film, then what is happening in Québec, it would not be enough for Perrault to simply engage in kind of local patriotism characterized by a passionate celebration of picturesque details: for clothes, food, and vehicles, may all be an expression of the conceptual world of the inhabitants, but they only express such differences that tourists might find picturesque; they do not express that essential individuality which is embodied not only in words but in the relationship of words to the reality that they describe. What Perrault is led to look for finally, is those gestures and those words that can be said to mean his country (*les actes et les paroles qui signifient un pays*). This meaning is in itself not political but rather what precedes the political act, that is, the necessary analysis of a condition.

*Un pays sans bon sens* (1970) is an enormously difficult and ambitious film, an almost virtuoso tour de force demonstration of Perrault's vision of film. What Perrault has tried to film here, is quite simply an idea, the idea of Québec, by filming those words and actions that have the country for their meaning; and there is no easily available dramatic symbolism or other basic cinematic devices that will do this task readily. In fact, the film consists almost entirely of long conversations with various people about their experience of Québec, which would hardly seem cinematic. Perrault's ambition, of course, is exactly to avoid the cinematic, but to perform with his camera and editor those gestures and actions which make the idea of Québec take
root with the spectators. Having introduced the film with Cartier's description of the first winter in Québec, in 1535, the rest is an attempt to discover what happened when Cartier went home again. There are no central myths or dramatic metaphors to express that; the only images that are clearly metaphorical or expressive in relation to the film's purpose seem entirely negative: a biology professor from Montreal talks about the typical Québécois Catholics as the white mice he keeps for experiments in his laboratory, and that image keeps recurring, in pictures and in heavily metaphoric graphic chapter headings, and in fact seems suggestive, in its aimlessness, of the organization of the film. Likewise, the image of the caribou running free in the snow to be snared in nets turns into a metaphor for the way a nation can be betrayed. These images describe a loss, an absence, a void, and the desperation of the film lies in its practical and human as well as cinematic sense that this void must somehow be filled. One of the most moving moments, in fact, occurs when a young literature student, born and raised in Western Canada and the US by French speaking parents, explains that he feels at home nowhere. He has never been to Montreal, yet he comes to understand that his journey from Canada to the US and on to Paris must eventually lead to Québec, a homeland that he has never seen: that is a conviction he arrives at, partly from listening to René Levesque speaking to a university audience on separatism and partly from trying to understand himself in the act of speaking to and being filmed by Perrault. From having been a French Canadian in exile he becomes a Québécois.

The film reaches no formal conclusions, of course. But out of the spoken words and their relationship to say, something as simple as the landscape, there begins to grow an intuitive visceral feeling for a country and a culture that is something more than picturesque artifacts and a problem of language. That continuing process is what may become the new Québec. In this sense, it can be argued that Perrault is making a film in some kind of future tense, narrating the way a nation is born; and if the birth has not yet occurred, the film may help it occur.

As a filmmaker Perrault knows that he cannot impose his solution on the images of living people: it must spring forth directly out of them, their language and their gestures. To that extent, Un pays sans bon sens remains an open work which appeals to the audience to join the debate. And that is a debate not about political solutions but about the necessary realizations of commonly accepted linguistic and practical situations. These realizations, then, are not concerned with socialism or capitalism but with alienation and integrity, oppression and liberation, exile and homecoming.

In leaving his work open, perceiving them in fact in such negative terms as loss, absence, search, and in assuming the radical separation of filmmaker from audience through the power of the medium, Perrault cannot be described as an orthodox revolutionary artist like some other young Québec filmmakers (although it has been suggested that Les voitures d'eau is one of the first really revolutionary films from Québec). Yet, Perrault himself has said that he experienced his films as acts of liberation: he felt he had come to finally "vivre en québécois." To live, or as he learned from the islanders on Ile-aux-Coudres, to learn while living, is more important than writing or making films or theatre. "In a cultural revolution it is less important that your film be a masterpiece than that you follow closely the event in a given cultural situation."

Thus, finally, for Perrault as for a revolutionary filmmaker like F.E. Solanas, the film disappears as a distinct phenomenon when it subordinates itself, as it must, to a revolutionary situation. For both filmmakers, a socially aware analysis of film in relation to the social reality leads to the insight that the medium is dead: what remains is revolution, action, life itself. And that death seems somehow built into the alienating character of the medium itself.
To make films, if it is legitimate at all, is a way of life. For Perrault, feature films and documentaries have to be discussed in the same terms. All differences disappear. To make films is a way of life; and to be a filmmaker is to be a Québécois. Nevertheless, within the limits of such an aesthetic, it is possible to maintain different attitudes towards the status of the image and its relationship to the reality that it mirrors, or opens up to, or sets a boundary to. To Solanas, the image is itself of only relative worth; it acquires value only when used in a film act which he describes in very specific terms. That is, whether the image is to be seen as appearance or reality, as drama, documentary, propaganda, or escapism, is ultimately a trivial question that disappears at the moment when the film itself is seen as pretext, as the setting for the kind of theatre that Solanas defines as revolutionary activity. And this means, then, that the breakthrough to reality, through the world of the looking glass, is achieved only by leaving the film behind. Ultimately, the quest to take the medium as far as possible in the direction of absolute realism, that the medium in its youth seemed to hold up as an attainable prospect, ends up with the dissolution of the medium as a narrative force. If the film becomes slightly pretext, then it merges with the environment and no longer commands a particular narrative allegiance. Any other film, available on the market place, might, in theory at least, do just as well. For the filmmaker there is nothing to say: the saying is done by the people, and the task of the filmmaker is to organize the environment in such a way that the narrative of the people will be as fruitful as possible. That activity, then, could either take the form of a politically mature and sophisticated product like La Hora de los hornos, or, for example, the form of a Doris Day movie exhibiting all the consumer goods features of a capitalist society, to be analyzed by the audience. Thus, whether he knows it or not, Solanas too finds himself moving into the area of specialized adult education, with particular attention given, as is natural, to local problems.

Perrault's basic impulse, too, is local. (In fact, his films may be extremely difficult to absorb for one not familiar with the particular problems of Québécois society.) To him, whether the image is to be seen as appearance or reality is not a trivial question, but a rather simple one, since he relates the function of the image to the linguistic act, as perceived, recalled or spoken. At the moment of shooting, the image is simply the record of the incomplete, limited and arbitrary, perhaps, but a record nonetheless. At the moment of editing, it becomes a linguistic element whose relative value is defined by memory and which can be used in different ways, not to recapture the original experience (which is impossible) but to recover the expressive content of the original moment. At the level of perception, during the screening, the image exists much less as a record of a concrete experience than as the perceptual expression of the possibility of a language which is cinematic, personal, and experiential, at the same time. This is to say that the narrative task of the filmmaker disappears: it is not a matter of saying something, but of discovering something; and the criteria of success in this undertaking are not found in the medium or its relationship to reality but in the experience. In saying that what matters is not that the film be a masterpiece but that it attach itself to the event, as expressive act (physical or linguistic), Perrault clearly seems to recognize the existence of contradictory standards — and, equally clearly, rejects those related to the formal properties of the medium, in favour of subordinating the film to the event (whether filmed or not). Faced with a choice, then, Perrault might well abandon film, having discovered that film is not his medium as much as he may be, at least for the moment, the medium of film. That, of course, is the moment at which the narrative drive towards a pervasive realism annhilates itself.
On Television Docudrama

The Tar Sands

by Seth Feldman

Good evening. I'm Barbara Frum. What you are about to see is a work of fiction constructed around certain known events. The film, *The Tar Sands*, is an imagined recreation of negotiations leading up to an agreement reached on February 3, 1975, an agreement which launched the Syncrude project in Alberta's Athabaska tar sands. It involved three governments: the governments of Canada, Alberta and Ontario and three international oil companies: Imperial, Gulf and City Service. Most of the negotiations for this agreement took place behind closed doors. Some details were made public at the time by those involved. Others came to light through a series of leaks during and after the negotiations. To the best of our knowledge, specific facts presented in the film, *The Tar Sands*, are accurate. However, since most of the agreement was worked out behind closed doors, much of the film's dialogue and many of its scenes and characters are, of necessity, fictional. We repeat, many of the people who are actually involved in the Syncrude agreement are not portrayed as themselves in this film. What you will see is the writer's imagined version in which various roles, statements and attitudes are portrayed at least in part through fictional composite characters. The character Willard Alexander is not a real person. He is a composite, the product of the writers' imaginations, a character who represents the Alberta civil servants who argued against proceeding with the Athabaska tar sands development in the manner finally chosen. As far as we know, there is no real David Bromley, the oil company representative in the film. He too is a composite of the many oil men involved in the real Syncrude negotiations. There is, however, a real Frank Spragins, then President of Syncrude Canada. And there is a real Donald MacDonald, then federal minister of energy and now minister of finance. And there is a real Peter Lougheed, then and now Premier of Alberta. But though these are real people, they are portrayed by actors in what, we remind you again, is a work of fiction based on certain known events. *The Tar Sands*:

— Barbara Frum as CBC Disclaimer

We're boxed.

— Kenneth Welsh as Peter Lougheed

In issuing this and a shorter disclaimer at the end of the program, the CBC, besides making a futile attempt to avoid legal repercussions, engages in the
ordinary television practice of sponsors and networks commenting on the program being presented. The use of commercials to define the nature of programs will be discussed below. On its part, network commentary on programming goes far beyond warnings about violence, offensive language and the denial that characters shown belong to any particular ethnic group. Statements simply disclaiming responsibility for the content of programs are a subtle way of implying that the content of these programs is controversial, potentially offensive and is not in some way to be taken at face value.

The net effect of network commentary on a particular program is to distance both audience and sponsor from the program and, in that way to determine the program’s integrity. In the case of The Tar Sands disclaimers, what we are being told is that, despite any credibility the program might engender, its contents are not to be accepted as anything more than allegory. The words “fiction” and “fictional” are used no less than seven times in the disclaimers to remind us that no matter what the basis in fact of The Tar Sands may well be, the final product is closer to, say, The King of Kensington than to the nightly news.

The CBC disclaimer undermines not only the authenticity of The Tar Sands but in so doing, it also requires the audience to maintain an unprecedented awareness of what can and cannot be proven about the veracity of what is being presented within a particular documentary convention: the "docudrama": In one sense, it is to be applauded for doing so. One wishes the same sort of audience scepticism had been encouraged during the early years of another documentary convention, cinema vérité. What is insidious about the disclaimer is that it implies that it is only docudrama that the viewer need beware. Although docudrama is far from universally accepted as documentary technique, it can at least be argued at this point that there is nothing more intrinsically fictional about it than there is about conventional documentary and news. Looking, for instance, at CBC's own Days Before Yesterday and Tenth Decade programs, it is hard to see how these shows use of narration over stock footage is any less of a fiction/performance than that of Welsh as Loughheed. Certainly the writer's imagination is being used to create a very different impression than would otherwise be made by the innocuous shots of Canadian leaders captured by newsreel cameras. In daily news programs, the effect is more or less the same. Living news personalities get, at best, a very few seconds to explain themselves and, even then, only after the content of their remarks is pre-digested and discussed by the anchor-man and the reporter sent to interview them. In most cases, there is no interview at all. The viewer of a news program will see only a photo or silent footage while a ventriloquist anchorman or reporter supplies the character's dialogue by reading a script prepared by sifting known facts through a "writers' imagination."

No presentation can, by itself, prove its own veracity. As a consequence, film and television makers prove the authenticity of their material by establishing and adhering to certain documentary conventions. Documentary itself is nothing more or less than the practice of whichever convention or set of documentary conventions is currently accepted. These conventions go in and out of fashion or evolve as tastes and technology change. But one documentary convention that seems to have been strictly adhered to from the days of Dziga-Vertov's first writings to the present is that one must never present reality by scripting scenes and hiring actors to speak these scripted lines.

The Tar Sands is an indication that this convention may well have outlived its usefulness. The program asserts that, in many ways, the Loughheed depicted is every bit as 'real' as the Peter Loughheed who appeared the next evening on The National to announce his lawsuit. This is not to say that Welsh and Loughheed are indistinguishable should we meet them on the street. Rather, that the images that result from both The Tar Sands and The National are
simply two interpretations of the same role, a role that may loosely be described as "the public image of Peter Loughheed." Naturally the performer on The National has a larger stake in the creation and continuation of the role. Welsh's performance is, in comparison, only a one night stand. Nevertheless, Loughheed's performance as a public persona is intrinsically no more valid than Welsh's. In both cases the basis for the performance is an incomplete set of facts (those that Loughheed is willing to make public and those that Pearson has been able to ascertain). In both cases, dialogue and action are stylized and are known to us only through the conventions of the media to which both performers play. Now the Peter Loughheed presented by Pearson may be seen as a fictional creation very much in keeping with the conventional filmic depiction of an English Canadian. Or Peter Loughheed may be an outgrowth of the clichés that have always been a part of the popular media images of leadership. Finally, the Loughheed character may be seen as the product of a rare and intelligent use of television to comment upon its own nature. The Peter Loughheed of The Tar Sands is largely created out of the public image (if not the public record) with the instances of necessary speculation growing fairly logically out of this image and out of general expectations about human personality.

In all, this "filling in" of non-public manifestations not only plays a minor role in the depiction of Loughheed but is also — at least to someone who is not a Loughheed scholar — entirely sympathetic. It is worth noting, though, that The Tar Sands does use broad theatrical characterization in drawing the composite characters. The civil servant, Willard Alexander, is shown as a hard drinking, chain smoking muckraker, a manifestation of the stereotype of the honest loner in a corrupt world. As such, he is as out of place in the film's staid sets and conference room tête-à-têtes as Humphrey Bogart would be at a Tory caucus. Alexander's composite counterpart, the oil companies' moustached villain, David Bromley, seems, like Alexander, to have been written into the script largely to orchestrate and intensify positive and negative audience responses.

Looking at the Alexander and Bromley characterizations the question that naturally arises is why did Pearson not simply provide Loughheed with a fictional name and avoid the entire issue of a possible libel suit? The answer that comes most easily to the program's detractors is that the use of real names was a cheap device to give the show a notoriety that a more allegorical work would not enjoy. Perhaps. But, knowing neither Pearson nor his intentions, would it not be possible to see the show as a statement about the validity of docudrama but also as a redefinition of the documentarian's responsibility when dealing with this sort of subject? If we are to be informed about the decisions leading up to the Syncrude agreement, is it not pertinent for us to have some idea of what sorts of human beings made these decisions? In conventional documentary, these human factors are sketched out with three types of material: interviews with confidents (usually favourable — how else would they come to be confidents?); and anecdotal material provided by the narrator. On rare occasions, a tiny bit of accidental footage will give some credible insight. But, in almost all cases, it is up to the viewer to draw his own composite personalities from the standard material.

Theoretically, then, Pearson is stating that the creation of this composite personality is the responsibility of the filmmaker who, presumably, knows more about the character than he can ever hope to transmit to the viewer through conventional means in the time provided. The documentarian is as responsible for providing a statement on the personality of his human subjects as he is for providing photographic images and audio tapes of them. In this case he must, as he does with his audio/visual material use some editorial judgement based on his own research and his own skill. But ultimately, he must make the assertion that the personality he is presenting is as valid as
the photographic and aural evidence. The means of making that assertion is
to label the personality with the name of human subject under discussion.

Alexander's final critique of Lougheed is that he is a man who with all his
"guile, brains and personality could not make the system work." "The system" here might not only be seen as the political and the economic
but also as a kind of ecology gone wrong. Again, the situation is ironic be-
cause it is the wealth not the harshness of the land that victimizes Lougheed.
It is the seemingly endless supply of oil in an already rich province that
makes it so easy for Lougheed to lose not only public funds but also his free-
dom to exert any real control over Alberta's economic future.

What Lougheed loses over the course of *The Tar Sands* is the correlation be-
tween his image and the reality of the environment. In this, he is not terribly
different from the majority of Pearson's protagonists in other films. *The Best
Damned Fiddler From Calabogie to Kaladar* drinks himself to death to hide
from himself the fact that he was no longer the freewheeling, independent
woodsman he thought himself to be. In *The Dowry* a determined maritimer
succeeds in blowing himself up in order to prove that no one can tell him
how to rig his boat. Most convincingly, in *Paperback Hero*, Rick Dillon
spurns love, money, and life itself to equate the image of a small town
hockey star with that of an American television gunfighter. Lougheed, as
portrayed by Pearson turns into an Imperial Premier who refuses to acknow-
ledge that his image has become little more than a front for a gang of corpor-
are swindlers.

As Robert Fothergill, Peter Harcourt and others have pointed out, this tragic
clinging to an obsolete image, goes well beyond Pearson's work and is, in
fact, something of a hallmark in English Canadian film. Pearson's protagon-
ists, including Lougheed, are kin to the protagonists of *The Rowdyman,
The Hard Part Begins*, *Wedding in White* and perhaps half a dozen other of
the "loser" type films. Moreover, Pearson's Lougheed is not terribly differ-
ent from the protagonists of the other *For the Record* CBC films. While
Lougheed is a chief of state being systematically undermined by a larger
entity than the government itself, the other *For the Record* protagonists are
engaged in the same frustrating and humiliating procedure at various levels.
Maria, Hank, the farmers of *Someday Soon*, the workers in *Dying Hard* all
discover, through their confrontations with the government that their images
of themselves as free citizens have been made obsolete by political and eco-
nomic systems that they can only begin to understand.

In addition to these debts owed Canadian fiction, film and television, the
Peter Lougheed seems to be an extension of a long filmic tradition of the
depiction of political leaders. Unfortunately, no one has yet written a his-
tory of the screen images of this group. However it is possible to say that the
political leaders we have seen on film and television screens have been shown
to us in three general ways. The leader may be depicted with an awe border-
ing on reverence. In its extreme, this is manifested by clichés such as the shot
of the nameless, faceless great man, his back to the camera, his shadow pre-
siding over the frame and any lesser being within it. This sort of device has
provoked satirical response in which the leader is seen as a fool, corrupt or
both. At the same time, running through both these views of political leader-
ship — as well as being manifested in its own right — has been the depiction
of the political leader as the imperfect human being whose personal limita-
tions are magnified by the pressures of the office. By the last scene, he may
have been crushed by his office, inspired by it or he may have shaped the
office around his own personality. In any case this third approach to leader-
ship, acknowledges a complexity in both man and office that is usually lack-
ing in the other two.
Pearson's Lougheed is a manifestation of the third approach. He is not crushed by the office nor is he any wiser for having served. Rather he is the agent by which the office itself and the government surrounding it face the decline in their importance. That this new, lesser chief of state is, by nature, a bland figure, makes Pearson's low key depiction of Lougheed that much more damning.

That Pearson's Lougheed has antecedents in Canadian fiction, film and television and in other screen manifestations of leadership does not of itself invalidate the veracity of the character. All these fictional modes are, after all, sustained by some correlation with reality. "The victim" in Canadian fiction and film is, after all, a response to real conditions within this country. The depiction of public leaders says much about the manner in which particular individuals and leadership as a whole has worked to change the lives of audiences who accept these depictions. Moreover, there is no format whether it is labeled fiction or non-fiction which is immune to this cultural baggage. Newscasters and documentarians are not only affected by the culture in which they live, but they are encouraged to develop personal styles that are every bit as noticeable as the styles of feature film auteurs. More importantly the means of production that result in non-fiction are all but identical to those that produce what are labeled fictional products. The bottom line is that the constraints, inducements and processes of selection become a far more important determinant of the veracity of works than do the labels of fiction and non-fiction affixed to the presentations screened.

It is in terms of its critique of these media processes that The Tar Sands makes its most important contribution. In its original context, the program was an attempt to provoke an audience, watching prime time television into a consideration of how that television is shaping their own images of themselves and the world in which they live. That The Tar Sands was as a television show, an extremely self-conscious use of the medium is an enormously important aspect of the presentation that has been generally ignored.

Pearson's Lougheed then is a man who is trying not to fall into his television set. We are invited to try not to fall along with him. A program without ordinary ads The Tar Sands provides three commercials of its own as a way of both de-programming its audience to the credibility of commercials and of making it share Lougheed's fate. The ads — Syncrude's PR film, Lougheed's address to Alberta and an oil company commercial — are shown to us only after we have been backrounded with the information that proves them fraudulent. We are also shown the cynical and negative reactions of on-screen viewers of the ads. Lougheed and Alexander dismiss the PR film, Alexander betrays Lougheed as a result of his television address and the oil executives clearly label their commercial as part of a campaign of public coercion.

We learn to discredit commercials; we are told we must live as if we believed them. Donald Brittain, narrator, keeping track of the declining fortunes of Lougheed, finally tells us that the Canadian taxpayer is committed to 75 per cent of the cost of Syncrude in return for 30 per cent ownership. Our final image of Alberta is that of a few bucolic and irrelevant jackpines framed like a memory in a landscape hung on Lougheed's office wall.

In looking for the nature of Peter Lougheed then, it is impossible to keep from coming back to his literal definition as an image making its way from the screen to the viewer's previously established notions of what that image should be. These notions might include the conventional news and documentary formats, formats that encourage us to perceive public figures as silent images with noisy interpreters. Or believing CBC's disclaimers, these notions might come primarily from our fictional associations. Hopefully, though, these notions will come from an awareness that what we are watch-
ing is, in a sense, watching us, waiting for our feedback and constantly learning how best (from their point of view) to make us look at them.

We should like to repeat that what you have just seen is a work of fiction created by the writers and incorporating available factual information. Some of the characters you’ve seen were based on real living people. Others were fictional composites of the many real people who played key roles in the real story. But the play remains a work of fiction.

Barbara Frum -a second CBC disclaimer
JEUDI
A cheval sur l'argent
A Review of
Chronique de la Vie Quotidienne

NFB prod. dir. by Jacques Leduc

by Ron Burnett

Four years in preparation, *Chronique de la vie quotidienne* is an important film fraught with errors and lessons about the fundamental problems of an approach to the documentary cinema which confuses the the way the "real" is depicted with the aesthetic means available to critique and make visible that reality. The overall film, of which only two parts are reviewed below *tries* to chronicle daily life but ends up being a chronicle of the intensely subjective vision of the filmmakers which in itself, though problematic, is not necessarily bad. Except that André Leduc and the other filmmakers involved use the style of "cinéma-direct" to *subjectify* all the various life moments that they encounter. *The result is a film which chronicles the surface* of the interactions and relationships of daily life, hiding the nature of the personal vision that is guiding it in favour of a phenomenology of the visible.
Petits souliers, Petits pains opens with an image of a farm vehicle harvesting beans from the land and the imagery is rich with the colours of the earth, with the pastoral beauty of the farm but there is an element of irony in the way that it is filmed that is revealed by the first of what is to become a series of parallel cuts to some upper class bourgeois women discussing how they are going to distribute boots and shoes to poor people — the camera pans back and forth looking closely at the face of the women, at the superficiality of their concern with charity, at the ennui they are experiencing. The camera tries to do what narration can never do talk about these women and the class to which they belong by showing both in the way that they talk and in the way that they present themselves how their position in the class structure permeates their being. Just as the irony is building to a head there is a cut to the factory in which the beans that we have seen being cut are being processed — in contrast to the previous scene the camera is loving in its look at the women (though the silence — the speechlessness of these women is there because the filmmakers choose not to make them speak) working and processing the food that others will eat. The significance of these shots is that they last long enough to allow a real appraisal of the work that the women are doing — there is no quick movement from machine to face — there is rather an attempt to show the process as organic — to reveal the organicity of the oppression, at the level of gesture, movement, expression; (the organic portrayal makes the oppression appear natural, inevitable) the interplay of gesture and expression produces a meaning that each spectator can grasp as their own. Though they are simultaneously directed not to see the imposition of meaning via the textual organization.

Cut to a banquet — the charity organization is throwing a party and the obviousness of the contradictions at the level of class come flowing out. Contradictions though that do not explain the nature of contradiction and certainly do no more than state difference without explaining it.

A major problem arises in the film at this point. This film by no means presumes itself just to be observing the scenes that it is showing — there is a constant interpellation of point of view through obvious editing — there is no attempt to be falsely objective — but as it attempts to show class contradiction, it fails to show class struggle. The real question is whether the two can or should be shown separately from each other — this is an important political question that the film fails to answer. The fact that nearly all the workers shown in the film are not given a voice reveals oppression but not anger and this absence of anger begins to reveal something about the filmmakers. In their desire to avoid the obviousness of narration they skirt close to the edge of an empiricism that presumes the real is visible in and for itself. They come close to the tradition of ethnographic filmmaking that does not recognize the need to make the visible contingent on analysis — to show the surface as determined by processes that are in themselves not immediately visible to the eye.

In a pyramidal way the film builds slowly to an examination of how it is self-interest that governs the charity of the bourgeoisie. This is revealed most clearly at a banquet (in honour of the work done for the poor) when one of the women wins the door prize, a trip to the Antibbes. The exploitative superficiality screams out from the screen.

The last image in this sequence of the film shows a farmer at work near railway tracks which, as the camera pulls back, are at the edge of the St. Lawrence river set in relief by the skyline of the city.

I felt very ambivalent about the ending because there is a sense that what is shown is itself natural — inevitable, that there is really no way out of the contradictions. It can be argued that the film does not set out to politicize its way of showing contradiction but in its attempt to be observational it dissi-
mates the necessary jump that the spectator has to make from observation to analysis, from effect to cause.

The meaning of a film is never effectively enunciated without the presence of mediators both within the enunciation and within the spectator. Leduc's attempt to bridge a gap that is at the very heart of how a political film should communicate its meaning (interchange not stimulus-response) is part of an empiricist vision that inevitably homogenizes the very contradictions that he wants to reveal.

CHRONIQUE DE LA VIE QUOTIDIENNE A CHEVAL SUR L'ARGENT

"I am interested in daily life because it is everyday experience that enframes our alienation — the small things that make up every day life can oppress us as well as leading to an understanding of how we can transcend them. It is through the relations of everyday life that we can begin to understand ourselves as being part of a collectivity and begin also to understand the ideology of that collectivity and how that ideology comes into being and permeates the lives of everyone." (Jacques Leduc)

A cheval sur l'argent uses the metaphor of Blue Bonnets raceway to describe the effects of money on the consciousness and sensibility of the working class. There are repeated shots of workers spending massive amounts of money on betting. The film traces, by implication, how the exploitation works and how deeply a part of it the workers are. The presumption is that workers do not recognize their own oppression.

"In our daily lives we constantly repeat certain actions and gestures and the repetition makes us lose contact with the importance of the routine upon our perception of ourselves. People forget that it is a particular social and political system which has organized their lives and it is precisely this forgetting which integrates them further into the system." (Jacques Leduc)

Oppression cannot be effective unless the recognition of it has been integrated into a general acceptance of it. The presumption that a worker does not recognize his/her own oppression presupposes a totally determined being— one that cannot oppose the effects of the system — one that cannot politically fight a very unmonolithic political structure. The workers at the raceway are shot in such a way so as to support an argument centred on ignorance. They are filmed from behind the cash registers— victims— objectified. The way that they are filmed puts the audience outside of what is being described. The audience can laugh and not recognize that it is laughing at itself. Thus a desire to concretely make visible the way money works upon
our needs fails precisely because it does not show the inter-relationships between money and politics, between money and social organization. The act of exchange does not explain the more complex problem of exchange itself. The microcosmic moments being shown at the race track can only be generalized to the society as a whole through analysis. The film fulfills its prophecy of ignorance by supporting and sustaining ignorance.

Perhaps the most crucial scene in the film is a long moment when the petit-bourgeois "gerant" of the track talks to a friend about his pension and the many arrangements he has made to give himself an adequate sense of security. The many ironies in the scene are immediately apparent. He is terribly insecure and feels that money will help him survive. The film portrays another level of oppression—survival premised not on creativity and change but financial security—a financial security that the audience and the gerant know to be unreal. The gerant goes around showing other people how he has organized his life. What do we learn from the scene? Does the film give us a deeper access to this individual? And if he is meant to represent an attitude, a way of life, do we understand the deeper emotions that govern his insecurities (our insecurities)? The real question here is whether the approach generated by the film leads us to understand the way the film itself posing the questions.

Is oppression being simplified? Do we understand the effects of ideology through an examination of the behavior of ordinary people? These are broader theoretical issues that are not touched upon by the film. And in one sense the film cannot deal with the theory of its own enunciation, its documentary form cannot move beyond descriptive depiction. ◆
Blood: Deconstruction in

Littin’s THE PROMISED LAND

by Robert Scott
"The cinema has resumed its destiny. This is so forcefully and naturally apparent that even the industry has begun to feel the consequences. An immense number of eyes can expect, with some hope at last, to see the film that will at one time express all the possible truth. The film that is to be projected against the sky, visible at the same moment in every part of the earth. It hasn't yet been made, not because we don't know the truth, but because we hide it, in fear or for expediency. We have always stopped a few feet short. Now our will is more steadfast, there is almost a contest to see who can report injustice first. This domestic Last Judgement, without trumpets, without celestial apparitions, private, begun by our films just after the war, cannot be interrupted, it would be the end of cinema, of democracy itself, if it were to be sucked back into the old life." 

Cesare Zavattini, 1949

Despite the arguments which rage through the film journals today, I will suppose here that many people are about generally the same job of work and that work concerns the analysis, discovery, and, perhaps creation of that film which will someday play against the sky for all peoples to see. In the meantime we are often faced with the necessary job of examining some film playing against the wall of a Safeway store in a suburban shopping center. This comparison points up the necessity for analysis on several fronts: a continuing analysis of the ways in which ideology is made invisible and pervasive through cinematic forms and at the same time, a formulation of those theories and practices which will allow, even facilitate, the emergence of a genuinely Marxist cinema.

To say that the medium is the message, is unfortunately to say very little; the equation, now a cliché, has entered common usage and become invisible. But the reality lives around us, flows through us, as we experience, through film, television, and media generally, the mystification of ideology. The premises upon which this analysis is based are simple enough; they suggest that the way of expression says as much or more than the what of it, that certain codified methods (codes) are common to our experience and contain invisible ideology, and the products of this mystification are popular precisely because they do not, at least at the formal level, challenge what is happening around us, even though the overt content may appear to be anti-establishment.

A corollary assumption is that ideology of this sort is more effective than visible propaganda since it works at the unconscious level and, therefore, whatever defenses we may be presumed to have are rendered ineffective. The message is carried through style and such formal aspects of art are considered by many to be inherently apolitical; they are not. The reason the question of invisible ideology is receiving so much critical attention nowadays, as opposed to the attention given to more overt forms of cinematic propaganda, is that hardly anyone outside of critical circles even believes the question exists.

A case in point can be drawn from the sea of advertising movies in which we as a culture swim. Advertising presents us with a triple bind: two levels of content and a third of form. The ad must sell us a product, but to do that it must sell us a life-style, but to do that it must sell us on a mode of perception peculiar to that life-style. This last job is accomplished through the form of the advertisement — through the codes which it incorporates: up-beat music, cut-aways (double takes), frenetic cutting, stereotypes. The Children's Television Workshop noticed that tiny children watch ads on television while ignoring the rest of the programming. Their answer has been to teach numbers and letters by those same methods. And the question remains the same: what else are we learning?

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2 The term ideology is not necessarily pejorative nor does it imply a subject/object separation producing a schism between the way ideology affects the subject and the way the subject rejects and remakes and changes ideology. The separation disappears as people are educated to understand the ways in which ideology functions in a particular culture. We can learn the ways in which bourgeois art forms, particularly film, have served to support and perpetuate the ideals of capitalism; we can also learn the ways in which Marxist art forms might support and perpetuate the material values of a socialist society. The specific problem of film study is that much of the ideological weight is carried by the style and technique of the film and to audiences used to thinking of film uncritically and as sources of entertainment and escape, this renders the ideology invisible. I do not believe that any type of ideology must or should remain invisible; education and study will reveal its workings.

3 It is ironic that one of the only references to advertising in current film journals consists of a Film Quarterly (Vol. XXIX, No. 2, pp. 1-2) editorial diatribe against ads being played during movies; they are movies.
Up until this point I have said little about the content of the ideology under discussion. Obviously if any ideology can be carried through form, then all can be. Indeed the primary thrust of semiological/political criticism might well be the development of an effective formal apparatus for socialist ideology. However since the bulk of film criticism has taken place under the auspices of bourgeois capitalism and since most published observers of semiology and politics in culture have been looking at past traditions rather than current possibilities, the term ideology has come to be associated almost exclusively with bourgeois illusionism. "Bourgeois" refers to content, the world view necessary for the maintenance of capitalistic ideology/economies; "illusionisms" refers to the methods of diffusion proven most efficient in perpetuating the bourgeois content. The term seems, most often, to be used very loosely — bourgeois illusionism thus referring to either content or form or both. This writing will, after having stated initially the distinction, capitulate to the more general usage.

Most of the writing to date assumes that critical opinion agrees as to the content of bourgeois illusionism. An unlikely prospect. I will suggest here that it contains at least the following: an inclination toward (a) stasis (b) individualism (c) concepts of uniform time and space (d) ego centrality and (e) voyeurism. It is no new observation that bourgeois capitalism has, through the agencies of psychology and philosophy, spread the notion that we should aim towards a society of stasis and balance rather than one of revolution and change. The aim has been socialization, the reduction of psychic stress resulting from classic alienation, and the purgation of emotions through narrative art forms. The result is that we often receive the image of a motionless and continuous world — a closed system. A second pillar of illusionism is found in the view that individuals constitute history and, in effect, stand outside of history; history is the result of a specular people. Further, time and space are measured in discrete units; time (days) marches on like a line of soldiers, each new one foreclosing access to those gone by. The cumulative forces of history cannot apply here in what Mircea Eliade refers to as "one way time." Illusionism also transforms us into a transcendent self — a miraculous other who can see all, know all (the invisible camera); ego becomes god (like) and we fly to our fantasies. Finally, and perhaps constituting the lynchpin of the whole illusionist framework, comes the distinction between passive and active participation. By obscuring its origins, insisting on its completeness as a realistic whole, the illusionistic text denies our participation and teaches us to sit back and let it happen (be it a movie or fate or a political system); we become voyeurs.

If we accept the foregoing content as being a partial list of that which is Signified by bourgeois illusionism, then the next question concerns the formal cinematic means through which this ideology is conducted to the subject-spectator. Prior to the examination of particular cinematic techniques, it might be profitable to ask some questions about the most basic, and therefore least examined tools of movie-making: camera, and projector, and screening room. Jean-Louis Baudry has done this job rather exhaustively and begins by observing that film camera, in terms of composition, records in the same ideologically loaded fashion as has been common in painting since the Italian Renaissance:

"Contrary to Chinese and Japanese painting, Western easel painting presenting as it does a motionless and continuous whole, elaborates a total vision which corresponds to the idealist conception of the fullness and homogeneity of "being". . . . The principle of transcendence which conditions and is conditioned by the perspective construction represented in painting and in the photographic image which copies from it seems to inspire all the idealist paens to which the cinema has given rise . . . . (p.42)

By normal recording perspective, then, the camera by definition supports a
metaphysical conception of the universe which is both uniform and static and which is observed from a fixed subject location. The use of normal perspective involves an organization in which all the elements of a composition are "equally near and distant from the source of all life." (p.41) This fixed point of visual reference "specifies in return the position of the subject, the very spot it must occupy" (p.41) and lays the psychological foundation for the creation of a transcendent subject (an imaginary spot the viewer's ego will seek to occupy). The projection apparatus itself, postulates Baudry, also represents a process in mystification. Films consist of minutely variable discrete units, frames, which are projected at such a speed as to appear continuous and undifferentiated. Thus by its very nature, the projection device hides its process and in this hiding "lives on the denial of difference" (p.42) A mechanical process which "both selects the minimal difference and represses it in projection" (p.43) is the dichotomy exposed here and we see that film, which has the possibility of "a multiplicity of points of view which would neutralize the fixed position of the eye-subject and even nullify it"(p.43), ends by supporting the "substantializing character of the single-perspective image." (p.42) By pursuing continuity (via persistence of vision) at the expense of differentiation, the filmic process at its very roots, continues the idea, initiated by perspective in painting, that perception originates from a single transcendent point (ego) and that the results of that perception must be a homogenous world. Baudry further postulates that the site of the film experience, a darkened room with pulsing screen, is analogous to Plato's cave as the birthplace of the ego (transcendent self). He paraphrases Lacan as suggesting that two conditions presuppose the "imaginary constitution of the self" at age 16-18 months: immature powers of mobility and a precocious maturation of visual organization." (p.45) Since these conditions obviously prevail in most movie theaters, the moment is ripe for the birth of a transcendent subject, a simple logical extension of the single-perspective image presented by the camera and continued by the projector, which "constitutes and rules the objects in this world." (p.45) We, the viewers, become that transcendent subject and the cycle from the camera to screen is complete. The whole process which Baudry describes becomes even more obviously ideological when we consider that:

> everything happens as if, the subject himself being unable — and for a reason — to account for his own situation, it was necessary to substitute secondary organs, grafted on to replace his own defective instruments or ideological formations capable of filling his function as subject. (p.45)

The metaphysical implications of this perceptual pattern lie in the initial assumption of human frailty and the concomitant dependence on other than human powers to supply the missing links.

If Baudry's analysis is essentially correct (hopefully, my simplification of his rather complex epistemological process has not too far distorted it) then we might well despair for the future of a cinema not geared to the particular ideology which, his article delineates, bourgeois idealism. The cards seem distinctly stacked, since the culmination of camera, projection, and screening room seem to equal the antithesis of a materialist ethic. But, in a context almost eschatological, Baudry concludes by predicting the "return of the repressed" which will "signify without fail the arrival of the instrument in flesh and blood." (p.46) How exactly, this self-critical revelation of mechanism will take place Baudry leaves for others to elucidate but his point is clear — the road towards a reborn cinema lies in a cinema which reveals its own skeleton.

If disturbance of the illusionist status quo is the aim of radical cinema, then the identification of the codes through which that status quo is maintained becomes obligatory. The implications of Baudry's text notwithstanding, one
fact seems clear: all who propose to make films must use the basic apparatus which pertain to the medium. But in the first stage, that of the camera (pre-projection), many variables are possible (Baudry’s footnote no.30 refers to one of these — editing) and the workings of those variables in historically observable ways constitute the patterns of codicity which we seek to identify. There are many candidates for these honours but some of the foremost include: (1) “the absent one” (2) “the reverse” (3) “the spectator in the text” (4) “the big zoom” (5) “narrative sequence” (linear time) (6) deep space (perspective) (7) shot change invisibility (matching cuts, 180 degree rule, etc.) (8) realistic acting. The guilty party may stand up, but a brief investigation of the foregoing possibilities may yield, at the very least, some mechanisms for departure from filmic norms.

One of the more interesting theories examining the meeting place between filmic and political manipulations is that of Daniel Dayan 8 (in conjunction with Brian Henderson who collaborated in writing the article and Jean-Pierre Oudart whose ideas he articulates). Dayan suggests that we examine the case of the shot-reverse shot:

In the first, the missing field imposes itself upon our consciousness under the form of the absent one who is looking at what we see. In the second shot, the reverse shot of the first, the missing field is abolished by the presence of somebody or something occupying the absent one’s field. The reverse shot represents the fictional owner of the glance corresponding to shot one. (p.29)

This two part relationship is explained in terms of a dialectic: the first shot forms a rent in the narrative illusion of the film and the second shot sutures that damaged relationship between story and spectator. Thus the "code, which produces an imaginary, ideological effect, is hidden by the message" and the "Spectator absorbs an ideological effect without being aware of it." (p.30) Dayan concludes that through this system "of the suture the film discourse presents itself as a product without a producer" (p.31) and as a conveyor of absolute truth; the ideology of the film in question is stitched into our consciousness. In short, the first shot gives us a chance to perceive the apparatus at work, "the viewer discovers the frame" (p.29), by causing us to question its origin, but the second shot seals us comfortably back into the narrative. This process serves to bolster the power of bourgeois illusionism by continuing the mystification of narrative point of view and structure.

Unfortunately, the thrust of this argument is somewhat diluted when we realize, as William Rothman 9 has us do, that the shot/reverse shot sequence is a rare beast indeed and that the normal pattern for point of view shots is a "three shot (viewer/view/viewer)" (p.47) Thus it appears there is no rent at all; we know from the beginning who is doing the looking, the absent one is absent indeed, and the narrative has not been disturbed in the least. The suture theory would then apply only in those situations where we discover the who of a glance after the fact of the glance; such situations might occur, for instance, when a character is being watched by a hidden observer or when a large emphasis is being placed upon the texture of an environment and later we see that a person is part of than environment (witnesses it). Rothman’s observations severely limit the applications of Dayan’s thesis; they do not shake its internal validity. Rothman, however, takes the opportunity to present, once, again the standard reactionary argument that content is the place to look for ideology and that form is malleable, neutral, to be used equally by all:

The commonsense position would appear to be that classical cinema has through its complex history served a variety of masters. Classical films, to be sure, have in countless cases served many different forms of bourgeois ideology. But they have also been instrumental in concrete attacks on particular ideological forms. (p.49)
He suggests further that "the time has come for a re-examination of the whole idea that classical narrative continuity is illusionistic." (p.47) To jump from the modification of a particular thesis to questioning the validity of an entire critical framework is quite an inductive leap; it might also be time to re-examine the generally held opinion that intellectual film criticism is somehow neutral.

Fortunately, however, Dayan also sees the limitations of his own argument, and in a footnote (p.31), confirms that the "shot/reverse shot is itself merely one figure in the system of classical cinema." Another figure, as proposed by Noel Burch's reverse-field figure — that image which occurs during conversations between characters as the editing switches back and forth between two-shots:

Its function may be defined as that of concentrating our attention on the character who delivers The Word (or incidently, on the character who receives it) on either side of the spectator-pivot engulfed by the deep space of the diegesis, thereby transforming the spectator into a relay, a conduit through which any exchange necessarily passes, making him or her into a privileged actor with the power of being present without being seen. It is entirely possible that the keystone to the whole illusionistic discourse of film is precisely the reverse-field figure, that unique locus of the spectator's relationship with characters who, at the same time as they address themselves to him, offer him a scene suitable for wish fulfillment at the very center of his fantasy... (p.66)

The fact that this material is contained in Footnote no.27 may indicate that Burch intends further work on the specifics of his deconstruction model (see below) but the outline is clear. The reverse is typical of filmic manipulations which present an omniscient viewpoint as if it were part of normal discourse. First we see one person's face talking, usually with the partial frame of the other person's shoulder and head, and then we see the other person in precisely the reversed position; now this person is talking. Back and forth we go, each shot perfectly matched on the screen, as the camera is careful to stay on the same side of the conversation (180 degree rule); when this rule is broken the characters will appear to have switched sides on the screen (and the one on the left will appear on the right, vice versa). The ideological content is conveyed in the isolation of the images, the emphasis on the individuals, and the deep space between them; we get the romantic feeling that here are people apart from their environment, their history, adrift in a sea of emotional, sanctioned interaction. Beyond the individualism thus implied, Burch sees (as does Baudry) the potentiality for ego-expansion; the spectator becomes as if a god, moving with unseen grace through gyrations of dramatic narrative. The satisfaction of such human fantasies may serve very well the ideology inherent in bourgeois illusionism but it holds little promise for the genuine liberation of the human spirit.

A third scenario for the demystification of classic cinematic codes can be found in the "spectator in the text" theory advanced by Nick Browne.11 He directs our attention to the ways, particularly in Ford's Stagecoach, in which the filmmaker "directs attention away from his own activity, to mask and displace it." (p.35) By presenting images from points-of-view which are plausible within the framework of the narrative, by contriving a dramatic narrator and then "referring shots on the screen alternatively to the authority of her eye or the place of her body," (p.35) the filmmaker hides his own manipulation and inscriptions of the story:

The explanation of the presence of the imagery is referred by the film not to the originating authority who stands invisible, behind the action, but to his masks within the depicted scene (p.35)

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The result of these evasive tactics is that the "spectator" is in several places at once — with the fictional viewer, with the viewed, and at the same time in a position to evaluate and respond to the claims of each. This fact suggests that like the dreamer, the filmic spectator is a plural subject." (p.36) While Browne recognizes that the specific code which he is analyzing, that of multiple points of view culminating in a point we call the spectator's , results in a "text which is ultimately the product of the narrator's disposition toward the tale," (p.35) he fails to point out what that disposition might be. He concludes that "certain formal features of the imagery . . . can be explained as the ensemble of ways authority implicitly positions the spectator/reader," (p.38) but he never once suggests a historical/political context in which that authority might be examined. Actually, the Browne analysis might well be seen as further support for the thesis that one of the major underpinning structures of illusionism is the development and support of the omniscient, transcendent subject. And, as Browne points out, this content is carefully hidden so that the spectator thinks all the direction and commentary is coming from within the confines of the narrative point of view; decidedly, it is not.

The big zoom refers to a technique common in current filmmaking, especially in those films created for television, which consists of a camera located somewhere above "the big city" zooming in, past buildings and windows, finally settling upon one person, the major character in the fiction. This seemingly harmless, and incredibly overused, piece of apparatus is particularly useful to a filmmaker because it serves several functions: establishes the context of the fiction (be it city, country, or suburban household), establishes the distance between the ostensible source of the observation (camera) and the observed (object), and establishes the uniqueness of the character (he is one among many). He is the unique individual in the teeming city, part of the whole which is not to be questioned. The ideology of this very act of moving in toward the supposed center of a filmic construction supports the basic tenets of traditional perspective — presenting a balanced world viewed from a fixed, stable center. The zoom is smooth; the camera seems to know exactly where it is headed (as opposed to the point-of-view shot which might be searching). The spectator, who must of necessity identify with the force that seems to move the image, becomes omnipresent, moving through the space of the city with the ease of a god-like creature. And the distance we travel leads us to the central converging point of illusionism — the individual. Thus we recognize immediately, intuitively, that, whatever else the fiction tells us, here is the story of an individual. This person counts. The society, the culture, the political system may fall apart entirely, but he remains. Such is the ideology of the big zoom and it conveys this subtle message each and every time that it is used, regardless of the context in which it occurs.

The last four more general illusionistic techniques can be discussed in less detail, partly because arguments already summarized have touched upon some of them and partly because their effects are less invisible. The maintenance of a linear narrative sequence (beginning, middle, end) is clearly a major factor in the creation of a cinema which reflects the world without challenging it. It is ironic that such a logical pattern should be associated with realism at all, since people's lives rarely have a plot or even logical sequence. Our fantasies have demanded the linear narrative which code in turn supports our fantasies: a neat and enclosed world. Last Year at Marienbad at least in the year of its creation, represented a departure from narrative norms; the fact that the film is much more understandable in a linear sense to modern audiences suggests that cinematic codes do not remain constant but mutate along with public consciousness. The use of traditional perspective, although partially inherent in the use of the camera as an instrument, is also an alternative which can be manipulated by lens/distance ratios. An emphasis on wide-angle or telephoto effects and/or an abundance of close-ups or distance
shots constitute possible ways in which traditional perspective can be distorted. However, it should be noted that in the vast majority of cases such techniques are assimilated quite easily into the illusionistic text and, as spectators become accustomed, down through the years, to new filmic patterns, it becomes more difficult to effect even a superficial challenge to such long-standing codes as traditional perspective. The Passion of Joan of Arc, through its disorienting use of close-ups and camera movement, effectively prevents the spectator from seeing the whole picture; we are denied the fixed point of visual reference which we expect and therefore, are forced to put the fragments of information together ourselves. Dreyer's challenge of illusionistic codes appears to have withstood the test of time somewhat better than that of Resnais. Shot change invisibility, of course, is a tool which has been honed continually since the days of Porter and Griffith. Whereas silent films often called attention to themselves through wipes, irises, and unusual masking effects, the sound narrative, with the exception of an occasional wipe from the Japanese film industry, takes no such chances. Visual continuity is maintained through matching cuts, lap dissolves, and reverence for such guidelines as the 180 degree rule; by no means is the spectator's sense of order to be affronted. What passes unexamined, quite naturally, is the fact that our sense of order is not apriori but is dictated to us by our cultural/political heritage. Godard stands practically alone in challenging this particular code. Between the jump-cuts of Breathless and the end distancing slogans of La Chinoise lies a continuum of intent: the disruption of liquid cinema, the smooth flow of events between the screen and the spectator. Finally, acting has also done its share to shore up the illusionistic edifice. The actor acts in ways which we call realistic or believable but, again, the irony is apparent, as the people whom we observe in the world are not so believable. The real policeman is not believable precisely because we have accepted as real a dramatized and stereotyped version of policemen; we expect our vision of things to be corroborated by the movies we see; usually it is. The films of Robert Bresson are with few exceptions calculated to strip the filmic image of its dramatic charge and to deny the spectator any easy identification with the emotional content of human relationships. Au Hassard Balthazar contains people performing narrative acts (also animals) but in such a way that they seem to "speak" their lines and "walk through" their actions. In this way we are constantly kept aware, at some level, that film is a manipulation, not a reality; we must supply the dramatic energy ourselves.

Several threads may be seen connecting these various manifestations of illusionism. In one way or another all of the techniques discussed here lend themselves toward the creation of a finite, circumscribed object (film) which, being separated from its creation and its uses, finds justification in its view of reality as a "motionless and continuous whole." In viewing this object the subject (spectator) becomes more than human, taking on godlike attributes which allow a privileged view of the object before him. Finally, between the static object and the transcendent subject exists a distance which is constantly diminished by the workings of the operant cinematic codes. The image is not unlike that provided in the Book of Genesis in the Christian Bible: God looked at the world and saw that it was good (or at least acceptable). That is to say that God and the world are two ends of one continuum, each reflecting the rightness of the other. So it is with the illusionist cinema, the traditional cinematic codes functioning to ensure that the spectator feels "right" and, simultaneously, presenting him with a "right" ideology. As the distance diminishes between subject and object, as the catharsis does its work, the spectator is systematically drained of all creative/revolutionary energy. He no longer questions (assuming that he ever did) the reality he lives in; it is him.

It would appear, we must conclude, that the perceptual patterns which underlie bourgeois capitalism have historically lent themselves to expression through the means of illusionism — a system designed, albeit perhaps unin-
tentionally, to disguise its own operations. Certainly the dominant codes have been challenged from time to time, with the exception of those most recently "discovered" ("the absent one," "the spectator in the text," et.al.), but the model for an alternative is fragmented at best. Through what formal means, then, does Marxism find its most effective articulation? Although the answers to this question are by no means so well researched as are the various building blocks of illusionism, the beginning clearly lies in a cinema which calls attention to its own artifice. In any case it will be a consciously built system, deriving its strength from a rational dialectic.

Noel Burch and Jorge Dana come closer than any previous commentators to the development of a usable overall paradigm for Marxist film criticism. They begin by reviving a term long absent from film discussions, aesthetics, and by asserting that "the refusal to see an aesthetically decisive discontinuity between the practices of, say, Bresson and Preminger is a flagrant case of false consciousness." (p. 41) Burch, from the outset, lays his cards on the table — there is, after all, a qualitative difference between various levels of film achievement. It is no longer sufficient for the film critic to simply analyze the formal content of a formula film and then suggest that it admirably contains all of the elements of a particular genre:

What we are attacking is a form of mystification, which consists in holding these films (illusionistic) up as models of écriture, in establishing a decisive difference between their formal contribution (sometimes more warily described as a mastery of the codes) and the anonymous machinery of ordinary cinema . . . these films must therefore be situated in their correct historical context, in the indeed very particular role which they occupy, that of vehicle, refined to the nth degree, of the representation of the dominant class. (p. 48)

With these, perhaps caustic, observations as a backdrop, Burch launches his scenario by referring to Umberto Eco who suggests that a "serial method" is essential in creating an artistic dialectic: "The series would then no longer be the negation of structure, but structure questioning itself and recognizing itself as part of history." (p. 42) The self-questioning structure, then, becomes the basis for a genuinely Marxist cinema and Burch points out that three generations of researchers (albeit a limited cross-section of those generations) have agreed that the aesthetic message is "transmitted by the internal system through which a work contests the validity of the system of codes in force within the artistic practices of the ideology dominant in a given time and place." (p. 41) The Burch analysis, next, establishes four categories of films, the first of which is determined wholly by illusionistic codes and the last of which escapes those codes through a constant designation/deconstruction of them. In each category the degree to which a particular film exploits or, on the other hand, explores the dominant codes becomes the criterion of film excellence. His case in point is Dreyer's Gertrud and, in particular, the complex relationship between characters speaking their parts, camera movements, and the static tableaux from which actions originate, in short, Dreyer's use of codes (designation) for the purpose of blowing them apart (deconstruction):

Although the camera movements adhere scrupulously to the letter of the role given them in the most heavily coded films, the fact of being part of a discourse whose primary effect is to cause a crisis within these same codes (an effect most clearly perceived no doubt by those for whom the film is unreadable, intolerable), endows them with a conspicuousness which is anything but transparent, and assigns them a place among the signifiers of a textual surface whose primary trait is to assume the sinews of linear discourse the better to acknowledge them. (p. 63)

A Marxist film aesthetic is thus informed by the constant interplay of two polar lines of inquiry: codicity and the deconstruction of codicity. Each requires the other and out of the conflict (collision) between the two arrives...
a synthesis — revolutionary energy. David Caute\textsuperscript{14} isolates these variables in a non-filmic context when he suggests that the aim of revolutionary art is, not to purge the spectator of his pity and fear, but to leave those emotions intact — to send us back into the street with them boiling inside us. This is achieved, suggests Caute, through alternate cycles of involvement and alienation, pulling the spectator into the story and then ejecting him, involving his emotions and then forcing him to be intellectually aware of his physical circumstances. Both levels of operation occur together, interplay continually, and culminate in a final collision/synthesis. That synthesis is new perception, on the part of the spectator, not only of filmic forms but of the ways in which those forms interact with and structure the political situation in which we live. And the new perceptions here postulated lead directly to new actions. The pattern for a committed, self-critical cinema might be as follows: eye (new perception) — I (new self) - aye (new society). A commitment to anything less would be mere decoration.

A final word should be paid here to practicality. Who is going to see and be changed by these marvelously deconstructed films which a Marxist aesthetic might postulate or create? Who indeed? It is no secret that Godard reaches a narrow audience, Straub and Bresson an even narrower one. The criticisms of this potentially elite position come from many directions. Chuck Kleinhans accuses Burch of being symptomatic of a "new formalism which not only separates form from content and elevates form above content, but one that also takes pure film form as itself a sufficient political weapon to overthrow bourgeois ideology."\textsuperscript{15} The fact that Burch takes The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari to be a primary example of deconstructed cinema might be seen as a support for this challenge. Whether the Kleinhans criticism really applies to Burch or not (I doubt that it does), it certainly speaks to world cinema generally. It will not be sufficient to present radical and deconstructed forms to narrow, intellectual audiences. While deconstruction of illusionistic forms is a major prong of the radical film attack, Marxist content (and the parallel criticism of that content) must also surface as the second prong (as it always has been with Godard). Kleinhans makes a vital distinction between "self-reflective" (radical form only) and "self-critical" cinema (radical form plus radical content); the later proposes a radical content into order to "expose its own form, criticize its content, and its own social function."\textsuperscript{16} So content matters but Marxist content, although increasing the universality of the product, will certainly not guarantee an audience; it might even decrease the audience. Women and Film Magazine encapsulated the problem in a question put to Noel Burch (which he artfully evaded); they asked him to comment on the fact that Godard’s experiments in deconstruction seem to be "operating in a vacuum. He’s speaking to people who are engaged in very like-minded projects."\textsuperscript{17} How do we mend that vacuum, bridge that gap between communication and recipient? Gideon Bachmann suggests that there may be "two kinds of moving celluloid images with sound; those that entertain and those that engage. The magic ingredient, the catalyst that would make them fuse, doesn’t exist."\textsuperscript{18} Although his observation has validity, Bachmann assumes that the catalyst is an impossibility; he only mentions it to demonstrate the impoverished state of the art and to predict its demise.

Bachmann is wrong; I submit that there is such a catalyst (the film which is usually said to most contain it being Tout Va Bien). But the place to look for its emergence is not so much Europe or North America, although these may be the breeding grounds for the theory which underlies this "magic," but in the countries which are themselves emerging: Cuba, Chile, Senegal, Puerto Rico, and the countless other places where cinema is being born again. There is a reason why Peter Saintsbury\textsuperscript{19} in his introduction to Afterimage No. 5 specifies that two of the major areas he wishes to explore are semiology and third world cinema. The meeting of the deconstructed image with third world Marxist ideology will materialize Baudry’s eschatology and Zavattini’s dream simultaneously. "The arrival of the instrument in flesh
The arrival of the instrument in flesh and blood: deconstruction in Littin's The Promised Land

Julianne Burton has suggested that The Promised Land operates 'dialectically,' alternating intense emotional involvement with critical perspective. Burton has here touched upon the core of the film's structure, although her otherwise excellent analysis does not pursue this point beyond naming a few 'distancing devices.' Miguel Littin has in fact created a text in crisis, a filmic statement in which parallel lines of emotional and intellectual structure continually interact and comment upon one another. The Promised Land is designed to be an emotional, even illusionistic, epic narrative but, at the same time, a parallel line of formal analysis intersects the narrative at specific crisis points and destroys it. The basic narrative codes are "designated" only to be "deconstructed" by the formal inner-workings of the film's technique. This constant interplay of emotion and intellect forms a continuum of inner collisions which take place both in the text and in the subject (spectator); we are pulled this way, now that way. The result is a synthesis of extreme power and clarity — a call for new people with new perceptual powers, for, as the ballad on the soundtrack puts it, an "earth . . . covered with colors . . . and new beings with new songs and sounds."

The narrative itself consists of a roving band of peasants who, gathering both numbers and abuse as they travel, finally hit upon the scheme of expropriating what they believe to be unused government land. They do so, clearing the land, farming it, and creating a socialist agrarian culture, only to discover that the rest of Chile has not done likewise. They are still exploited by the general economic system. Ultimately, they are convinced, through the appearance of a red airplane, that the correct thing to do would be to liberate the nearest town, Huique. After accomplishing this task, the peasants discover that the military situation is not as they had thought; a battalion of troops arrives to squelch the invaders. They return to Palmilla only to be followed and massacred shortly after they arrive home. An epilogue shows the peasants rising again, renewing the battle by passing weapons to the younger generation, and descending victorious into the Palmilla valley. The narrative is accompanied at many points with an emotional and effective musical score which weaves several revolutionary themes into the fabric of the fiction. The fiction is narrated by an old man who appears in the story as a young man, Chirigua; this device adds an ambiguity to the text. His comments, usually cast in the role of youthful cynic, fulfill the function of chorus, or common person. Further, one must ask from what context does he speak? If he survived the massacre, if he was handed, metaphorically, the guns of protest by Jose Duran, if he is now an old man, then what perspective does he bring to his reconstruction of events? In any case, what he says is not necessarily to be believed; his words act, rather, as a critique of the visual narrative.

What seems, at first glance, a simple narrative, however, turns out to have many complications and convolutions. History, legend, mysticism, religion and politics intermix, each commenting upon the other. But one strand of

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2 Ms. Burton has informed me that the 110 minute U.S. version was condensed from an original 120 minute print. I can only guess how these deletions, if present, might affect my arguments.
the folk consciousness stands out structurally above the others — the appearance at various points within the narrative of the Virgin del Carmen, the patron saint of both the people and the armed forces. It is precisely during these appearances that style goes wild; the narrative codes are disrupted and form acts as a criticism of both itself and the Marxist content of the film. The virgin appears seven times, each time in a different role: some helpful, some aloof. Her first appearance is in the opening montage (1st 15 shots of the film) when she is shown receiving medals of honor from the military. This virgin seems to be presiding over a celebration which has distinctly a right wing flavor; a soldier exclaims "I name thee patron Saint of Chile, our Sovereign lady of the Army" after which the sound track suggests "The only solution is a firm dictatorship." The final shot of this series summarizes the mood of festivity and political/religious fervor; the camera zooms back to an extreme long shot of the virgin, now completely surrounded by soldiers. The narrator, Chirigua, intones: "It was Sunday the feast of St. Emetrius, 13th of November, 1930; everything I'm about to tell you is true; I saw it with my own eyes, heard it with my own ears." The entire montage (shots of the Maipu temple, a soldier shooting a gun, men singing "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow," a bishop on a litter, a politician in a car) has an associative, rather than linear, logic, The viewer gets the feeling of repression, masked by festivity, of incipient violence; the very lack of logical order in the shots adds to the sense of uncertainty and hesitation.

The virgin next appears as the peasants, as yet without a destination, make their way across the countryside. We first see the band of men and women moving from left to right across the frame down a country road; the two youngsters, Chirigua and the "red head", break away from the procession toward the bottom of the frame and the camera follows them as they move back to the left and into a meadow containing a female preacher. In the background and on the far side of the road we see Jose Duran and Pinstripe, the nominal leaders of the party, talking to some local peasants, presumably about joining the procession. The preacher lady, not visible, warns: "God, too, doth have his own hell and man has sinned greatly . . . war, hunger, plagues, unemployment, and strange voices will come." Chirigua, as the old narrator, explains: "I didn't understand any of that stuff"; the young Chirigua, proceeds across the meadow, until, in the distance, the virgin and child come into the frame (along with a stray flock of turkeys). The two figures move toward each other as religious singing, presumably emanating from the preacher's encampment, pervades the sound track. The remainder of the sequence is a standard reverse shot series in which the two figures approach each other, each seeing the other from the traditional imaginary point of view. What is unique is the means by which Littin deconstructs this code through dislocations of space, perspective, and sound. Shot 1 is the reverse shot (from the Virgin's position) showing Chirigua advancing behind him. The sound track carries the musical revolution theme, a guitar piece with an almost military, certainly militant strain. Shot 2 cuts back to a close-up of the Virgin advancing with Jose Duran and Pinstripe, talking to peasants, in the background; the sound track consists of the religious singing, Duran talking, and the musical theme bursting off and on intermittently. This displacement of normal space (Duran is actually located on the far side of the road away from the meadow) brings to focus the clash of cultural expediens: the demure, smiling Virgin as opposed to the primitive exhortations of Jose Duran. The sound track intensifies the clash, the voice of Duran and the religious singing acting as polarities, with the intermittent theme music bursting through as the incipient synthesis. Shot 3 is the reverse shot again, this time accompanied by both religious and theme music, overlayed equally. Shot 4 is a repeat of Shot 2 but this time the camera zooms back to reveal the Virgin's body in more detail; Duran and Pinstripe recede further to the background; the voice of Duran and the singing remain on the sound track. Shot 5 is the final reverse; Chirigua finally stops walking as the camera moves in to a closeup. Shot 6 shows the whole scene, the virgin and the boy about a
yard apart, from a point which, logically, would still include Duran and Pinstripe; they are gone. The soundtrack for the last two shots includes religious singing only.

The overt message of this narrative sequence is that, since the Virgin has appeared to the peasants, they are blessed; at least the Virgin cares enough to make a showing. Formally, however, this content is shattered by the development of an inner-critique. Shot 2 presents the alternatives: political energy, on the one hand, and religious attraction (even fear), on the other. The theme music attempts, and fails, to break through this mystification — to reach a clarity or synthesis of opposing forces. In Shot 4 the political area recedes and the theme music is absent; Shot 5 registers a further regression, as now the theme music is missing and Chirigua is surrounded by religious singing only. The final shot negates the existence of Jose Duran, returns filmic space to normal, and ends the deconstruction. The entire sequence acts analytically not only to question the spacial relationships in the narrative but to question the thematic development of the film's content (politics and religion). But soon the peasants are on the road again and we are sucked back into the emotional stream of their daily battle for survival.

The Virgin does not appear again until long after the settlers have reached and founded Palmilla. The red airplane arrives announcing, ironically, the arrival of socialism to Chile and education sessions ensue. Jose Duran is thus inspired, not simply as a result of the red airplane but as the culmination of his perceptual and intellectual growth, to issue his manifesto — "The Words of Jose Duran." These words represent, in terms of the film's content, a primary vehicle of meaning; at the same time, the formal means of their presentation act as a critique of that content. The Virgin appears, physically, at the point where the lines of ideology and critique intersect. The sequence begins with a medium long shot of Jose Duran on the speech wagon; Pinstripe is beside him, people and flags forming a circular pattern behind the wagon. The camera zooms in slowly until Jose is outlined against a textured background (out-of-focus trees) through which flags flash every few seconds. He begins: "There can't be free folks here in Palmilla, if there's still folks over in Huique that are exploited and ain't free . . . when working folks is in charge of the laws and the courts that is socialism." Suddenly what has appeared to be a direct depiction of an event breaks loose from its moorings; the image cuts to a different Jose Duran, this time holding a gun, walking behind lines of peasant/soldiers. His words continue, however, but now at two levels: the old voice (coming presumably from the wagon) and the new voice (deeper, more resonant and coming from the visual image). The new voice suggests: "We have strength if we work together; without unity we got nothing . . . unselfish children will be born . . . everyone will be free and equal"; the old voice persists, the two voices (one speaking from ego, the other from the resonant voice of the people) forming the poles of a dialectic. The camera, all the while, has been tracking slowly, following Jose Duran as he walks to the left behind his ranks; at this point the Virgin enters frame left and Jose has to actually go around her in order to continue his monologue. After the camera tracks slowly past the Virgin and picks up Jose again, he continues, but now his voice is of a single quality — both voices blended into one: "Everyone gets their fair share." A cut to a closeup of Chirigua with flag shouting "To Huique" ends the sequence.

What began as a linear narrative sequence, Jose pronouncing his words, is disrupted by a parallel line of development — Jose's words under more militant circumstances (the film stock even changes to a high grain, dark image). The two realities impinge upon one another, exist simultaneously, defying time, and upon the juncture of the virgin are blended into one voice, the voice of the people. She is the catalyst which fuses the oppositions; the synthesis
which emerges is action: "To Huique." But this synthesis is part of a larger structure, failure and destruction, which casts its validity into doubt. The dialectical process itself is thus questioned by the formal qualities of this sequence.

The Virgin also takes part in the departure of Jose Duran and his followers for Huique. The departure sequence begins with a long pan, shot from a distance, in which we see Jose's band beginning to ride through the streets; the pan continues until Arturo Prats (a Chilean national patriot), sword raised in benediction, enters the frame at the right. Cut to a hand holding a leaflet and quick pan right to the red airplane pilot; he gestures in Duran's direction. Cut to Duran at full gallop right to left through the frame. The next shot includes a stylized tableau of Arturo Prats and the Virgin in postures of farewell (almost mocking in nature); Prats shouts, in a voice almost precisely resembling that of the resonant Jose Duran, "Seize Power Chileans, Seize Huique." Cut to Duran in full gallop left to right through the frame (a reversal of his former screen direction). The ensuing shot is inexplicable in terms of the narrative but functions analytically in counterpoint to the action; it consists of a static shot of Jose Duran, again behind his ranks, standing by the Virgin. The final shot of this sequence shows the peasant army, again in full gallop right to left, leaving the valley; villagers follow on foot with flags.

This complex interweaving of elements establishes two lines of comment: the ongoing, penetrating line of action pursued by Jose Duran and the criticism which his well wishers seem to offer (a static line). Duran's departure is spacially punctured (direction reversed) by the blessing of Prats and the Virgin; their posturing and the mimicking tone of Prats voice call into question the overt content of their communication. The imposition of the static shot from the prior sequence (Words of Jose Duran) punctures again the already riddled narrative, time adding its dislocation to space. Finally, Jose is back on track, heading out of the valley, while the sound track echoes his actions with a ballad for Jose Duran: "Jose rode the wind . . . the Virgin kissed his brow and Arturo Prats guided his beautiful sword." The overt content is supported by the overt movement of the narrative and sound track — onward to victory. But, at the formal level, the criticism is devastating, suggesting at the very least, conflict for the expedition, and, at the worst, a negative blessing. As usual, the Virgin stands at the center of this dislocation, occupying the imaginary crisis point between code and deconstruction.

Not long after leaving Palmilla the liberators meet the snow-covered Andes, not quite what you might expect, geographically, in Chile's interior regions. The mythic pattern which requires the heroes to pass certain tests before moving on to higher challenges and victory is enacted and the Virgin appears to ratify the results. The scene where Jose, after yelling at his men some of whom want to return to Palmilla, meets the Virgin in the snow is constructed in three perspectives, each a repetition and criticism of the one before it. Jose begins this sequence by walking slowly through the snow; the camera follows in a long slow pan. Suddenly we cut to a closeup of the Virgin and as she says, "Why art thou so sad Jose Duran," the camera zooms back a medium shot. Cut to a closeup of Duran's face; as he talks the camera again zooms back, revealing Duran's approach from a position on the far side of the Virgin (the edges of her clothes showing in frame left). His reply, spoken in the archaic language characteristic of this section, is: "Just look Blessed Virgin . . . you see how the snow keeps me from Huique." The second part begins with a cut to Chirigua carrying a flag; the camera zooms back to reveal both Jose Duran and the Virgin on either side of Chirigua. The Virgin begins again by asking "Why art thou so sad, Jose Duran"; the scene continues, as before, but this time from the single shot perspective. This time the Virgin finishes by suggesting to Duran: "You were born a man and a Chilean . . . before 2 days have passed you will reach Huique." Jose Duran replies that, in such an eventuality, he will build a shrine on the very spot
celebrating the Virgin's charity and benevolence. The entire sequence is repeated a third round, this time with a long shot; the Virgin and Jose repeat precisely the same words but their bodies and voices seem almost engulfed by the snow and rocks which surround them.

The first perspective consists of three separate shots the last of which is a variant (zoom) on the standard reverse. The closeups and the reverse angle emphasize the individuals involved, the almost romantic nature of this meeting between material and supernatural worlds. The second perspective allows a part of the external world within the frame, Chirigua, and sees the event from a more distanced and rational viewpoint. The camera distance, the single shot set-up, and the intrusion of elements exterior to the dialogue deromanticize the image, effectively stripping it of its dramatic charge. The third perspective places the whole operation in a social/historical (geographical) context; these people, who set great store by their own achievements, are parts of a larger pattern which may or may not become visible to them. Each perspective in this series acts as a designation which is, in turn, destroyed by the perspective which follows it. The overall effect of the Virgin-in-the-Snow sequence is, of course, to advance the narrative (now the heroes can go on to Huique) but at a level which questions the whole pattern of events.

The events in Huique, although marked with some successes in land distribution and communication, soon deteriorate as Jose Duran learns, eventually, that the promise of the red airplane was somewhat in error. It turns out that the government of Chile is not in support of socialist liberations after all and, in fact, an army is on its way to oust the liberators. The appearance of the Virgin in Huique marks a turning point in Chirigua's disillusionment; he remarks, "looks like there's two of them: one for these bastards and one for the poor folks." The city seems to be celebrating the same festival, the Feast of St. Emeterius, that was shown in the opening montage and that was seen in progress as the peasants first approached Palmilla via Huique. The camera pans left over a long procession of religious participants; finally the Virgin enters frame left, flanked by the primary landowners of Huique. Chirigua notes, "she looked hard and mean at us . . . she wasn't the same Virgin I saw before." The landowner, Errazuriz, intones: "We are the landowners of Chile; we own capital and land; what you call the people is a gullible and corruptible mass guided and controlled by us." The pan moves on, leaving Errazuriz and the Virgin for a group of maskers and musicians.

This whole sequence, although at one level simply a narrative indicator of changing power relationships and of events to come, also acts in tandem with other parallel lines of structure in the film. In fact, this sequence picks up reverberations from all of the previous crisis points at which the Virgin has appeared. The setting is much like that found in the opening montage; the Virgin is surrounded by soldiers and various members of the landholding elite. Chirigua notes that this does not seem to be the "same Virgin he saw before" on the road to Palmilla and, finally, the long panning shot establishes a formal connection with the long pan found in the "Words of Jose Duran" episode. But this time the Virgin does not participate in the pole of antithesis itself. Thus the Huique Virgin not only summarizes the narrative situation (the tide is turning against the peasants) but acts as a focal summary point of its deconstruction.

The Virgin's final physical appearance in The Promised Land is in a very short tableau marking the exodus of Jose Duran from Huique. We see, in what appears to be a funeral ceremony of sorts, Errazuriz, the Virgin, and various cherubs and soldiers assembled on the marbled stairway of a baronial mansion. The liturgy seems to be directed toward socialism generally: "Sweet fatherland, we reaffirm our ancestral vows sworn on your altar that Chile will be the tomb of free men or a refuge from repression." The scene ends in a puff of smoke as the soldiers fire their guns; the Virgin has come
full circle from St. Emetrius to St. Emetrius. She no longer participates in history; she stands against it. The frozen nature of the tableau not only criticizes the frozen consciousness of the Chilean bourgeoisie but stands in contrast to the rapid withdrawal of Jose Duran. The battle and retreat are interrupted by and, in fact, supplanted by this static moment of symbolic commentary. When we return to the narrative it is to a far different world, titled "The Living and the Dead," in which death itself rides with the defeated liberators.

A final situation in which narrative and self-critical modes interact is the one during which the soldiers descend into Palmilla with their ultimatum. The sequence begins with a long pan which is initiated by a closeup of a peasant woman, pans right to follow the arrival of the men returning defeated from Huique, pans left following the same woman as she looks up at the hillside, and terminates as the soldiers ride down the hillside into the valley and begin their explanation. Part of what the woman sees on the hillside, in addition to soldiers, looks like a religious procession similar to those associated in this film with the Virgin; however, the distance of the shot does not allow US to know if the Virgin is actually present. The next shot is a reverse angle of the point where the long pan terminated; now we're seeing the major and his soldiers from the back. The major begins his ultimatum and the sound track registers three levels of commentary: the major himself, a ballad repeating the content, and Chirigua who chronicles the eviction notice in his own words. The three part structure continues into a second shot, from in front of the major again, looking over the listening peasants' heads. Behind the major, and almost imperceptibly, a litter descends the hillside and comes to rest directly behind the soldiers. It appears to be empty. The major finally finishes his threatening gestures and turns his horse. Cut to a static camera shot showing soldiers leaving toward the hillside; several go by and then the unidentified litter passes. Whoever the occupant is must be in a prone position as, again, no person is visible.

The major's words, while in narrative terms denoting the reasons for the soldiers' presence, are seen from two additional levels of perception: the personal and the cultural. Chirigua's comments connect the events to actual lives; whereas the ballad points to the place such events come to have in the cultural life of a people. Throughout the film, we see events through the eyes of the folk ballad — the eyes of the common people looking through history for moments of comfort and direction, the eyes of history informed by purpose. It is almost as if the film takes place in two tenses; we are seeing the present tense in the narrative before our eyes but we are also seeing the events after the fact, after human beings have had a chance to digest and distill the events into a mythic structure. The juncture of these tenses, combined with the undetermined tense signified by the old Chirigua, constitutes a final crisis in the narrative structure of the film. As if to witness that crisis, the unidentified litter moves in behind the soldiers, backing them up. All the formal patterns established in The Promised Land indicate that the Virgin should appear at this moment but all we have is an empty litter occupying her place. The Virgin is absent. She is, in Littin's world, dead, a false catalyst; history goes on without her influence. The soldiers can accomplish their massacre on their own.

The final section of The Promised Land, "anthem and Return of the Heroes," represents a mythic alternative or reconstruction of the events we have witnessed in the rest of the film. The narrative, and symbolically the standard interpretations of history, are challenged as being inadequate; they do not tell the whole story. A series of events seems to tell a simple story: some peasants squatted on a rich man's land, invaded a nearby town, and were wiped out as a result. But, when viewed in a larger historical context, this conflict is, in the words of Jose Duran, part of a "war that is beginning now and will
never end" — art of an effort all people must make in gaining control over their own lives. Thus, the film's conclusion, while it might be seen as romantic from a narrative point of view, is actually the repudiation of linear historical analysis. Arturo Prats hands a sword to Chirigua, Jose Duran rides up through the mist and hands him a gun, and the sound track begins to outline a reality in which "the Earth will be filled with thousands of men and covered with colors." Next we see Meche walk naked through the battlefield, leading her horse, and the ballad speaks of "new beings with new songs and sounds." The image has an unsettling effect, as if seeing a strange, yet familiar, world through a filtered glass. Meche represents not merely the innocence and purity of the revolution but an alternative perceptual pattern in which all things are reborn. Her nudity is the antithesis of normal filmic nudity — a code which invariably incorporates titillation and the cultural view that sex is somehow separated from everyday life (objectified). The image of Meche in the battlefield blows that pattern wide open. There is nothing romantic about the completeness of her nudity. The starkness of her environment, and, relieved of this dramatic charge, the image becomes cultural and political. It is a brave new world, indeed, and the people, who in the next to last shot descend victorious into the Palmilla valley, are the final heroes. The culture here postulated does not need a mediator (Virgin) between itself and its ideal form; it is its form.

A comprehensive analysis might reveal many ways in which the form and content of *The Promised Land* fall short of their potential impact. The film's failure, for example, to produce female characters who significantly transcend the normal stereotypes might be seen as fatal for a film with intentions so large and so Marxist. On the formal side, it might be argued that, the emotional narrative being so strong and the identification with the personalities which the film demands so intense, deconstruction is impossible. Miguel Littin's own definition suggests that "the revolutionary work proves itself, in reality, after the fact if the spectator is capable of being transformed into an agent in the fight for freedom." It falls short here, too, since it cannot be seen in the country and culture which provided energy and urgency to its images. But as a model for a cinema which attempts to both reach the masses and provide them with a simultaneous critique of that reaching, it is unsurpassed. *The Promised Land* not only suggests that we need a new political framework, but declares also that we need to be new people with new perceptual capacities in order to make that framework a reality.

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BRUCE ELDER: A CRITIQUE OF CINE-STRUCTURALISM

Review Article of Bill Nichol's book *Movies and Methods*

WITH A RESPONSE FROM BILL NICHOLS

The notion that metacritical theories can offer methodological procedures for conducting an objective, scientific analysis of a work of art has been a perennially attractive one. Structuralist criticism is, of course, founded on this notion. The aspiration of the structuralist critics for a scientific criticism reveals itself in two ways. In the first place, structuralists take up *models* imported from such scientific disciplines as linguistics, psycho-analysis, anthropology, and apply them, *mutatis mutandis*, to the analysis of artistic works. Secondly, this criticism attempts to make use of the scientific *method*: certain hypothetical models are applied to certain works as a means both of revealing the underlying character of the work and of validating and refining the model itself.

The reasons for the extreme interest which structuralist methods of criticism have generated in the few short years since its introduction into the American critical scene are many. Not the least important amongst them is historical. The scientific and objective character of structural analysis has seemed to many to be a most appealing alternative to the mainstream critical tradition the basic weaknesses of which had revealed themselves in the arbitrary and relativistic qualities of impressionistic criticism. But structuralism as a critical methodology (or more strictly, a group of critical methodologies that share a certain family resemblance) has too in its own time led to certain excesses which are now becoming quite apparent. The time has come to question the basis of the structuralist methodology. Laudable as the empirical, scientific character of structuralism seemed for the aforementioned historical reasons, its has had a very truncating effect on the critical enterprise. In part, this is due to certain fundamental disanalogies between the nature of scientific and aesthetic inquiry. This disanalogy reveals itself in the different means each of these disciplines employs to assess the value of models developed. In the scientific field, the value of a model can be determined objectively; only the conformity between the predictions predicated on the model and actual state of affairs need be considered. (Even the criterion of simplicity, if one wishes to consider it, is an objective and mathematically definable one.) In the field of criticism, however, the *range* and *depth* of insight provided are of concern. Hence, in aesthetic inquiry, the value of a model involves a subjective moment, and so cannot be objectively determined. An adequate metacritical theory must, therefore, provide some basis for making a qualitative assessment of a model. The empirical and positivistic character of structuralism prevents it from furnishing this basis.
This problem of value manifests itself in yet another form. The models which one employs as investigative tools delimit the domain into which one may inquire, as only a limited range of phenomena can be explainable by any given model. In the field of science, this poses no problem for a model need only explain something about some phenomenon to have some heuristic value. In the field of aesthetic inquiry, however, a far different state of affairs obtains. Not every sort of structure or relation which one can uncover in an artwork has aesthetic value: hence a metacritical theory must provide some ground for deciding whether any given relation or structure is aesthetically relevant. Structuralist methodologies, being positivistic in character, cannot provide such a ground. In the absence of such a ground, the complexity which that methodology can uncover comes to be valued. Thus we have the spectacle on the contemporary critical scene of a number of competing methodological tools, each of which celebrates a certain kind of structural and relational complexity without giving us any reason to believe that such complexity has any aesthetic relevance. In many cases, it does not.

The lack of a normative base in their work has also influenced the structuralists approach to metacriticism. Metacriticism properly has two tasks: in the first place, it must develop a methodology which, while it enables one, to unfold the foundational presuppositions that underlie one's critical practice, itself remains free from such presuppositions since it is only a methodology for such an explication. Secondly it must attempt to determine the aesthetic validity of these presuppositions by testing them against actual work.

The desire to conduct artistic inquiry using scientific procedures has caused structuralists to accept the first task, but not the second. At the same time, the normative poverty of the discipline has led to a decrease of concern with the task of aesthetic analysis. Thus the literature of structuralism has taken on an increasing reflexive character; text piles upon text, each attempting to expose the operative concepts that lie behind the thematic concepts explicat-ed in the previous text and each then in turn being subjected to similar sort of analysis. All the while, the level of methodological inquiry becomes increasingly remote from actual films. The task of criticism is thus abandoned in favour of arid methodological inquiry.

That methodological aridity is a danger to which any structuralist and semiotic analyses have succumbed is nowhere in greater evidence than in the rigourously positivistic and empiricistic character of their quest to uncover cinematic codes. The pursuit could be described essentially as one that attempts to demonstrate that one can observe that certain common patterns, of, say, shots exist in certain groups of films. No attempt is made, however, to show that such patterns have any aesthetic validity; to my knowledge, no one has undertaken an analysis which would reveal that these patterns exploit certain material properties of the film in order to create tension. Similarly, the analyses of cinematic narratives found in the structuralist literature consist in demonstrating that one can discover certain narrative patterns in certain types of films; the question of whether such narrative patterns have any basis in the nature of the film material is never broached. Anyone familiar with Plato's allegory of the cave will immediately recognize the kind of knowledge for which the structuralists are seeking. Plato terms it *pistis* and describes it as being the second lowest form of knowledge.

Elevating models which fail to provide a normative basis for critical judgements to the level of critical paradigms has many consequences. The critical enterprise either becomes a mechanistic procedure of enumerating and
cataloguing strategies, relations and structures or one in which a work of art is measured against some arbitrary criterion, the aesthetic relevance of which is uninterrogated. This latter approach is exemplified by Martin Walsh's criticism of Rossellini (Jump Cut No. 15). The argument of the article runs roughly as follows: A film (work of art) is good only if it is non-illusionistic, i.e. if it reveals the manner by which its signifying practice is produced; evidence is presented to the effect that Rossellini's works (specifically Roma, Citta Aperta and La Prise de Pouvoir de Louis XIV) are illusionistic; therefore Rossellini's works are poor. Even overlooking the error of equating illusionistic art with art which reveals masks the manner by which its signifying practice is produced and the obviousness of the point established by critical scrutiny, one would still have to consider this piece as remarkably bad criticism. The criterion of value is a completely unjustified statement of preference, the aesthetic relevance of which is never demonstrated. The art work is simply measured in quite a mechanistic fashion against this criterion.

In spite of these fundamental problems, the structuralist critics have laboured to produce a literature on the cinema which aspires toward uncompromisingly high standards of conceptual clarity and philosophical rigour. Their continued exchange of ideas on topics of central concern have led them to question, refine, re-work, or even reject their critical paradigms and to develop ever more adequate ones. This kind of collectivity, of course, has been made possible only by their ability to move beyond critical methods founded on a thoroughgoing critical relativism. But, unfortunately, even this collectivity has at times a rather perverted air about it, and their exchanges seem more like incestuous chatting-up of each other than genuine dialogue directed at scrutinizing their fundamental critical premises.

Bill Nichols' new anthology Movies and Methods (University of California Press, 1977), manifests both these strengths and weaknesses. Almost all the articles have an exceptionally high degree of scholarly seriousness and rigour. Unfortunately, the book is hardly adequate for its apparent use, as a core text in survey courses on film criticism and critical methodology. For one thing, it provides very little sense of the evolution of film criticism. Such critics as Kracauer, Bazin, Wood and others whose work has for years constituted the basic reading for foundational courses in film criticism make only cameo appearances in the text. Moreover, these critics are all represented in articles that have little relevance to the issues raised in the more recent structuralist articles. Articles by those individuals of greater relevance to the key issues raised by the cine-structuralists are not included. The most striking example of this is the omission of the famous exchange between Lovell and Wood on the viability of non-structurally based criticism, an exchange which in fact played a major role in the shaping of structuralist critical practices. (One must, in fairness, allow that reasons other than editorial preference may account for this and that Nichols does refer to the debate on page 7.) By representing these critics in this manner, Nichols makes them appear as relics from another age with little relevance to the contemporary critical scene.

Replacing these critics in the position of critical prominence are the critics of the structuralist/semiological pantheon: the Russian formalist Brik and Schlovsky, the Althusserian-influenced Cahiers du Cinema critics and the semiologists Metz and Eco. The critical methods of almost all of these men are founded upon a more or less rigorous structural re-reading of Marx or on the work of Freud. Perhaps the most unfortunate consequence of this degree of emphasis on structuralist-based criticism is that it reduces the advantages to be gained from comparative study.

Other than the limitations which result from this highly biased selection of articles, Nichol's book has several serious shortcomings. One of the most startling is Nichol's mistepresentation of the formalist position in criticism.
Nichols characterizes formalist criticism, *via differens*, by distinguishing it from contextual criticism. Contextual criticism as Nichols describes it is criticism which takes into account the manner in which the filmic object situates itself and is determined by some broader context — be it psychological, sociological or socio-economic — while formalist criticism is concerned only with the internal relations in a work. (p.5) Surely the proper term for what Nichols calls formalist criticism is immanent criticism: "formalism" has acquired a much more specific meaning.

Formalist criticism proper is associated with certain notions related to the material character of the art object, it concerns itself with the manner in which the artwork exploits certain essential material features of the medium in which it is realized in order to evoke tensions. Nichols overlooks this essential feature of formalism and even goes so far as to misrepresent it by suggesting that formalist criticism encompasses the study of types of codes and systems which are not materially based (p.7). This misrepresentation allows Nichols to characterize *auterist* criticism as a species of formalist criticism, ignoring the fact that the Romantic basis for this theory lies in a notion of art as personal expression and in a concern for the relationship between features immanent to the work (for example recurrent iconographical elements) and the psychological content of their production that is almost certainly at odds with the foundational concepts of formalist criticism. As though this misrepresentation were not enough, Nichols compounds error with confusion when he proceeds to suggest that Kracauer's theory of film can be categorized as a formalist theory simply because it is an essentialist theory. What lies behind such a claim is of course a failure to distinguish between the conditions necessary for a theory to be considered formalist and those conditions which are sufficient to considering it to be of this type. Though a materialist basis is a necessary condition for a theory to be formalist, it is certainly not a sufficient condition.

Such confusions as these make it readily apparent that Nichols fails to grasp those particularizing features of formalist criticism which enable one to speak of formalist criticism as a distinct category of immanent criticism. And from this fundamental misunderstanding a host of misrepresentation follows.

That Nichols considerably underestimates the importance of the material properties of the cinema and their role in shaping cinematic expression is revealed by a comment he makes on the situation of the independent filmmaker. He writes, "... a frequent tenet of *auter* criticism is that a tension exists between the artist's visions and the means at his disposal for realizing it; studio pressure, genre conventions, star demands, story requirements (sic) ... But this kind of tension does not exist for the independent filmmaker, his vision and his work enjoy a far less mediated relation." The naiveté of asserting that the independent filmmaker works free of any market pressure, one might still wish to quarrel with this comment. Many (myself for one) consider the nature of the cinematic material and form to be the primary constraint on the filmmaker's work. If that is so, the claim that the independent filmmaker's vision and his work enjoy a far less mediated relation would seem to be something of an overstatement.

The ignorance and hostility toward notions of formalist criticism which Nichols displays is also reflected in the selection of articles. At one point in his anthology, Nichols makes a sadly revealing comment: "Of the areas of theory, criticism and history — history is the one in which there does not seem to be as much activity, or at least innovative activity as there is in the area of theory and criticism."(p.3) Such a statement seems to overlook the seminal studies of Noel Burch; Sitney's important propositions concerning the construction of a film history on a model on which the dynamics of historical progression are conceived of as lying in the impulse towards transformation of the forms which dominate at any particular moment in
the history of an artwork; the many important studies of Soviet cinema which followed the reappraisal of the constructivist movement in the Soviet arts which took place at the beginning of the seventies; and finally, Annette Michelson's reading of the historical progression from Malevich to the independent cinema. Nichols has overlooked all this work and drawn almost exclusively from the three or four dominant film journals.

Nichols's misrepresentation is not confined to the area of formalist criticism or to the area of contemporary critical practices. At one point Nichols includes Eric Rohmer as one of those who, along with F. Truffaut, marched under the banner of auteurism. Surely the fact that the early Cahiers harboured two opposing critical camps, the Bazinian realists and the auteurists, and that Rohmer aligned himself with the former, not the latter should be common knowledge among film scholars. And in the context of comments on the development of film theory (comments which are framed in such a manner as to suggest that the rise of structuralist paradigms to a position of dominance in critical practice has been marked by a quantum leap in the quality of critical practice in the cinema), Nichols suggests structuralist film criticism made much more extensive use of concepts from disciplines outside of film studies to provide the principles which inform critical practice (p.3). This, is simply historical nonsense. Almost all the major film theories have been informed by the philosophical tendencies of the period during which they were formulated. One could cite the important influence Neo-Kantian psychology had on the work of Arnheim, historical dialectics on Eisenstein, material theories on Kracauer, Personalism and phenomenology on Bazin and left liberal social theory and Neo-Hegelianism on Grierson and Rotha as just a few examples. The enormity of the oversight which characterizes this remark reveals the kind of intolerant dogmaticism which results whenever one particular paradigm becomes excessively dominant in critical practice. In a way, this volume sadly reflects the situation of much contemporary critical practice.

Even in his area of specialization, Nichols makes some comments that reveal some pretty serious oversights. Structuralism, Nichols characterizes "as an attempt to elaborate governing rules, or conceptual models that inform and order appearances or phenomena." He then proceeds to suggest that this sort of enterprise "can be seen originating in the work of Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud." (p.461) This, of course, is also historical nonsense: the enterprise which Nichols describes can be traced back at least to the pre-Socratic philosophers.

Nichols does however, avoid one of the besetting sins of structuralist critics. Lacking any solid understanding of the nature of aesthetic value, the structuralists tend not to see their activity as one of arriving at any final absolute truth, rather they view themselves as "playing against the text" — taking up one line of critical attack on the work to discover where it leads, then dropping this line for another in order to play the same game again, but so to speak, on a different field. At its worst, this feature has led to a certain faddishness in the taking up of models which are subsequently disposed of just as they reach a kind of hegemony. This, of course prevents them from considering their work as a kind of cumulative enterprise erecting an ever-growing body of information about specific films. Thankfully, Nichols seems not to have fallen for this.

Nichols own contribution to the text is an essay entitled "Style, Grammar and the Movies." Nichols courageously takes on one central model which has preoccupied an enormous number of semioticians of the cinema. Nichols suggests that this model is one which depends upon the opposition between pairs of discrete items and that the discreteness of the units means the model is digital rather than analog in character. Since this model has lead to certain difficulties, Nichols proposes to develop a model on which the information
transmitted on films is conceived of as being encoded in analogic rather than
digital form, i.e., our understanding of that information relies on our under-
standing of its place in a continuum of variation, rather than in a commu-
tative differentiation.

The reason why semioticians of the cinema have gravitated towards the
digital model, Nichols suggests, is explained in part by the fallacious assump-
tion that models that are derived from a study of language can be applied
without substantial alteration to the cinema. He goes further, however, to
suggest that this desire is motivated by that kind of "epistemological error"
which has ideological and hence socio-political determinants: the digital
model of the communication process is informed by the forces of oppression
and exploitation.

Nichols goes to no great length to demonstrate precisely how this conception
of communication process is shaped by these social forces nor does he ever
specify the nature of the epistemological error. This latter omission, made
glaring by the frequency with which Nichols lays the charge, is quite surpris-
ing in light of Nichols' discussion of Metz. In discussing Metz's analysis of
Mitry, Nichols remarks upon the vagueness and lack of material basis which
characterize Metz's description of the notion of "current of signification"
which is nowhere (not contained in any of the images) and yet everywhere.
Nichols attributed Metz's belief in the existence of such a ghostly pheno-
menon to the fact that Metz fails to recognize that the cinema conveys in-
formation by analogue as well as digital means; had Metz conceived of the
possibility of analogic modes of conveying information, he would, Nichols
suggests, have had no need to resort to postulating such phantomic pheno-
mena. This, of course, is not the explanation of the reason for the erroratall:
Metz's view is idealistic. It is surprising that Nichols did not bring out this
point.

Nor does Nichols' suggestion that an analogic model be applied to the study
of the communication process in the cinema really take us that far, since in
theory, any analogic model, finely broken down, can be resolved into a dig-
tal model. The problem does not lie in the conception of the communica-
tion process as being based on discrete pairs of items — the significance of
any lexical item is obviously based upon the fact that it applies only in
certain limited and specifiable conditions and hence involves a differentiation
between the conditions under which it applies and those under which it
does not apply. Nor does the problem lie in the belief that the nature of relations
between the paired items always involves opposition. Only determination in-
volves a negation, an opposition. Rather the problem is that the relationship
is actually one which involves different moments — opposition or antithesis
being one, synthesis being another. Unfortunately space does not permit me
to pursue the ramifications of this fact in depth; the fruits of such realiza-
tion can, however be found in John Tulloch's article in the new periodical
The Australian Journal of Film Theory entitled, "Genetic Structuralism and
the Cinema — a Look at Fritz Lang's Metropolis".

If these qualities of Nichols' work reflect the tone of the pervading critical
scene (as I indeed think they do), what sort of needs does it indicate? One
fundamental oversight which stems from the positivistic outlook is a failure
to come to terms adequately with the nature of the aesthetic experience. Al-
though as Nichols himself points out (p.378) some structuralists have given
evidence of an increasing concern about the nature of the relationship
between the art object and the perceiver, the models which have been used
to help them understand the nature of this relationship have usually been
psychoanalytic.

Psychoanalytic criticism generally does one of three things. Sometimes, it de-
genерates into the process of sifting out the symbolic content of a work and
constructing an interpretation of the work but on the basis of this and others it attempts to understand how the formal construction of a work is determined by its psychological content (for example how the use of the flashbacks and the narrative identification of mother and child in Cria is used to incarnate the Electra situation) and at still others it demonstrates how the formal conditions of a work operate within the psychological economy to provide qualification. These approaches have certain problems in common. One is that they are all essentially interpretive aids; they aid one in producing a kind of analysis of the text of a work but help very little in dealing with that upon which aesthetic value depends — relation and proportion. In light of this, it is remarkable that those structuralist critics who have been so insistent on the value of psychoanalytically based criticism have continued to maintain what are, finally, orthodox approaches to psychoanalytic criticism and have overlooked entirely the work of such radically innovative thinkers as Ehrenzweig. In The Hidden Order of Art, he proposes that the ordering patterns in a work of art are derived from two quite different kinds of perception: a kind of gestaltist vision which operates by differentiating elements in the perceptual field and forming these elements into a conceptually definable figure and a kind of holistic scanning vision which unconsciously absorbs the entire visual field and holds it in an undifferentiated totality. One could, I think, demonstrate that certain tensional features of an artwork result from the way in which the interaction of these ordering systems acts to set up patterns of dissonance and mutual interference. By describing this unconscious ordering, this theory opens up our understanding of another level which the artwork uses to create tension.

Another aspiration frequently voiced by the cine-structuralists that makes it difficult for them to adequately come to terms with the phenomenal aspect of the aesthetic experience is that of "decentering the subject", i.e., of shifting the focus of analysis away from the personality who generates structure towards the structural system itself. In the case of the critic, this implies a bracketing of the consideration of the personal element in his response. This project, it seems to me, is a misguided one. Arnheim has demonstrated the process of perceiving an art object is not merely a passive one; rather it involves the perceiver in a kind of creative construction. Indeed, in a Neo-Kantian turn, he demonstrates that the artwork of which we become aware is not a brute material object which exists independent of any activity of understanding but rather a phenomenal construct whose meaning is conferred upon it by a creative act of understanding. One central task of metacritical theory should be therefore to explain how the perceiver's own existential situation comes to be embodied in the construction of the phenomenal art object. The whole idea of decentering runs counter to this. (In fairness one must allow that Nichols' attitude on this matter is not one of simple rejection of such concerns for he comments with favour on the suggestion that the image-viewer interaction be further scrutinized (p.378). He also praises the project of decentering. It would seem that he would have a difficult task in reconciling these views.)

The concept of an artwork as a phenomenal object casts doubt on the whole idea of an artwork as being an object which embodies deep structures which underlie and inform surface appearances. A phenomenal object is, by definition, constituted strictly by its appearance; it is precisely an object without a hidden otherness, an object which conceals nothing of its being. The only sorts of relations and structures which it can embody are manifest relations between elements of its appearance. Consequently the only sort of analysis appropriate to an object which has this sort of ontological status is one which devotes itself to elucidating the internal interrelationships between the object's sensible elements. An analytic approach bent on discovering latent structures, structures other than those interrelating sensible qualities seems, in this context to be quite mistaken. The possible retort that when structuralists talk of deep structures they are really only speaking
metaphorically, distinguishing between more obvious structures (surface structures) and less obvious ones (deep structures) does not hold up under scrutiny. 'First it is clear that when structuralists talk about deep structures that they are speaking about structures whose ordering principles do not rely exclusively on the object's perceptual features for they involve the object's relation to certain economic, social, political, or psychological formations which stand outside the artwork.

The creative character of the perceiver's response is also important when considering the normative basis of one's critical practice. Just as the act of perception is not only one of passive response to a material object but rather one of creative construction, so too the values involved in the critical process are not values inherent in objects but are actually realized in the formulation of an authentic critical response to a work of art: thus the individual who responds genuinely to a work of art is not a homo scientus discovering through analytic inquiry values objectively embodied in a work of art but rather a homo creator who through his creative activity of responding to a work actually brings its values into being.

The prime virtue of a work of art may indeed be just this, that it evokes a response that involves the realization of value. The scanting of this fact which characterizes the structuralist methodologies threatens to pervert the nature of the critical process converting it from creation to techne. This would be a serious blow to good criticism.

REPLY TO BRUCE ELDER BY BILL NICHOLS

Elder attacks structuralist criticism (to him an undifferentiated amalgam of recent critical approaches) in general and my anthology, Movies and Methods in particular, out of an apparent need to defend the virtue of aesthetic inquiry. The attack is poorly executed as well as misdirected. Does this mean that aesthetic inquiry has indeed lost its virtue? Let us examine Elder's attack in some detail and then see what consequences its tactical errors and strategic failures have for aesthetic inquiry itself, if any.

Every author hopes for a sympathetic reviewer, but most would settle for reviewers who could at least read. Elder, unfortunately, cannot. He does not seem to lack the basic skills of literacy; rather he seems possessed by a blinding kind of zealotry. From the start, it leads him into muddled thinking even before he begins to discuss the anthology.

Elder introduces the notion of "metacritical theories" in his first sentence as a source of procedures for the scientific study of art. He does not distinguish metacriticism and theory though, nor does he explain where his notion of the "scientific" comes from (it sounds like Northrup Frye's which is itself fairly vague), nor does he say whether theory only generates procedures for the scientific study of art. If "metacritical theories" applied to structuralist criticism simply means borrowing models and using methods, the distinction...
between metacritical theories and criticism grows all the more vaguer. Elder compounds his muddle by failing to distinguish theories from models — is there a theory of how to borrow models; is science based on models or theories — which is more fundamental? By the end of the first paragraph he further confounds things by telling us that structuralists use the scientific method, applying models to works to reveal something about the work and to refine the model. Do we really need a scientific method to apply models or build analogies? Is this any different from new criticism in literature or auteur criticism in film? And in the use of the scientific method why doesn't Elder distinguish between developing models and the formulation and testing of hypotheses that leads to models and, sometimes, theories?

This initially blurred picture of the "enemy"— structuralist criticism — never comes into clearer focus. Structuralism remains a group of critical methodologies with a family resemblance (unspecified) that aspires to objective, scientific analysis through recourse to a metacritical theory (unspecified) that tells it to borrow models and use a peculiar kind of scientific method involving models but not hypotheses. Conveniently, this blur allows Elder to classify linguistics, psychoanalysis and anthropology as scientific disciplines without ever differentiating natural from social sciences or empirical from non-empirical science (if the latter does not exist, as it does not seem to for Elder, then why is psychoanalysis called a science as well as a model for structural criticism?).

Elder's conclusion from all this is that structuralism is positivistic and lacks a normative base (another one of Elder's ill-defined terms). The lack of a normative base means that structuralism cannot support aesthetic inquiry. A telling blow has landed to the solar plexus of structural methodology! — Or has it? It is telling only if structuralism aspires to aesthetic inquiry as fervently as it seems to aspire, for Elder, to scientific objectivity. Although some "structural" authors have attempted to propose criteria of value (Wollen's chapter on auteur criticism in Signs and Meaning in the Cinema or perhaps Walsh's Jump Cut article referred to by Elder though it is not clear how a criterion of non-illusionism is based on structuralism rather than a Marxist (via Godard and Brecht) theory of aesthetics, these attempts have been soundly criticized long before Elder rode onto the scene.

Even Movies and Methods, a threat to the virtue of aesthetic inquiry if ever there was one according to Elder, inaugurates its "Structuralism-Semiology" chapter with Sam Rhodie's Totems and Movies and includes Ron Abramson's critique of Wollen's chapter — both articles point out the obvious danger of basing aesthetic judgements on structural analysis. Had Elder read them with care perhaps he would have saved himself the effort of reiterating rather tired warnings against a tendency to confuse structural complexity (in Ford over Hawks, for example, for Wollen) with aesthetic value. Most scholars who are even remotely involved in current research recognize that structural and semiotic methods ask how messages are constructed, what rules or codes organize them. They ask how meaning is communicated not how well it is communicated or even, necessarily, what meaning is communicated.

Elder's charges against Movies and Methods are too unfocused to be considered point-by-point. His greatest distortion is to pretend it is something it doesn't claim to be (a "coretext in survey courses" dominated by structuralist criticism). Not only does the introduction make clear that the anthology presupposes background knowledge — the classic texts and great men whose absence or "cameo" appearance upsets Elder (I'm still trying to find Kracauer's contribution) are described as "the building blocks for much of what is included here" (p.3) — it also devotes only one of seven chapters to structuralism-semiology. Conveniently, though, Elder never mentions that there are feminist, genre, auteur, political or theory chapters, the better to fabricate a straw man for his vituperations.
Elder's next greatest concern is the anthology's distortion of formalism. He chides "Nichols" (the author of a text written in 1972-73) for confusing formalist and imminent criticism. Without citing sources to support his claim he informs "Nichols" that formalist criticism "concerns itself with the manner in which the artwork exploits certain essential material features of the medium in which it is realized in order to evoke tensions." Apparently tensions yield aesthetic experiences and structuralism fails to isolate tensions or only locates those not rooted in "material features" (which features are again on vaguely specified).

This concern about formalist criticism is not a side issue but central to Elder's attempt to rescue aesthetics from the structuralist peril. Apparently formalism falls on the side of aesthetic rather than scientific inquiry though Elder does not wheel out a "metacritical theory" to say so. The closest he comes is to declare that the notion of "an artwork as phenomenal object casts doubts on (the idea that it) embodies deep structures which underlie and inform surface appearance." Perhaps this is what Elder considers providing a normative base. He would be hard put though to deny that the notion of an artwork posed by a structural or marxist perspective "casts doubts" on the idea that it is "constituted strictly by its appearance."

For Elder the appearance of an artwork is a function of its material organization (in a non-marxist sense — material means the physical "stuff" of which the work is made). Aesthetics is linked to the ways in which "tension" (again unspecified as to its range and depth) arises from material features. Since Elder's formalist criticism studies how material features are exploited to evoke tensions it puts us on the royal road to aesthetic inquiry. So far so good. What threat, though, does "structuralist criticism" pose to this nicely packaged itinerary? None at all as far as I can see (and Elder graciously grants "Nichols" an "area of specialization" — structuralist criticism). Since structuralist work uses different assumptions about appearances, and asks different questions about signification, and since efforts to tie structuralism to aesthetics or criteria of value have long since been recognized as misguided in most cases, Elder's valiant defense of aesthetics' virtue seems rather pointless. Let Elder clarify his own assumptions and apply them. Let him produce results rather than attacks on chimerical enemies. Let others then judge the value of the result obtained. In this way we can at least learn something about Elder's notions of aesthetics and formalist criticism while Elder can, hopefully, spare himself the embarrassment of tilting at windmills.

Two final points. First, once we take up assumptions which "cast doubt" upon the primacy and finality of appearances we also begin to doubt the primacy of "material features" and their internal tensions in Elder's sense. External constraints may be just as significant. Hence the difference between a commercial auteur artist and an independent filmmaker remains valid. All art which circulates within a capitalist economy is subject to "market pressure" as Elder calls it, true. This is not the point. The auteur is subject to a range of specific pressures which cannot be cavalierly flattened into the market: does Elder truly believe that the market for "art" functions in a purely homologous manner to the Hollywood industry of production, exhibition, distribution, with star, studio, producer demands, and so on? Saying that all art contends with market pressure, therefore, what really works as a primary constraint is the "nature of cinematic material and form" is flatly absurd. This point is driven home, from a "structuralist perspective" by the editors of Cinéthique (in an attack on Metz's Langage et Cinéma):

If the analysis takes into account not just the primary object of semiology (the study of cinematic language), but its secondary object as well (the study of film as systems), it is possible to argue that the specific codes
(those peculiar to the film material — B.N.) are not necessarily the most important codes of a film system. The nonspecific codes (those carried by the film material but also found elsewhere like speech or gesture - B.N.) also play a role in the establishment of that system, and the question then is whether this role is not perhaps always the primary one. (Screen, 14, no.1/2, p.198.)

This leads to a second and final point. "Structuralism" as Elder constitutes it poses no threat to his brand of aesthetic inquiry. There is indeed a spectre haunting Elder's aesthetics, however. It is Marxism. Oddly enough, Elder doesn't even want to use the word and makes little reference to the marxist edge to Movies and Methods or to the degree to which marxist assumptions interact with structural, psychanalytic feminist, semiotic, and formal methods to pose a very real threat to Elder's notions of a normative aesthetic. Basically, the threat takes the form of reminding us that pleasure is not innocent whereas Elder's brand of aesthetics rests upon a kind of pre-social, "innocent" pleasure exemplified by his reference to Ehrenzweig. Although mechanisms of the sort Elder refers to may be involved, Cinéthique's question remains the central one: how nonspecific and specific codes fabricate a film system and whatever significance and/or pleasure it may afford. By whom and for whom, at what price and to what end is aesthetic pleasure organized? Laura Mulvey, for example, reminds us of the sexist bias built into the star system and the images of women generated there in her article, Visual Pleasure and the Narrative Cinema (Screen, 16, no.3, 1976.) Pursuing this sort of question is not simply to ask different questions of film (as Elder's formal and structural methods do), but to challenge the very viability of traditional aesthetics and its attempt to isolate art from ideology. By refusing to debate this challenge in favour of attacking an imaginary enemy, Elder conveniently attempts to let himself off the hook. The hook, however, will not disappear by wishing it away. In fact, from where I stand, it suspends Bruce Elder in thin air. Hopefully he will find a way to get his feet back on the ground where some real material tensions stand waiting to confront him. ☘️
CINE-TRACTS IS SOLICITING CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ITS READERS. THE LIST BELOW, IS NOT DEFINITIVE AND IS NOT INTENDED TO LIMIT THE RANGE OF MANUSCRIPTS SUBMITTED:

Semiotics and Film — a re-evaluation of the contribution of semiotic theory to the study of film — structuralism and film.
Quebec Cinema — a critical, historical and theoretical overview.
A look back at the work of Cahiers du Cinema and an evaluation of present work in film magazines.
Ethnographic Film

SPECIAL ISSUE NO. 7 FILM AND EDUCATION Deadline December 15, 1978.
Film and Cultural Studies — How are they taught? What role do they play in the present educational system?
General course content
Methodology
Alternatives
Sexism

ISSUE NO. 8 TELEVISION Deadline, March 1, 1979
Theories of Television
History, critical reviews
Breakdown of shows, discussion of production process
Role of State
Monopoly control

We are also interested in reviews of books on culture, film reviews, interviews with media practitioners, filmmakers, etc. and articles on the production process in film and television.
S. Heath: Questions of Property
The First Martin Walsh Lecture

Johan Van Der Keuken: A Discussion
Script from ‘Springtime’

Saul Landau

Comolli: An Interview

Special Canadian Section
R. Scott Litten’s ‘The Promised Land’

Bruce Elder—An Exchange With Bill Nichols