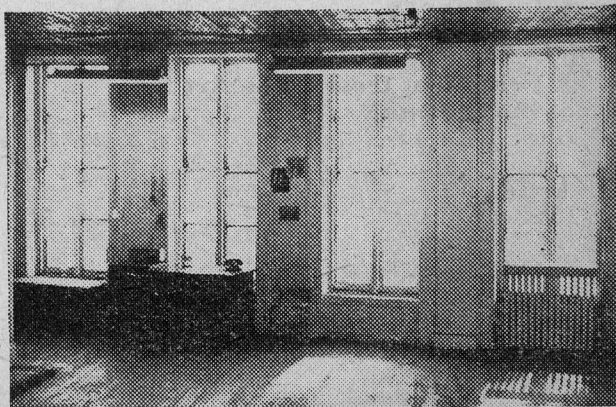
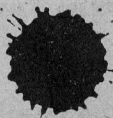
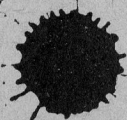
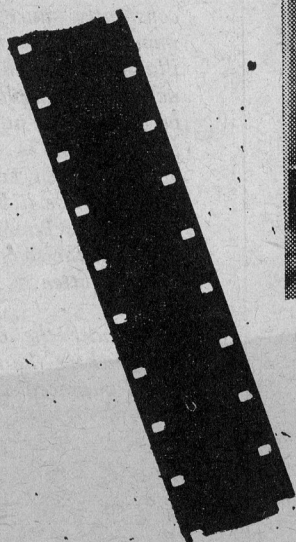


CINEMA 3

Spring '69 in the New Cinema 5/



WAVELENGTH



CINIM 3

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if . . .

a romantic phantasy born of political impotence

The massive house of culture encloses minds which are constantly trying to re-decorate it. The cinema is a room in the house, an essential part of the structure. The room has connecting doors and a few windows. The doors, however, are papered with cobwebs and the windows opaque with grime. Beings, supposedly rational, probably human, people the space between the walls, though the lack of light makes precise observation difficult. The room's inhabitants gesticulate continually, mutter printable pieties, stumble up and down. Even though their English is excellent, they seem to have forgotten that the rest of the house surrounds them. They think that the limits of their room are the limits of existence, and they firmly believe that what they do within the small space is enough. Like the sheets which have not been changed for decades, the ideas which burden the ever more malignant air have outlived their inspiration. The people are trapped in their gestures, in their words, in their newspapers. Like the characters in *The Exterminating Angel*, they dream of freedom (from and to what they cannot remember), kill the occasional stray lamb, even commit suicide every now and again, but since they cannot understand why they are captives in an unbarred room, they continue as before. Seldom but sometimes one of them lights a match, an attempt to see around the cage, but the gusts which ricochet within the running walls, constantly unrepaired by the absent landlord, immediately extinguish the flame and any hope of illumination. This they accept as inevitable, and the act, which emphasises and isolates a single hand, becomes a self-sufficient ritual. The hand, its shape, its crevices, is discussed, debated, defended and derided, often even interviewed. For the lack of anything else it becomes the focus of the room. Its owner loses himself in contemplation, forgetting the others in the room and the room itself. The house is long forgotten.

But under the house in the unpartitioned, dingy cellar where the beams which support the structure stand unconcealed and where everyone has matches

. . . .

S.H.

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MICHAEL SNOW'S FILM WAVELENGTH WON THE GRAND PRIX AT THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL IN KNOCKE-LE-ZOUTE. ON A RECENT VISIT TO ENGLAND HE ANSWERED

Ten Questions to Michael Snow

He wants to make "a film that has no explanation."

1. Why Wavelength?

Critical moment in my life and/or art. Light and sound waves. Limits of hear and see . . . "A time monument". A pun on the room length zoom to the photo of waves (sea), through the light waves and on the sound waves. Electricity. Ontology. "A definitive statement of pure film space and time . . ." "A summation of my nervous system, religious inklings and aesthetic ideas . . ." The quotes from pre-prize piece written for the NY Co-op catalogue.

2. Why is it 46 minutes long?

Nice fuck. Could have been longer, couldn't be shorter. Money! Much shorter and the movement would have been too fast. Much longer was too expensive.

3. What is it about?

It is about question one. Yes. Question one. Also question two, four, five, six and seven. And question three perhaps most.

4. Why does life enter the film?

Life is in the film. One of the subjects of the film or perhaps more accurately what the film is is a "balancing" of different orders, classes of events and protagonists. The image of the yellow chair has as much "value" in its own world as the girl closing the window. In life? the film events are not hierarchical but there is a kind of scale of mobility that runs from pure light events, the various perceptions of the room, to the images of human beings. The inert: the bookcase that gets carried in, the

corpse, visually, dying being a passage from activity to object. Inertia. It is precise that "events take place".

5. Aren't the beginning and the end arbitrary?

They are the beginning and the end of the film. And in between? Where do you start? If you decide to make a film at all that narrows down your choices considerably. Of course it could have been shot somewhere else. From the beginning the end is a factor. In the context of the film the end is not "arbitrary"; it is fated. And past the end it should have ripples. The wave photograph; waves are the visible registrar of invisible forces. Because it is (at first) seen as flat (on the wall) it makes a total spacial ending for the film at the same time as an image it implies continuity.

6. What determined your choice of the different textures?

I presume you mean the colour and light-value changes. They were given their tendency by the arranging of the different kinds of film stock which was done before shooting. Basically I played/improvised with plastics and filters while shooting, bearing in mind many considerations, such as their relationship to the human images, their "abstractness", though their passages of complementaries as a general form they go from warm colours to cool. Spectrum. Oppositions are drama. I didn't always make a "choice". I was surprised and wanted to be. However I set up a system or container which could both shape the fortuitous and give it a place. I wouldn't make works of art if I knew etc.

7. How does the sound track function?

Like the image, the sound starts as "representational", "realistic", when the image becomes "abstract" (negative sequence) that is, one does not "believe" in the image in the "real" way, the sound also becomes "abstract". These terms are reversible. The sine-wave *glissando* is "realer" than the other. One does not have the "feeling" of being in some other place (dream-drug aspect of film). It is "concrete" while, for example, *Strawberry Fields* on the radio—in the film is already a quote of a quote etc. This *glissando* is all the sound we can hear. What else is there? It's meant to be an ear equivalent of the zoom. I think of all the sounds as music and compose in that way. The sound of glass breaking, etc.

against the sine-wave before the-man-who-dies enters is very beautiful to me.

8. How did you get there?

Have been working on it for all of my lives.

9. Where do you go after?

I'm going to Edinburgh on Tuesday.

10. What would you say to the spectator who, after a few minutes, wants to walk out?

I might be interested in his or her reasons. It might be interesting to discuss them. It might lead to friendship or sexual intercourse or both. I would hope that he or she would not disturb the others, some of whom presumably might wish to stay.

On Chelsea Girls

by Omar Diop

Whether you consider Andy Warhol's *Chelsea Girls* to be fiction or document, it is an event, a rupture in the history of the cinema and an attack on the morality implicit in the image.

Chelsea Girls is a monster born in the mind of a dilettante who puts the technical extremism of a Godard to the service of the moral metaphysics of a de Sade. An infernal machine puts on the screen a universe which only obeys its own laws.

A convenient and traditional way of defining the cinema is that "it takes us out of the world in which we live in order to transport us to a different world, that of film." *Chelsea Girls* is at once much simpler and much more complex. It is, in itself, a perfectly homogeneous and self-sufficient world. It is, however, radically different from any other film, because it starts from a position which is its functioning principle, CAMERA=GOD. For Spinoza all ethical propositions are developments of the position, GOD=SUBSTANCE. For Warhol all images flow from the axiom,

CAMERA=GOD. But what does that mean? The camera is no longer merely a bit of technical equipment. It is the norm. In the formal universe of the cinema, it means that "the camera is that which is determined by nothing but itself". The camera is the equivalent of substance in Spinoza's system, since it is what is permanent in the film. The people and objects in the film are no more than the attributes or modes of the substance, passing deformations, undulations on an imperturbable road. This is the essential cinematic vision in *Chelsea Girls*. Proof of it is the almost complete absence of editing in the film. A shot lasts for twenty minutes, content to arrange and construct a cinematic discourse purely with the film's rhythm. This alone is sufficient matter for reflection by past and future film makers.

Whereas Hitchcock makes use of the treasures of his imagination and technical ability to construct a shot, Warhol eliminates all this technical sophistication. His primitive technique consists

in simply positioning the camera somewhere vaguely central, opening rather than setting the diaphragm, focusing, approximately, and letting the film run.

No one who has read Spinoza will find this extraordinary, for he points out that, "liberty is necessity understood well". Warhol applies this idea to the image's interior necessity. Technique becomes aesthetic, because the continuous shot, which lasts as long as the reel, accepts the camera's own logic. In order to continue to respect this logic, the image must not be an *a priori* construction of the film maker. The camera must be given the task of actualising the image in the same way a piano actualises the idea of the pianist.

All this is quite comprehensible if one accepts the initial postulate of CAMERA=GOD, i.e. that which is determined by nothing but itself. The film maker cannot allow himself to interfere with the essential structure of the image, because if he does, he risks altering the purity of the cinematic language by the introduction of another language. This is, perhaps, the most monstrous aspect of the film. Warhol does not use the camera as an instrument. He is, on the contrary, its servant, content to procure its objects which it can devour. He cannot even be accused of realism, since he does not pretend that he is presenting objects or meaningful aspects of any particular reality. It is this characteristic which makes *Chelsea Girls* an experimental film and not, as one could believe, because it is a sensational documentary.

Warhol tries to free himself from a mode of representation which the cinema might well consider to be its own, as well as from any other existant mode of representation. The film is, in fact, the very negation of realism, or of documentary realism. It releases a succession of autonomous structures. What is offered to the camera's eye is only of secondary importance. (I hope that after *Chelsea Girls* no one will ever again ask me: "What is the film about?") A film is always about itself; it makes use of other things, e.g. characters, objects, etc. . . , Andy Warhol is a genius, because he dares to let the film run in order to *see* what will happen. But whatever he may say, the film evokes phenomena which exist outside its strict framework.

There is, first of all, a very special rhythm in *Chelsea Girls*, a Sadic slowness. It makes you think of fleeing in a nightmare. Someone is chasing you. You run, but your legs will not move fast enough. You fall, get up, and fall again in a movement of inexorable anguish. It is amazing how many of the monotonous camera movements, which animate the two screens, bring an instrument of torture to mind, a rack moved by drops of water. In the closed universe of the Chelsea Hotel, the camera, like a sweet emanation from hell, rolls on. And it is not hard to understand why he chose this sort of marginal, Village humanity. Warhol could easily have placed the eye of his voracious god in a fishing village on the Gulf, if he were not afraid that the cinematic discourse would get lost behind the ethnology. For the sake of the clarity and validity of his experience, he had to show something which totally, or, at least, in large part, went beyond the officially accepted ways of thinking, speaking, and acting. This was the best way of demonstrating that the cinema, as it is, can do things that no other language can do. The residents of the Chelsea Hotel are not the objects of a sociological investigation. They are never introduced. We know neither how they got there nor from where they came. They are only seen, and in this sense they can be considered as the first purely cinematic characters of the film's short history. The only nature they possess is given to them by the film. They are images only images. They can only communicate through the camera, which makes them say things and which suggests the meaning of their words. The Chelsea Hotel is surely the modern equivalent of the Divine Marquis's chateau. It is, perhaps, even more frightening, because in the Chelsea Hotel there is no longer even any need to justify one's acts. They are autonomous and self-sufficient. For a long time a girl cuts the hair on her forehead, very slowly. She smiles at a child, hugs him, and starts to cut again. From time to time the camera leaves her torso to wander down her trousers or onto the stove. The scissors, her hair, her breasts, her slacks, the electric stove are all of equal importance. All objects for the camera. Ingrid enters shot to kneel in front of the Pope of the Village. Confession, psychoanalytic relationship, it does not matter, much less, at least, than Ingrid's superb tics.

Strange, perhaps revolting, beautiful.

AT A RECENT NEW CINEMA FESTIVAL IN PESARO, ITALY, A NUMBER OF EMINENT PHILOSOPHERS AND FILM MAKERS DISCUSSED ASPECTS OF THE THEME "LANGUAGE AND IDEOLOGY IN FILM". WHAT FOLLOWS IS A TRANSLATION OF PIER PAOLO PASOLINI'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE CONVERSATION, "DISCOURSE ON THE SHOT SEQUENCE, OR THE CINEMA AS THE SEMIOLOGY OF REALITY". FOOTNOTES HAVE BEEN ADDED BY THE TRANSLATOR.

The Pesaro Papers

by Pier Paolo Pasolini

Let us examine the 16mm film strip of Kennedy's death, the one shot by a spectator in the crowd. It is a series of shots, and it is the most typical shot sequence imaginable (1). The spectator-camera-man did not consciously choose his camera angle. He filmed from where he stood, including what his eye, rather than his lens, saw. The typical shot sequence is, therefore, subjective (2). This film strip contains none of the shots that would be found in a constructed film of Kennedy's death: none of Kennedy himself, of Jacqueline, of the assassin firing, of the accomplices, of people safe in the crowd, of the escort police, etc., etc.

If we actually had a film like this, with all these shots, what would we have? A series of shot sequences, which reproduce real actions and things, seen contemporaneously from different points of view, as they were at that precise moment, seen, that is, as a series of subjective shots. The subjective shot is the extreme limit of realism available to any audio-visual technique. It is not possible to conceive of "seeing and hearing" reality completely, *if not from a single visual angle*. Such a visual angle is always that of a seeing and hearing subject. This subject is a flesh and blood subject, because even if we—in a fiction film—select an ideal camera position, and therefore in some way abstract and denaturalise, this position becomes realistic, and, in the extreme, naturalistic, the moment we position a camera and a tape recorder there. It becomes an event seen and heard by a flesh and blood subject, i.e. a subject with eyes and ears.

Reality, seen and heard as it happens, is always in

the present tense. The tense of a shot sequence, understood as the primordial schematic element of cinema—that is, an infinite subjective shot—is, therefore, also the present. Cinema, consequently, "reproduces the present". Live television is a paradigmatic reproduction of the present, of something happening.

Let us suppose for the moment that instead of having only one film strip of Kennedy's death we have a dozen analogous film strips which subjectively reproduce his dying moment. What would be the result if—even for purely documentary reasons (for example, in the cinema used by the police investigating the crime)—we saw all these shot sequences one after the other, i.e. if we join them together mentally if not physically? We will end up with a *multiplication of presents*, as if an action which could, before our eyes, take place only once would take place more than once. In fact, such a multiplication of "presents" abolishes the present, makes it useless, because each of these "presents" points out the relativity, the unreliability, the imprecision and the ambiguity of the other.

If we were taking part in the police investigation—and, hence, uninterested in aesthetic questions but very interested in the documentary value of the film strips as visual testimony of a real event which must be reconstructed exactly—the first question we would ask ourselves would be: "Which of the film strips represents most approximately the true reality of the event?" This irreversible chapter of reality was enacted before so many inadequate eyes and ears (or film cameras

and tape recorders). Each pair of these natural organs or technical instruments perceived the event in a different way (high angle, low angle, long shot, close up, etc.). When one considers that there is *only one reality* and that many, infinitely many, are the ways of perceiving it, it is no wonder that these modes of perception seem so extremely impoverished, precarious, almost pitiful.

It is, nevertheless, clear that reality, even with its many faces, manages to express itself. It spoke to those who were there taking part (BECAUSE REALITY CANNOT SPEAK WITH OTHERS EXCEPT THROUGH ITSELF). It spoke with its language, the language of action (which is completed by human, symbolic and conventional languages). A rifle shot, more shots, a body falls, a car stops, a woman screams, many people shout. All these *non-symbolic signs* tell us that, here and now in the present, something has happened, the death of a President. The tense is, I repeat, the present of the various subjective points of view, as in a shot sequence which has been filmed from the various positions in which destiny has placed the witnesses with their feeble cultural organs or technical tools.

The language of action is, therefore, the language of non-symbolic signs in present time, yet, in the present, it has no meaning or, at most, it has only subjective meaning which is incomplete, uncertain, and mysterious. *With his last act the dying Kennedy expressed himself.* He fell to the seat of the black Presidential limousine, and died in the weak arms of a petit bourgeois American woman. But this last language of action, used by Kennedy to express himself before the numerous spectators, remains, in the present, suspended and uncertain. Each instant of the language of action is *a search*. For what? For a systematization which relates both to itself and to the objective world. It is a search for a connection with all the other languages of action. In this case, Kennedy's last *living syntagms* (3) searched for a connection with the living syntagms of those who, by being around him at that moment, expressed themselves, e.g. the living syntagms of the assassin or assassins who fired.

Until these living syntagms find a connection with each other, they are faulty, incomplete and

practically incomprehensible. How then can they become complete and comprehensible? The relations that they each seek, almost grope for, have to become stabilised. But not by means of a simple multiplication of "presents"—as would occur if we juxtaposed the various subjective points of view—but by co-ordinating them. Co-ordination does not limit itself, as does juxtaposition, to destroying and making useless the concept of the present. It makes the present become the past. Only events which occur and which are finished can be co-ordinated with each other, and, thus, acquire a meaning.

Now let us make another supposition: there is, among the police investigators who have viewed the various and hypothetical film strips joined together one after the other, a man of clever and analytic mind. His singularity stems from his ability to co-ordinate. Intuiting the truth, he—by an attentive analysis of the film strips—would be able to reconstruct the event. He would choose the really significant moments from the subjective shot sequences, and then find their real order. In other words, he would edit. As a result of this selection and co-ordination, the disconnection of the separate visual angles would disappear, and the existential subjective would become objective. The impoverished couples of eye and ear (camera and tape recorder), which in vain try to gather and reproduce the fleeting and unfriendly reality, would be replaced by a narrator who transforms present into past.

From this we can conclude that the cinema (or better, the audio-visual technique) is, substantially, an infinite shot sequence, in exactly the same way as reality is, during the time we can see and hear, to our eyes and ears (i.e. an infinite subjective shot sequence which ends when our life ends). This shot sequence is nothing other than the reproduction of the language of action. It is, in other words, the reproduction of the present.

When the editing process begins, when cinema becomes film (which are two very different things, in the same way that 'langue' differs from 'parole' (4)), the present becomes past (when co-ordination takes place through the various living languages), a past which for reasons inherent to the medium, and not from aesthetic choice, always has

the modes of the present tense. It is, therefore, an *historical present*.

Now I want to talk about death (I leave the sceptics free to wonder what this has to do with cinema). I have said many times, and, unfortunately, always badly, that reality has a language of its own. We need a textbook of General Semiology (5) to describe this language, but as yet no such text exists. (Up to now semiologies have always examined well defined and differentiated objects, the existing languages—whether they are based on signs or not.) It has not as yet been understood that semiology is the descriptive science of reality.

As far as man is concerned, the language of reality coincides with human action. Man expresses himself above all in his actions—understood not merely pragmatically—because his actions modify reality and influence the spirit. But this action lacks unity, or even sense, *until it is completed*. While Lenin was alive, the language of his action was still, in part, undecipherable, because it was still incomplete, susceptible to modification by future action. In short, as long as a man has a future, an unknown, he is incomplete, unexpressed. An honest man can, at 60, commit a crime. This reprehensible act changes all his past acts; he becomes something different from that which he was before. Until I am dead no one will be able to guarantee that they really know me, i.e. be able to give my actions a meaning, because as a linguistic object it is undecipherable.

It is, therefore, absolutely necessary to die, because as long as we live we do not make sense. The language of our life (with which we express ourselves and to which we give the utmost significance) is untranslatable, a chaos of possibilities, a search for connections and meanings without a solution in continuity. Death produces a quick montage of life. It chooses the most important moments (which can no longer be modified other possible, contrary, or incoherent moments). It transforms our infinite, unstable and uncertain present into a clear, stable, certain past which is linguistically describable (in a General Semiology). It is only thanks to death that our life helps us to express ourselves.

Editing works on film in the same way death works on life. Film could be defined as “words

without language”. In fact, to understand films we refer not to the cinema but to reality. My identification of the cinema with reality should make it clear that in the General Semiology (of reality) the semiology of the cinema would be no more than one chapter.

A shot: boy with black curly hair, dark and laughing eyes, face covered with acne, slightly swollen—as if hyperthyroid—throat, expression at once cheerful and comic emanates from his whole being. Does this shot *from a film* refer, perhaps, to—as would the cinema if defined by analogy with “*langue*”—a social pact made up of symbols? Yes, it refers to this social pact, but this pact, *since it is not symbolic, does not differentiate itself from reality*, that is, from the flesh and blood Ninetto Davoli (6) reproduced in the shot.

We already have in our heads a sort of “Code of Reality” (or that now famous text of General Semiology). By making use of this unexpressed and unconscious Code, our key to the understanding of reality, we understand the films we see. To sum this up in the most simple and elementary way, we recognize in films reality expressing itself to us as it does in daily life.

A character in the cinema, as in every moment of reality, speaks to us through signs, or *living syntagms*, which when subdivided into chapters could be: (I) the language of physical presence; (II) the language of behaviour; (III) the language of written-spoken language. All are synthesised from the language of action, which stabilizes the connections with us and with the objective world. In a General Semiology each of these chapters should be further subdivided into a number of paragraphs. I have for a long time wanted to develop this idea more fully, but for the moment I will limit myself to pointing out that the second chapter, “The Language of Behaviour”, would certainly be the most interesting and complex. It could be subdivided into two parts: “The Language of General Behaviour” (which would synthesise all the kinds of behaviour to be learnt through education in a codifying society) and “The Language of Specific Behaviour” (which would be used to express oneself in particular social situations and in given informal moments within those situations).

If, for example, we take the actor with black curly hair and acne to whom I referred earlier, the language of *general behaviour*—in a series of his acts, expressions, and words—immediately indicates to me his historic, ethnic, and social background. The language of his specific behaviour establishes with the most extreme possible precision this background (as dialect and slang do in relation to a language). The language of specific behaviour is, in substance, constituted from a series of ceremonies, the archetype of which belongs decidedly to the natural or animal world: the peacock who spreads his tail feathers, the cock who crows after coitus, the flower which, in a particular season, shows its colours. The language of the world is fundamentally a spectacle. In a fight the curly haired boy would not transgress the popular code: from the first line of dialogue, pronounced with the timorous voice of a person who does not feel very well, to the first almost compassionate threats, the first punch with hands open and palms open at the other's chest, etc.

From the various living ceremonies in the language of specific behaviour, one arrives almost imperceptibly at the conscious ceremonies: from those which are magic and archaic to those established by education in the contemporary bourgeois civilisation, until one arrives, always imperceptibly, at the symbolic human languages which do not depend on signs, the languages in which man, in order to express himself, uses his own body. Religious ceremonies, mime, dance, and theatre belong to this type of LIVING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE, as does the cinema.

I want now to point out how much of a General Semiology could be at once the semiology of reality and the semiology of the cinema. This can be done by considering only one other point, audio-visual reproduction. A grammar of the cinema could be based and constructed on such means of reproduction—which recreate in the cinema the same linguistic characteristics as in life understood as language. I must emphasize—and this is the central point of this paper—that even if there is, semiologically, no difference between time in the cinema and time in life—both being infinite shot sequences—there is a crucial difference between time and life and time in films.

If we take a pure shot sequence, an audio-visual reproduction shot subjectively, it is a fragment of the infinite succession of things and actions, which, potentially, can be reproduced. In its pure state such a shot sequence would be made up of a series of extraordinarily boring things and actions. Five minutes of my life, if they were projected onto a screen, would be completely without either interest or relevance. This is, of course, not so for me, because my body is alive. Those five minutes are five minutes of the vital soliloquy that reality has with itself. Nevertheless, our pure hypothetical shot sequence stresses the insignificance of life by representing it. But reflecting on this shot sequence, I come to know—with the certainty of a laboratory experiment—that the fundamental proposition expressed by something insignificant is: "I am", or "There is", or, simply, "To be".

But is "being" natural? No, not for me; on the contrary, to me it seems wonderful, mysterious, and, if anything, absolutely unnatural. In a fiction film, the shot sequence, as I have defined it, becomes the most 'naturalistic' moment in the cinematic narrative. A man slaps a woman, gets into a car, and drives off down the Autostrada del Mare. I'd put the camera and recorder in a place where it would be a flesh and blood, piteously naturalistic, witness, and shoot the whole scene in one shot—as a witness would see and hear it—up to the point when the car disappears towards Ostia. In the event that actually takes place before me as in its reproduction, the proposition, "That is all", is fundamental and dominant. (Nevertheless, since I am not indifferent to reality, I am potentially not indifferent to a reproduction of reality. I judge the film with the aid of that Code of Reality, and the film reproduces in me just about the same feelings I would have felt if I had lived through the experience.)

The cinema is accused of naturalism, because it will never be able to do without these shot sequences, these reproductions of reality. But the fear of naturalism is (at least in the cinema) the fear of being. It is basically fear of the naturalness of being and of the terrible ambiguity of reality, due to forgetting that the cinema is based in the past tense. And that is hardly naturalism! Making films is like writing on burning paper.

Let us take, to explore the nature of naturalism in the cinema, an extreme case, one which is presented to us as an avante-garde experiment. In the basements of New York's New Cinema long shot sequences are shown for hours and hours (for example, a man sleeping). This is pure cinema, and as such, as a representation of reality from a particular visual point of view, is subjective in the most insanely naturalistic way. As ever, the New Cinema is an extreme cultural consequence of Neo-realism with its cult of the document and of the truth. But while Neo-realism cultivated its cult of reality with optimism, good sense, and bonhomie, the New Cinema turns everything upside down. With its cult of exasperated reality and with its interminable shot sequences, the New Cinema, instead of stating the proposition, "What is insignificant IS", says, "What is IS insignificant". This insignificance is felt with such pain and anger that it assaults the spectator, his idea of order, and his human existential love for what is. The short, sensitive, measured, natural, affable, neo-realistic shot sequence gives us the pleasure of recognizing the reality in which we live daily. We enjoy it as an aesthetic confrontation with academic conventions. The long, unfelt, unmeasured, unnatural, silent shot sequence of the New Cinema, on the contrary, makes us feel a horror of reality. It is an aesthetic confrontation with neo-realistic naturalism, accepted as the academy of life.

Rhythm is the practical difference between real life and reproduced life. But it is also this temporal question which distinguishes the cinema from the cinema. The length of a shot or the rhythm with which shots follow each other change the value of the film, places it in one school, or one epoch, or one ideology rather than another.

If we consider that in fiction films the illusion of a shot sequence can be created by editing, the importance of the shot sequence becomes even greater. One has really to choose a world. While a real shot sequence reproduces a real action exactly, a *constructed* shot sequence (which is found in most neo-realistic films but also in the naturalistic conventions of the commercial cinema) imitates the corresponding real action, reproduces its various facets, and sews them together in a time which is false while pretending naturalness.

The primary characteristic of the New Cinema's editing is to point out this falsification of real time (or, as in the case of those eternal shot sequences, to point out its exasperation by overturning the significance of the insignificant). Are the film makers of the New Cinema right? Has the real time of a film to be destroyed? And must this destruction become the basic element of style? Must the spectator be denied the illusion of an action developing in time?

It seems to me that the film makers of the New Cinema do not die enough in their films. They agitate, contort, and torture themselves in their films, but they do not die in them. Their films bear witness to the suffering engendered by the absurd phenomenon that is time, but they are, in this sense, interpretable only as human gestures. The fear of naturalism limits them to being merely documents. Their subjectivity, when taken to the point of either an infinite shot sequence (which inures the spectator in the irrelevance of his own reality) or of a kind of editing (which subverts the illusion of something happening in time, i.e. the spectator's reality), ends up being the subjectivity of a psychological case study. Even in the most avante-garde, and apparently indecipherable, pages of literature reality is, at least, evoked. We cannot escape from reality, because it speaks with itself and we are a part of its circle. In an illegible page of avante-garde writing—as in a shot sequence which exasperates time until whatever illusion of re-living reality through it is taken from us—there is always a reality which comes out; it is the reality of the author who in the text expresses his psychological poverty, his literary calculus, his noble or ignoble petit bourgeois neurosis.

I must repeat that a life is really and entirely decipherable only after death, at which point its spaces are eliminated and the insignificant disappears. Life's fundamental proposition is no longer simply "To be", and its naturalness becomes, therefore, a mistaken target, a false ideal. Those who make a shot sequence in order to demonstrate the horrible insignificance of life make an error equal and opposite to those who make a sequence which demonstrates the poetry of insignificance. The continuum of life—at the moment of death or at the moment of editing—loses all its temporal infinity, in which while

living we bask enjoying the complete correspondence of our physical life—which carries us to consummation—with the passage of time. There are no moments when this correspondence is not perfect. After death this continuity of life is no more, but there is, instead, *its meaning*. Either be immortal and unexpressed or express yourself and die. The difference, therefore, between the cinema and life is negligible. The General Semiology which describes life can also describe the cinema. While an action which takes place in life—for example me standing here—has as meaning its sense—which can be deciphered only after death, an action which takes place in the cinema has as meaning the meaning of the same action in life. It, therefore, has its sense only indirectly (a sense which in the same way is really only decipherable after death). The difference, then, between life and the cinema is that in a film an action (figurative sign, expressive means, living reproduced syntagm—use whatever name you prefer), carried out by the same people in the same natural and social situation, already has its complete and decipherable sense, just as if death had already taken place. What I mean to say is that in film time is finite, even if it is a fiction. For it is a fiction that must be accepted. Its time is not that of life as lived but of life after death. Seen like this it is real as it is. It is not an illusion and can very easily be that of a story in a film.

- (1) In Italian “shot sequence” also suggests a series of geometric planes.
- (2) “Subjective” and “subjective shot” are in Italian the same word.
- (3) “. . . the syntagm is a combination of signs, which has space as a support . . . it derives its value from its opposition to what precedes and what follows; . . . the analytical activity which applies to the syntagm is that of carving out.”
Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, Jonathan Cape, London.
- (4) A distinction made in semiology between the structured system and the individual meaning carrying units.
- (5) “. . . a general science of signs, or Semiology, of which linguistics would form only one part. Semiology therefore aims to take in any system of signs, whatever their substance and limits; images, gestures, musical sounds, objects, and the complex associations of all these, which form the content of ritual, convention or public entertainment: these constitute, if not language, at least systems of signification.”
Barthes, *op. cit.*
- (6) An actor Pasolini has used in a number of his films.

The Movie Experience

by Stella Townson

was

(1938) *SNOW WHITE*:

sweating panic down among the cigarette ends each time the witch appeared

(1948) *JOHNNY BELINDA*:

people making short journeys;

Jane Wyman hurt

“Mummy, what did he do to her?”

(1948) *SARABAND FOR DEAD LOVERS*:

Stewart Granger—

Brylcreem, a fine upper lip of restraining principle, and a lower of combustible and inevitably triumphant inclination

first catch in the breath

(1948) *HAMLET*:

Larry Olivier in a stiff-backed chair, but his VOICE and Walton's sote authenticke flute

(1955) *TO CATCH A THIEF*:

Grace Kelly flip to Cary Grant over a chicken salad hamper “Leg or breast?”

wandering with a friend in Oxford Street when suddenly is

(1957) *THE SEVENTH SEAL*:

steady monochrome frames, the slow preparations for Art

(1959) *LA DOLCE VITA*:

a girl waves—the images speed up, are flashing through—
scramble up into the frame, this is living more than life

(1965) *PLASTER DEATH*:

stopped by one single frame—a spasm—one is a huge throat that cannot swallow

‘As a kid, when I saw *The Wicked Lady* at the Odeon in Toronto,

I thought it was an art movie’ PETER HARCOURT

THE NEW CINEMA IS VERY MUCH ALIVE IN LATIN AMERICA, BUT THE TASTE-MAKERS HAVE NOT BROUGHT MUCH OF IT HERE. THE ONLY FILMS WHICH ARE AVAILABLE IN ENGLAND ARE CUBAN (THROUGH THE CUBAN EMBASSY). THE BRAZILIANS, THE ARGENTINIANS, AND THE MEXICANS HAVE ALSO MADE SOME BRILLIANT "NEWSREELS", HERE ALEX VIANY, A BRAZILIAN CRITIC AND FILM MAKER, CONTRIBUTES SOME

Notes on Cinema Novo

Almost forty international awards in seven years. Retrospective programmes in Berlin, Genoa, Moscow and New York. Many articles and discussions in some of the most influential film magazines in the world. The increasing respect shown by important critics towards such Brazilian directors as Rui Guerra, Glauber Rocha, Nelson Pereira dos Santos, and Paulo César Saraceni. And these are just a few of the victories won by Brazil's young, fighting Cinema Novo.

The first stirrings of the movement were felt in the early fifties when some young film makers began a two-front fight against pretentious, Hollywood type, big productions (represented by Vera Cruz' films), and cheap musical comedies (the so-called *chanchadas*), and found an immediate echo among young critics and cineastes. The name, Cinema Novo, appeared for the first time around 1959-60, but it was then as fluid and undefined as the French *nouvelle vague*. Since 1961, Cinema Novo's starting point, each year has brought the revelation of important new talents. The movement includes some 30 directors, most of them in their twenties or early thirties, and many of them with only one feature film to their credit. But, of course, since it includes so many aggressive and contrasting personalities, who want to capture and denounce the Brazilian turmoil, Cinema Novo cannot be thought of as a serene, academic movement. In 1961, 23 year old Glauber Rocha,

then known mainly as one of the most stimulating critics of the younger generation, after his first practical exercises in two short, almost secret, films, was already looking back with awe while awaiting the release of his film *Barravento*. "What did we want?" he asked. "When Miguel Borges put out a manifesto, he said we should want *cinema-cinema*." At the Santa Margherita Ligure Latin American Festival, Gustavo Dahl launched a revolutionary slogan: "We can't be bothered with cinema. We want to hear the voice of man". And Paulo César Saraceni said, "Cinema Novo is a question of truth, not of age." Glauber Rocha proclaimed, "We do not want Eisenstein, Rossellini, Bergman, Fellini, Ford, or anybody else", adding that "our cinema is new because Brazilian man is new and Brazilian problems are new, and our light is new, and that is why our films are born different from European cinema". Cinema Novo wanted to make *author films*, said he, "where the movie-maker becomes an artist capable of tackling the great problems of his time; we want to make fighting films for a fighting age, and films to build up a cultural heritage in Brazil".

More recently Nelson Pereira dos Santos said that, in fact, one of Cinema Novo's greatest contributions was to give cultural status to the Brazilian cinema. And indeed the film business is now seen as a wonderful field for any young man of talent who may want to throw his own social and/or

political ideas into Brazil's boiling cultural caldron.

"The old stupidity was so great", wrote critic Orlando Sena back in 1961, "that the new trends seem almost revolutionary, when they should have been borne as naturally as a necessary endeavour. Like any revolution, this one is beginning violently, and we are obliged to be violent". And Miguel Tôrres, a former sailor who had just enough time to show promise as one of Brazil's most imaginative screen writers before dying while location hunting in 1962, had even stronger words to say about Cinema Novo's aims: "Our truth is here in Brazil, in an underdeveloped country, only recently emerging from prehistoric times. We have to kill, to violate, even with refinements of perversity. That's our barbaric truth".

Notwithstanding all difficulties—great in all fields and on all levels since the rightist military coup of April Fool's Day, 1964—the last five years have been full of affirmations and revelations, with such remarkable first feature films as Andrade's *O Padre e a Mãe*, Bressane's *Cara a Cara*, Hirszman's *A Falecida*, Jarbor's *Opiniao Pública*, Lima's *Menino de Engenho*, and Person's *Sao Paulo S/A*, as well as such second works as Diegues' *A Grande Cidade*, Roberto Santos' *A Hora e Vez de Augusto Matraga* (The Hour and Time of Augusto Matraga), and Saraceni's *O Desafio* (The Challenge).

Nelson Pereira dos Santos' *Vidas Secas* could be seen as the crowning accomplishment of Cinema Novo's formative period; and Glauber Rocha's barbaric *Deus e o Diabo na Terra do Sol* (God and the Devil in the Land of the Sun) as the opening shot for a second innings. With his third film, *Terra em Transe* (Earth's Throes), Glauber Rocha places the movement on a new, much higher, plane.

In general terms, the first period had as an important characteristic the great social problems of Rio's *favelados* (hill-dwellers) and North-eastern Brazil's *cangaceiros* (old-time bandits) and *retirantes* (drought-ridden migrants). In *Vidas Secas*, Nelson Pereira dos Santos attained maturity and gave a tragic tone to the saga of the nordestinos (North-easterners); in *Deus e o Diabo na Terra*

do Sol, Glauber Rocha let out a revolutionary cry and put the theme on an epic plane; and now, in *O Dragao da Maldade contra o Santo Guerreiro* (The Evil Dragon against the Holy Warrior), he takes his bandit-chaser, Antnôio das Mortes, on an arduous trip to consciousness.

The period now in full development will probably be marked by a larger number of literary adaptations (such as *Menino de Engenho* and *Augusto Matraga*, and now Joaquim Pedro de Andrade's *Macunaima* and Glauber Rocha's *Quarup*), more investigations of urban life (such as *A Grande Cidade* and *Sao Paulo S/A*, and now Julio Bressane's *Cara a Cara* and Antônio Carlos Fontoura's *Copacabana me Engana*), and a closer view of today's political and social issues (as in *O Desafio* and *Opiniao Publica*, and now in Gustavo Dahl's *O Bravo Guerreiro* and Mauricio Gomes Leite's *A Vida Provisória*).

This last trend may take many different forms: Glauber Rocha has a surrealist allegory in *Terra em Transe*; Walter Lima Jr. goes into science fiction in *Brasil Ano 2,000* (Brazil Year 2,000); Carlos Diegues will follow a Brazilian family from the past to the future in *O Brado Retumbante* (The Resounding Cry).

"Art is as difficult as loving, and what remains of good in these young men", said Miguel Tôrres in 1962, "is that almost nobody has great certainties. Fortunately, up to now nobody has found an absolute truth . . . Our duty is to record the historical, political and social moment of our era, and we shall try to do that without mixing paints to please anybody's vision . . . As long as we do not make films to break up public conformity . . . we shall not be equal to our present times."

Many are those who are trying to follow Tôrres' ideas. Right now, not counting many possible first films, Joaquim Pedro de Andrade, Miguel Borges, Julio Bressane, Ibere Cavalcanti, Eduardo Coutinho, Carlos Diegues, Rui Guerra, Leon Hirszman, Arnaldo Jabôr, Flavio Migliaccio, Domingos Oliveira, Luis Sérgio Person, Glauber Rocha, Nelson Pereira dos Santos, Roberto Santos, Paulo César Saraceni, Geraldo Sarno, Paulo Gil Soares and others are working on new projects—and anything may happen.

EVERY REAL FILM IS A DISCOVERY OF THE CINEMA. THE NEAT, UNREAL DIVISION BETWEEN FILM MAKING AND FILM CRITICISM RESULTS IN EMPTY AND PASSIVE, IF NOT IRRELEVANT AND STUPID, WRITING ON THE CINEMA. THE FACT THAT FEW CRITICS HAVE ANY IDEA ABOUT THE DECISIONS THAT A FILM MAKER HAS TO MAKE MEANS THAT MANY REALLY INVENTIVE, IMPORTANT FILMS GET LOST, KILLED BY TURGID PROSE AND INCOMPREHENSION. KRAMER'S FILMS ARE EXAMPLES OF THIS PROCESS AT WORK. HERE, UNFORTUNATELY PERHAPS TOO LATE, NORM FRUCHTER, HIMSELF A FILM MAKER, RECALLS

Shooting *In The Country* and *The Edge*

We started shooting *In the Country* in September 1966, after Robert Machover and I had finished our documentary, *Troublemakers*. Kramer had been an activist in the community organising project which was the centre of *Troublemakers*, and during the editing we found that we valued his eye more than anyone else's. When he unearthed an old shooting script and asked if we could film it using verité equipment (16mm Eclair, Nagra and minimum lights), we jumped in. Folly. Or rather, the hardest three months of our lives. Kramer set to work in two directions at once: casting and revising the script. I ducked out of casting after we shot a 15 minute screen test which cost us 50 dollars. None of us was sure what we were looking for, or how to shoot it. Kramer interviewed maybe 20 young actors before he found his lead, and probably as many actresses without finding anybody. He finally

settled on Catherine Merrill, Machover's girl. Small problems created during the screening of early rushes when Bill Devane, the lead, complained about getting sandwiched between the cameraman's affection and his own bad profile. Less enviable problems: Kramer wrote the script in short scenes, numbered like license plates (EE₁, H₂₀, MM₇) or chemical formulae. He was still writing when we started shooting. No one else had a sense of where the film was going. Time mushroomed, perhaps 35 scenes. We had only two weeks to shoot. Five man crew: Machover and two camera assistants to set up, load, pull focus, change mags. Me and one assistant sound man. Lighting was at best approximate. We learned from the rushes, which were ferried daily into New York. Racing to the city to pick them up. Syncing them up in a makeshift editing room (set-up and supervised by Mike Robinson, the

fourth member of what has now become our production company, Blue Van Films). Rushes were disastrous for the cast. A mistake we never repeated. Actors should never see their performances broken up into takes, sometimes repeated ten times. (For *The Edge* we barred the whole cast from rushes until the end when we celebrated with a 15 hour screening of *all* the footage. Unedited.) Torture for them, but we learned about lighting, corrected our mistakes, decided what scenes had to be re-shot. Most important, I think that Kramer formed the film style in response to the rushes, comparing what he'd wanted from a take with what seemed possible given our own inexperience, the limitations of tripod shooting, and the realities the actors structured as they inhabited the characters Kramer had imagined. I don't know how other people work, but Kramer was able to respond to the rushes in a way which seemed more open than I could have ever imagined, constantly finding what he wanted and where he *could* go from each day's raw material. *In the Country* was a necessary compromise, confusing for all of us who worked on it but clear to Kramer. He was already planning the film which was to become *The Edge* out of the limitations defined by the rushes of *In the Country*.

Kramer wanted that cankerous tangle which is the centre of *In the Country*: wounds, scabs, interlockings, a mesh too encrusted to permit separation into categories of blame or value, of cause or effect. Maybe it's an eternal dance. Some people saw it as autobiographical doodling; others thought such revelations indecent, certainly not art. We sweated to get the performances. Sometimes baking under lights we had to boost with Colortrans because the lights we had weren't strong enough. Crawling under beds to get the mike close enough, and the track is still abominable. Crickets drown the dialogue and half the exteriors sound like they were shot during bombing runs—the house we used for the film was a mile from a motorway and just north of a very popular private airfield. Weekends I wanted anti-aircraft guns. You get to hate the actor's voice, especially during the troublesome scenes which you learnt by heart. The repeats haunt your dreams. I couldn't look at the rough cut, and it took me a year before I could watch the film without remembering how we'd shot it.

Kramer and Machover edited *In the Country* in six weeks. Somehow what became clear was the conception Kramer had held during those contorted weeks of shooting. A feat, or maybe a quality, even more amazing for *The Edge* which had over fifty scenes, thirteen main characters, three weeks shooting, twenty hour days, and a troupe to jockey and cajole, which often approached feature film conditions. For we'd graduated. Or rather Kramer wanted to explore 35mm and a mobile camera. (We built a dolly from a hospital walker which collapsed under the weight of our giant studio BNC. Three men were needed to lift it.) Set-ups, this time with more complicated lighting, would often take several hours. Most critics chose to define the style of *The Edge* as cinema vérité. Once you have worked on a film you lose whatever vestigial respect you might have had for critics. At least I did. And yet critics in France, Italy and the States were far more receptive to both films than we'd expected. (England's another story, dull but familiar.)

We shot *The Edge* during April and May of 1967. I think Kramer, after a few months of making notes, wrote the script in a month. Again he was still writing during the shooting. And revising, as actors stumbled over lines they couldn't manage. Or lines were scraped altogether. We shot it in New York, dragging around maybe a thousand pounds of equipment. Once up five flights of stairs to a railroad flat which didn't translate into the image Kramer wanted. The paradox of *The Edge* is that all the locations were chosen with immense care and yet the film seems placeless. Heads swim. No density of scene to relax into. The only artifacts are the coffee cups, which we shared with cast in between takes. Kramer's wife, Janie, was script girl, assistant producer, and chef—during *The Edge* she often had to feed 20 people.

In the Country cost 6,000 dollars, *The Edge* 10,000. Nobody got paid. The films belong to all of us. We kept our fingers crossed when they opened, waiting to see if we'd become millionaires. So far we're not sorry to be back where we started, facing the next film. I think Kramer would like an Elemak, which never works for nothing. Otherwise he might say, as I do, that the way we shot them is the only way to make films.

Introduction to Some Austrian Filmmakers

compiled by Bob Cobbing

"The cataclysmic increase in world destructive potential since 1945 is inextricably linked with the most disturbing tendencies in modern art, and the proliferation of programmes of research into aggression and destruction in society. The organisers of DIAS, seeing the close relationship between art forms using actual destruction of material and social reality, have arranged a three day Symposium."

I rip off my left hand. A foot lies somewhere. A suture on my wrist bone. I push a needle into my spinal cord. I nail my big toe to my index finger. Genitals, shoulder and head-hair lie on a white dish. I slit my aorta from top to bottom with a razor blade. I coil a pressure pin into my ear. I split the length of my head into two halves. I install barbed wire into my urethra and try to tear the nerves by gently turning it (auto-systoscopy). I bite off my pimple and suck it up. I let it all be filmed and inspected. (from description by Gunter Brus of his happening and Kren's film SELF MUTILIATION). The first contact I had with Austria was when Ernst Jandl, the sound-poet, came over here in 1965 to take part in the great International Poetry Incarnation at the Albert Hall. I asked him what else of interest was going on in Vienna. He told me: Nothing.

Then, in 1966, the Destruction in Art Symposium brought to England Otto Mühl, Gunter Brus and Kurt Kren and one realised that Jandl's 'nothing' was an all-time record understatement.

At the fourth International Experimental Film Competition at Knokke-Le-Zoute in 1967-68 Hans Scheugl and Ernst Schmidt showed us that Kren was by no means an isolated film-maker. They and he and Peter Weibel, who also attended DIAS, were about to form an Austrian Film-Makers Co-operative, which is by now fully active.

men sitting in the dripping blood of eviscerated animals, which is said to be art; they have bashed a hole in the basement floor of a London bookshop and struck water, which is said to be art; they are

be diverted: better that canvases should be ripped, or chickens decapitated, than that a single man should be hurt. But pictures of women bundled up in transparent sacks, or of men smeared with blood and muck, whatever the

Cosinus Alpha, Mühl materialaktion technique, the most provocative action film two female nude figures in garish and radiant colours, interspersed with monochrome, confirms Kren's optical sensuality using extremely direct and truthful images against which cinema film (because it is dependent on commerce and thematically confined) seems poor and artificial.

Some of the biggest impact (DIAS) made by two groups founded in recent years - the Institute of Direct Art, Vienna, most of members were present, and Group 7A1 - Madrid

The name 'Institute of Direct Art' and the name 'Materialaktion' which they apply to their happenings give positive clues to the type of happenings and the type of films which they create. Their art is direct and uninhibited; it uses materials, and the human body here counts as a material, which are changed in the course of the action.

September 13

Gunter Brus and Otto Muhl present Direct Art 'Ten Rounds for Cassius Clay'. St Bride Institute.

September 15 ~~An anarchical demonstration against~~

Kurt Kren: 13 Films

Simultaneous Happening of the Vienna Group

Gunter Brus: 'Self-Destruction'

Hermann Nitsch: Film Projections

Peter Weibel: Action-Lecture 'Proposals on Non-Affirmative Art'

Otto Muhl: 'Lecture Destruction'

Materialaktion performed live is powerful enough, with its explosive use of sound as well as the visual elements. Two hardened press reporters were driven to complain to the police with a result that one of the organisers of DIAS was fined £100 for '... unlawfully causing to be shown and presented an indecent exhibition contrary to Common Law.'

The more artists turn from the

~~optical sensuality~~

creation of permanent objects to ephemeral events and happenings, the greater the need for cameras to record these events. The problems involved in making a record of an artistic entity which is also engrossing in its own right as a film, aren't simple, but Kren has brilliantly solved them by his cutting . . . the motif of *Mama and Papa* is a nude girl being merged with food and drink; *Leda and the Swan* has a more faecal tincture; in *O Tannenbaum* she is treated like a Christmas tree decoration; and in a fourth film two frenetically Lesbian ladies are drenched in powdered paint and polythene . . . Throughout the four films one is as exhilarated as confused by a glorious mishmash of compulsive images, a pure purée of ambivalence . . .

. . . for a comparison with his non-happening films, which I suppose are in the nature of being happenings by Kren, on film, rather than being live happenings by Mühl and Brus filmed by Kren—shows—all his films show that his mastery is in his editing, in his sense of timing, in his sense of progression in images, in speed, in rhythms. Quotes about his films: in a precise pattern, 7081 frames long . . . his systematically calculated montage . . . five situations, aspects of a scene, are repeated twenty-one times; in between, black frames interrupt the running . . . give us our second clue:

First: there is the passion to be truthful about this untrustworthy world. Second: there is the passion for technique to embody this truth. Hans Scheugl, for instance, in his film *Hernals*. Documentary and pseudo-documentary incidents are respectively shot by two cameras from different angles. The results are split up into separate phases of movement. Each phase is repeated in the montage, runs off twofold, for any given moment. As the angle changes, the technique varies. The sound too undergoes duplication and here too different techniques are adopted. One realises how untrustworthy is the single-angle view; how different another person's point of view can be. Or hear Scheugl on his film *Schumanngasse*: A journey through the Schumanngasse on 13th January 1967 from one end to the other, shot in a single sequence, thereby bringing into accord shooting time and cinema time, the length of the journey with the length of the 30mm film, the length of the street, the same length in the cinema. The economy of the matter produces a maximum of film analysis. MILITIA FIRST THING IN THE MORNING 1966. A Utopia of performed actions. The film is not to be considered and measured against the usual dramatic techniques of the industrial cinema, but reveals itself through a comparison of individual attitudes (Schmidt on Scheugl) SCHMIDT HIMSELF made *P.r.a.t.e.r*. It is based essentially on different montage and camera techniques. How the camera can help us to come to grips with reality, for reality is not what it seems/as I see it now/tomorrow/or you today/yesterday. Or, all of these are realities/reality. The additional sound recording takes up the technique of fragmentary reproductions of realiti(y)es/mixes shreds of noise with fragments of interviews/and poems by Jandl! Conformity is redressed in Otto Mühl's *Materialaktion*, colour film records of which were, for many, the DIAS (Destruction in Art Symposium) highpoint.

Schmidt, too, has made a film based on a Mühl event. Mühl throws colour on naked bodies. The unpleasant red-yellow produces a grey unpleasantness which is created by war pictures and the photographed corpses of animals. The white frames cutting in, talking about the action acting as an ironic commentary, shreds of pop songs, lead to new associations, evoke fear nausea laughter. 1. Schmidt as well as Kren has found a satisfactory technique for transferring a Mühl event to the screen. He makes greater use of sound than Kren (Kren's films are so powerful without sound that sound is not missed). It's a lot to do with the white frames cutting in, and with the alternation of positive and negative coloured images/the two points of view. 2. Laughter is never far away in this film by Schmidt (BODYBUILDING) or in the Brus self mutilation paragraph as in Kren's films so similar and yet do different. There is such an emphasis on form in Kren, on precise editing, on rhythms, that his bodies lose all possible obscenity and become, in one aspect, animated abstract coloured shapes/for the intellect; but that "optical sensuality" keeps breaking in. Schmidt is truer to the shape of the happening but he still distances us with his white punctuating frames and pos/neg. We are involved and not involved. We feel and we stand back and ponder.

RE-NULIFICATION OF SUBJECT RE-DEVASTATION OF MEANING,

A fragment from THE ART OF THE CINEMA

by Hugh D. Lumsden

Language

Language consists of a message and a medium. When the message has achieved a meaning then the language itself becomes a reality continuum. Seeing is such a language and visual reality is one of the main reality continuums for mankind. Seeing is thus a language which has to be learnt like any other. The medium is certain wave lengths of light. The message these can produce rise in complexity as man learns how to see. Helmholtz states that when a child, on seeing a large statue far away on a church wall, asked if he could have "that doll". He had not yet learnt to consider the effect of distance on the size of an object.

Reality Continuums

A reality continuum is any language perceived by man, but it is only a reality continuum for as long as it is being perceived, sensed, or understood. The reality continuum in which any individual exists as momentarily suiting him best can be called the ego continuum. The flux of unorganised continuums out of which all present and future languages are, or will be born, can be called the egoless flux of continuums or Taoist reality.

Primary Languages

Every organism chooses that continuum in which it can survive best as its main reality continuum, and the languages which operate in these continuums might be called primary languages. For example, when a dog hears another dog bark on television it sometimes goes to the screen and sniffs.

but smelling no odour of dog, it soon loses interest in the antics of the screen dog. For a blind man the primary languages are aural and tactile. The fact that seeing is often believing makes one feel that visual reality is special, but it is only special because man needs to it be. There could be other intelligent organisms in the universe who find visual reality as obscure and intermittent as we find odours. They might dream in odour objects with their nostrils closed, and their sense of reality at any one time could contain such a vivid presence of the past as to be unbelievable to us.

The vivid presence of the past is easily understandable only in our own main reality continuum. For example, how easily we say, "Look, how beautiful the stars are tonight". We don't need to say, "Look at that one ten million light years ago, or that one which no longer exists". They are irrelevancies before the "reality" of the moment.

Reality and Man

Man can only have two final attitudes to reality. One is to accept it, which means to accept death, the other is to try to dominate it. And it is for this latter action that the visual reality continuum is called into being. But we will see that the camera in the hands of an artist need not be used solely for such a purpose.

Secondary Languages

Secondary languages arise out of primary languages and also create their own reality continuum

For example, a savage by pointing to a tall tree, then to a tall savage, and then making a sound, might have conveyed the concept "tallness" to his friends. In this way we may have arisen conceptual thought, a new reality continuum of concepts and ideas.

Cinematic metaphors

Seeing is a process of reading the visual continuum to one's advantage, but man frequently oversteps the mark. Let us consider a simple cinematic metaphor to illustrate this. A man, waiting for a girl to appear from a distant doorway, may actually see her appear several times, only to change each time into something else; a young man in a raincoat, or even a drop of water on the window. Such metaphors could be shown on the screen by quick simple lap-dissolves. The metaphor in the latter case is that a desire, superimposed upon a drop of water, produces the desired object.

Let us now consider a personal example of the reverse case, where the ego makes a real event imaginary.

One night while on a military training exercise I had to go forward and mend a broken telephone cable. While thus engaged there suddenly appeared before my eyes the crouched forms of three men. "Imagination" said my ego immediately, for to have accepted them in the reality continuum would have meant that I had already fallen into a very obvious trap. The image thus became a warning of a possibility, rather than an actuality. I finished the task. Suddenly three men sprang out of the darkness and grabbed me. I did not cry out even then, because I still refused to admit the fact that I could have fallen into so simple a trap. It couldn't happen, therefore it wasn't happening.

Cinema to be faithful in restoring emotional realities to its audience must present such significant realities in the continuums the characters it is portraying experience them.

Theatre and Cinema

Drama is more than art in motion. It is the

structuring of emotional tension between man's two ultimate attitudes to reality through fear or laughter. We have said that the old structure of what is comic or tragic no longer always functions in every life. To create a new drama a profounder language is needed, and that language is cinema.

In Theatre, where reactions are usually between people, the collapse of the one attitude is but the automatic reinstatement of the other. From this viewpoint every human experience is nothing but a slight jolt from the ego dominance of a continuum towards egoless acceptance of the flux of continuums or vice versa. The truth of any experience can be totally revealed by the utterances and behaviour of human actors on a stage.

If Cinema remains content with this level of presentation it will never be born. It must destroy this total landscape. The screen, and this is the point we consider extremely relevant to its future, can jolt its audiences into a greater variety of continuums and construct a greater variety of metaphors than any other art. But by merely showing the gain or loss of dominance in the move to and from the egoless reality in only ONE continuum the job is only half done. To be dropped suddenly into other reality continuums in the process is far more profound, because for anyone to experience the awe-inspiring power of the Taoist reality, a sense of "changes of reality" is essential. The screen is well suited to do this.

To sum up then: Before Cinema can structure metaphors of any depth it must show the profound nature of the abyss in which men survive. To achieve this effect Cinema should first set out to destroy the dead metaphors which are its raw material. It can do this by jolting those who hold such units valid into different continuums, during which process (as with the example of Miliota in Pavese's novel), the original units are revealed to be no longer statements about reality and have to be abandoned. Only when a profound sense that things "are not quite all they seem" has been created can a metaphor of any depth be set up. Then two units, hostile and indifferent as they may have previously been, can clash; a new tension be set up, and a new emotional identity achieved.

ARTICLE

by *Lawrence Moore*

this is the age of the magic unintense / the con-man creator / the plastic apples on the dry rot knowledge tree / call in rentokil for instant happy imagine rembrandt as an animator working in 8mm how about the recurring obsession that the world is full of microcosmic people cluttering up the gaps in paving stones—can you avoid treading on them and squashing their minds to pieces?

ours is an age which is proud of a machine that thinks and suspicious of a man that tries to: Howard Mumford-Jones

we are attempting to retrace the path we lost when we first inherited the truth

a film maker once said to me—instead of using people in films to put over your ideas, who not stand there yourself?

Do we really know why we put our ideas on show? Why does it become so important to distill a series of experiences and re-create them for public consumption?

At the risk of over-generalisation I'd hazard these:

- (1) Money. One recognises a talent in oneself which can be adapted to communication and live off it.
- (2) That people have something to say and want to say it to as many strangers as possible.
- (3) That they feel rightly or wrongly it will benefit mankind in some way.
- (4) That it is a form of self-catharsis.
- (5) That they're exhibitionists—instead of dragging their flies open in the park, they make a film, book, painting, sculpture, event.
- (6) That it advances the progression of total world thought.
- (7) That one isn't convinced of one's own existence until one is convinced that other people are.
- (8) A combination of all these.
- (9) It's impossible to tell.

Another truism is that it should be the idea that matters. The interpretive medium should be secondary, though some might say that the form in which the idea is expressed is itself self-revelatory and should be an integral part of the original idea.

Then to whom does one communicate this idea? Everyone? The television audience of the daunting several millions or to an audience that is already sympathetic with the interpretive medium?

Does one select an audience and stage an event in the hope that everyone will discover something relevant to them?

The drawback has always been that the idea necessarily derives from the total experience of the originator and that though one person experiencing the interpretation might consciously or otherwise recognise a part of it he cannot live within its totality.

Thus the complete understanding of the idea can only remain with its originator—the spectators/participants can only recognise parts of the whole. The next point seems to be that area of creation via participation where there is no single originator. This is probably the only way a group of people can recognise and feel at one with the total event.

It would be naive to attempt to aim at everyone in the hope that the original idea would retain its strength and direction for each person, but it's also pretty obvious that the area or originator/spectator still relies on chance and that the research into the receptiveness of audiences has only been haphazardly investigated and analysed.

Short of attempting to draw a picture of some utopian ultimate it seems to me that one kind of ultimate in the integration of man/society/environment will be the heightening of the plastic age when we attain a fusion of imagery with the environment—the buildings are constructed by the mind—that images are so constructed and recorded. Imagine attaching a device to the brain and recording one's conscious and sub-conscious fantasies: a sort of home-mind freak-out kit.

The New Age will peak in a flash point where the whole of humanity instantaneously accelerates from this plane to the next. Whether higher or lower remains to be seen—hopefully the next one up where the mind/matter fusion will happen.

But we're faced with this plane at the moment and to be more specific, the communicators via cinema or television with the fact that ideas have first to be interpreted in the medium most practical and that these then have to be channelled through the distributive agencies—the cinema owners, television stations, galleries, parks and so on—who are invariably totally opposed to risk, change or innovation of any sort, a situation many of them are happy about, though the majority of the audiences they reach are not. The cigar chewing distributor crunches his celluloid way through

Wardour Street, rolls his forced white sleeves up gorilla arms and sits.

The second truism is that unlike a freer distributive agency—one's room for instance—money is the ruling factor, unavoidably so as we're dealing with a cash consuming technological medium. Carrying on from this is the division of those communicators relying on work not directly connected with the organisational/distributive structure of the medium they work in during the evening/weekend/vacation and those who work within the structure, on the one hand earning a living directly from it, on the other tending to compromise in the hope that some of the ideas/techniques that could be developed more fully outside the time limits available in the television/film commercial structure come off. Or as society tends to put it—the amateur and the professional. The former is in a sense the more diehard—has the opportunity to spend time keeping strict control on the original idea but in many ways is the more negative. For if we are to inject new ideas into the structure we eventually have to deal with we should logically work solidly within it. Until one meets the problem it will never be solved.

It could well be argued that by fitting in with the structure, working towards an eventual mind explosion takes too long and that the only way to get the greys to recognise anything beyond their nose is to work outside—unhampered by it, then blast a way in with the ultimate event—sort of making *Finnegans Wake* on 8mm in a weekend. Sometimes this comes off, but is often as inexorably grinding a process as working directly within the structure.

There are other ways. Pouring vast quantities of LSD into executive drinking fountains is one. Another would be to fire copies of *R *y Du*gn*t* through the top floor windows of every distributive agency in the country.

Three other points spring up. They have the money to effect a change, we haven't. They exist in a schizoid state—at one and the same time the communicator is relied upon for ideas/innovation but rarely given either the chance/money/time to explore them. In many ways we are to them parasites. They in a sense would far rather we set up innumerable Co-ops developing ideas which they would immediately use out of context. Who could blame them?

One of the most potentially dangerous aspects of the whole problem of progress in communicative

ideas is that the areas where innovation should take place—the state sponsored schools, colleges and so on tend to gear their ideas output to the very distributive structure that needs changing—i.e. sending communicators after a three year training session into the Industry armed with the seeds of its self-stagnation.

When a group of Arizona businessmen spend over a million pounds transporting and re-building London Bridge one despairs. There are many things to despair about, but this to me is the ultimate crunch.

Obviously the scene can't change overnight unless one is a time-bending extraterrestrial from Epsilon Eridani or East Penge. The most important thing seems to be this working within the medium and distributive structure that one hopes to change. The situation has reached a ridiculous point of absolute non-change. Short of forming a hard core of anarchic bomb-throwing communicators there are a number of points that seem to need changing—all of which may be obvious:

- (1) Destroy all cinemas and rebuild plastic, totally changeable event areas.
- (2) Sack the peanut salesman who at present manage them and replace with children.
- (3) Create visual / aural / psychological / medical / dramatic research centres where technologists specialising in these areas can freely communicate and jointly innovate.
- (4) Prevent the inventors of new communication techniques from being bought out by the communication monopolies.
- (5) Destroy the communication monopolies/the licence to print money-makers.
- (6) Destroy the arts council and affiliated bodies.
- (7) Re-discover god.

Even if these suggestions are unreasonable and impractical at the moment it seems obvious to anyone who is at all concerned with the development of the communication media that very little is happening. At the moment there are the isolated happenings at the Arts Lab, I.C.A., Notting Hill Gents but no integration. Until that comes about—until we make it come about—the non-change will snail crawl its shuffling way through mediocrity and the world stand still.

All events and characters contained in the above are entirely fictitious and bear no resemblance to any event/character living or dead. Any coincidence would be most welcome.

The B.F.I. Dossier *Who Governs What?*

The British Film Institute is not unlike a many headed monster that cannot find its mythology. Its reason for being is lost in clouded history. What remains is a body which needs annual feeding, a Frankenstein made up of spare projects, kept alive because killing it would publicise its confused and contradictory function. In short, it is one of those horrors born of modern bureaucracy, a semi-official body built on vague, good intentions but structured in such a way that it can only do things which offend nobody.

The Government gives it more than £300,000 each year and also appoints its governing board. So the Institute is a Government agency? Well, not exactly. You see it has members too. Why do they join? Well, most of them join and pay membership fees so that they can go to the National Film Theatre. So the money they pay goes to the National Film Theatre? No, it goes to the Institute who give a tiny percentage of the membership money to the N.F.T. Oh! Then the 30,000 or so members and associate members must have some say in how the Institute is run? No, none at all. Oh! Does it do something to develop and encourage film making in England then? Well, that's a difficult problem. You have to understand that the chairman of the Rank Organisation, the president of the distributors' association, and the head of the exhibitors' guild all sit on the Institute's governing board, and the Rank Organisation, as you know was cited in the Monopolies Commission Report as having a control of the film industry which is contrary to the public interest. I see. It's a trade organisation? No, of course not, but it cannot do anything which might antagonize the trade. So it cannot really do anything about reforming the British film industry because that would annoy the members of its governing body? That's not quite right, but you must remember that the Institute depends upon the good will of the "trade". So if the B.F.I. can't help film makers do creative work, the Arts Council does. Is that right? No, not quite. And so on . . .

Last year a petition was presented to the Minister

with special responsibility for the arts asking that the role of the B.F.I. be clarified and that the members of the Institute's Board of Governors resign. Jennie Lee, presumably after consultation with the Governors, rejected the petition and explained that the only thing wrong with the Institute was that it did not have enough money. Since few believe that the Institute uses its money usefully at present, there is little reason to presume that giving it more money would change anything. The B.F.I.'s basic problem is its function, or lack of one. It is not a government agency, yet it depends upon the Treasury for its existence. It is not an Arts Council for the cinema, nor is it a mouthpiece for the trade. It is certainly not a courageous voice. Perhaps it is just a very costly film society, a cultural sacred cow.

The Institute responded to the petition by making some minor changes in policy which disarmed some of the specific complaints in the petition. It also instituted a series of Open Forums which were so well structured and so cleverly conceived that discussion of the real issues was almost impossible. And finally they actually put some real, live film makers (Kevin Brownlow, Lindsay Anderson, and Karel Reisz) on the Board of Governors. Needless to say they chose from among the few film makers who had declined to sign the petition. But perhaps the most illuminating criticism of the B.F.I. is simply a list of the rest of the governors.:

Sir William Coldstream, CBE, D.Litt. (Chairman)
age: 60
Slade Professor of Fine Art; Trustee of the National Gallery; Director, The Royal Opera House '57 - '62; Vice-Chairman, Arts Council

Kenneth Adam, CBE
age: 60
BOAC Press Officer '40; D. Tel. BBC-tv. other activities: Governor of Charing Cross Hospital; London Topographical Society; Council of Industrial Design.

Paul Adorian, FCGI, FIEE, FIERE
age: 63
Ex-Managing Director Rediffusion TV; Chairman: Humphries Holdings, Mole Richardson

Edgar Anstey
age: 62
Chief Officer British Railways Films; Chairman,
Society of Film and TV Arts; British Film
Academy.

Jocelyn Baines
Publisher; Biography of Conrad.

Sir Michael Balcon
age: 72
Gainsborough Pictures; MGM; Ealing Studios;
British Lion; Producer of countless films

R. S. Camplin
General Secretary, Cinematograph Exhibitors
Association.

John H. Davis
age: 62
Chairman of the Rank Organisation, Rank
Xerox; Director, Eagle Star Insurance
Recreations: farming, gardening, reading, travel,
music

Carl Foreman
age: 54
Writer, Producer, Director; Films include:
High Noon, *Guns of Navarone*

Helen Forman
Central Office of Information

George Hoellering
Director, Academy Cinemas.

Dr. David Kerr, MP
age: 43
Member for Wandsworth; Royal Society of
Medicine.
recreations: gardening, photography, squash.

Lord Lloyd of Hampstead, MA, LID
age: 53
Professor of Jurisprudence; Chairman, the
Lloyd Committee on a National Film School.
recreations: painting, listening to music

Montague C. Morton
President, Kinematograph Renters Society;
Deputy Chairman, United Artists; Director,
Army Kinema Corp.

Professor Roy Shaw
Director of Extra-Mural Studies, Keele.

*Most of the information for this list was found in
Who's Who.* S.H.

A Reaction to Soliloquy

by Philip Crick

1.

Is anyone here?

Here?

Come!

Come!

Why do you avoid me?

Why do you avoid me?

I will die before you lie with me!

Lie with me! Echo answered.

But Narcissus had gone, and she spent the rest of
her life in the mountains moaning her regret until
her Voice, merely, survived.

2.

A girl. Any girl. Her disembodied speech, husky,
stertorous, faintly non-English, chats with herself,
mourns a spent marriage, broods on her own
dissatisfactions.

In a zone of barbarous nearness, her many
shapes: semi-profile, fingers, nose, dark cross-
hatched cheek, hair, teeth, mouth, eye, lips

enlarged like the shut pod of a lily, hover on the
frontier between the recognisable and the unreal;
and everything floats, is cut away from the republic
of the ordinary. Hands in this strict six-inch wide
focus are suddenly big, jointed and cool, become
a row of legs, or, abruptly absurd, a bunch of
carrots. Or again, they taper, graceful and pointed,
like the claws of a bird.

The mind of Echo has settled in the throat of a
disenchanted Narcissus.

At the first phrase on track: "He left me", the
nervous tormented self-caressing hands and
wrists in ultra-close-up begin their dance. A
cigarette smoulders in the slowness of time.
The sound of her mind is in ultra-close-up also,
so that it is more the tense intake and expulsion
of breath, clear and penetrating which marry
mood to image, than the simple meaning of the
words.

Imperceptibly, the pulsing hands disclose a face,
a head, charged with a certain resentment and an

unspecified anxiety. The fingers press on a cheek, remove, writhe; are in constant circulation.

And all the while, as the girl muses on her lost connection with her husband, the camera creeps up closer, impossibly closer, to her.

Facets of her immediate surroundings hint, waver, and disappear. A pocket mirror enters her orbit; and we see its rectangle framed in the larger screen frame. At the precise point at which her thoughts turn altogether away from the outside world, from her lost man, Dwoskin drags our perception into the mirror itself. (Narcissus has become obsessed by the clear glass stream.)

Now screen and mirror coincide; but still we are pressed compulsively minutely nearer and nearer to the subject of this lament, as she seeks an assurance of her own identity in a reflected image.

She complains that she would like to sink in Time, to float in it. She accuses herself of failure. She blames the world and herself for it. And as her neurosis expands our eyes graze her huge lips.

"Something has changed me." She muses. "Changed". And, as the words: "I want to be different. I have to be different", occur attention shifts to an eye, to half an eye, its exposed crystal surfaces. It is as though the viewer might now be hauled into the eye itself, to a place where shape and meaning vanish.

The narcissistic fingers cover the eyes: "I remember having thought, what's truth?" Is her grasp on thought itself dissolving?

Out of the silence an aircraft roars, the only other element besides her voice on the whole track. It is an impersonal signal from the abandoned world.

"Aeroplanes

I rather like aeroplanes.

Sometimes they just don't come down."

Here, at the end of a film, shot through with a desire to float, with a longing for weightlessness, Dwoskin presses the clash between the sensual and the real on the one hand, and the cinematic and the abstract, on the other, to vanishing point.

Knokkenotes

by Simon Hartog

Cannes was never like this. It is a real film festival in a real casino in an unreal setting: winter, North Sea, Belgian resort town. It is a festival for film makers, not for critics.

If the New Cinema has a European crib, it is Knokke. If it has a mage it is Jacques Ledoux, the festival director. He looks rather like a Keystone Cop, but, as he was heard to say after the prizes were announced, "Ca se defend". His idea of a film festival is to give anyone who wants to make a film free stock, and then show what they make. If you have to have prizes, at least make sure that the prize money goes to film makers (who need it). That is the cinema free, and that within the possibilities of human malevolence is the Knokke Film Festival.

The mechanics of festivals are seldom exposed to fresh air for obvious reasons, but the workings of Knokke deserve illumination. Agfa gives free stock and developing to most anyone who submits an idea. Not everyone of course, takes advantage of this offer; it is very difficult to believe a film company would actually give away film. Thanks to Ledoux, however, they do. Anyone can submit a film for the competition. There are no secret committees which send films from each country. A selection jury—which later is required to publicly defend their selections—then chooses the films for competition. This year they had 335 films from which they chose 90 (36 from the U.S.A., 14 from Germany, 9 from Belgium, 5 from the U.K., etc.). They, of course, made some mistakes. John Latham's magnificent *Speak* was the most notable omission (Ledoux got it shown out of competition), but when a jury starts with the idea that the cinematic search is more valuable than the easy solution, the atmosphere is healthy.

The competition jury was made up of four film makers (among whom Vera Chytilova, Shirley Clarke, Walerian Borowczyk); no actors, producers or critics. Of the ten prizes they had to

give, which ranged from four thousand dollars down to a bit of paper, they only made one error of judgment (for the Belgian *Entretien*). Paul Sharits' *Piece Mandala* deserved to be in its place, but 90% for a jury is very civilised.

At Knokke life was rather distilled; films went on from ten in the morn until two or three in the night with breaks for smoking, eating, and happenings organised or spontaneous. It was a love (of the cinema) in.

The British taxpayer was very well represented. Five B.F.I. staff, one from the C.O.I., and one from the I.C.A. *The Times* and *The Guardian* critics were in intermittent presence. None of them seemed to be enjoying themselves very much. In informed circles the reactions of the Dean Street Mafia was taken to be an unerring guide to the value of the film. If they left the hall, the film was worth watching, and vice versa. It was wonderful to watch the group thinking and acting with one mind, but then maybe Marx was right.

In a festival christened Experiment 4 there was only one film that could have won the Grand Prize, Michael Snow's *Wavelength*. Its outstanding virtue is its uncomplicated clarity. It cannot be described; it must be lived. The film finishes when it starts, because the end is included in its single frame. The motion of the picture is in its movement. Its theme is not what happens but how it happens. At the end of the film the spectator knows no more, but he understands the limits, and hence the possibilities, of the cinema. *Wavelength*, the sound for Steve Dwoskin's films, and Robert Nelson's *The Grateful Dead*, which solved its own problem, apart, there was too little attempt to find alternatives for the ear beyond the predictable silence or music plonkcrete. *Wavelength*, however, matched the purity of its image with pure sound. ". . . a sine wave, which goes from its lowest (50 cycles per second) to its highest (1,200 c.p.s.) in 40 minutes."

Lutz Mommartz also left his mark upon the mind with a number of sorties into the cinema absurd. (*Eisenbahn*, *Markeneier*, *Selbstschüsse*, and *Tanzscheife*). Mommartz's elfish irony clucked quietly over some of the most glaring avante-garde obsessions. In *Selbstschüsse* (roughly Self-shooting), which won second prize, he amazes himself



Lutz Mommartz in his *Selbstschüsse*

by filming himself as though he was the final most fascinating truth. He films himself from a variety of angles, limited by his limbs, continually joyous about capturing his ego completely on celluloid. As a technical *non plus ultra* he even throws the camera into the air to get an aerial shot of his balding head. Someone at the close of the Festival suggested that it should be renamed the Fessetival of Eggsperimental Cinema; this because few films managed to avoid a fesse (French slang for buttock) or an egg. Mommartz in *Markeneier* took the sting out of the symbol by suggesting that egg is happiness shaped. In this context the Belgian *Les souffrances d'un oeuf meurtri* did manage, together with Mommartz, to do more with an egg than pay homage to a faded Freudian fable.

The families Nelson (Guvnor and Robert) and Wiley (William and Dorothy) did an extraordinary double act. The men made *The Great Blondino* together and their wives won a prize with *Fog Pumas*. *Blondino* is the film equivalent of the song "The Mighty Quinn", a metaphor based on a popartish circus performer. It shows a mastery of texture and imagery that few other films in the Festival were able to challenge. Like his fellow West Coast film makers, Nelson is concerned with both expanding the photographic expressivity of the cinema and using the medium, however subtly, as a polemic tool. *Blondino* did not in the end get a prize, probably because it was too dependant upon the narrative fable tradition. His *The Grateful Dead*, however, did score, because it is the foundation of a new direction for the filmed document. In this portrait of the pop group he makes use of the shorthand he developed in his earlier films to avoid the commonplace docu-

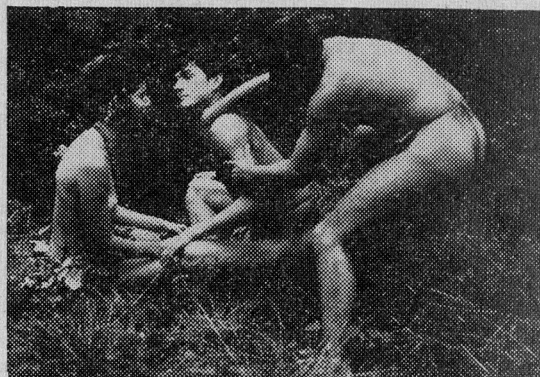
mentary explanations. He uses single images or clusters of images to make precise and direct non-verbal points. Most documentaries have to lie, because they must pretend to tell the whole truth. This is impossible both because a documentary can never ask all the questions and because the whole truth is unportrayable. *The Grateful Dead* is a document of the spirit constructed with visual intuitions. It could never pretend to be what it isn't.

"My only intention was to make a film I like". Mrs. Nelson on *Fog Pumas*. It is a tonal film which slithers through the arteries of the psyche's body with unhalting and unspecified terror. It is the contents of a Shakespearian witch's stew in violet. Mrs. Nelson has learnt a great deal from her husband, but she also knows something he has yet to learn. *Fog Pumas* does not want to be deciphered; it just echos.

Fog Pumas' affinity with the four Swedish films (*Altisonans*, *Anima Mundi*, *Besöket* and *Ems Nr. 1*) is not surprising, since Mrs. Nelson was born in Sweden. But whereas she confronted herself with her selves, the Swedes saw no hope in such an encounter, and fled into consideration of the future's hieroglyphics. They glance at our earthly landscape as if from a moon a billion years hence or ago. They muse over the messages which emanate from the earth, or from deep space, with violent indifference, rather like the men in *Un Chien d'Andalou* who poke the amputated hand in order to see if it shows any sign of life. Three of the Swedish entries defined the void graphically. *Ems Nr. 1* in colour hovers on the edge of the Northern Lights, just at the point beyond which is complete darkness. In black and white, *Altisonans* and *Anima Mundi*, the grain shrieks grey to be free from the need to be seen at all. *Besöket*, which won a prize, is a study of the gestures of fallen angels in a landscape of High Contrast Pan, angels who have fallen not through sin but because their wings had failed them. It is *Les Jeux des Anges* 'en direct'. These bleak illuminations, orchestrated to the cackle of electronic eagles tracking their prey from above, far above, suggest the Swedish suicide syndrome which our culture needs to love and to cultivate, but this pain was real. It hurt.

Steve Dwoskin, who needs no praise from me,

apart, Europe provided no other prize winners. Two other film makers from the Continent, however, impressed, Werner Nekes von Hamburg and Tonino Debernardi di Torino. Both are active in their respective Co-ops and both bear the mark



From Werner Nekes' *Das Seminar*

of liberation via the New American Cinema. *Il Mostro Verde* (co-directed with Paulo Menzi) with its two coloured screens looked out from a rubbish heap, every city's New York, while sighing gently barbaric praise to refuse, human or otherwise. Nekes' films (one whole plus two half films, but one of the halves was actually three stuck together—?) displayed a light hearted disregard for everything. He manages to make extremes comic, and hence obvious. Working with his fascination with form, he sneaks up, confuses, surprises, and then, with a Delphic gest, enlightens.

Riddle: To whom, "In order to encourage free artistic creation and the spirit of research . . .", does the Fourth International Experimental Film Competition give a prize (but no money)? Answer: a computer. Film makers of the world speak Fortran. Computers, however, do have a number of very telling advantages over human film makers. They are not alive. They understand relationships. They cannot see, and they do not have to be paid. Computerised film making does, of course, call into question the future of the *politique des auteurs*, as well as other problems too existential to consider in such a limited space. If TV took the middle out of the cinematic spectrum, the computer now seems able to take the competent and accurate out of the film makers hands. What remains will have to be consigned to pathological behaviour courses.

Three films made by, or with the help of, computers were shown at Knokke. Two, *Atol* and *Cybernetik 5.3*, were made by John Stehura, who—to keep things in perspective—programmed the computer. They resemble the illuminated walls of the Wimpy Bar year 2001, but are tasteful and elegant. He explains his method thus: “All camera images and audio sequences were described in digital format. A computer program determined the structure for the visual relationships and audio associations (by Stockhausen). This film is the preliminary attempt to organise camera and audio images through a cybernetic editing model and a digital computer.” A physicist friend has translated my comments about the method—not the films which were nice—so that the computer can understand it. The message reads: 0000000000000001011110000. The film which won the prize was called *Hummingbird*. It was animated by a computer, and is a mechanical exercise of power over a number of lines which at the start form the outline of the bird and which are then dragged through all sorts of rearrangements. *Hummingbird* is, in its way, a typical Hollywood product. All the assumptions are made in the first few seconds, and the end, which is predictable, comes after these assumptions have been through the most elementary permutations. But the end of what? he screamed.

‘Experimental’ suggests oppressive intensity. On my right Art, on my left Boredom, shake hands, come out fighting, sort of thing. Wit comes as a surprise in such a contest, but wit there was. Remember that *Flaming Creatures*, Prix du Film Maudit at the last Knokke, is one of the funniest films ever made. It found comedy where few had even dared to look. This year’s supply of laughs had a proud ancestry. Mommartz and Nekes. Martin Scorsese’s *The Big Shave* (Prix L’Age d’Or) took an overtly sanguine look at one of the horrors of daily life. Piero Heliczer’s none too random superimpositions in his masterful *Joan of Arc* were, through poetically serious, very funny: inside a jail, a mock battle of Hastings and a naked but headless girl doing her thing in front of an American flag. Some of the humour was, of course, inadvertent. The audience trying to blow out the candles on the screen. The social message of the Japanese masochistic monster movie. Out of competition fun had two great strokes. A Sad Movie by Wim Vanderlinden

(of *Tulips* fame), *Hawaiian Lullaby*, goes, in 35mm scope and colour, something like this: and endless title sequence with epic crescendos, a school play backdrop of Hawaiian beachscape, a palm tree, tropical flora and a large white full moon, remains unmoving on the screen while a slightly off key hula resounds, this for an interminable time, then onto the stage walks a real live girl dressed in a



From Wim Vanderlinden's multi-media *Hawaiian Lullaby*

grass skirt, she arranges herself in front of the moon, which now spotlights her naked breasts, and does an awkward hula for a couple of minutes, the end.

The prize (unofficial) for the funniest film in the Festival went to *La Verifica Incerta*. Two Italians cut together bits from hundreds of Hollywood scope films that are dubbed into Italian and shown on a normal ratio screen. The bitter skill of their juxtaposition was at once a history of the post war Hollywood film and its epitaph. While it never got the point of Gary Cooper having a gun fight with himself, that was its spirit.

One unfortunate vibration at the Festival was the influence of Gregory Markopoulos. In addition to a retrospective of his work, his *Illiac Passion* was shown in competition, and legion were the films of his pupils and disciples. There is no doubt that Markopoulos is of the greatest importance in the search for new structures in the cinema. Nor can his single minded devotion to the cause of experiment in film be questioned. His films, which find their beauty in visual and editing connections, mark him in the frontier of the New Cinema. Markopoulos' technical mastery, however, is obscured by the intellectual impoverishment with which he confronts his favourite, almost only, theme, humourless high camp homophilia. His passion is as unfeeling and as tasteless as the

photos in *Playboy*. Until he is able to cope with his subject matter with the same creative genius he uses in making and relating his images, his films can be no more than technical treasure troves, a stunning calligraphy not worth reading. His followers, pupils, and imitators border on the unbearable when they plunder his Socratic—in both senses—dialogue without his sense and sensitivity. Whatever aesthetic questions Markopoulos's films pose, he is to be taken seriously; on the evidence, with one or two exceptions, of Knokke his disciples do his cause a great harm.

On the patriotic front, the British films at Knokke were, like the little girl, either very good or very bad. The work of Steve Dwoskin and John Latham is already well known. The one other English film maker who grabbed was Clive Tichner. His *Conversation* superimposed the idyllic ephemera of London's Heaths and boas onto a study of interference in a conversation between two girls. Although the contrast does its work, the best of the film was the sincerity of the (all too often castrated) images of the tranquil if slightly mythical London. Tichner handles this vision with the pictorial joy it deserves. That monster movie, the biography of the intelligentsia's substitute for Jack the Ripper *Herostratus*, was shown out of competition. It betrays most vividly the dilemma of the British com-

mercial cinema today. Don Levy is never quite sure whether he wants to make a morally anarchistic narrative or a sublime stylistic cathedral. He does both and makes neither. It is really two films, one uselessly fashionable, the other visually unresolved. Somehow the English cinema has developed such guilt about style that it becomes the additive which will after injection save any idea. It has become so obsessive a search that it starts to choke the mouth it was meant to feed. It rests, as it begun, an alien element which out of inability cannot be swallowed and out of pride cannot be spit out. Magic is the only answer.

Asides apart, Knokke this time, as it has been in the past, was the showplace of the cinema renewing itself, and as such a font for future hope. It is unfortunate that 'respectable' critics treat Knokke as a Byzantine curiosity to be dismissed with incomprehension disguised as clever contempt, for Knokke proves that the cinema is more resilient and adventurous than its critics.

P.S. To the Festival organisers: Since the Festival is held only once every four years, there is one very silly rule, i.e. that a film cannot have been shown publicly previous to the Festival. Since the gap between festivals is so long, this is unreasonable, but it is also unenforcable and, hence, unfair.

Steps Towards A European Co-op

I. Europ (short for European Film Makers Co-operative) was born in intention at Knokke. The idea is very simple. There are active Co-ops in England, Italy, West Germany (two or three), Switzerland and Austria. Embryonic ones in Holland, France, Sweden, and Belgium. Even accounting for national, and sometimes intra-national, peculiarities, there is, at least in principles, agreement on structures and objectives within the various European Co-ops. This existing network can provide the foundation of a New European Cinema. In practical terms this means that a film maker will have the possibility of a European wide audience in a distribution

system which depends not at all on the commercial distribution structures.

At the meeting in Knokke with representatives from the Co-ops, embryonic or otherwise, of practically every Western European country, agreement was reached on the following points: (1) English is to be the official language of the organisation; (2) A file of information about each Co-op, the film makers, the films, rental prices, distribution and projection facilities, etc. is to be compiled and communicated to each of the Co-ops in a newsletter; (3) Film makers can deposit their prints with any Co-op they wish;

and (4) Before the end of the year there will be another meeting, which will include screenings, to try and agree on a structure and *modus operandi* for a European Co-op. S.H.

II. Since the May Rebellion somewhat disturbed the European time flow and the planned co-ordination, the meeting mentioned above only just took place. Steve Dwoskin who, together with David Curtis, represented the London Film Makers Co-op, reports on the Munich conference.

About 40 film makers, plus friends, turned up in Munich for meetings and films during the week of November 12. For the most part they were coming as representatives of their local co-op, though there were a few Americans. Many others who were unable to come in person sent films.

Among the cast: Marc Adrian, Massimo Bacigalupo, Gianfranco Baruchello, Robert Beaver, Emmanule and Rosanna Centazzo, Mauro Chessa, Valie Export, Franz Fallenberg, Mario Ferrero, Paul Fuchs, W. & B. Hein, Ulrich Herzog, Karl Kases, Kurt Kren, Kleiner Keimling, Alfredo Leonardi, Victor, Loffredo and Silvio Guido and Anna Lombardi, Dieter Meier, Lutz Mommartz, Otto Mühl, Werner Nekes and Dore O, Winfrid Parkinson, Brunz Patalas, Sergio Sarri, Hans Scheugl, Lucca Patella, Gottfried Schlemmer, Ernst Schmidt, Klaus Schönherr, Peter Schweri, Piet Verdonk, Adamo and Antonio Vergine, Franz Zwartjes.

The whole event, which centred around the Künstlerhaus was organised by W. & B. Hein from Cologne and Klaus Schönherr from Zürich, the facilities in Munich being provided by the Undependent Film Center. Much of the first two days was spent in an attempt to define the basic topics for discussion. The press came with their facetious curiosity, and a cameraman from German TV played at being "the underground film maker" imitating what he considered to be independent film technique. It was great to watch since he obviously did not know what he was doing, but it was undoubtedly the best bit of film he ever shot. Valie Export and Hans Scheugl—for the benefit of all, especially the press—

presented the first ever *tactile* film. A twelve second experience. Valie Export wearing a curtained box over her chest went out into the streets of Munich with Scheugl at the megaphone. For twelve seconds anyone could put their hands behind the curtain in the box and the film, the film was the bare breasts of Valie Export.

It was not until the third day that the discussion took shape. Everyone had moved to the Atelier Jean in the Kaiserplatz. Here away from the formality of the conference hall, and with an adequate supply of beer, more intimate and positive discussions took place. First, in small groups and, then, in large round table discussions. the major topics were:

- (1) a central distribution to handle European bookings and arrange screenings.
- (2) a central information centre which would issue a newsletter and a catalogue of European New Cinema films.
- (3) exchange programmes between the various European Co-ops and the U.S.A.

The longest debate concerned the formation of a central distribution agency. It was also the source of the most disagreement. The Austrians were the most fervent supporters of the project, which came to be known as the "Super Co-op". In the end most people felt that the time was not yet right for the creation of a supra-national European Co-op. It was decided to set up a central information centre in Cologne which would gather information from all the Co-ops and independent film makers in Europe, and the information would then be gathered, edited, and sent out in newsletter form to all interested parties. A catalogue of all independent European films would be collected and issued by the same method. Finally tentative plans were laid for the exchange of film programmes within Europe.

In addition, the meeting brought together a large number of film makers. It also allowed for many new films—and new film makers—to be seen. And new ideas to be exchanged. From Holland Franz Zwartjes brought his *Faces* and *Birds One*, both strong films done in high contrast black and white. His were amongst the most exciting new films to appear. Zwartjes processes his own films using black and white reversal stock. By doing his

own processing he achieves a special 'soft edge' high contrast, which gives his films an extraordinary depth of tone. W. & B. Heins' (Germany) powerful new film is a film film, *Rohfilm* (Rawfilm) and Malcolm Legrice's film as film film *Talla* worked with the essence of film itself. Kurt Kren once again telling all with so little in *Schatzi*. Antonio De Bernardi's (Italy) 8mm, multi-screen, spectacular film poems included *Lune e Pienessa* (Moons and Fullness) for two screens, *Il Sogno di Costantino* (Constantine's Dream) for 3 screens, and *Il Bestiario* (The Beastiary) for 4 screens and 3 sounds. De Bernardi, who eclipses the film into vision, is one of the strongest and most poetic of the European film makers. Dore O, Werner Neke's wife, showed her film, *Alaska* (Alaska), a beautiful film that only a woman could make about the introspective and psychic feelings of woman to man, to her own body, and to bodies' urges. Werner Nekes, himself, the most prolific of all the film makers, presented an array of his new films. Amongst those shown were: *Operation, Tarzan Kampf Mit De Gorilla* (made from some 8mm Tarzan films he was given on a recent trip in London), and *Mama Da Steht ein Mann*, which he made with Dore O and himself mouthing the words of the title until you begin to hear the phrase yourself. The film is, of course, silent.

Lutz Mommartz (whose film won a prize at Knokke) presented his film-through-film-by-film, *Gegenüber*. It is a 2 screen, two projector film. The two screens are placed directly opposite each other, and each has a small hole cut in the centre. The projectors are positioned behind the holes, facing each other, so that the projected beams cross and the images appear on the opposite screen. On one screen the image of a girl projecting a film onto the opposite screen, on which a boy is projecting a film of the girl projecting him. Valie Export's (Austria) animated film *Ping Pong* consisted of a jumping ball projected against the wall while she played solo ping pong by hitting a real ball against the projected one. She spent most of the time chasing the real ball under the seats.

Gianfranco Baruchello (Italy) hit surrealism and symbolism with his *Costretto a Scomparire* (Forced to Disappear). Knives, scissors, frozen turkey, nude male, into mincemeat, and a burial.

Alfredo Leonardi (Italy) hit the joys of film with *Libro dei Santi di Roma*, the home movie for the big screen. Guido Lombardi hit density with feeling in his 8mm *Sviluppo Nr. 2* and *A Corpo*. Gottfried Schlemmer reached some nice boredom with his eleven minute film of a clock for eleven minutes. It is called 8h01-8h11. Peter Kubelka was there to show his masterpiece, *Unsere Afrikareise*. Ulrich Herzog showed his 8mm metamorphosis of a council housing estate. I showed my new film *Me, Myself and I*, and Klaus Schönherr (Switzerland) showed *Gedanken Beim Berühren Einer Mädchenhaut* (loosely, Farts While Touching a Girl's Skin), a superimposing of girl as studies with Bach behind.

Hans Scheugl of the Austrian Co-op showed his film, *Sugar Daddies*, on the wall of the toilet. Not inappropriate since the film was of graffiti from the Gents. And the whole Austrian Co-op let loose with a non-film film during a late night show in a local cinema. A metal foil screen was unveiled, fireworks were set into it, then set alight. It was like Guy Fawkes. Half the audience retreated through the emergency exits. Piet Verdonk of the Dutch Co-op presented *Lipstick* and explained his new phosphorescent cine screen, which holds the image, like after image, while the film is projected normally. He is also working with the Phillips Company on a screen with a photoelectric cell built into it. The result: the intensity of the projected image is converted into sound. Entertainment was provided between films, and meetings by Munich's resident artist, Paul Fuchs, and his wife with film loops, horns, tympanums, and projections on nudes.

Everyone brought films, some one, many many, some bad, some forgotten, and some to always be remembered. As with any similar experience where film after film is projected hour after hour, day after day, many films are lost, not because of their quality, but because of saturation, because the film that comes before or after can distort the one in between, or just because your eyeballs, cannot focus anymore. The chance to show and to see these films is so rare that when the opportunity is there, they pour out. They all have to be seen again, the mentioned and the unmentioned. What about here in London for a change and a chance.

Steve Dwoskin

The London Filmmakers Co-op Report

During the last year, and particularly in the last four months, the demand for Co-op films has rapidly escalated. During the same period, the number of films in the catalogue has about doubled. Amongst the new films are, at last, some by English film makers other than Steve Dwoskin and John Latham. These include some interesting pieces by Roger Ackling, Fred Drummond, Mike Dunford, Malcolm Legrice, Simon Hartog, and Anthony Scott. But, these films apart, there are still comparatively few independently conceived films being produced here. Many of the new films have been by American film makers who are staying or have recently stayed in London. Amongst these Peter Gidal, Gordon Page, Abbott Meader, Bill Wees and Sandy Daly have made some very good films. The only new films from Europe have been the *Cinétracts*, made during the May Commune in France, three numbers of the *Cinegiornale*, made for the Italian student movement, and two films from the German film maker, Werner Nekes. However, a much closer co-operation with the other European Co-ops is expected as a result of the November, Munich conference (See page 29).

As a consequence of the success of the London Co-op's initiative in bringing the New American Cinema programme to the National Film Theatre and around to a number of universities, an increasing number of visiting film makers are coming to England to show their films in London and throughout the country. When foreign film makers visit England, the Co-op attempts to persuade them to leave some of their films here, which has led to these acquisitions: Michael Snow's *Wavelength* (See interview with Michael Snow in this issue), Takahiko Iimura's *Ai/Love*, and Jud Yalkut's *US Down by the Riverside*. Ron Finne of the Canyon City Co-op in San Francisco has also promised to give the Co-op a number of his excellent films in the near future.

Carla Liss, who worked with Jonas Mekas in New York, has been employed by the Co-op to take charge of all distribution organisation. This has, in addition to incredibly improving the efficiency of the Co-op's distribution service, improved

relationships with American film makers who now feel more confident about sending us copies for distribution. This has resulted in the arrival of a number of films by some of the better known American film makers: Stan Brakhage, Bruce Baillie, David Brooks, Peter Kubelka, George Landow, Ron Rice, Stan Vanderbeek, Taylor Mead, Storm de Hirsch, Fluxus, amongst others.

At present the Co-op has no spare resources with which to finance production facilities although approaches have been made to the B.F.I. for help with some filming equipment and they are showing general willingness. The search for space in which to house the production equipment is being linked in with the "New Arts Lab" type project which is at present looking for premises.

At a recent conference of arts labs and similar organisations in Cambridge, plans were made to establish a national distribution circuit. This should come into being around April. The Co-op will prepare a number of balanced, package-deal programmes for the circuit, which could tie in with the proposed European Co-op film exchanges.

Co-op films are being shown regularly in London at the Electric Cinema Club in the Imperial Cinema, Portobello Road, and at the New Cinema Club in Oxford. Both these clubs are very encouraging steps in the expansion of the new cinema's public in this country, and both deserve enthusiastic support. Other important cinematic developments here are the foundation of an 8mm Film Makers Co-op in Oxford, the political film making activities of Filmstrip and English Newsreels, and Interaction's film making programme.

While the Co-op waits for a more permanent cinema area, other venues will be used from time to time (watch the press: *IT*, *Time Out*, etc.). For the first time the affairs of the Co-op seem healthy and stable, and with the growing interest throughout the country, the future looks rosy.

Malcolm Legrice

For information about Co-op activities, films, and membership, write to the London Film Makers Co-operative, 208 Ladbroke Grove, London, W.10.

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