



Some would call this pomography.
Some would call it art.
See inside for further discussion . . .

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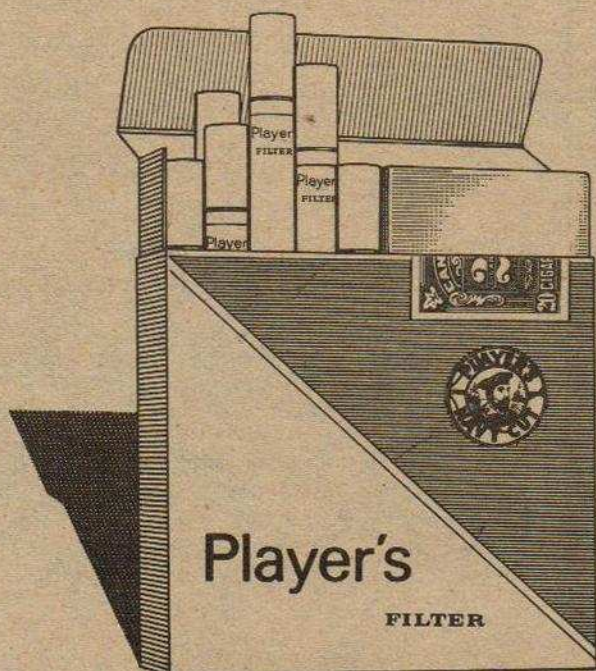
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Great guitarist with pleasing voice, Eric Clapton synthesizes a unique medley of string forms

One of the best guitarists in the US, Mike Bloomfield, once called Eric Clapton the perfect guitarist. He said, "His attack is flawless... He has ideas, attack, touch, ability to transmit emotion and ability to transmit his ideas... Eric does all of these about as well as you can do them."

The first new recording of Clapton's in almost two years, **Derek and the Dominos In Concert** (RSO/Polydor) was released in the last month. And don't be mistaken, this LP is clearly an Eric Clapton showcase, not giving the other members of the group any of the spotlight. But that's not a matter of concern. Bobby Whitlock on keyboards and vocals, Carl Radle on bass and Jim Gordon on drums are all superb in their understated roles, but are effectually incidental to Clapton's performance.

The double album consists of live cuts recorded at the Fillmore East almost two years ago. As the material has been recorded by Clapton before on "Layla", "Eric Clapton" or "Blind Faith". But the "live" situation allowed a lot of improvisation

was also added before each verse that changes the phrasing in a most pleasant way.

More generally, Clapton's voice is revealed as being quite pleasing live, as well as having interesting subtle qualities. It's too bad that the vocal pickup was less than perfect. There are no complaints about the instrumental production though.

Clapton is a great guitarist, not only because of his technical ability — any number of people can boast that — but because his style is a synthesis of guitar forms rather than an imitation. He isn't really perfect, — the blues lines in "Have You Ever Loved A Woman" could have been more emotionally interpreted — but he represents something very close to it.

Rory Gallagher is another one of those guitarists whose name comes up these days when the "greats" are discussed. Hailing from Cork, Ireland, his first recording exposure

was with the three man rock group Taste. He and the group concentrated on translating the blues into their own rock-blues style. But Taste never gained popularity out-



that stretched most cuts out to over 10 minutes.

Despite the length of the songs, Clapton's timing is perfect and the repetition is minimal. All the instrumental lines are surprising in their deliberateness — a quality uncommon in long rock-guitar solos.

One of the more impressive cuts is a new version of "Presence of the Lord" which Clapton first recorded with Blind Faith. That original recording was made using Stevie Winwood on vocals. Clapton's guitar was subdued while Winwood's keyboards took the instrumental lead. The instrumental break in the middle is then dominated by Clapton. The live cut features Clapton on vocal and he does a very sensitive, soulful job that's even better than Winwood's. But now Clapton's guitar is the pivot instrument while Whitlock's piano is subdued. A delicate little guitar riff

side the British Isles and Rory left the group after about four LP's.

Blueprint (Polydor) is Rory's third solo album. It's an uneventful production that has many weaknesses.

Gallagher's voice, while passable, is unexciting and forced. His songwriting, which is the base of the album is mediocre in almost every respect, melody, structure, arrangements and especially lyrics.

That brings us to ask the question why is Gallagher a "great" guitarist? The answer is that he isn't. He's good. He's a fair technician but his lines are often repetitive and lack dynamism. The acoustic slide guitar on Big Bill Broonzy's "Banker's Blues" is simply sloppy and lacks good attack. It isn't even fair to compare him with say, Ry Cooder. Enough said.

Allan Mandell

Offbeat tragicomedy about hangman, victim is intriguing: Richardson looks at death

Once again the little Studio Theatre will prove its surprising versatility, as the latest production, **Gallows Humour** begins its run there tonight. Director Marc Diamond is working with two distinct sets facing one another on either side of the audience. It won't be a case of gratuitous virtuoso set design, however, for the two halves of the setting for **Gallows Humour** correspond like the two acts of the tragic comedy. They are mirror images, both distorted by the author's absurd view of the living.

The common denominator is Death. Jack Richardson's characters are intimately dominated by the process of dying. Their lives are devoted to carrying out this process in an orderly, consistent fashion. In the first half, a convicted murderer awaits his execution with a measure of

tranquillity until the warden presents him with Lucie, whose calling is to sweeten the final hours the prisoner spends in his cell. Their confrontation treats the problems and paradoxes of vibrant self-destruction versus deathly predictability in daily life. It is both a desperate game and a pathetic farce.

Act two's death chamber is the kitchen of the hangman. A brash move on the part of the warden sets off a confrontation between the hangman and his wife. The conflict is of the same dimensions as that between the prostitute and the convict about to be hanged. Philip and Martha belong to the dynasty of happily married couples we find in Strindberg, Albee, and Anouilh, to mention only a few. The hangman and wife have a relationship that nevertheless can boast its own

peculiar imagery, its own symbols of rejection and resignation.

Gallows Humour enjoyed success as an off-Broadway production. There are enough intriguing ideas in the play to allow a free creative hand to experiment in translating the text to live theatre. There are relative possibilities for the use of farce, visual and psychological realism, and rhetoric.

Marc Diamond's cast and crew have dealt with these possibilities pragmatically rather than academically, be it a case of a well-equipped (and masterfully wallpapered) kitchen, or one of finding the most effective delivery for a key speech.

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Eleanor Coleman



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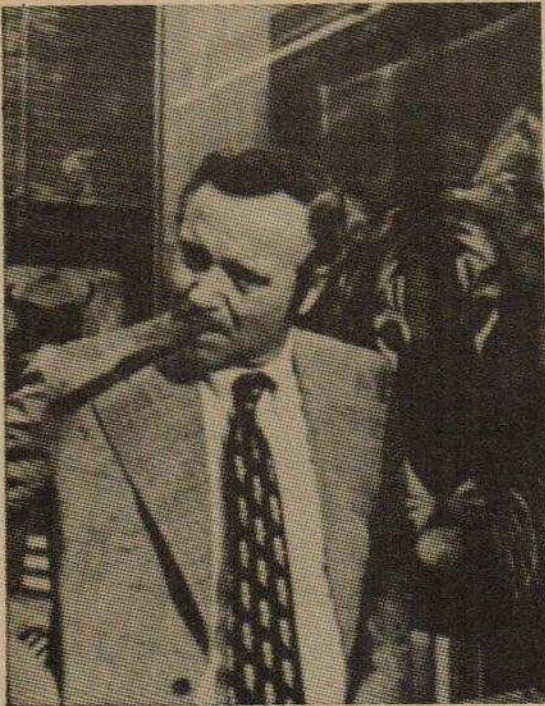
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The hit stage play is now on the screen!

Tiger proved toothless, lost in America's past

Save the Tiger might also be called "Save the World", or "God Save America", and, on the micro level, "Save Harry Stoner".

Harry Stoner is the businessman-cum-war-veteran protagonist of the novel and of the movie of the same



name — the hub of the wheel through which the spokes of the work penetrate. Stoner personifies middle-aged Middle America.

But he's bright enough; he realizes what's going on, but is too weak to help himself. Swept up and under by the currents of his past and America's present, he's not strong enough to either preserve his acquired moral values or adapt to different ones. He feels, "I just haven't got the fucking strength to get involved", and rationalizes away his actions, substituting past involvement for present anomie.

The past is Stoner's America — baseball as it used to be. "They spat tobacco juice on the ball", Harry reminisces, "they scratched their ass... they were something... Goddammit, they were something."

Harry might be your father, or any survivor of war or economic depression, with no way to communicate his experiences to a new generation which hasn't had them to understand.

Although the novel is a better produced work than the movie, its pulpy style leaves it wanting, appearing to be a hastily completed and largely unfinished work. However, what the novel does reveal is the all important dimension of Stoner which the movie fails to get hold of and carry through. The film offers no "past motif", no insight into Harry's past and its effect on his future as the cause of his actions. Jack Lemmon as Harry Stoner is as good as might be expected in the situation, but not good enough. Harry as a war veteran is sublimated to Harry as a businessman.

For Harry the war was home, but now his business has become the alienating substitute for the war's camaraderie. He says, "there (are) no guys' anymore. Guys that had that special thing for each other in that long ago war... the thing that had nothing to do with causes. That special thing you never talked about but was there. You could see it on a professional football team... The thing was you always covered the other guy and he always covered you. That's how it was. But, what the hell...today it is every man for himself."

And Harry's problems is the movie's problem: how to get Stoner across to the audience. Where the book develops it, the movie fails.

The girl he picks up hitch-hiking on the Strip in Los Angeles tells him that "a war is so male. It's so full of balls." Later he's surprised to hear that she does not know the United States ever fought a war with Italy. He's only able to answer, "Yes, we did."

The irony and dilemma of Harry's situation is that the war he fought was supposed to preserve his vision of America, while it only imprisoned him, and forced "his" country in a different direction. Again he realizes his plight but is powerless to do anything about it: "They nailed you. They sucked you in. Get the things... get the things. And maybe they were right. If you made it why not live it up. It was over so fucking fast..."

For Harry there are "no more rules. Only referees."

Bob Gauthier



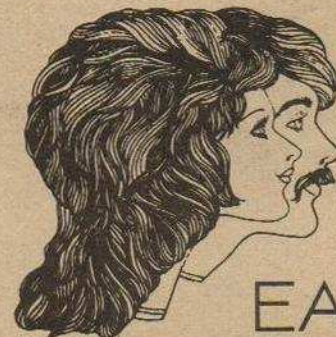
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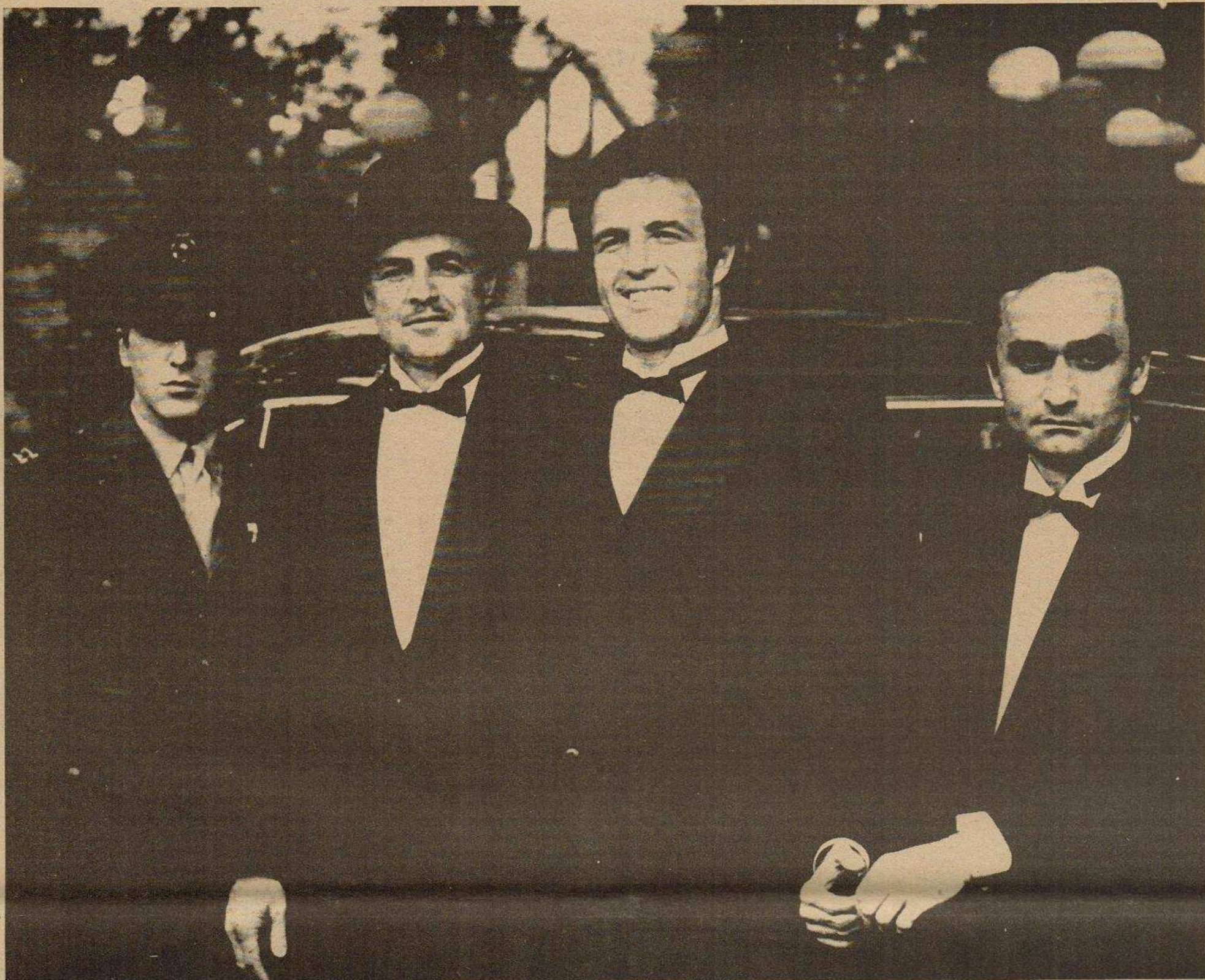
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EATON'S



Movies: pandering to sadist in us?

In the hierarchy of my private concerns, film violence has only recently become a "problem". Although traumatized at an early age by the witch in *The Wizard of Oz*, thus beginning a lifelong aversion to anything resembling a horror film, I have always been a Western freak, whether of the classic *Stagecoach* or one of the innumerable Randolph Scott or Audie Murphy oaters; and with no qualms about the villain's violent end, either, since the hero's fury was always both provoked and appropriate. His guns were either hung up or headed farther west at the fadeout, and he would never have thought of taking the opportunity to dispose of his enemy's wife, kids, and relatives (a staple of both Greek and Chinese tragedy). Although the morality was a simple one of white horses and black hats, it did serve as sufficient justification for the events of the plot.

Thus I don't think that I have any basic objections to the depiction of violence, provided that it has some organic relationship to context. Clearly, there are numerous examples of works of art where violence is integral to the realization of the author's intentions, and could not be omitted without irreparable weakening of force: the execution of the three soldiers in *Paths of Glory*, the murder of the old lady in *Crime and Punishment*, and Goya's drawings of the Napoleonic Wars in Spain suggest themselves at random. To forbid an artist the use of violence would make as much sense as outlawing one of the colors of the spectrum — we would see less, and be the poorer for it.

In viewing several recent films, however, I have been particularly struck by the gratuitous and excessive character of the violence portrayed. Although it happened to be *The Godfather* which aroused the desire to write something about film violence, *A Clockwork Orange*, *Straw Dogs*, or *Dirty Harry* could just as easily have touched off this particular string of mental firecrackers, and of emotions all the more personally significant precisely because they do not seem to be shared by my friends. With regard to *The Godfather*, especially, I found myself at odds with those whose opinions I usually share, or at least comprehend; thus, they felt necessity to tackle the "Violence in Films" problem, despite the slightly boggling amount of attention it has already received in the Middle — and Highbrow — media.

I think there are at least two major consequences for the social surroundings in which we live. The first is difficult to characterize precisely, but essentially involves a kind of numbing effect in terms of our sensitivity to the suffering of others.

Whether one chooses to use the phrase "Freedom of the Press" or "Repressive Tolerance", it seems clear that the mass media expose us to substantial doses of human misery, to which we as isolated individuals can react in only limited ways — of which turning off appears to be the most popular. Whether one chooses to describe this as desensitization, alienation or information overload, the basic situation is one of learning to ignore unpleasantness over which one appears to have no control.

The second consequence may seem much less significant, but it is personally important in terms of the manner in which I want to discuss film violence. It concerns the method of argument characteristic of the muckracking style, which is essentially the *a posteriori* marshalling of causes to explain a given contemporary effect. The advantage of this method is that one can "explain" just about anything through a judicious selection of causes: thus although *The Greening of America* and *Future Shock* describe antithetical social situations, and project antithetical futures, each is to a degree convincing within the context of that set of information which the author has decided to stress. The point is not that Reich or Toffler are phonies, or are necessarily wrong. It is, rather, that their conclusions are determined by the particular intellectual filters through which they view the world, and have a corresponding degree of validity.

Thus it would be quite simple to "explain" film violence by choosing X number of causes. The only problem would be that you wouldn't know anything more about it than when you started to read this. And neither would I. Q.E.D.: we'll have to try another strategy.

When in doubt, describe the situation.

If we start by examining the nature of film, we are immediately confronted by the fact that film is an industry, a business which operates on the same principles as General Motors or Standard Oil. The name of the game is profit, and maximum profit requires the maximum possible audience. That the cinema was rapidly exploited by some very adroit businessmen, and not preserved for the exclusive pleasure of a privileged class (as the ballet has been, for example), is perhaps to be deplored, but should not delude us as to the possibility of an "artist's cinema" free of commercial considerations. The production companies exist, the theaters and distribution apparatus exist, and these are social facts requiring the production and consumption of film.

Production and consumption. The "success" of a film equals the number of people who are willing to spend money to see it; and in a competitive situation in which movies are but

one of several potential choices available to the seeker after entertainment, they must present an alternative to that which is available for "free" — i.e. television. Since television programming is fairly rigidly controlled as to violent or sexual content, primarily because of its greater accessibility to children, it is not surprising that the film industry has chosen to emphasize that which is forbidden to TV: explicit sex and exaggerated violence. Marshall Dillon makes it with Miss Kitty; Doc performs open heart surgery on Festus' umpteenth wound.

Unlike the continuing furor over overt sexual content, which has already brought about a four category rating system, those few individuals who have concerned themselves with the increase in film violence have not provoked any sort of mass protest against this phenomenon. In view of the Social Darwinist ideology of contemporary conservatism, and the identification of a "liberal" position with a distaste for any kind of censorship, we should probably not expect either analysis or concern from the usual sources of controversial social issues; but remembering the deficiencies of the "social criticism-muckraking" discussed above, this would not seem to constitute an objection to a continuing consideration of film violence.

Perhaps the most overtly violent type of film is the Western, where the drama of Good vs. Evil reduces to a naked contest of force in the absence of strong social controls (the impotent Sheriff). In the "classic" Western (roughly, pre-1965), the last twitch of the villains signals a moment of choice for the hero: settling down with the banker's daughter, or riding off into the sunset to seek further adventure. If we take these as metaphors for the acceptance of triumph of an advancing civilization, either decision symbolizes the victory of the community over the individual. *Gemeinschaft* marches on, either absorbing or pushing westward the man whose capacity for violence is no longer relevant.

Contrast this with such more recent examples of the genre as *Little Big Man* and *A Fistful of Dollars*. In the former, the tables have been completely turned: it is the cavalry and the settlers who destroy the more humane Indian culture, with General Custer presented as the bloody-minded leader of a Mongolian horde, rather than as the brave but injudicious gallant of *They Died With Their Boots On* (1941) or *Bugles in the Afternoon* (1952). *A Fistful of Dollars* celebrates the destruction of a community through Clint Eastwood's clever manipulation of competing sub-groups, and its sequels, particularly *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly*, continue the theme of the protagonist's abstraction from events in the surrounding

society. In the latter film, only the jerks enlist in either the Union or Confederate armies, while the smart guys hang loose and pursue personal profit at the expense of both sides.

Although *Little Big Man* and Sergio Leone's "spaghetti Westerns" present different pictures of the advancing society — in the one case, pathologically aggressive, in the other, beset by idiotic factionalism — both convey rather similar attitudes toward the moral turpitude of American civilization. They indict a society rather than an individual or a discernable group, as the background of social corruption justifies the foreground of personal violence: in a world of rats, he who grabs the most cheese is King.

"Indict a society" is perhaps too strong a phrase. . . or is it? If we deal with the concept of "justification", it would appear that the traditional Western legitimated violence as an appropriate response to a specific and temporary historical situation, whereas more recent examples of the genre present violence as a structurally organic feature of contemporary social life. In terms of our increasing awareness of the ways society does do violence to people (women, ethnic minorities, nonconformist youth), we could be tempted to conclude that this represents an intellectual "coming of age" of the cinema, a fuller comprehension of the "Violence is power" equation understood by such diverse men as Napoleon, Max Weber, and Mao Tse-Tung. In view of the contemporary film's absence of any mitigating sensibility or thought regarding the consequence of social violence however, I doubt that we can accept it as some sort of "reality therapy" for the past deficiencies of movies — particularly when there exists a strong correlation between the inclusion of graphic violence and the economic success of the resulting film.

If the first thing we can derive from such films as *Straw Dogs*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *Dirty Harry*, and *The French Connection* is a communication about the inherently violent nature of our world, the second is surely a message about the appropriate behaviour in this situation. The aggressive brutality of the police in *Dirty Harry* and *The French Connection* is perhaps the most obvious example: don't take the chance of misjudging Joe Citizen, man, if he looks cross-eyed, zap him! The contrast with the old style Western Sheriff, who had to be ridiculed and shat on before retaliating, is evident; it's almost as if the old "Preemptive Strike" theory of the think-tank nuclear madmen has seeped down into the collective unconscious. Nice guys finish last; shoot first, talk later, the only good _____ is a dead _____: old clichés achieving a frightening reality.

The consequences for the social fabric, that precious area of intersubjective agreement which makes social life possible, can hardly be exaggerated. They are most evident in the sort of Fortress Persona mentality operative in New York City, where doors are triple — and quadruple — bolted and strangers are enemies until proven otherwise, but may also be observed in the 52 per cent increase in personal assaults in Canada over the last five years. We appear to be moving towards a realization of Hobbes' conception of society as a "war of all against all": habits based upon a general trust of most people in most situations are replaced by a generalized suspicion of everyone characterized by evasion, dishonesty, and the mobilization of hostile feelings.

To attribute these disturbing phenomena solely to an increase in cinematic violence would of course be ridiculous. Up to this point I have been attempting to provide a background, a context, within which we can sensibly discuss and try to understand an artificially isolated case of what is commonly perceived as the alienation, depersonalization, commercialization, whatever, of contemporary life.

To use these giant-sized and mind-boggling words, however, is to end discussion, to invoke the incomprehensible, to admit defeat. The fault is not in the words themselves, or in the very real situations which they describe, but in their promiscuous use as the coins of a conventional wisdom in our time. If we wish to make some intelligent application of them, I think that we have to provide some content which we can understand together: hard, shared, collective experience, of which watching films, and experiencing violence, is perhaps as good an example as can be found.

So what happens when we see a particularly graphic depiction of violence on the theater screen? For a significant portion of the audience, we would probably have to define "see" as "see as unreal": as the advertisement for the film *Last House on the Left* reiterate, "Keep repeating, it's only a movie...only a movie...only a movie." While this may be a "healthy" response, in the sense that it at least temporarily preserves the sanity of the viewer, we should perhaps examine a bit more closely the type of conditioning going on here. ("Keep repeating...it's only a gas chamber...only a gas chamber...only a gas chamber.")

It has become quite commonplace to decry the desensitizing effects of the barrage of violence in the news media, of watching the day's installment of the Vietnam war and attempting to relate to "93 Dead in Bolivian Air Crash." Although this is usually described in highly moral terms, as a kind of not-nice callousness towards the suffering of others, a more important consequence would seem to me to be the acceptance of violence as **normative**, as a basic and typical occurrence in the social world. Sure is hard to get excited about Bolivian air crashes (picket-line violence in Kitchener, a scream down the block); familiarity breeds. . . **familiarity**: ho-hum, la-di-da, and the automatic inclusion in the taken-for-granted world of everyday phenomena.

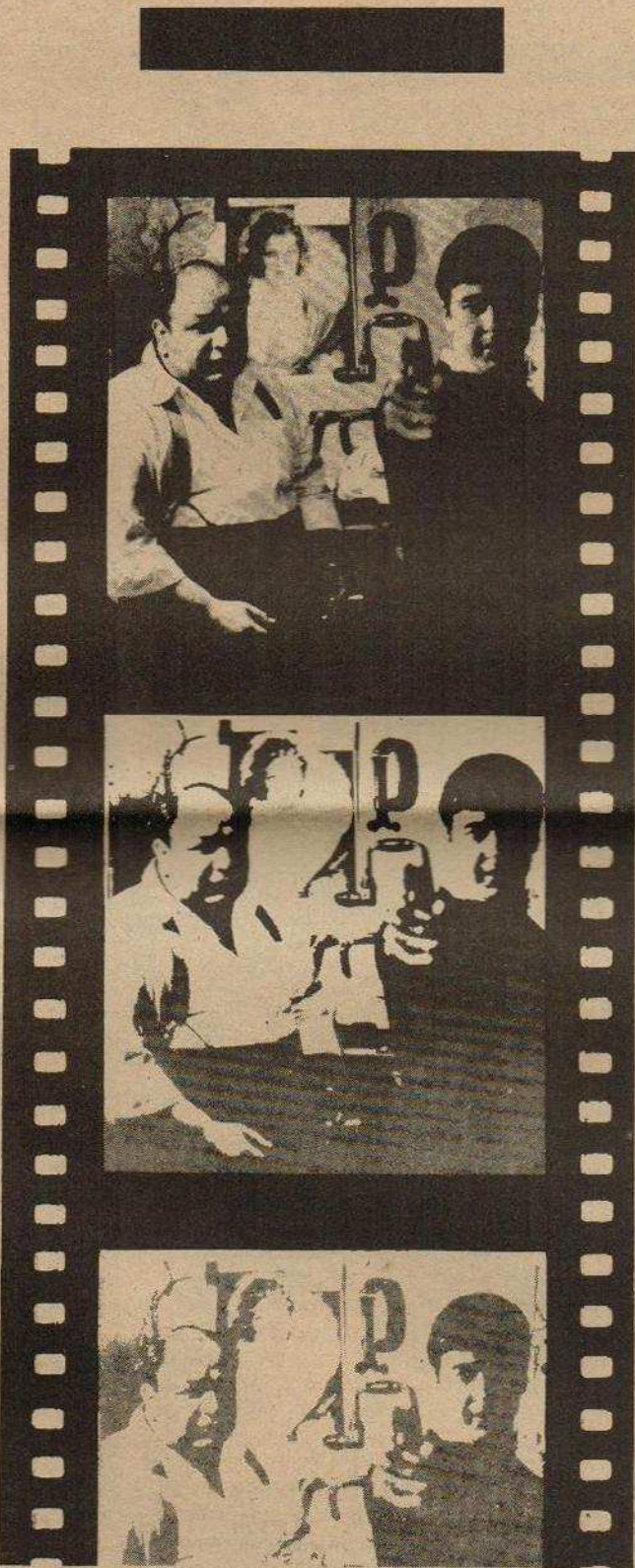
From accepting violence as normative, it is but a small step to adopt a totally fatalistic attitude towards it. In the case of Bolivian air crash victims, this is both realistic (What could we do about it?) and necessary (How can we internalize the pain of the victims' loved ones?); but what about other situations in which we have some actual or potential influence? Far from representing either greater realism or the dissemination of social consciousness, it would seem likely that the experience of an unremitting flow of media violence operates to destroy our capacity to either comprehend or deal with it.

Although the above remarks refer specifically to the news media, we should not underestimate the role of film violence in encouraging a similar apathy. Most of us go to the movies as a kind of special event, to which we devote some thought, discus-

sion with friends, and expenditure of money; we expect some return for this investment, and are proportionally more attentive to (and thus more open to the influence of) whatever film we have chosen. The question of the relative weight of the cinema and the news media in promoting affective anesthesia can be left to the social scientists; what is important here is the substantial contribution which film violence makes to this phenomenon.

In contrast to those who see film violence as an unreal and fantastic thing, and deny any validity or impact to what they see on the screen, those who enjoy graphic violence grant it a validity which overshadows the events of their own lives: the former conceive of violence as an unreal adjunct to life, while the latter conceive of life as an unreal adjunct to violence. Assuming that there are reasons for accepting the reality of both daily life and violence (which I hope that the reader will grant), either reaction can be fairly classified as a withdrawal from, or denial of, the basic conditions of being human.

Before moving on to a consideration of what can be done for this "deranged community," I should add that I do not want



to imply some sort of exalted status for those who react negatively to violence in films. Obviously this could be an equally reality-negating response, although it at least contains the potential for a constructive reaction to what seems to me to be a rather unhealthy situation. We are familiar with the cultural stereotypes of the bluenose, shrinking violet, or little old lady in tennis shoes, however, and will not expect help from that quarter.

How then should we attempt to deal with a phenomenon such as violence in film? My first suggestion will likely seem simple-minded, but it is made in the conviction that it is both an often overlooked and potentially powerful method of getting some feedback into contemporary communication processes. Simply put, it is that we have to become more conscious of ourselves as consumers of culture, and act accordingly.

In terms of personal relationships, for example, I suspect that most of us act so as to minimize contact with people whom we find either offensive or simply boring; and if they were the only people inhabiting our social world, we would probably do our damndest to find another one. We are aware of the

pressures towards conformity characteristic of social groups, and conscious of the fact that if we hang out with folks we don't like, it is probable that (1) we will lead rather depressed lives, and (2) are more likely to be affected by their collective influence than they are by our individual one. Therefore we quite sensibly seek a satisfying level of social reality.

With regard to "culture" or "entertainment," however, we seem to be much less aware of the effects of taking in what is simply because it is readily available. If we accept the idea that society shapes us, we need not accept the proposition that it shapes us all in the same way; quite obviously, it doesn't which seems to leave some room for the exercise of individual choice and self-determination. We hold others to account for their actions, we attempt to control some of the content of some of the areas of our lives, and I can see no reason why we should not attempt the same thing concerning other kinds of inputs. Like Kultchah.

Perhaps some exaggeration will make this clearer. Imagine, if you will, someone who confines his entertainment to whatever happens to be on the Top 40 or the best-seller list or, for that matter, whatever happens to appear in the paper. What will he be doing to himself? "Experiencing reality," or placing himself at the mercy of social processes which grind out mass culture on purely economic criteria? And even if you enjoy the products of the latter, it is difficult to applaud a life lived with such a high degree of unconsciousness.

With the above in mind, I think we can have some immediate influence on what is presented to us as entertainment or culture by using our available assets of mind and awareness in a more sophisticated way, based on thinking about how "You are what you eat." For example, I have recently turned down invitations to see *Deliverance* and *The Getaway* on the grounds that, having read their reviews, I would find their violence upsetting, and found that none was mystified by it or thought that it cast aspersions on my intelligence, personality, or sex.

If we can succeed in taking control over our personal range of entertainment choices, we thus may begin a process which will rescue audiences from a status equivalent to that of the Victorian wife: prone and unresponsive? If this presumes too great an influence by isolated, turned-on individuals, perhaps we should next consider a social correlative for increasing awareness.

I think a clue is provided by a previous reference to entertainment as that which "is presented to us" — is in some sense beyond our control. My suggestion, which may again seem simplistic, is that we devote more thought and energy to constructing (rather than merely choosing appropriately) a culture which is rewarding in terms of creation as well as appreciation.

The major obstacle here, aside from again becoming conscious of the value of creating one's own culture, is probably the cult of technical excellence which has had a strongly inhibitory effect on broad participation in cultural activities. It is perhaps most obvious in the sports culture, which consists of the progressive elimination of practically everyone from competitive sports, but can also be observed in such areas as "musical education," where the talented child passes through a series of filters leading to the social role of "musician". Although these filters are often justified as timeless and eternal aesthetic criteria, anyone familiar with either the changes in these standards over time, or with the large number of talented (and usually innovative) musicians who receive no formal musical education, will be aware of their culture-bound and highly relative nature.

I am not arguing against excellence, but against a system which operates so as to define it as that which is the exclusive province of the few rather than a potentiality for the many. The net effect of this attitude, when multiplied over most areas of cultural endeavor, is to create the ideal consumer: passive, unthinking, and certain of his own lack of ability, alive only when applauding the efforts of someone else.

The antidote? Again, I think, we must begin to be conscious of how things happen and how they affect us. If we arrive at the conclusion that available cultural options are unsatisfying, we have to move towards creating new ones; if our music, literature, cinema, or whatever is inadequate, better an attempt of our own, no matter how apparently inept, than either useless bitching or fatalistic acceptance. This will almost certainly require the ability to work outside established institutions, not least because our products will rarely meet accepted standards, but also because these institutions are incapable of relating to culture based on individual needs for satisfaction rather than an elitist conception of "excellence."

If we can overcome our conditioned attitudes about cultural forms and realize, for example, that there is no need for us to make "movies" with professional actors and expensive production processes, but that there probably is a need for us to use the medium of photography in recording and understanding our lives, we may be able to begin. If we can realize that "literature" is not merely the printed page, but also those thoughts and feelings which we scribble down and want to share with others, we may be able to begin. And if we can realize that "music" exists independently of records and concert halls, exists wherever there are voices, hands, and feet with something to express, we may fucking well succeed.

Before any of this can happen, however, a tremendous amount of demystification and consciousness-raising needs to be done, of which this piece of writing has been a personal jumping-off point. It started out as an attempt to understand what freaked me out about violent movies, grew and accreted and escalated into whatever it has been for you, got kicked around, initiated, and encouraged by lots of good people, and it came out here. Somewhere along the way it ceased to be work and became an experience — sort of like making love when you're tired. Well, I'm tired, I'm spent, but if any of us got off together. . . it was worth it.

Paul Stuewe

The preceding article was adapted from *The Chevron*. A reply to Stuewe's position was published the next week, and it is printed on the following two pages.

We emulate films; deploring violence isn't all there is to solving problem

adapted from *The Chevron*

The discussion (problem? question?) of excessive violence in film is dangerously close now to becoming a cliché.

"Excessive", I fear, is a word which demands parameters and cannot be left to a presumed consensus of opinion. "Excessive film violence" means no more than does "pornography" unless it is accompanied by an attempt at fixing it in an understandable context.

(Admittedly, at first glance we seem to be caught up, as far as definition goes, on an almost classically liberal escalator of permissiveness and personal freedom, but this is a discussion of personal views and consumer choice, not of law-making and "protection of society from itself" — and, ultimately, we will be concerned here with the quality of violence rather than quantity.)

For example *The Godfather*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *Straw Dogs* and *Dirty Harry* upset me, but if physical violence was what put you off these films, I think you missed the real impact of their message.

"Violence", as we all know in these days of enlightened mass awareness of psychology, can take on many forms, and the physical violence presented in the above-mentioned films were, to me, certainly secondary to the "mental violence" aimed at the audiences. At some I wanted to vomit, but mostly simply to walk out and demand my money back. These movies, plus *The Getaway*, *The New Centurions*, *The French Connection* and others of recent vintage have put me off or angered me, not for their portrayal of physical violence, but for their mindless and uncritical reinforcement of society's roles, their intellectual and literary banality and often — as with *Clockwork Orange* — simply for their lack of sufficient technical competence to interest me for the hour-plus. Perhaps some of these require individual comment about content to demonstrate the roots of my objections, before stating the objections themselves.

The Godfather, for instance, turned into — after only 15 minutes — simply a series of exhibitions on how to kill people. Soon, I was not interested in the characters, the plot, the acting... only guessing who would be done away with next and what glorious new way the mafiosi would uncover to carry out the murder. Even if you were able to brush aside this distraction and pay attention to the characters, what was presented? Two rival gangs of killers and exploiters, killing each other off for the right to get the biggest cut off the dope, gambling, prostitution, show business and various other ventures they were involved in.

Except that that was not the way they were presented at all. What you saw was a script dwelling almost lovingly on a "good" gang of killers, and a "bad" gang came on screen occasionally to supplement the sense of competition. The camera took us inside the one family and we suffered with them the trials of big-time crime through the murders, death and "persecutions". We got to know them; many viewers were even brought to like them. Since the other gang was just a bunch of faces behind guns, what was there to like about them? So we were "told" (cinematically) to like the only people presented in any depth, however shallow. I was appalled when many people I saw the show with and talked with later actually felt sorry when Sonny got machine-gunned by "the others" at the end. They had been manipulated into identifying and empathizing with this gunman because the presentation had been so one-sided, and we all know a movie-goer will pick someone to identify with or lose interest, and *The Godfather* was too cleverly and slickly produced to lose most people's interest.

And the presentation of women in *The Godfather*: Either mindless receptacles for a penis and raiser of children or passive, accepting ornaments with shoulders on which to cry between he-man gun battles.

Straw Dogs at least started off with an acceptable enough premise: pacifistic professor-type and wife try to get away from it all in the smotheringly-closed-in society of a small English village. Fine. Except that the wife turns out to be a flirtatious nymphomaniac who has had an affair before with the village's most menacing young workman. And then the whole village (men only, since that's all we see) turns into a gang of murderous idiots and the wife gets willingly raped and the husband finally unpacifistically kills a handful of the idiots in order to protect his house (a man must choose a place to make a stand). The view of men is that they are aggressive and possessive by nature — even the ones who try to hide it or repress it, like the professor — and the view of women is that they are constant prey to their overpowering sexual needs and give themselves (sexually and loyally) in the end to the man who will fight hardest for them.

Director Sam Peckinpah — who classifies females as either "women" or "pussies" — has denied the universality of *Straw Dog's* characters in several interviews, but the Peckinpah stamp on a movie has become easily recognizable and almost



undeniably representative of the stereotypes of *Straw Dogs*. Take his most recent "adventure", *The Getaway*. Other than the fact that it is badly made and poorly paced — in a word, boring — the film presents Steve McQueen as a man who loses his sense of manhood when he learns his wife has had sex with another man in order to get him out of prison; not only that, but the "other man" has — as she put it — "gotten to her" in some cryptic, dark, sexual way. In the same picture, the (previously content?) wife of a veterinarian immediately becomes the willing sexual plaything of a sadistic gunman when he abducts the couple and eventually drives the vet — who has, natch, lost all sense of worth upon losing the sexual loyalty of his wife — to suicide. It would be hard for even Peckinpah to deny the message of the simple-minded wife lingeringly fondling the villain's upraised phallic gunbarrel in unmistakable masturbatory fashion. Again the statement is there: men are for dominating and fighting, women are for fighting over and fucking.

In *Dirty Harry*, the "criminal" was presented as a slaving sadist, a craven coward of a sex maniac and he dressed funny. The heroic policeman, on the other long hand of the law, was beset by liberal legal restrictions and effete permissive politicians. The only women were peripheral, but again: a prostitute, a murdered nude girl and a passive policeman's wife whose weight on the cop finally drove him to denounce his manly job and, by inference, his manhood. He was "going back into law", which from the cop's point of view is going from the side of the law to the side of crime.

French Connection, basically the same story. The only female in this movie was a promiscuous girl with whom the cop spends one night before discarding her and going back "to the job", which has no place for women.

If this has not formed into some kind of identifiable and almost conspiratorial pattern by now, try tuning in some of the TV cop shows some night; they are, if anything, even more explicit in their portrayal of men and women, crime and society. In the only episode of *Streets of San Francisco* I have seen the other night, the story centered on a young woman who had gone to police college and wanted, of course, to work alongside the men in the apprehending-dangerous-criminals work. Now, all thoughts of the desirability of female cops over male cops aside, the issue to be resolved in this episode was clear: either she would make it and prove herself, or she would learn once and for all the superiority of men. Of course, in our present North American liberal atmosphere, I was sure the outcome would not be as clear-cut as the situation seemed. Sadly, I was right. After a vicious sadist had raped and killed the girl's roommate — also a woman cop — she wanted naturally to be a part of the hunt for the killer. The wise, old head cop said no — you know how emotional women can get about these things — and she kept disobeying orders and messing things up trying to get him anyway (women aren't as disciplined as men, and are ruled by emotion, not mentality). In the end scene, the murderer returns to her room while the men cops are out looking for him and confronts her. She is a cop trained in karate and other kills, but falls apart and screams when she sees him (have you ever seen a male cop in film or on TV scream when confronted with his quarry?). He knocks her around, her karate evidently forgotten in the emotion of the moment, and the killer is finally shot from outside a window by a male cop who had returned to the scene to rescue the woman.

Without letting this become a one-issue essay on male and female role-playing, I simply want to make it clear through these examples that it is this form of media violence, carried over in popular, classical and rock music, art and books, which disturbs and worries me much more than the realistic and even "excessive" portrayal of physical violence.

That being said, I will try to return to the topic of physical violence which I left off at the front of the piece. I believe, first of all, that there is an important difference between "fantasy" or "illusory" violence and "fictive" or "non-fictive" violence. I will try to define these terms as I see and use them.

"Fictive" and "non-fictive" violence is that which occurs or has occurred in either a general or a particularized context, such as gunfights, sword duels, wars of ancient or modern type, murder, rape, etc. These appear in our newspapers and on our TV sets and around us everyday and, while generally overdramatized by the media, are not creations of it. An example of "non-fictive" violence would be a pseudo-documentary of a real event, like *In Cold Blood* or *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral*. "Fictive" violence would be films like *Straw Dogs* or *Clockwork Orange*. These types are films which emulate, or even project beyond its present scope, the violence of the society; emulating it, they are also liable to be emulated in turn by those who see it, and are turned on by it (Bremer being macho-sexually turned on by *Clockwork Orange* before gunning Nixon and finally settling for

Wallace; his own real-life experience with "the old ultra-violence").

"Fantasy" or "illusory" violence, on the other hand, portrays ("projects, in the best sense of the world) types of violence which come from the folk-tales, fantasies or violence-repressive stories and themes of society, such as werewolves, vampires, witches, invasions from Mars and horrible mutant creatures. These stories rarely emulate any form of real violence around us and, hence, do not leave themselves so open to emulation. It is an enjoyed and shared illusion through which one can absorb and repress: "It made me feel."

But to break this statement down into a simplistic two-sided categorization of "those who are turned on by violence" and "those who are upset by it" is both unfair and shallow. Speaking personally, I am "turned on" in a semi-sexual way by some forms of "fantasy" violence, but extremely upset by either real violence or most portrayals of real violence, especially war films. So which category shall I condemn myself to? Obviously, the question is much deeper.

To make my point here clearer perhaps than I need, a heritage of overwhelmingly approving and patriotic war films provided an almost-perfect atmosphere for which men growing up in the United States between 1940 and 1965 were prepared to go to Vietnam and carry out there all the atrocities and "normal" carnages of war. There were, of course, wars before there were war films, but my point here is that patriotic films took the place, during that period of American history, of folk tales and heroic stories which had before been passed on to young men by spoken or written word; these films were an extension of that reinforcement agency of society and gave those men something to emulate, even often be proud of. The same can be said of Westerns. They serve, with only the handful of recent exceptions to reinforce the "rugged he-man individual-frontier" mentality and the male macho image which America still tries desperately to hold dear. While few men, it is true, are tempted to strap on their guns and shoot it out, it is the portrayal of frontier justice, which is nearly the anthesis of modern liberal interpretations of social and legal justice, which emerges as the lasting and cumulative effect of these sagas. Matt Dillon is the perfect attorney-general for the U.S.: cold, dedicated unmovingly (and unmoved) to the Law, he places the unbending execution of the Law above any human or humane considerations; it is the Law which must be preserved, not the human beings caught up in it.

Seen in this light, *Straw Dogs* is almost the perfect Western updated. The hero, deserted by "civilization" during his hour of crisis, ostensibly does not wish to use his guns (he has "hung them up", dislikes bloodshed, etc.) but in the end is "forced" to — because of an arbitrary tolerance line he has drawn (protection of his house, the citizens, Law, etc.) — and when he does kill, it is completely "justified"; the killings are seen, in retrospect, as "inevitable" and now, under Peckinpah, even as enjoyable — a necessary release.

"Fantasy" violence — and here I should add that I include the highly sensual sense of fear which many so-called terror movies employ instead of actual blood-and-guts violence conversely gives the viewer-reader-listener no role to emulate, no heritage to uphold, no background of which to have great pride; the person or persons you identify with in order to experience the "fright" have no carry-over outside the walls of the theatre. It is ephemeral, non-particularized, too difficult to bring down to the level of our own lives and, on top of that, too much fun. If a quote-horror-unquote movie is done badly or is too much of a cliché, I laugh through it; indeed many are done with just this purpose in mind... they are intended to be parodies of the genre. If a war movie or western is done badly I do not laugh, and neither do those who take them to heart.

And so my conclusion, I think, is this — talk of "excessive" violence in films is a red herring; is, in fact, totally undefinable and misleading, like "redeeming social value" in the argument over literature. It draws you away from the real issues, the "gut" questions, the aspects which we must live with, day by day.

The graphic portrayal of physical violence was paramount to films like *Catch-22*, *Deliverance* or *The Wild Bunch*. It was central to the film's — and book's — theme and without it the power of the movie would have been lost. But that is a moot point: it is my personal evaluation, it is telling you where my "squeamishness line" is drawn. It is important only after a first consideration is applied: what type of violence was portrayed and how was it presented (approval or disapproval). The gore in *Catch-22* sickened Yossarian, and it sickened me and it should have shocked and sickened everyone who saw it; that was its purpose. It was not meant to make a hero or martyr of the man who was killed, but to show him as a victim, in the full and absurd sense of the *Catch-22* mentality. Was it "excess" to show the kid's guts hanging out? The question is unanswerable. But ask this question: What was the intent of the film, how did it portray people? Or, perhaps better, what sort of people did it give us to portray? Those are questions that can, and should, be answered before questions of technical skill in presenting death and dismemberment are argued. *Catch-22* presents a view which runs counter to the prevailing patriotic and military heritage in North America and the Western World; *The Green Berets* is just another attempt to present that heritage. The question of which, or even whether both, presents, "excessive" violence in its physical form does not interest me. Enough.

Now, having come to that, there is still the question of alternatives. The first, of course, is critics. This is admittedly a weak alternative, but one worth mentioning. After comparing a few reviews to the movies, you can draw some definite conclusions as to which critics you can trust as far as fairly articulating the thrust of the film, and which cannot or do not. I have seen enough previews and read enough reviews by people I trust and respect to avoid *The Green Berets* and even comment on it without having seen it. I knew I did not want to pay the people who made it, nor subject myself to the forms of violence and role-portrayal it presented. While that particular decision was fairly straight-forward, I must confess that other movies present less precise distinctions. I still don't know, for instance, whether I should have avoided *Patton* as I did, since some reviewers indicated it approvingly portrayed the general



and others saw it as having an almost anti-war tenor. But, I stayed away from it.

There are other, and probably better, forms of action. Walk out, demand your money back. There are few movies I have felt that strongly about, but the alternative exists; even if you don't get a refund, the manager is aware of your objection and you have removed yourself from an unpleasant situation. Write letters to editors, talk to your friends. When you disapprove of a popular movie, ask your friends why they enjoyed it. Perhaps they honestly haven't thought it out; at any rate, it is better to talk it out than just nod and say, "Well, I didn't like it."

And "making our own" (music, art, films, etc.) can be an

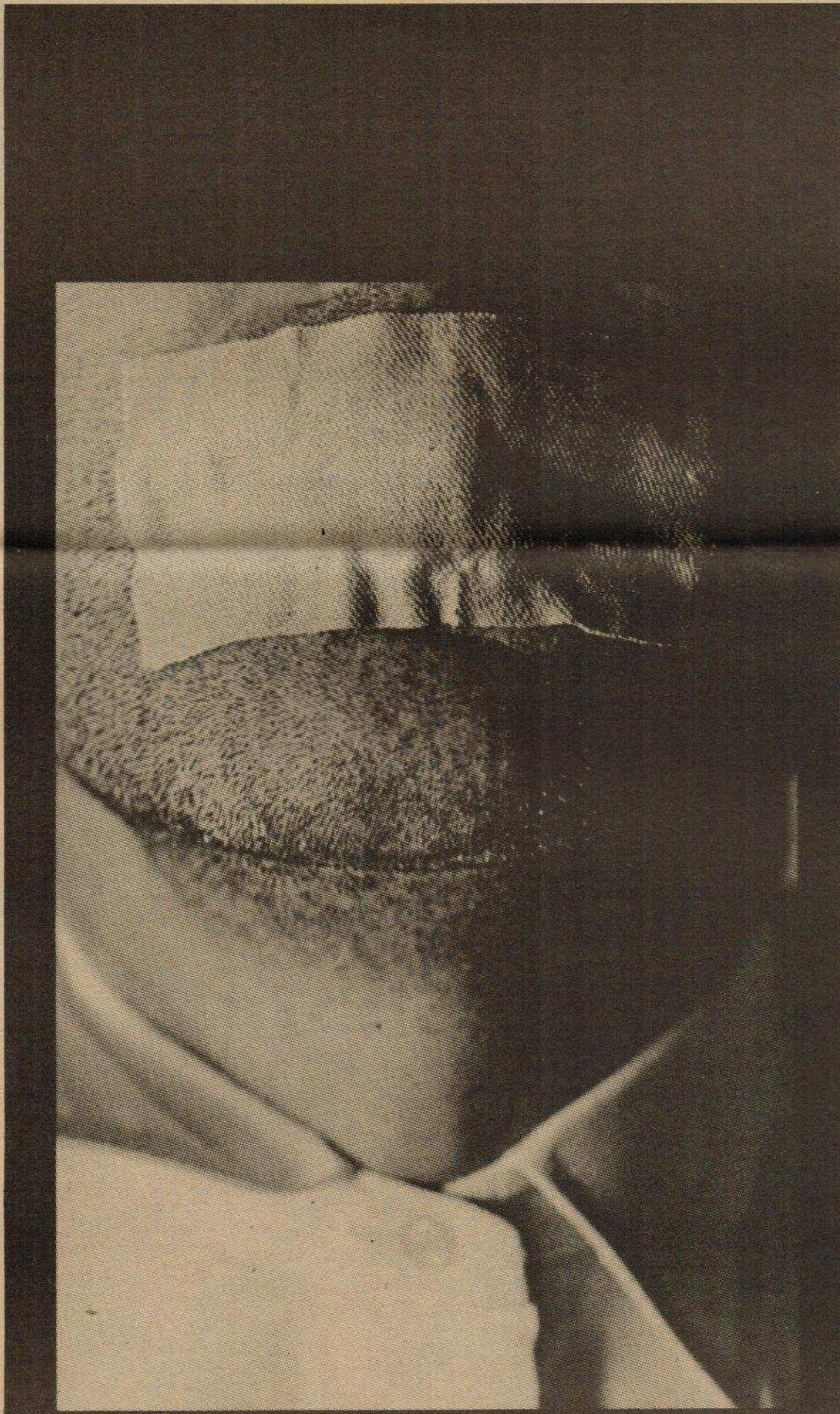
alternative. But they are weak and fairly unrealistic alternatives at this point. In the first place, until you are working at it full time, few of us can manage financially or time-wise, to produce any form of art but the most basic, the most amateur and so, the least appealing and powerful. This is not "mystifying" the process of making films, music, etc.; it is recognizing the realities of the hard work, time and experience demanded in doing them in ways that contain potential to affect people's lives in ways other than making them laugh at incompetence.

In the end, I suppose, it comes right down to you; your judgement, your choice of critics and friends to trust, your own method.

George Kaufman



Censorship is more than a board of men; money, fear and toadying factors



"The official censor is pretty small potatoes. He walks behind the elephant, and the elephant goes where the guy who owns the circus decides.... Business and government are the Scylla and Charybdis filmmakers have to sail by. To the few who make it through, the censor is a minor squall very near port."

Phoniness always bothers me more than the vice it covers, so plain old garden-variety, we-won't-let-you-see-that censorship doesn't trouble me much. I'll be alright if they bar *Last Tango in Paris*. I can imagine scenes that would burn holes in the film.

Often enough I get a kick out of censorship. Mona Lisa does nothing for me, but put a black rectangle across her eyes and she becomes art; I really dig not being allowed to see things that are OK in New Brunswick; I loved it when the Varsity appeared during the FLQ affair with "CENSORED" replacing lines of type; I love the beeps and little soundless passages in talk shows, the triple asteriks in *Esquire*. Was it shit? cock? fuck? cunt? pee? poo? tit? Are you allowed to say tit? Once I was given \$100 to play a left-wing extremist on a Norm Perry show and I wanted to test the aesthetic possibilities of beeps. For example, I would answer a perfectly civil question with a chain of curses, all the time looking composed as a cucumber. If Perry tried to ask why I'd done it, I'd swear while he did, making him beep back at me. I thought about using beeps for punctuation (I'm fine, thanks, Norm, beep). Unfortunately I found out that the show was live and uncensored, so I didn't get to do it.

Overt censorship makes everybody an artist. When Abbie Hoffman appeared on the Merv Griffin show as a black band on the screen and a disembodied voice, we were told it was because he wore a shirt made from the flag, but can you ever really be sure? In my heart I run with that fringe per cent who don't believe for a second that anybody has been anywhere near the moon.

Phony censorship, however galls me, and for every ounce of the old high school debating topic, there is a ton of sneaky programmed selections advertising themselves as free choice. Most of it isn't at all connected with censorship boards, but a little of it is, in a grey, semi-overt way.

There are two co-ordinates for a censor: the boinggg test is one. (If a work makes him go boinggg, it's bad and oughtn't to be shown). The other co-ordinate is pressure, and the censor reacts to pressure on his office the same way he reacts to pressure under his robes. The Ontario Film Censorship Board, for instance, takes community standards — i.e. standards from the community — very seriously. So, if you want to see *Last Tango*, write the board. I'm told it really will make a difference (particularly because they will be tottering on that one anyway. *Deep Throat*, however will be an uphill fight.)

It is not only the public who apply pressure, though. *Titticut Follies* was a cinema-verite documentary filmed in an American mental hospital, as critical as film can be. ("How often do you masturbate", asks a psychiatrist. "About three times a day", a patient replies. "Too much!" says the doctor.) The film was turned down for showing here at the same time as Morton Shulman was muck-raking the Ontario Mental Hospital system. The provincial government did not want the added publicity and asked its board to block the movie. It was banned for nudity and profanity, if I recall correctly.

The censor board also sways to movie industry pressure, which while it serves some films, leaves others even more vulnerable. Movie distributors are not artists, they are businessmen, and they try to put a buck where it will bring back two. *The Godfather* was a sure-fire hit; *Sweet Sweetback's Badass Song* on the other hand was keyed to a black audience that didn't exist in Ontario, so if it was banned it would not be a big revenue loss. It was banned. *A Clockwork Orange*, fronted by Kubrick's name, fame and distributor support,

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Industrial pressure d... movies you see. The oth... waving the glove of t... Television Commission... where a Canadian and... the same program at t... company carrying the... replace it with the Cana... Canadian commercials... arm to Canadian adve... stations, but already t... Canadian schedule... simultaneous showings... something television... Television is a mediun... viewer choice as it is. B... petitive, commercial tele... are already severely re... want to watch a West... Western. Unfortunately... another Western, and... number of Western fans... of the particular Weste... the number hoping for... The ratings are chee... scheduled by the above... starts again.

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It is a favourite conce... bosses — including mov... blinker the people's visi... the conceit is that an en... dian the gun with which... turn a profit. The latter... take, although Abbie Ho... it when he wrote *Steal*... sour that not even the... put it on his presses... himself, but the Canadia... an illegal import, so it i... Hoffman allowed in the... you choose, it costs a p... movie, magazine, tv sh... those who pay the p... careful as to what tun... Warner, the last of the... and Clyde had good sex... the Old Elements. My... them too. Good sex, nice... house, bandits, a sho... What Jack L. Warner p...

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Alan Resnais and Ric... praised directors who... flopped at the box-offic... raise a picture for th... Welles' promise faded... Peckinpah, on the othe... with a steady stream of... unpopular in Hollywood... films in a row, so the b... sneak in a *Junior Bonne*... *The Getaway*. What has... bloody predilection may...

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More than men; money, lying factors

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kicked out all the jams. Meanwhile, Dusan Mackarayev's **WR: Mysteries of the Organism** has never been shown, even though Mackarayev was invited to be on the jury for the Canadian Film Awards. In the States, Don Shebib's **Goin' Down the Road** lost its chance at real profit when it was X-rated, leaving Pauline Kael to accuse that, if Shebib's film has been an American studio production, it would have been sure to get General Audience approval. This could not have been far from Kael's mind when she launched Bertolucci's **Last Tango in Paris** on its notorious course with her unprecedented praise, well before a New York opening was scheduled. The **Time** and **Newsweek** covers, in fact most all the hoopla, has been politically designed to make it difficult for the censor to censor. (Meanwhile, Bertolucci and company snipped out some sodomy from the British version, when it came down to that or losing the U.K. market. So don't expect to see the film completely intact.)

Industrial pressure does not just affect what movies you see. The other week its hand was busy waving the glove of the Canadian Radio and Television Commission. The CRTC ruled that, where a Canadian and American network aired the same program at the same time, any cable company carrying the American version had to replace it with the Canadian one, i.e., the one with Canadian commercials. This is a nice shot in the arm to Canadian advertisers and to Canadian stations, but already the rush is on to switch Canadian schedules around for more simultaneous showings of American programs something television watchers hardly need. Television is a medium offering little enough viewer choice as it is. Because of the way competitive, commercial television works, alternatives are already severely restricted. If the majority want to watch a Western, they will be given a Western. Unfortunately, they will also be given another Western, and possibly a third until the number of Western fans still not serviced by one of the particular Westerns offered is smaller than the number hoping for some other kind of show. The ratings are checked for the programs scheduled by the above process) and then it all starts again.

The official censor, then, is pretty small potatoes. He walks behind the elephant, and the elephant goes where the guy who owns the circus decides.

Joseph Losey, one of the most successful serious film directors, has been catching flack lately for his apolitical treatment of **The Assassination of Trotsky**. Losey told one critic, "You want another film and I couldn't make it. I don't say that I would be incapable of making it, but I wouldn't know how to finance it or who would distribute it."

It is a favourite conceit among the far left that bosses — including movies bosses — conspire to blinker the people's vision. Among the liberal left the conceit is that an entrepreneur would sell an Indian the gun with which to shoot him if it would turn a profit. The latter is the easier position to take, although Abbie Hoffman stuck a spanner in it when he wrote **Steal This Book**, a property so sour that not even the greediest publisher would put it on his presses. (Hoffman published it himself, but the Canadian government declared it an illegal import, so it is unavailable here. Nor is Hoffman allowed in the country. Whichever model you choose, it costs a pile of money to produce a movie, magazine, tv show, book or record, and those who pay the piper are understandably careful as to what tune they pick. Take Jack L. Warner, the last of the Warner Brothers: "**Bonnie and Clyde** had good sex in it. It had what we call the Old Elements. My film, **Dirty Little Billy** has them too. Good sex, nice little barmaid, a red-light house, bandits, a shoot-out, the Old Elements." What Jack L. Warner pays for, you see.

And, conversely, what you go to see is what the Warners will pay for.

Alan Resnais and Richard Lester are two highly praised directors whose last couple of films flopped at the box-office. Neither has been able to raise a picture for the last few years. Orson Welles' promise faded on the same grounds. Sam Peckinpah, on the other hand, hedges his bets with a steady stream of violent pictures. He is too unpopular in Hollywood to risk financial failure two films in a row, so the best he can hope to do is sneak in a **Junior Bonner** between **Straw Dogs** and **The Getaway**. What has always appeared to be his bloody predilection may be survival instinct.

Movie financiers know that the vast majority of the money spent on movie tickets last year was spent on fourteen pictures, and they know which fourteen pictures they were. **Son of the Godfather** is currently being filmed by Paramount. Eleven per-

cent of the total paid admissions for all North American theatres in December was spent on **The Poseidon Adventure**. Etc. It wouldn't matter, except that, what is financed is also an indicator of what is not financed. Perhaps the greatest blacklist in the history of art is against ugly people.

The pressure of sticking with what will be sure to make money comes as close as the local theatre. Those terrible, awful shorts that are the staple in Toronto first-run houses (particularly the Hollywood) are not just bad by chance. They are either part of the distributor's package (i.e. the short comes with the movie) or they are chosen because they are free (a promotional film for French wines, or the like.) And there is a strong incentive to book the worst short available. It is usually estimated that a theatre makes 25¢ for every admission dollar out of the overpriced popcorn and soft-drinks, and the worse the short, the more popcorn sold. If the theatre is running **The Godfather** and returning 90 per cent of the profit to the distributor, you can bet the manager wants to butter a lot of popcorn.

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The alternative to business money for filmmakers and artists is government money. But government censorship is just as bad, only more openly political. The National Film Board and the CBC are notorious for the restrictions they place on projects. The **This Hour Has Seven Days** case was only exceptional for the arrogance the network showed in the face of the public's support of the program. The Canadian Film Development Corporation has been more discreet, but it becomes clearer and clearer that certain films don't get financed. There was a spate of movies promised out of the FLQ kidnappings and repression, but none raised the money. Now even **La Guerre, Yes Sir** has had its financing dropped by the CFDC, for reasons that a number of film people suspect are pretty political. Business and government are the Scylla and Charybdis filmmakers have to sail by. To the few that make it through, the censor is a minor squall very near port.

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Earlier at Mac climbed up the C arrested for at and booked into Street for obs straight, fact by one point when "Sweet God — ment — the cop suicide and he attempted sycid they push him h



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When I hand who was then paragraph, sayi would dearly lov he didn't have t bidden, but one (As an aside, called me to say tower piece in high school stud ed was the dele hoped I would u I was feeling so I was only at

ms. Meanwhile, Dusan **Series of the Organism** has though Mackarayev was y for the Canadian Film Don Shebib's **Goin' Down** at real profit when it was Kael to accuse that, if n an American studio been sure to get General could not have been far she launched Bertolucci's ts notorious course with e, well before a New York **The Time** and **Newsweek** l the hoopla, has been ke it difficult for the cen- ile, Bertolucci and com- sodomy from the British own to that or losing the pect to see the film com-

es not just affect what er week its hand was busy he Canadian Radio and The CRTC ruled that, American network aired e same time, any cable American version had to ian one, i.e., the one with This is a nice shot in the rtisers and to Canadian e rush is on to switch s around for more of American programs w watchers hardly need. n offering little enough because of the way com- vision works, alternatives istricted. If the majority ern, they will be given a they will also be given ossibly a third until the still not serviced by one s offered is smaller than ome other kind of show. ked for the programs process) and then it all

then, is pretty small nd the elephant, and the guy who owns the circus

of the most successful has been catching flack cal treatment of **The y**. Losey told one critic, and I couldn't make it. I e incapable of making it, to finance it or who would

it among the far left that ies bosses — conspire to on. Among the liberal left repeneur would sell an in- to shoot him if it would is the easier position to fffman stuck a spanner in **This Book**, a property so greediest publisher would (Hoffman published it n government declared it s unavailable here. Nor is country. Whichever model le of money to produce a ow, book or record, and per are understandably e they pick. Take Jack L. Warner Brothers: "**Bonnie** in it. It had what we call ilm, **Dirty Little Billy** has little barmaid, a red-light -out, the Old Elements." ys for, you see.

you go to see is what the

ard Lester are two highly e last couple of films . Neither has been able to e last few years. Orson n the same grounds. Sam r hand, hedges his bets iolent pictures. He is too o risk financial failure two est he can hope to do is between **Straw Dogs** and always appeared to be his e survival instinct. y that the vast majority of vie tickets last year was es, and they know which ere. **Son of the Godfather** by Paramount. Eleven par-

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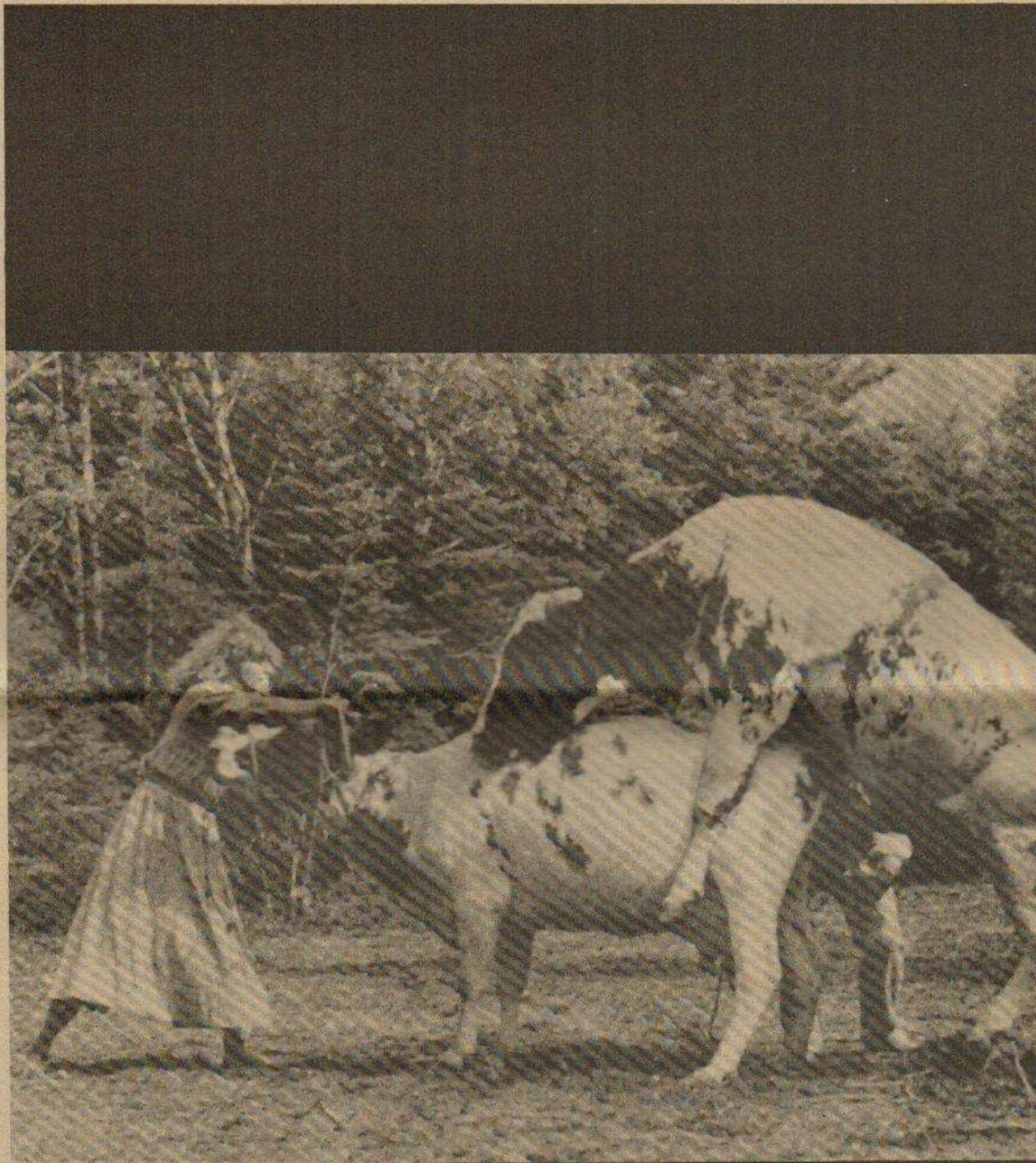
years back where the police made a lot of arrests and broke it up with their horses. The column was the angriest I had written. It was also the first one that was ever rejected — on the grounds that it just wasn't very well written. Who knows, it might not have been. In writing as in movies it is hardest to create a committed work. It is equally hard to read one, often embarrassing or threatening to turn embarrassing at any moment. It is not the style.

Earlier at **Maclean's**, I wrote about a friend who climbed up the CBC tower one lunchbreak and got arrested for attempted suicide, a bit beaten up and booked into the mental hospital at 999 Queen Street for observation. My approach was a straight, fact by fact, biased narrative, except for one point where I broke into italics to write: "**Sweet God — excuse me this one editorial comment — the cops ask a man if he was attempting suicide and he says no, and they book him for attempted suicide; and he says don't push me so they push him harder; they knee him and punch**

by the end I found myself more and more learning the style. I hadn't been bullied. If anything, I'd been protected. It just happens to you. "When people of talent get involved in the movie business", says Pauline Kael, "They rarely play their talent straight, they bend it to what they think of as the "demands" of the medium — that is, to what movies have already done."

The last piece of mine that **Maclean's** published was a follow-up to an earlier one I had written giving Hell to the National Hockey League for ripping off hockey. I received over a hundred letters (a **Maclean's** landslide) and did the follow-up piece by confronting Clarence Campbell, Hockey Canada, John Monroe and some others with my bulging portfolio. Of course I discovered that none of them gave a sweet damn about my hundred representative, angry hockey fans, who had about as much sway with the NHL as they had with General Motors. So that was what I wrote.

After I handed in my copy I got a call from Phil, the interim editor after Gzowski's dismissal. Phil



"It'll be all right if they bar **Last Tango in Paris**. I can imagine scenes that would burn holes in the film."

him and he asks for a doctor and the doctor arrives with the man who kneed and punched him; and a psychiatrist asks him if he heard voices, and he says no, and so he gets committed to a mental hospital; and then THEY say that HE is acting strangely!"

When I handed the piece in, Peter Gzowski, who was then the editor, particularly liked that paragraph, saying that was the kind of thing he would dearly love to write, but couldn't. Not that he didn't have the skill, not that he had been forbidden, but one in his position just didn't.

(As an aside, McClelland and Stewart recently called me to say they wanted to reprint the CBC tower piece in a new sociology textbook for high school students. The only change they wanted was the deletion of that paragraph, which they hoped I would understand. It was a sunny day and I was feeling spry so I told them all or nothing.)

I was only at **Maclean's** eight months or so, but

was worried that my piece was so cynical it would make the section of letters to follow pretty superfluous. He wondered if I couldn't offer a little more hope — not change my beliefs, but maybe just lighten my prediction some. He asked me to think about it. I did and I figured, when you came right down to it, a sentence or two, surrounded by thousands of others, laid out between bright-coloured, high-priced, motivationally-researched ads — a sentence or two couldn't make much difference. I thought, "What the Hell". I was low on money at the time, unsure about a job, and charged the ending to read, "Actually, I would be pretty pessimistic if it weren't for the letters; but if that many people stay that mad, and start getting together with more mad people, we sure could unseat some politicians and maybe even some hockey czars" — which made us all as happy as we could be, under the circumstances.

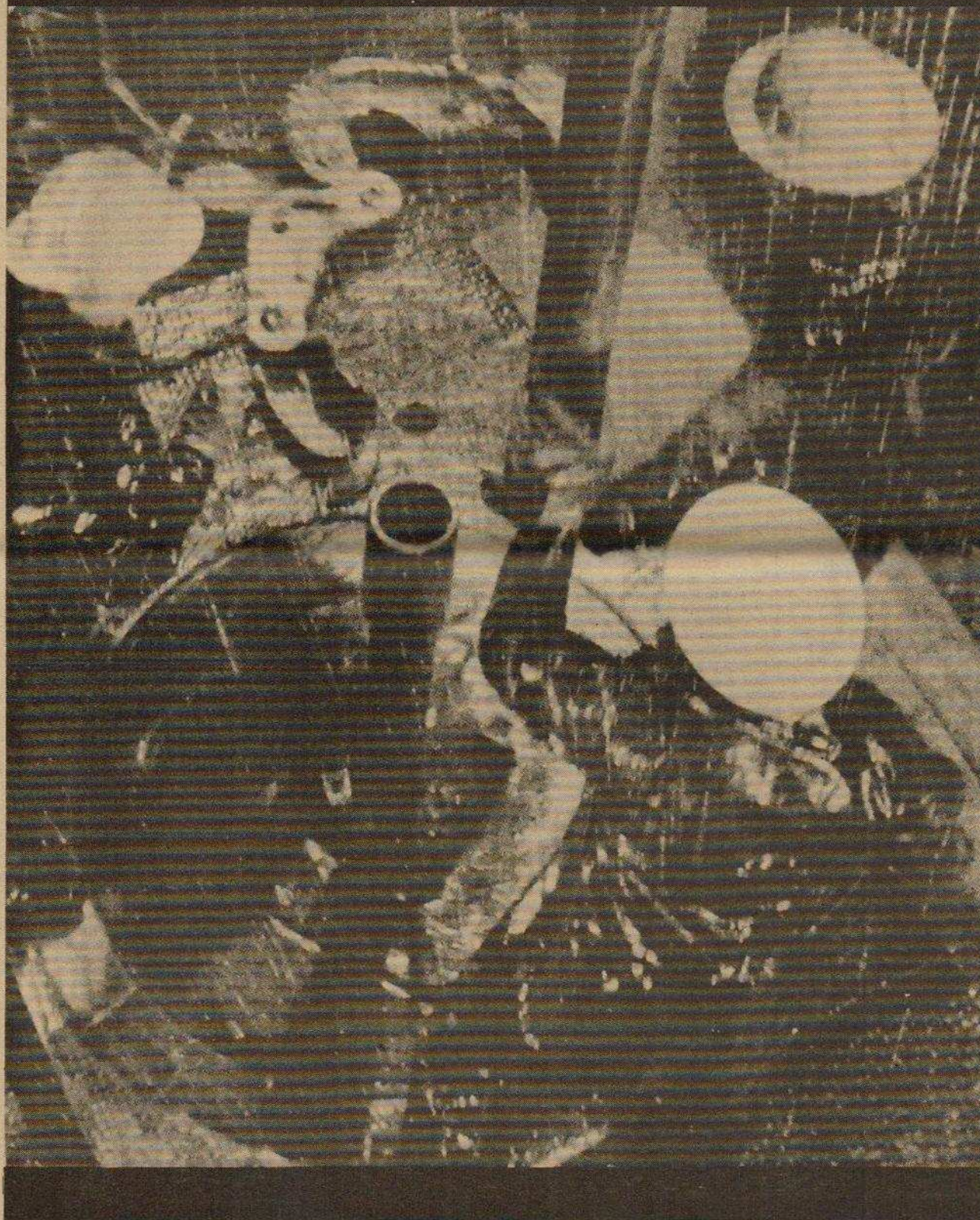
Bob Bossin

Canadian capitalism gone on the blink

"In key sectors of the Canadian economy non-residents are in a position to take decisions contrary to the well-being of Canadians. And that has in fact come about in industries as important as automobiles,

titanium, radios, chemical products, optical products and many others. Foreigners will decide if our oil wells are to be worked or closed . . . and will collect the profits."

—Pierre Trudeau, 1958



Much has happened since 1958 to further reduce Canada to an economic and political satellite of the American leviathan and yet the telling evidence of dependent status has almost become lost in a shuffle of useless reports masking almost total inaction on the part of successive Liberal and Conservative governments.

Trudeau's essay is one of "14 probes into the workings of a branch plant economy" contained in a *Last Post* special called **Corporate Canada**.

Edited by Marc Starowicz and Rae Murphy of the *Last Post* staff **Corporate Canada** attempts to serve "as a layman's guide to the basics of Canada's economic and political crisis". Most of the articles appearing in **Corporate Canada** have previously appeared in the *Last Post*, a muckraking alternative Canadian news magazine.

In the essays on various Canadian corporations and their activities the authors go beyond the distortions and superficialities one reads daily in the average commercial newspaper and analyze what is behind the events.

Contemporary writing on economics in Canada is by and large an economics of acceptance, acceptance of the myths of orthodox liberal economics. Mel Watkins, a left-wing U of T economics professor, says in the introduction that the conventional economist relies on two myths: that the market is the basic source of power and that the state is a "neutral entity able to intervene when the populace wills to correct any imbalance."

Watkins argues that Marx offered the best insight into the modern capitalist state when he said "the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the bourgeoisie." He goes on to observe that "in hinterland areas therefore it is the owners, top managers and financiers of the foreign based multi-national corporations that are the contemporary ruling class. Where the power lies is mostly outside Canada."

However, the essays in **Corporate Canada** are not merely about the well-documented activities of American multi-national corporations. Eaton's, one of the most well-known Canadian corporations, comes under fire in what is one of the best essays in the collection.

One might well prescribe this piece as required reading for those who might think an independent capitalist Canada is an objective to be worked for.

Eaton's is exposed by Starowicz as a corporation that has continually fought attempts of its employees to unionize. It was investigated during the 1930's by a Royal Commission because of its high prices and sweat shop wages.

Eaton's now has 50,000 employees across Canada and the Eaton family owns 48 department stores, 5 warehouses, 352 catalogue sales offices and many undeveloped parcels of land. With an estimated fortune of 400 million dollars the Eaton empire is one of the largest concentrations of political and economic power in Canada.

Starowicz details how this empire has been built by super-exploitative wages, poor working conditions, arbitrary management, and powerful pressure on the press and on governments.

In the thirties it was revealed by women employees that they were harassed and harangued into making the minimum of \$12.50 a week on piecework. This required the completion of twelve dresses a day, which was almost physically impossible.

In those days a group of 40 women in a department were fired when they tried to bargain with management as part of a union. In 1951 a vote was held on certification of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union and after a three year union organizing campaign the workers voted 4880 to 4020 not to join the union. This reflected a massive organizing and publicity effort by the company against unionization which spread lies about the union and which also involved four well timed raises, a better pension scheme and benefits.

Yet in 1970 the average wage for saleswomen in a Toronto store was \$1.70 an hour as compared to \$2.00 an hour for salesmen, far behind the unionized industrial sector. The union still gets many calls from Eaton's workers but they are told about the loss in 1951.

Starowicz also reveals how the daily press in Toronto and Montreal are influenced by the moguls of the Eaton empire. One reporter in Montreal was fired after an Eaton's boss complained about a humorous piece he had done about the Santa Claus parade. In Toronto the *Telegram* twice killed a Marc Zwelling story about the layoff of 200 Eaton's employees in 1970. Zwelling now works for the *Last Post*.

The Eaton's empire was built on many questionable practices, including the use of loss leaders to drive smaller retailers

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"Medieval Herbals, Medicine and Magic" by Professor Jerry Stannard, Department of History, University of Kansas on Monday 26 March at 8:00 p.m., Osler Hall, Academy of Medicine, Bloor and Huron Streets. Jointly sponsored by the Centre for Medieval Studies and the Academy of Medicine.

HILLEL PRESENTS

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ASHER GRUNIS

PHD candidate York University in International Law

ON

**"The Legal Status of the Israeli
Occupied Territories in the Light
of International Law"**

Thursday, March 22, 1973

4:30 p.m.

Hillel House 186 St. George

out of business, special discounts from manufacturers to undersell competitors, the forcing of workers to work at intolerable speeds at low wages.

In another article titled "Why the CPR doesn't Like You", Bob Chodos demonstrates how another huge Canadian corporation has dedicated itself to phasing out rail service in spite of passenger demand. Begun with government financing as part of Macdonald's National Policy in the 1880's, the CPR is a corporate agglomeration unconcerned by people's needs and solely concerned with profit.

In fact when the National Railways Act came into effect in the late sixties, which required railways to justify any cuts in service, the CPR applied to drop all its passenger service except its lucrative Toronto to Montreal run. Apparently now more interested in developing its hotel chain, airline, transport system and freight service and other enterprises, Canadian Pacific greeted the refusal to cut off many runs by curtailing services and discouraging passengers.

It made its times inconvenient, it raised meal prices, cut dining and sleeping car service and did everything it could to discourage passengers. An apathetic Liberal government in Ottawa did not fight too hard and CPR was allowed to make some reductions in service. This co-operation with federal governments has remained despite the fact Sir John A. is long gone.

Chodos goes on to explore the trends in Canadian rail service, suggesting that even CN appears preoccupied with a desire to make a profit from passenger service. He cites a study made by an Ontario transportation economist which argued that not only is rail service cheaper than air but a considerable deficit is justified in view of the fact that more expensive airline transportation is subsidized through airport and other subsidies which add up to more than \$100 million.

In the last essay in this expose of the Canadian dream Ralph Surette explores the decline of the family farm and how this development has actually been encouraged by government policies. The facts of the desperate situation of rural Canada are quite familiar but what Surette explains is that the trend to corporate farming, which is destroying a way of life, has been encouraged by a heartless federal government in concert with agri-business.

Branch plant economy hurts most Canadians

No wonder a small farmer can't stay in business when the free market allows wholesalers to reap huge profits while farmers and small retailers get almost nothing. The farmer only gets ten per cent of the final selling price of his produce while vast corporations such as Kraftco milk every last penny out of consumers. The eastern urban elites of Canada, Surette charges, have aided in these developments, encouraging rural depopulation and ignoring the chaos in the free marketing system.

Overproduction has been encouraged by corporations eager to get cheap products for processing and maximize already exorbitant profits. Surette concludes that in essence the problem is the same as that in other sectors of the Canadian economy; that not enough is spent on research and development and nothing is being done to fight American control through land ownership and the exploitative practices of its large food processing corporations.

In the second series of six brief essays Corporate Canada explores the continentalist pressure on the Canadian economy and the disastrous results in energy resource industries, in high technology industries such as computers and electronics and finally the war industry and the National Hockey League. In all these case studies the authors detail how American control has resulted in detrimental effects for Canada. Much of the information on the extent of American ownership in the Canadian economy is common knowledge but what is often forgotten is just how that ownership leads to control and how decisions are based on profitability on an international scale. The stories in the computer industry and the electronics industry are a case in point.

As in all high technology Canadian industries there is a high degree of American ownership and this has resulted in the decline of both computer and television and radio tube manufacturing. While Canadian and world sales are booming Canadian branch plants such as General Electric and Westinghouse are closing plants. While the computer industry is the fastest growing industry in the world Canadian firms are going out of business and branch plants are phasing out operations.

The degree of American control has resulted in an increased tendency to import what technology still is required and not even produce enough for the Canadian market. Research and development in Canada by Canadians is almost non-existent. The proportion of imports is increasing in proportion to domestic production. Clearly Canada has completely lost control of her economy in these vital areas.

Despite the Science Council of Canada's warnings about these trends in high technology industries and the dire consequences of foreign control, the Trudeau government has done absolutely nothing to develop publicly owned industry of this type in Canada. This despite the fact that particularly in the computer industry, this is vital to our future economic development and independence from subservience to the American empire.

One of the most obviously distasteful areas of foreign control is in the arms industry. Canada is one of the world's leading arms producers and its largest customer is the United States. Starowicz shows how this industry is dominated by American firms and is in fact subservient to the American State Department. Though the Canadian government has kindly set up a marketing agency for the branch plant war industry, deals must still be approved by the American state department because most of the arms producing companies are American owned.

Canada is a leading producer in aircraft, radar, guidance systems and guided missiles. One government official is quoted as saying: "Let's face the facts — as long as we have defence forces we have a defence industry, and as long as we have that industry, they have to have foreign markets."

Therefore, Canada acts as a chief supplier of the U.S. war machine in its various efforts from Korea to Vietnam cooperating through a defence sharing agreement as well as two military alliances, NATO and NORAD. "An independent Foreign Policy for Canadians" was the title of a Trudeau review of our foreign policy published several years ago. Can anyone take this seriously while Canada acts as a powder monkey for the largest imperialist military power in the world?

In resources the same story unfolds as Trudeau and Joe Greene tried to conceal the obvious when they denied the existence of a continental energy pact. Gord Cleveland looks at Joe Greene's nationalist speech at Denver and exposes it as a ploy to distract Canadians from the sell-out of their natural resources. He shows how high-level American planning committees consider a continental energy policy as essential to America's continued growth as the most powerful state in the international capitalist economic system.

The continental energy pact never needed to be signed. It is proceeding as scheduled with the James Bay development (financed by American capital to exploit Quebec's hydro power for American consumers), and the Mackenzie Pipeline while natural resource industries continue to have the highest degree of American domination in any sector of the Canadian economy. Canada's most irreplaceable resources are being sold out and the Trudeau government just sits back and watches, occasionally rousing itself to help the Americans complete their take-over.

The final insult is the decline of Canada's "national sport", hockey, with the expansion of the National Hockey League to the United States in 1967, ironically the centennial year. This has resulted in a lower quality of hockey and marks the complete commercialization of the sport. Only three franchises out of 16 in 1973 are in Canada (and only two are Canadian owned). Hockey Night in Canada has fallen from its former top position in Canadian television ratings as the game becomes so diluted that aficionados no longer bother watching what was once the weekly showpiece of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

The final section deals with the government response or lack of it. It is fittingly titled "The Politics of the Last Resort". The Trudeau government is lambasted in three successive es-

says for its bankrupt policies such as the DREE (Department of Regional Economic Expansion) grants that have only contributed to the coffers of large corporations and failed to solve regional disparities, and its lack of effective response to Nixon's protectionist economic policies of August 1971. All Trudeau could do was go to Washington and beg for exemption.

Corporate Canada is in many ways a depressing book but necessarily so. The utter bankruptcy of the response of the present government and the Canadian capitalist classes has been reflected in encouragement they give to the imperialism

Major league hockey a bush league sport

of American multinational corporations. Behind the figures lie the real effects of American control, the degeneration of Canada into an advanced banana republic, manipulated from Washington and New York. We are what economist Kari Levitt calls "the world's most developed underdeveloped country".

However Corporate Canada fails to go beyond pointing out the deficiencies of the capitalist system. Its only failure — but a crucial one — is the limitation of muckraking journalism: solutions are only vaguely stated and alluded to, not clearly stated and integrated into an overall critique of the system.

For example, the Globe and Mail, Canada's "national newspaper" publishes muckraking stories, but refuses to realize that these are just examples of the inherent contradictions of the capitalist system. And while the Last Post journalists are certainly more analytic, "Corporate Canada" is still limited in its overall analysis. It suffers, as many collections of essays do, from a lack of a coherent analysis.

What should have been included to lengthen and increase the effectiveness of the book is an overall analysis of why Canadian capitalism has ended up in this sorry state and what are the forces that maintain it that way.

At times, the book also makes it possible to conclude that some of the Last Post writers have plunked for socialist solutions to the problems they outline only because Canadian capitalism has failed to produce Canadian independence. They sometimes seem to reject an independent capitalist Canada only because Canadian capitalists don't want it, rather than because they consider it undesirable per se. This can come close to anti-Americanism, rather than opposition to American imperialism. On the whole, however, the book does steer clear of this pitfall.

Certainly, though, the point Corporate Canada could have made more explicit is that the bourgeois solutions of the ilk of the reformist Committee for an Independent Canada are irrelevant in terms of solving Canada's problems. What Canada is facing is a crisis of capitalism. The only solution is the establishment of socialism, and this, in the Canadian context, implies a strategy that links the struggle for socialism with the struggle for independence, while never losing sight of the fact that socialism is the overall goal.

Thus, such reformist goals as 51 per cent Canadian ownership, more laws restricting corporate dealings and other CIC type demands are mere tinkering and won't solve Canada's economic crisis. It is necessary that socialists continue to expose the contradictions of Canada's state as a dependent capitalist satellite, subject to the dictates of the metropolitan power of the American empire.

The book does, however, make the useful contribution of detailing, in no uncertain terms, some of the major problems of the Canadian economic system.

Corporate Canada, the Canada of bought-off capitalists and corrupt Liberal politicians is fast reaching its crisis. As its collapse becomes more complete socialist alternatives will become essential if Canada is to survive as anything other than a junior partner in the American empire.

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Bob Bettson



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Watsup

oops!

Last week, in a review of James Reany's Poems, we stated that an entire one-page poem had been printed upside down, which was perfectly true. However, we ascribed this to a "hilarious pasteup error". Tim Inkster of Porcepic Press has since instructed us that the poem was so printed deliberately. Our apologies.

And, three books reviewed, also by Press Porcepic, sell in a set of four for ten dollars. The books already mentioned are Tales sur la pointe des pieds, Angel, Bumblebee Dithyramb and the fourth is The Topolobampo Poems.

movies

No doubt you don't have any time to wander off to movies these days, but if you do, there's a few things around. Tonight you can see **Citizen Kane** at the Roxy (seven and 10:45) in the increasingly unlikely event that you haven't seen that staggeringly good movie. At 9:05 **Touch of Evil** is playing, an example of later, lesser Welles — a stylish, empty thriller.

Friday and Saturday evening at St. Mike's Woody Allen's **Play It Again, Sam** is the bill. Allen is somebody you either like a lot or not at all, so caveat emptor.

Revue Repertory Theatre has an odd pairing of films Saturday and Sunday. **Harold and Maude** is an offbeat, May-December romance starring Seymour Cassel and Ruth Gordon. **Tristana** is one of Luis Bunuel's unique works of cinema art.

Next Tuesday at the Roxy, you can see a pair of films appropriate to the dull, oppressive exam-time feeling. Appropriate, that is, to relieving the feeling. **A Day at the Races** and **At the Circus** by the Marx brothers. Their comedies are as viewable as ever, and will do wonders for your doldrums.

pop

The Survival Conference continues this week, providing some good free music. That great U of T favourite, **String Band** is playing tonight at 10 pm in the Hart House music room. **Humphry and the Dumptrucks** entertain at Innis College, 63 St. George, on Friday at 10 pm. A songwriter's workshop with former Fug **Tuli Kupferberg**, **Luke Gibson**, **Bob Bossin** and others (possibly Valdy) is scheduled for four pm Friday afternoon in Innis College.

As well as learning how to survive at the conference you can help the Quebec-Gothic Tenants' Association pay off their \$4000 legal debt incurred in their fight against high-rise developers by buying a ticket to the **Gothic Rock-It Concert** at eight pm at Convocation Hall tomorrow. The \$2 admission brings five hours of entertainment including the talents of Toronto singer **Beverly Glenn-Copeland** and the illusions of magician **Doug Henning**. Also featured are keyboard man **Bill King** and drummer **Bill Usher** and the folk guitar duo of **John Lyle** and **Derek Stephenson**, plus the eight member band **Horn**, who record for GRT.

Appearing at the Riverboat this week is Toronto's **Joe Mendelson** who's just released an album called "Mr Middle Of the Road" (Nobody/GRT). Mendelson accompanies himself adequately on guitar, drums, piano and bass on the LP's 16 selections (many of them 1-2 minutes). Mainline fans will be pleased to know that group's original member has retained his silly sexist, chauvinistic lyrics and egoistic smugness. Mendelson has always been a fair

guitar player but this collection is at best less of a waste of vinyl than Mainline's albums. One of the best slide guitarists, **Ry Cooder**, comes to the Riverboat starting Thursday, April 5. Besides working on three of his own LP's (on Reprise), Cooder has distinguished himself on sessions with an incredible number of performers including the Rolling Stones, Gord Lightfoot and Arlo Guthrie.

Gordon Lightfoot has sold out every night of his concerts scheduled for Massey Hall tonight through Sunday.

Fiddler's Green presents English, Scottish and Irish folk songs with **Owen McBride**, **Enoch Kent** and **Lan Robb** on Friday at nine pm. Flatpickers **Nigel and Jesse** appear on Tuesday, March 27 with a repertoire of North American folk tunes.

Former blues-rock lead guitarist of "Taste", **Rory Gallagher** is at the Colonial Tavern on

drawings and watercolors on March 26 (until April 13).

survival

That mad hodge-podge, the Survival conference, continues. Tonight you can attend a session on alternative health care. After that, listen to some country music by Stringband.

Survival in jails might have a particular usefulness for you; if so, go to the Advisory bureau noon on Friday.

Architecture without architects is a substantial topic, appearances notwithstanding. At the Pendarves Lounge, International Students' Centre, ISC, two pm. At eight pm that night, in the music room at Hart House, Survival and the body will be under discussion.



Yonge Street until Saturday. The evening could be expensive (\$3.50 up), so check prices first at 363-6168.

The legendary **Fats Domino** is at the El Mocambo until Saturday and the cover charge (\$1 to \$2) is lowest tonight.

The Mariposa Folk Festival presents its third concert at Glebe Road United Church, at 7:30 pm on Saturday. The program features **Fred McKenna**, **Adam Mitchell**, **Owen McBride** and **Sweet Evening Breeze**. Tickets are \$2.50 and further information is available by calling 922-4871.

art

At the Art Gallery of Ontario an exhibition entitled **Information and Perception** begins March 24. It was created and mounted by eight fourth-year art students and its theme is "what the individual 'thinks' he perceives". Both this and **The Art of the Comic Strip** will be on until April 18.

At the Evans Gallery **Fred Tymoshenko**, born in Windsor, shows his landscapes inspired by a recent trip to the West Coast. This gallery is at 124 Scollard Street, and the hours are 10:30 — 5:30 daily (closed Sunday). Until April 7.

La Chasse Galerie hosts **Rita Scalabrini** and her paintings beginning tomorrow, March 22. Erindale College host realist painter Mary Pratt beginning March 26. You might have seen this artist and her husband on a recent program of Telescope. Beginning March 30 until April 20 at Erindale is an exhibit, **Art of the Canadian Eskimo**, mainly prints.

At Victoria's New Academic Building **Shelley Graves Shaw** begins showing her

An issue closer close to home is Quebec-Gothic city survival, Thursday at two pm in the Pendarves lounge.

Friday evening Tuli Kupferberg, Fug manque, will be honored guest at the Revolting theatre. Humphry and the Dumptrucks follow that act. Innis college is the location, 63 St. George. Keep on coming.

theatre

It's **The Big Apple**, yes indeed. And there are good things in this musical now featured at the Global Village. Elizabeth Swerdlow's dancing and choreography in the production provide its most positive element. Her fellow performers rally to the demands of the choreography fairly well.

One has to mention these things first because other elements of the production simply cripple its potential as a durable musical. Its plot is too vague and loose and (the term is becoming a cliché itself) cliché-ridden. There is no character development of the supposed central figure of the dancer, Monta-Suma. As Elizabeth Swerdlow has no singing talent that was evident on opening night, there is a pathetic contrast between her majesty as a dancer and her inadequacy when expressing herself vocally. Even when speaking, she is not easily heard. Between the flatness and repetitiveness of her lyrics and her obvious vocal limitations, the intended tragedy of the dancer was is not effectively communicated.

There are vague suggestions of plot that are like thumbnail sketches lying in no particular order: the progress of the three male tempters, the temptation of Monta's two fellow dancers, the tongue-in-cheek look at the consumer soci-

ety. If the musical had a more precise idea of what is wanted to say, it might come closer to coherency.

As it is, it comes closer to a variety show, which, characteristically, has some rather fascinating acts and some more dull and forgettable ones. **Monta's Dance**, **Putting On The Beast** and **The Big Apple** are certainly enjoyable to watch. If Elizabeth Swerdlow wants to accomplish more than a fragmented evening's entertainment, she had better stand back and look at the whole **Apple**. Perhaps she bit off more than she could chew.

More dramatizations of Canadian history are flowering this spring. Tonight the Theatre Passe Muraille will premiere its play concerning the life of Pauline Johnson. Carol Bolt, who created **Pauline** along with director Paul Thompson, wrote **Gabe**, Toronto Free Theatre's modern salute to Riel and his friend. If Thompson's influence is still strong, we can count on intriguing use of the actors' gifts in presenting Upper Canada to the spectator.

The **Backdoor Theatre Workshop** is located at 474 Ontario Street. Wednesday two original one act plays open there, **Yo Yo**, by Michael John Nimchuk, and **And At Night We Dream** by David Mutch. Performances are Wednesdays through Sundays at 8:30 p.m. until April 15th. Performances are pay-what-you-can. Call for reservations 961-1505, or 964-1513.

More from little theatres: **The Scarborough Players** present Slawomir Mrozek's **Tango** from tonight until Saturday night, at the Theatre in the Pines, 4130 Lawrence Avenue East. The student price is one dollar. Others pay two dollars. At the Palmerston Library Theatre, 560 Palmerston Avenue, the **Q Theatre Company** is performing George Furquar's **The Beaux Stratagem**. It runs from March 22 to 31 at 8:30 p.m. Students pay \$1.50, others \$2.50.

music

Hart House on March 25 hosts a concert of jazz and experimental music, at 8 pm. At the Faculty of Music on March 26, 27, 28 and 29 there are student recitals — phone the box office for info and to confirm. On March 29 compositions by student composers will be performed at the International Student Symposium in the concert hall at 2:10 pm — no tickets, no charge. That evening at 8:30 the University of Toronto Concert Band under **Robert Rosevear** presents a concert — no tickets, no charge.

On March 27-8 at Massey Hall the **Toronto Symphony** under **Victor Feldbrill** plays music by Bizet, Prokofiev, Debussy-Freedman. The guest pianist will be Horacio Gutierrez.

On March 29 the second to last concert in the International String Quartet Series takes place at the Town Hall St. Lawrence Centre, at 8:30. Works to be performed are **Bocherini's** quartet in D major, **Beethoven's** quartet in A minor and **Ravel's** string quartet in F major, by the Quartetto Italiano.

The famous **Guarneri** quartet comes from a round of concerts in New York to perform at the Eaton Auditorium, March 31 at 8 pm. Tickets are from \$6 to \$3.

On March 31 **Victor Treyakov**, a 27-year-old Siberian-born violinist performs at Massey Hall as part of the International Artists series. His program is made up of works by Tartini, Beethoven, Prokofiev and Paganini.

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